

## WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2020

Washington State Natural Resources Building, Room 172, 1111 Washington St SE,  
Olympia, WA 98501

### **Invasive Species Council Members Present:**

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Ray Willard, Chair	Washington State Department of Transportation
Pat Stevenson, Vice Chair	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Bill Tweit, Past Chair	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Andrea Thorpe	Washington Parks and Recreation Commission
Todd Murray	Washington State University
Joe Maroney	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Pat DeHaan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Heidi McMaster	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Anna Lyon	Okanogan County
Blain Reeves	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Todd Hass	Puget Sound Partnership
Kendall Farley	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Ian Sinks	Columbia Land Trust
Steve Burke	King County
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Charles Cunningham	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington Department of Ecology
Tim Harrington	U.S. Forest Service
Yolanda Iguanzo	United States. Department of Agriculture
Shaun Seaman	Chelan County Public Utility District

### **Guests:**

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Stephanie Helms	Seattle Department of Transportation
Allen Pleus	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chris Looney	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Sven-Erik Spichiger	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Chelsea Buffington	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Karla Salp	Washington State Department of Agriculture

## Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

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Justin Bush	Executive Coordinator
Wyatt Lundquist	Board Liaison
Julia McNamara	Administrative Assistant
Alexis Haifley	Community Outreach & Environmental Education Specialist

### Opening and Welcome

**Chair Ray Willard**, Department of Transportation, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. with welcome announcements, facility safety information, introductions, roll call, and a review and approval of the amended agenda. In light of the novel Coronavirus, Board Liaison, **Wyatt Lundquist**, noted all health and safety measures taken before and during the meeting.

Following the amended agenda, Chair Willard recognized Member Bill Tweit's service to the Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC) as he will be stepping down from his position. Chair Willard and Member Joe Maroney each expressed gratitude for Member Tweit's excellent public servitude. In celebration of his service, WISC staff presented him with an original painting of the European Green Crab, one of WISCs priority species and the species Member Tweit identified as being the species he loves-to-hate most.

**Motion:** March Agenda Approval  
**Decision:** Approval with Amendments

**Motion:** December 2019 Meeting Minutes  
**Moved by:** Member Bill Tweit  
**Seconded by:** Member Joe Maroney  
**Decision:** Approved with Amendments

### Item 1: Executive Coordinator's Report- Justin Bush

**Justin Bush**, WISC Executive Coordinator, covered this quarter's WISC happenings, including meetings and events, social media on goings, and sighting reports through the WISC app.

Overall, the WISC staff members had attended thirteen meetings in the last quarter. Mr. Bush highlighted the February 5, 2020 Invasive Fish National Webinar Planning meeting where Matthew Neilson with US Geological Survey, Joe Maroney with Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Kevin Irons with Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Janine Bryan with Whoosh Innovations were brought together to raise awareness of invasive fish and what new technologies might be able to stop them. Member Maroney reported that

Whooshh Innovations brought forth a new automatized technology that was able to sort fish based upon computerized visual identification.

Among the five events WISC staff members attended, Mr. Bush highlighted the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia and the Invasive Species Awareness week. During the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia Conference, much discussion surrounded the "Don't Let it Loose" and "Bucket Biologist" campaigns, as well as discussion on the Urban Forest Pest Readiness Playbook. Mr. Bush noted that, moving forward, connecting with the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia would be helpful for WISC, tribes, and other agencies to help understand how to engage with the province and stop the spread of invasive species.

Mr. Bush then updated WISC on Invasive Species Awareness Week, with 2020 marking the third year in a row the Governor has issued a proclamation. During this week, the council issued a news releases, organized social media posts, and hosted a variety of events including a Puddles, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Zebra Mussel detecting dog, media event. In total, the council reached over 50,000 through the outreach week. While this reach is noteworthy, Chair Willard expressed interest in seeing compared outreach data between each year that the National Invasive Species Awareness Week had occurred, dating from 2018 to 2020. Mr. Bush will compile this information and share it at a future meeting.

Following event updates, Mr. Bush covered social media outreach. On Facebook there was a reach of 60,309 individuals, which was an 11,000-following increase from last quarter's data. The highest reaching post concerned the "Don't Let it Loose" campaign, where readers were encouraged to refrain from dumping unwanted pets, plants, and other materials into our environment as these could become invasive species or die a cruel death. WISC's Instagram experienced a 10% following increase. To further this increase, WISC staff requested that WISC members send in photos that would interest the public. Mr. Bush also reported that Twitter was able to reach over 70,000 people with the top two tweets concerning National Invasive Species Awareness Week and the Russian thistle (tumbleweed) event, where tumbleweed had covered several cars and blocked roadways in Eastern Washington.

To close his report, Mr. Bush presented data concerning sighting reports. As the years go by, there is an increase in the number of reports and more variation in the types of species being reported, much of which has to do with council's citizen science work and public outreach. Noticeably, in 2018 insect sighting reports decreased significantly from the previous and subsequent year. WISC staff attributed this with not issuing the August Tree Check news release. While the staff anticipate that the upward sighting trend will

continue in 2020, so far this year there had only been 19 reports this quarter, while there had been 77 reports in the last quarter of 2019. This largely is attributed to the time of year and lack of species being noticeable.

**Task:** Have WISC Executive Coordinator, Justin Bush, create and present a comparison of public outreach results associated with Invasive Species Awareness Week activities from 2018-2020 at the June meeting.

## **Item 2: Asian Giant Hornet Detection and Response**

**Chris Looney**, Washington State Department of Agriculture, briefed WISC on the Asian Giant Hornet, *Vespa mandarinia*. Opening, he described the species as an apex insect due to its adaptability and lack of natural enemies. Because of these abilities and its native habitat being Asia, WSDA quickly added this species to its survey list after a report of a 2019 sighting in Vancouver, BC. An actual specimen was reported in December 2019, in Blaine, WA, which Managing Entomologist Sven-Erik Spichiger examined on-site.

Mr. Looney continued with the species annual cycle, highlighting the potential dispersal of 300 new queens up to an 18-mile radius in the September, November and December months.

Typically, this species lives underground in hollow tree roots, hollowed trunks, and abandoned rodent burrows. Dr. Looney reported its foraging habits, revealing that queens typically feed on tree sap and that workers capture other insects for protein. One insect the hornet takes considerable interest in is the honeybee. Mr. Looney relayed that the hornets have three separate attack phases associated with honeybees. There is the hunting phase, where individual honeybees are killed and turned into a "meatball" and brought back to the hive to feed larvae. Following the hunting phase is the slaughter phase, where as few as 20 hornets will destroy and kill all honeybees in a nest in under 6 hours. In the final stage, known as the occupation stage, the hornets will wander through an empty nest searching for honeybee pupae and larvae to feed to their own young.

Mr. Looney communicated that the US should expect a similar impact that Europe had when a related species, *V. velutina*, became established in 2004. This species spread over 60km per year, killed at least two people in 2019, and reduced the honey production by two thirds.

Thankfully, WSDA has put a plan in motion in hopes of mitigating the Asian giant hornet's effects. Mr. Looney announced that they will be setting up two types of traps

and will eradicate detected nests with insecticides. The traps include a sap trap, where an oak tree is injured to bleed and attract queens, who ideally will be captured on a sticky trap surrounding the wound (wire mesh is placed around the small wound to protect birds). WSDA will also deploy bottle traps, which are homemade traps containing fruit juice and ethanol (to deter pollinators). Finally, when spraying discovered nests with insecticide, crew members must wear a special safety suit as normal honeybee suits are insufficient.

Following the briefing, WISC discussed the decision and two proposed directions.

1. Decision: add Asian Giant hornet as a council priority
2. Direction: council staff work with WSDA, USDA, and WSU to create a priority species web page, WA Invasives app profile, ect
3. Direction: Creation of a work group to review the purpose, use and council priority species list

Member Reeves pointed out that adding the Giant Asian Hornet to the council priority invasive list would be essential. Member Reeves also approved of direction item 1, but expressed that the final direction item would need to be a separate action item.

With the Asian Giant Hornet being added to the priority species list, Chair Willard expressed the importance of putting out a news release which WISC staff would need to carry out in the near future.

**Task:** Have WISC staff create and deploy a news release concerning Asian Giant Hornets.

**Motion:** Add the Asian Giant Hornet to the WISC species priority list and, by doing so, WISC members direct council staff to work with WSDA, USDA, and WSU to create a council priority species webpage, WA Invasive app profile, and other outreach resources.

**Moved by:** Member Bill Tweit

**Seconded by:** Member Blain Reeves

**Decision:** **Approved as amended**

### **Item 3: European Green Crab Emergency Measures**

**Allen Pleus**, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), provided an update on European Green Crab (EGC) management. He briefly covered the Salish Sea Transboundary EGC Action Plan that was signed in March of 2019. The overarching goal of the EGC Action Plan is collaborative management, early detection and rapid response to eliminate the populations that have gathered in Washington waters. Unfortunately, there is evidence that larvae from the crabs are coming when winter water temperatures

and strong onshore winds are suitable. To further educate people on the situation, Mr. Pleus relayed that there will be conference on the matter in April 2020.

Mr. Pleus then presented data concerning where EGC have been captured within the Salish sea and coastal areas. The data indicated population size through the number of crabs that have been captured per 100 traps (CPUE). When presenting a graph comparing Washington and Oregon coastal trapping efforts at long-term monitoring sites that showed an increase in CPUE from 75 (1998 and 2005) to 145 (2019) at the Willapa Bay site, it indicated a recent recruitment surge.

Mr. Pleus noted this species is aggressive and highly adaptable. He also noted that they are keystone habitat modifiers in habitats such as eelgrass and salt marshes. Typically, shellfish and forage fish take refuge within these habitats, meaning such populations will be negatively impacted. Loss of forage fish will also greatly impact salmon and orcas.

He went on to inform WISC that the probability of this species becoming established is quite high and the current forms of management have proved insufficient. The Salish Sea Transboundary Action Plan has not yet been adopted by all partners, there is no coastal management plan, and no statewide coordination resources.

Due to a finding of imminent danger, under RCW 77.135.090, WDFW Director Susewind sent a letter and supporting materials to Governor Jay Inslee requesting emergency measures for field work and science and policy coordination. While legislation provided \$783,000 in field work funding prompting WDFW to help stop the spread of the EGC, there was still a gap of \$508,000 where no funding was provided for science and coordination purposes.

Before closing his briefing and opening discussion to the council, Mr. Pleus emphasized the urgency of public outreach and education and how to train other entities on the capture and identification of EGC. The council discussed other funding sources, the inclusion of Taylor Farms Shellfish, and the creation of a cooperative invasive species planning group.

#### **Item 4: City of Seattle Interdepartmental Invasive Species Readiness Update**

**Stephanie Helms**, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), gave an update on the Seattle tree inventory and how city departments are working together in order to tackle invasive pests that effect the urban forests in the city of Seattle.

Ms. Helms gave a list of pros and cons concerning the management of SDOT's urban forest property. The cons included:

- Seattle Municipal Code, which led to shared maintenance responsibilities

- Private property where trees cannot be managed by the city, therefore pests cannot necessarily be managed
- Departmental requirements
- Lack of funding
- No single Urban Forestry department

The pros included:

- Vast amounts of data concerning urban forestry
- Multiple departments and resources to use and collaborate among
- Code on nuisance trees and vegetation
- Ties in well with existing initiatives.

She stressed the importance of many city agencies working together to streamline processes and pull together resources and knowledge. While there are nine agencies that assist with urban forestry in Seattle, the four most involved include SDOT, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Seattle City Light. Because the agencies worked together, in August of 2019 they were able to create an invasive pest committee known as the Seattle Committee for Invasive Pests. The committee was able to publicly present the Urban Forest Readiness Playbook at Seattle's recent Pesticide Recertification Seminar.

Ms. Helms noted that while the departments had been collaborating and working together, SDOT has been working on its own projects concerning forest mapping, tree inventory, and priority pests. Prior to the novel Coronavirus, SDOT had been updating its mapping and tree inventory daily. For priority pests, SDOT has created a spreadsheet of three pests with the intention of adding more pests with detailed information about the species. After the creation of the spreadsheet, SDOT would then create "pest IDs" for outreach and education purposes.

Ms. Helms closed her briefing seeking guidance on proper disposal of trees affected by invasive pests and offered to answer any questions that WISC may have.

Chair Willard and Member Tweit delved into conversation surrounding coordination of communication from city to city within Washington. Member Tweit directed WISC staff to add information concerning city programs into the Strategic Plan.

**Task:** Add city programs into WISC Strategic Plan

### **Item 5: Innovative Invasive Species Response Planning and Tracking Tools**

**Chelsey Buffington**, WDFW European Green Crab Specialist, presented a mapping device that will assist with tracking and response to invasive species within Washington

state. Logistically speaking, Ms. Buffington explained that this mapping device would help mitigate issues that often occur simultaneously, such as the initial, extended and an Internal Command System response.

Ms. Buffington highlighted the Kettle Falls Marina Rapid Response exercise that occurred in October of 2019, which helped lead to the creation of the planning and tracking tools.

Although there are numerous layers to this mapping device, including hospitals, road maps, fueling stations, water bodies, and land types, Ms. Buffington informed the council that a base map can be created out of the web mapping tool.

Moving forward, she spoke about a second mapping tool known as the "Incident Command Support Tool", which could be utilized by local emergency personnel to aid in the on-screen management of responses to incidents and or threats. This tool may consist of an introduction to the response, maps and other GIS resources, links to downloadable ICS forms, the Unified Command hierarchy, contact information, planning logistics, and information for the public.

If this tool were used in response to EGC, then a map would need to be created with clear jurisdictions and contact points for State, Federal, Tribes and local governments, there would need to be collaboration with various entities, people would need to know their roles and there would need to be information on where EGC have or have not been captured. Ms. Buffington has already moved forward with these adaptations on the tool for Drayton Harbor, an area infested with EGC.

WISC dove into conversation concerning the tools and mapping devices. Mr. Bush asked how this tool could help with other invasive species and what role the council should play in the development of such a tool. He also expressed interest in inputting the creation of innovative tools such as this into the Strategic plan. Chair Willard noted these tools would be great models for other entities as they could create a model system to best detect, monitor, and respond to invasive species. Member Reeves also expressed that it is imperative that the information within these tools be dynamic and continuously updated to stay relevant.

#### **Item 6: Fiscal Year 20 Invasive Mussel Funding to Washington State**

**Member Heidi McMaster**, WSU, updated the board on the Bureau of Reclamation 2020 fiscal year. She began with a brief overview of 2019 where there were 29 projects awarded national wide. Eight projects were awarded to the Pacific Northwest Region; three of them for early detection were awarded \$245,000, four of them for prevention



were awarded \$585,000 and one project for outreach and education was awarded \$92,000.

In fiscal year 2020 the initial funding amount to Reclamation was \$760,000, allowing only one project to be approved and funded in the Pacific Northwest Region. Fortunately, the Department of Interior (DOI) released additional funding, meaning all Washington submitted projects could be funded.

Those funded projects include WDFW's Cle Elem invasive muscle inspection station, WDFW's relocation and purchase of a new inspection station to replace the one at Plymouth, and WDFW's expansion to year-round operations at their two boating inspection stations. RCO and Colville Confederated Tribes also had two funded projects: for RCO, this was funding for training to improve Preparedness and Response and the Colville Confederated Tribes received funding to expand the Colville AIS monitoring program.

Bill Tweit recognized that the level of support for these projects is generous and it would behoove WISC to send out a letter of appreciation to Scott Cameron, Secretary of Interior. Allen Pleus noted that DOI funding is especially great because match funding is not required. Member McMaster was hopeful that the letter would give DOI understanding of how essential their funding is to get Reclamation projects completed.

**Task:** Have WISC Executive Coordinator, Justin Bush, send out a letter of appreciation on behalf of WISC to the DOI Secretary Scott Cameron concerning Bureau of Reclamation project funding.

### **Item 7: Asian Giant Hornet Communications Plan and Interagency Collaboration**

**Karla Salp**, WSDA, covered the Asian Giant Hornet communications plan. She opened with an outreach update concerning social media. She shared about the response to WSDA's first blog post regarding the Asian Giant Hornet. Under normal conditions, WSDA's blog only receives a few hundred views, yet this post received over 20,000 views and even caught the eye of the New York Times. Ms. Salp continued, communicating that after a Facebook post, WSDA had accomplished a reach of over 46,000 people and a YouTube video of Chris Looney's Asian Giant Hornet presentation conducted in collaboration with the council received 651 views.

While this amount of reach is impressive and out of the ordinary, Ms. Salp expressed that outreach and education about the Asian Giant Hornet is paramount. Within the Asian Giant Hornet draft communications plan emphasizes that anyone who leaves their house to be outdoors is at risk of encountering these creatures, not to mention the repercussions they could have on Washington's environment.

Ms. Salp also relayed that within the plan, WSDA intends to send out mailings, post information at parks, invite more individuals to the Facebook Asian Giant Hornet Watch page, put out news releases, and record radio notices. Although WSDA had a good idea of the different audiences that need outreach, Ms. Salp requested that the council email her with more ideas and communication pathways. Following her briefing, Chair Willard suggested that each council member speak with their agencies communication team to encourage posts and outreach concerning the Asian Giant Hornet. Member McMaster informed the group that she had been posting on her personal social media about the Asian Giant Hornet and encouraged other WISC members to do the same.

Member Andrea Thorpe relayed that she could work with WSDA to get information out to State Parks staff in order to post information on a public information boards within state parks. She also suggested that WSDA reach out to the Washington Native Plant Society.

The council closed by discussing more people and resources for outreach, including foresters and wildlife researchers, birdwatchers, and geocachers.

**Task:** Council members should attempt to involve their agencies' communication resources in AGH communications and should make suggestions to WSDA regarding outreach targets and strategies.

General Public Comment: No public Comment at this time

**LUNCH: 12:03 p.m.-1:00 p.m.**

### **Item 8: Oregon/Washington Invasive Pest Response Full Scale Exercise**

**Yolanda Iguzano**, USDA, and **Brad White**, WSDA, gave an overview of the Oregon/Washington Invasive Pest Response Full Scale Exercise concerning the Spotted Lantern Fly.

Yolanda briefly explained that having the exercise in person was helpful for discussion purposes, especially concerning newer staff who had not received training on how to deal with detection and eradication of pests.

Brad White provide more detail about the exercise. He noted that while it was only an exercise, it quickly resembled a real-life scenario for those who were involved. While the entire exercise was scripted, the organizers were able to insert real life problems into the scenario. This was essential so that the group responding could address unanticipated problems that arose. Member White also relayed the usefulness of having two different

states involved, as each state has different regulatory authority and jurisdictions that must be followed.

Justin Bush expressed hearing concern from responders being asked to fill roles without prior training. This difficulty was also faced during the Kettle Falls Marina invasive mussel exercise. Mr. Bush asked the WISC if they should hold position-specific training for key ICS roles.

Member Brad White agreed that WISC should play a role in training and exercises and that it is essential for training to occur on a regular basis. The council concluded that more ICS training should be done regularly.

### **Item 9: Council Member Recognition**

**Chair Willard** gave recognition to the vice chair, Pat Stevenson. Pat Stevenson will be stepping down from his Vice Chair role this year with intent of remaining on the council as a member, as he has been since the council started in 2006. Member Stevenson expressed appreciation for being a part of this council and advised that the next vice chair have ample time to speak with WISC Executive Coordinator, Justin Bush on a regular basis. Mr. Bush closed the recognition by listing all original intentions of WISC assigned by legislature and that Councilmember Stevenson exemplified these intentions.

### **Item 10: 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Work Session**

**Chair Willard** expressed that a work session would be carried out for both remote council members and those in person. Alexis Haifley and Justin Bush explained how it would be carried out. After completing the 20-minute work session, the council came back together to discuss what they had written down. Mr. Bush expressed that he would compile the notes from the survey sent out to remote members and the worksheets that present members had completed. The council briefly discussed if more topics should be added to the plan, which topics would be added, and if there was a way to compile different topics into one. Overall, there was agreement that the discussion would continue in specific work groups and be shared at the following meeting.

### **Item 11: Leadership of the Council**

**Chair Willard** opened noting how interagency and broad, collaborative interactions are essential to WISC. He also noted the value of having tribal representation on the leadership team. In continuance of that, WISC moved to have two vice chairs, with one always being made available for a tribal member. As Pat Stevenson had stepped down, Chair Willard invited Member Maroney to fill the tribal position and addressed the rest

of the council to see who else would be nominated for the remaining position. Member Reeves expressed interest and Member Pleus nominated him for the position.

**Motion:** Nomination of Joe Maroney as co vice chair for WISC  
**Moved by:** Member Pat Stevenson  
**Seconded by:** Member Blaine Reeves  
**Decision:** **Approved**

**Motion:** Nomination of Blaine Reeves as co vice chair for WISC  
**Moved by:** Member Allen Pleus  
**Seconded by:** Member Joe Maroney  
**Decision:** **Approved**

After the positions were filled, Justin Bush and Chair Willard voiced that as the chair steps down, anyone from the council can fill the position, not only the vice co-chairs. However, best practice would likely be for a vice chair to move to the chair position.

#### **Item 12: Future Meeting Planning and Closing Remarks**

**Chair Willard** expressed that the June meeting may be affected by the novel Coronavirus. While this could be true, Justin Bush would still like to move forward with the search for meeting topics and speakers from the Walla Walla area.

The council followed with discussion on who to contact and what to speak on. Topics such as Thousand Canker (walnut tree) Disease, the European Green Crab, Northern Pike, and grape surveys may be added to the June agenda.

General Public Comments: No general public comment

**ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 2:52PM.**



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Ray Willard, Chair

June 17, 2020

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Date