

Invasive Species Council Members Present:

Blain Reeves, Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Todd Murray, Vice Chair	Washington State University
Joe Maroney, Past Chair	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Adam Fyall	Benton County
Steven Burke	King County
Stacy Horton	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Todd Hass	Puget Sound Partnership
Jason Anderson	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Alexei Calambokidis	Washington Council of Trout Unlimited
Roy Hamblin	United States Customs and Border Protection
Yolanda Inguanzo	United States Department of Agriculture
Heidi McMaster	United States Department of the Interior
Carrie Cook-Tabor	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Karen Ripley	United States Forest Service
Greg Haubrich	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington State Department of Ecology
Justin Bush	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation

Guests & Alternates:

Megan Turnock	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Sara Mounts	Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Alternate)
Joshua Dise	Sandia National Laboratories
Regan McNatt	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Erin Coyle	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Melia DeVivo	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jesse Schultz	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Hunter Wastacott	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Stella Waxwing	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Alternate)

Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

Stephanie Helms	Executive Coordinator
Julia McNamara	Board Liaison
Jessica La Belle	Invasive Species Program Specialist
Maria Marlin	Outreach and Education Specialist
Megan Montgomery	Board and Policy Administrative Assistant

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Blain Reeves called the Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Board Liaison performed roll call, determining quorum.

Technical difficulties delayed roll call until 9:18 a.m.

Motion: Approval of **December 7, 2023, Agenda**

Moved by: Vice Chair **Murray**

Seconded by: Member **Bush**

Decision: Approved

Motion: Approval of **September 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Moved by: Member **Willard**

Seconded by: Member **Maroney**

Decision: Approved

Item 1: Council Staff Report

Stephanie Helms, WISC Executive Coordinator, highlighted the October RCO All Staff event where council staff presented on the National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Additionally, council staff participated in the first Urban Forest Pest Virtual Summit on October 17 and 18, the Feral Swine Transboundary Tabletop Exercise in Spokane, a field trip to Willapa Bay to see Washington State University (WSU) European Green Crab (EGC) diet study, and an Area Port of Seattle Tour with United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

In coming months, staff will participate in a Wild Spotter Invasive Species Ambassador Training Course, the 100th Meridian Columbia River Basin Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) team meeting, a WSU Winter Workshop in Spokane, the 2024 EGC Manager's Symposium, and a statewide Port Interception Workshop.

Ms. Helms provided a brief update on grants, sharing that the [PlayCleanGo](#) Boot Brush project is active, and staff will be sending out interest forms soon. Unfortunately, WISC was not selected to move forward with the America the Beautiful grant proposal for bullfrog management in western states, but staff plans to make adjustments and resubmit the proposal. The third phase of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban Forest Pest Readiness agreements have been executed. Staff is awaiting results of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection Act funding and hopes to report at the next meeting.

In a final note, Ms. Helms shared that an Invasive Species Awareness Art Contest hosted by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is currently open to all school-aged children, and more information can be found on [WDFW's website](#).

Maria Marlin, Community Outreach and Environmental Specialist, was most proud of the first Annual Invasive Species Pet Costume Contest held in October. Participants were asked to design a costume for their pet based on a priority species and include information on the species as part of their submission.

Jessica La Belle, Invasive Species Program Specialist, highlighted a presentation she provided to students at the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine, which covered multiple priority species, information on invasive species sniffing dogs, and the Washington Invasives app. Ms. La Belle was asked to return to provide this presentation in 2024.

Item 2: Update on Idaho Quagga Mussel Response and Washington's Preparedness Activities

Justin Bush, WDFW AIS Policy Coordinator, explained that WDFW is the lead agency for managing invasive species of the animal kingdom, including AIS. The WDFW AIS unit's core functions include prevention, early detection, rapid response, infested site management, local and regional coordination, education and outreach, and enforcement.

Jesse Schultz, WDFW AIS Prevention Section Lead, explained how the WDFW AIS Prevention Section implements the [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 77.135](#) through species classification, decontamination, containment, permitting and regulation, early detection monitoring, management actions, education and outreach, and enforcement activities led by Captain Eric Anderson. Education and outreach are key in raising awareness of what WDFW is doing to combat AIS in Washington, and the AIS Unit regularly collaborates across the department to address invasive species, like EGC and zebra and quagga mussels (invasive mussels).

The council has analyzed over 800 species for potential risk and impact to Washington's economy and environment, and of all the species analyzed, invasive mussels are the most impactful threat to Washington and are WDFW's highest priority. Invasive mussels are a prohibited, level one species with the potential to impact hydropower infrastructure, fisheries, endangered and threatened species, recreation, and public utilities including drinking water irrigation.

Invasive mussels have direct and indirect impacts on fish passage and hatcheries, and a reduction of prey availability could have downstream impacts on Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW).

Member Ripley left at 9:53 a.m.

A key characteristic of invasive mussels is the byssal threads, which native freshwater mussels do not have. Mr. Schultz explained the invasive mussels' life cycle plays a role in management. Invasive mussels broadcast spawn at certain water temperatures and the embryos quickly develop into planktonic veligers that drifts for up to one month before settling in their preferred environment: hard substrate in dark waters. Invasive mussels require concentrated levels of calcium carbonate to grow. Sample methods specifically target the free-floating veliger, and in Idaho, planktonic veligers were found throughout the water column, along with one benthic adult.

Invasive mussels arrived in the United States (US) through ballast water and was first detected in Michigan in 1988, and west of the 100th Meridian Line in Nevada in 2007. Over the last twenty years, a massive perimeter defense effort has been underway to keep invasive mussels from establishing in Washington waters. On September 18, 2023, Idaho's Governor informed WDFW that invasive mussels were detected near Twin Falls. Idaho swiftly executed their rapid response plan, which included a chemical treatment for eradication; however, it is uncertain how far the free-floating veligers travelled.

Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana have similar monitoring programs to standardize sample methods and lab practices. In Washington, monitoring consists of plankton tows, which collect water samples that are then sent to labs for analysis.

Member Maroney asked how long it takes to receive results from the samples. Mr. Schultz explained that WDFW is contracted with two different labs, which typically take up to two weeks for analysis.

Todd Hass left at 10:00 a.m.

Although Washington is better prepared for invasive mussels than it has ever been, overland movement of watercraft is an additional threat that needs to be monitored. WDFW has been intercepting around twenty invasive mussel watercraft per year at mandatory inspection and decontamination stations around the state which will remain key in managing the threat going forward. When an infested watercraft or equipment is found, it is decontaminated using a Clean Drain Dry Decontamination (CD3) station, and WDFW is strategically placing hot water treatment sites across the state.

When prevention activities fail, WDFW is ready with plans for early detection monitoring conducted across the state and has evolved comprehensive sample methods that include sampling water quality, sediment, and environmental deoxyribonucleic acid (eDNA), along with visual shoreline surveys and plankton tows. On the Snake River, there are twenty-three monitoring sites, and eight more have been added since the Idaho detection. WDFW has a response plan ready if invasive mussels are detected in waterways. A similar plan was simulated at the 2019 Lake Roosevelt rapid response exercise funded by the US Bureau of Reclamation.

In the short term, WDFW would like to develop and deploy long-term leadership strategy, form a multi-agency coordinating (MAC) group, fully fund watercraft inspection sites, procure another mussel-sniffing canine, increase monitoring, strengthen prevention, expand preparedness for response, consider a future where invasive mussels are established in Washington waters, and look at the timeline and cost. Mr. Bush emphasized that WDFW is doing everything it can to prevent invasive mussels from establishing in Washington and is seeking partnerships and collaboration to continue efforts.

Member Calambokidis noted that Trout Unlimited has members that are trained in eDNA sampling for bull trout and Pacific lamprey who could possibly collaborate with WDFW.

Member Willard shared that Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) uses calcium in liquid deicer and wondered if that could be contributing to dissolved calcium levels. Mr. Schultz was unaware that WSDOT used calcium in their deicer but noted that the dissolved calcium is concentrated highest in summer months when there is less run-off. Member Willard mentioned a national organization on winter operations that may have some research available on run-off.

Todd Hass returned at 10:30 a.m.

BREAK: 10:34 – 10:40 A.M.

Item 3: American Bullfrog Removal on Kalispel Tribal Lands

Megan Turnock, Kalispel Tribe of Indians Wildlife Biologist, provided an overview of the removal of the American bullfrog (bullfrog) from Kalispel Tribal lands that is vital to a variety of native amphibian species, such as the Pacific chorus frog, western toad, Columbia spotted frog, and northern leopard frog (NLF). NLF has been in decline in Washington in the past fifty years due to habitat loss and bullfrogs and is now a state-

listed endangered species with only one population left at the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. The last confirmed NLF sighting in northeastern Washington occurred in 1970.

Originally native to the eastern United States, bullfrogs were introduced to the western states in the 1900's, likely as a food source. Since their introduction, bullfrogs have successfully dispersed and colonized throughout the western states, including Washington, where they are a priority invasive species on Kalispel Natural Resources land.

Bullfrogs are the largest frog species in North America and can disperse up to one kilometer. They are gape-limited predators and will eat anything they can fit in their mouths. Female bullfrogs can lay up to 40,000 eggs in a single egg mass, and tadpoles, which take two years to metamorphose, are unpalatable to predators. Bullfrogs are tolerant of environmental toxins and are carriers of the deadly chytrid fungus. The incidence of disease in native amphibians is higher in bullfrog-occupied sites and bullfrogs compete with native species.

The Kalispel Tribe started a bullfrog removal effort as part of their commitment to restoring wetland ecosystems and native species like NLF. The tribe would like to reintroduce NLF, so they are restoring vernal ponds on tribal properties; however, bullfrog dispersal remains a challenge. Bullfrogs are well-established and have been seen in the Pend Orielle, in sloughs, and in drainage ditches.

Vice Chair Murray left at 10:49 a.m. and returned at 10:51 a.m.

In 2021, the Kalispel Tribe was funded through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to start a bullfrog removal project to reduce bullfrog populations at Trimble Creek, a suitable habitat for reintroducing NLF, and to contribute to regional bullfrog control efforts. In 2022 and 2023, two-person teams worked at night from July through September to remove bullfrogs using a lead-free pellet rifle. In 2023, data was collected on sex, age class, weight, and stomach contents, and lab tests were done on muscle tissue to test for toxins like mercury, and skin swabs for chytrid.

In 2022, teams removed 1,493 adult bullfrogs from Trimble Creek. In 2023, teams removed 7,036 bullfrogs, which included 2,693 adults, 1,885 metamorphs, 2,458 tadpoles, and two egg masses. More females were collected than males and stomach contents primarily consisted of insects, some rodents, fish, and other bullfrogs. There was no evidence of bullfrogs preying on native amphibian species which could have been due to the differences in habitats between species. Unfortunately, nine out of forty-eight swabs tested positive for chytrid fungus. Ms. Turnock was currently awaiting

results from the toxin analysis to determine if the bullfrogs are safe for human consumption.

Overall, the pellet rifle was effective, and the peak collection occurred in metamorphs and tadpoles in September. So far, there has been no obvious decrease in removals and work will continue through 2024. Going forward, Ms. Turnock hopes to conduct community outreach, spreading awareness that bullfrogs are an invasive species. Preliminary NLF reintroduction plans are underway, and meetings have been held with WDFW and WSU to discuss lessons learned from a similar program at Potholes State Park. The future of the program is being considered as well as what control efforts will look like long-term.

Members discussed the distribution map and possible data gaps in National Forest Service (NFS) lands. Additionally, members discussed the impacts of bullfrogs on river ecosystems and current restrictions on the public harvesting bullfrogs for human consumption. **Member Bush** offered to provide a follow-up from WDFW regarding bullfrog management.

Item 4: Update on Vessel Incidental Discharge Act and Introduction of New Ballast Water and Biofouling Program Staff

Justin Bush explained the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA), a new ballast water and biofouling program within the WDFW AIS Unit. WDFW has the authority under [RCW 77.120](#) to manage ballast water and biofouling and to ensure vessels follow [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 220-650](#).

State ballast water laws apply to vessels over 300 gross tons, foreign or domestic, and capable of carrying ballast water into Washington after operating in out-of-state waters. Vessels must report ballast water discharge plans to WDFW and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) at least twenty-four hours prior to arriving in state waters or moving between Oregon and Washington Columbia River ports or transitioning between Washington state ports and will only be authorized if discharge conditions are met through vessel inspections.

Biofouling and hull management are regulated in coordination with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to prevent the introduction of non-indigenous species or release of associated water quality pollutants. Vessel operators must receive approval by WDFW and Ecology to conduct in-water hull cleaning in any area of the vessel below or around the waterlines including sea chests and propellers. At least seven days prior to in-water hull cleaning, WDFW and Ecology must be notified with information and

documentation for approval or denial of cleaning activities. WDFW is working to spread awareness of this work through brochures, a website, and blog to ensure funding continues. VIDA began in 2019 as part of the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018, which established a new section of the Clean Water Act. VIDA directs the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt regulations that set national standards of performance for discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel and directs the USCG to adopt implementation regulations. In October of 2023, the EPA released a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking and expects to finalize and publish VIDA rules in fall of 2024, after which the USCG will publish their final VIDA rules.

On August 28, 2023, WDFW in collaboration with state agencies in California, Oregon, Hawaii, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin sent a States' Expectations for Process letter to the EPA setting the states' expectations for process which requested a sixty-day comment period and meetings with states before the EPA released their supplemental rulemaking. Additionally, the letter outlines states' concerns:

- 1) EPA failed to adequately analyze the best available technology to set minimum standards.
- 2) EPA's proposed regulations are less stringent than the existing 2013 Vessel General Permit, weakening protections.
- 3) EPA is attempting to regulate biofouling as incidental discharge, which is beyond the intent of VIDA.
- 4) EPA fails to protect US waters through chemical contamination resulting from in-water cleaning.

Member Bush offered to provide follow-up to this letter once it is available.

Member Maroney asked if there has been coordination with Tribes on these issues. Mr. Bush was hopeful that the new section lead would take on the commitment of providing better outreach and awareness.

Alternate Member McNatt pointed out that there were no east coast states on the letter to the EPA and wondered if there was difference of opinion with other states. Member Bush shared that east coast states are aware of this issue but was not sure their take on this issue is.

Item 5: Volunteer Recognition Category and Criteria Overview and Discussion

Past Chair Joe Maroney briefed the council on an annual volunteer recognition award that was previously proposed to the council and included forming a work group to

recognize and celebrate notable people, organizations, or projects that protect Washington from invasive species. This award includes categories; a process for nominating, selecting, and announcing awards; and determining the design of a physical award.

The work group, consisting of Past Chair Maroney, Vice Chair Murray, Member Bush, Stephanie Helms, and Maria Marlin, met on November 21, 2023, and decided on three award categories:

- 1) Laudable Leader Award – recognizes outstanding leadership of an individual who has shown devoted advocacy and support to invasive species policy. Nominated individuals can be at the federal, state, tribal, or local level.
- 2) Champion Citizen Scientist Award – recognizes a citizen going above and beyond to consistently prevent, address, or manage invasive species in Washington. Their efforts serve to protect Washington’s natural and cultural resources from the damaging impacts of invasive species.
- 3) Outstanding Organization Award – recognizes an organization with programs and/or staff that successfully demonstrate efficient and effective invasive species prevention and management.

The nomination process would allow individuals and organizations to self-nominate. Nominations would be accepted throughout the calendar year beginning in March 2024 and annual awards would be announced during National Invasive Species Awareness Week beginning in 2025.

The work group will develop evaluation criteria and then evaluate all nominations and make recommendations to the Past Chair or other delegate of the Chair. This individual will make the final decision on the annual award winners.

Member Ripley returned at 11:30 a.m.

The next steps of the process are for council staff and the work group to develop a nomination form and evaluation criteria for the three award categories. Member Maroney asked for any interested council members to contact him to get involved.

Todd Hass left at 11:33 a.m.

Stephanie Helms highlighted the importance of these awards as a key piece of outreach.

Additionally, **Member Maroney** suggested a non-annual lifetime achievement award to honor those who spent their lifetime championing invasive species and **Member Bush** voiced his support for this type of award.

LUNCH: 11:38 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Todd Hass and Marcie Clement returned during the lunch break.

Item 6: Washington and British Columbia Feral Swine Trans Boundary Exercise

Erin Coyle, Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Emergency Program Manager, provided an overview of WSDA emergency response systems. The Emergency Management Program (EMP) enhances Washington's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all-hazards emergencies impacting the state's natural and agricultural resources and food supply chain. Within Washington State, all state agencies and local jurisdictions are held to [RCW 38.52](#), [WAC 118-30](#), and the "[Home Rule](#)." When an incident exceeds the capacity of the local government, state assistance through the State Emergency Operations Center (State EOC) may be requested. The Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) provides response and recovery framework for state, local, tribal, and whole community coordination and cooperation in times of emergencies and disasters. The Washington Restoration Framework (WRF) provides a platform for agencies and organizations to coordinate, communicate and collaborate with one another to support local and tribal recovery planning efforts. WSDA Emergency Support Function (ESF) Eleven coordinates state responses to animal and agricultural emergencies, including emerging and transboundary animal disease outbreaks and dangerous plant or pest infestations. Overall, WSDA serves as a liaison and collaborates with various levels of government and plans, responds to, and recovers specific focus items like transboundary animal disease outbreaks and dangerous plant or pest infestations.

WSDA is managing a series of significant investment items, including the Foreign Animal Disease Mitigation and Response Preparedness Exercise; Western States Agriculture Emergency Resilience Partnership; Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Cross-Border Livestock Health Conference (CBLHC) tabletop exercise (TTX); restructuring and revising ESF Eleven; and Invasive Species and Catastrophic Foreign Animal Disease Cross-Border Pacific Northwest.

The Feral Swine Transboundary TTX identified the risk of different reporting channels and the networks associated with the animal disease and wildlife mortality recording and a gap in standardized sampling protocols, resources, and defined jurisdictional

authorities. Early detection is critical and advanced preparation before the onset of an invasive species or transboundary animal disease emergency will increase the likelihood of a rapid and effective response.

Joshua Dise, Sandia National Laboratories Senior Systems Analyst, explained the Washington and British Columbia (BC) feral swine transboundary exercise. The Feral Swine Transboundary TTX was sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Health Security (OHS). The Health Food and Agriculture Resilience (HFAR) protects the health, food, and agriculture (HFA) of the public and ensure food security against terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. As the sponsoring agency, DHS/HFAR seeks to bolster the readiness of HFA systems both domestically and internally against natural, accidental, or intentional disruption in collaboration with federal, state, tribal, local, territorial, industry, academic, and international partners.

This TTX focused on invasive species, animal health, and emergency management to provide a strategic opportunity to strengthen and create relationships between relevant US and Canadian partners and explore communication pathways and incident coordination along the border.

The transboundary TTX was designed to be an interactive and facilitated exercise. Participants were encouraged to ask questions of each other to learn from one another. A scenario was provided to provide participants to explore important topics and focused on the initial recognition, communication pathways, and incident coordination in the event of an invasive species and threat of an agricultural emergency (e.g., a transboundary disease outbreak) along the US-Canada border. The exercise was broken into three modules: introduction and recognition; monitoring, initiating triggers, and sample collection; and animal health investigations and contingency planning. In response to the incident, participants explored communication pathways, strategies, and response triggers of such an incident and held a discussion on sampling and other relevant laboratory activities.

There were 147 individuals registered for this event, representing over sixty international, federal, state, provincial, local, Tribal and First Nation, and academic organizations. Around forty people were able to attend in person and over eighty online.

The exercise planning team managed and was responsible for the design, development, conduction, and evaluation of the exercise. Given the multijurisdictional components of the exercise, planning team members included representatives from each functional

area or relevant discipline including invasive species, animal health, and emergency management.

This exercise was a two-year effort that provided an outcome of multitude of lessons:

- Different reporting channels and networks associated with foreign animal disease (FAD) may contribute to gaps in situational awareness.
- A gap in standardized sampling protocols, resources, and defined jurisdictional authorities may hinder the response actions following a disease identification.
- There continues to be a need for greater industry involvement.
- Limited connectivity, awareness, and trust of government sources and authorities in rural locations may limit efficiency and effectiveness of response planning.
- There are limited resources available to augment staff responding to and managing potentially cascading incidents.

Item 7: Washington Department of Transportation's Roadside Landscape Asset Management System for Addressing Invasive Species

Ray Willard, WSDOT, gave an overview of the Roadside Landscape Asset Management System which addresses invasive species, wildfire management, vegetation maintenance operations, and developing a program over the next ten years. Legislative funding is necessary for WSDOT to support roadside vegetation maintenance operations and to address highway corridors as vectors for invasive species to avoid an emergency.

WSDOT is not a land management agency but does manage necessary corridors like interstates and highways that act as potential vectors. WSDOT is responsible for 7,000 corridor miles, 16,500 vegetated shoulder miles, 100,000 acres of unpaved rights-of-way (ROW), and 60,000 acres of paved ROW, which costs an average of \$20 million annually on planned roadside maintenance.

Roughly one-fifth of WSDOT's herbicide treatments across the state are conducted in Grant County alone, where dry, invasive grasses contribute to the spread of wildfires. WSDOT will receive \$100,000 as passthrough funding from Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided by the Bureau of Land Management for grass treatments in eastern Washington.

Member Willard explained that maintenance and preservation of roadsides are one of the lowest priorities. The intention of this project is to demonstrate the importance of establishing quality roadsides for weed and wildfire management. The new construction of the Walla Walla corridor has created a vacuum for invasive species to take hold, whereas the new corridor at the Hawks Prairie interchange is an example of one of

WSDOT's most successful roadside management projects. With better funding, WSDOT could have more successful roadsides.

Mr. Williard briefly explained the evolution of WSDOT Roadside Landscape Management from 1993 through 2023 that has maintained plans for all twenty-four areas of the state. There are around 400 staff across Washington performing vegetation management, including 300 licensed spray-technicians; however, due to lack of resources many of these employees end up doing paving projects in the summer when vegetation management should be happening.

WSDOT's system defines corridors as landscape types with planned treatments for each type. In the past five years, WSDOT has implemented keeping track of the plan on mobile devices to keep a better record of activities performed. This mobile system references which areas need which treatments and when. Going forward, the system would direct the work needing to be done.

In 2022, WSDOT spent \$15.5 million on vegetation management; however, of that only \$2.5 million was spent on noxious weed control. WSDOT will need \$5.5 million per year over the next ten years to restore roadsides to a state of good repair. This would include seventy dedicated roadside employees, and six lead landscape architects throughout the state.

Additionally, WSDOT is using innovative approaches to vegetation management, including grazing goats on roadsides, drones for blanket treatments, and training crews to identify invasive species for targeted treatments.

Chair Reeves asked how the budget is decided at WSDOT. Member Williard explained that the roadside budget comes out of the maintenance budget, but since roadsides are a part of asset management, a portion of the budget should come out of preservation as well.

Members discussed the importance of spreading the word about this work.

BREAK: 1:42 – 1:46 PM

Item 8: Chronic Wasting Disease Overview

Member Inguanzo returned from the break at 1:49 p.m. and Member Ripley returned at 1:51 p.m.

Dr. Melia DeVivo, WDFW Ungulate Research Scientist, provided a summary of the development of a chronic wasting disease (CWD) plan, which began in 2019.

Surveillance has been conducted over the last three years without dedicated staff until WDFW was able to hire a CWD Surveillance Program Coordinator, Hunter Westacott.

Hunter Westacott explained that CWD is a prion disease affecting the cervid family of ungulates like deer, moose, and elk. Prion diseases, or transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE), are a family of diseases that cause a misfold in the prion protein causing sponge-like lesions in the brain. These diseases are always fatal and have no known cures.

CWD is difficult to monitor and mitigate due to its ability to be easily transmitted. An infected animal sheds the disease through its saliva, urine, and feces and can transmit it directly from animal to animal, or through indirect transmission if another animal eats plants where an infected deer has grazed. Additionally, an infected carcass can be a source of transmission. Once CWD is on the landscape it is difficult to mitigate.

CWD positive animals have been detected in thirty-one states and five Canadian provinces. The first detection in the US was in northern Colorado in a captive cervid facility in 1967, and the closest detections to Washington have been in Libby, Montana in 2019 and Riggins, Idaho in 2021.

Testing for CWD is important because most infected animals look normal. The incubation period is up to two years, in which time the animal can spread CWD throughout different ranges. WDFW began testing symptomatic animals in 1995 and received funding to test statewide between 2001 and 2011. In 2011 WDFW received Legislative funds to begin systematic surveillance due to the positive detections in Libby, Montana, increasing the risk of transmission to Washington. There has been no CWD detected in Washington to date, but limited testing prevents detection at low prevalence.

The CWD Management Plan aims to proactively build trust and gauge support from the public on how WDFW manages this disease through outreach and education; reduce known risks for CWD entering Washington; and implement a pre-detection surveillance program. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 the surveillance program surveilled four units in the northeast corner of Washington. The surveillance focused on adult white-tailed deer and primarily sampled harvested and road-killed animals. WDFW collaborated with Tribes, WSDOT, and accepted voluntary submissions. Additionally, testing occurred at check stations, house-calls, by appointment, carcass pits, and roadways. In FY 2022-2023 the surveillance program extended to all of Region One and focused on adult deer and elk. CWD was not detected in 600 samples.

In FY 2023-2024 the surveillance program will remain in Region One and follow FY 2022-2023 with the addition of an incentive program that will include 100 multi-season deer tags where hunters that submit a CWD sample will be put into an exclusive drawing. Tags will be awarded to those hunters in April and paid for by sponsors and the state.

Member Maroney asked if the samples submitted by the Kalispel Tribe are entered into the drawing. Dr. DiVivo answered that deer harvested using state tags are entered into the drawing; however, tribal harvests, including those from Tribal hunts are not included in the incentive tag drawing at this time.

Member Maroney also asked if there has been coordination with Colorado, noting Colorado's CWD protocol for testing and monitoring is precise. Dr. DiVivo shared that she is in contact with CWD colleagues in Colorado and Wyoming and noted Washington can learn from Colorado and sees value in collecting specific location information from hunters.

Item 9: Prioritization Assessment Tool Update Exercise

Stephanie Helms explained how invasive species are defined in [RCW 79A.25.310](#) and shared the importance of continuously reassessing and updating the [prioritization assessment tool](#) (PAT) and priority species list, which provides essential direction in invasive species management efforts, articulates the issue to outside audiences, and supports requests to decision makers. Many things have changed since the last update of the PAT in 2017 and a new section for impact on culturally or historically significant resources will be added to the PAT before reassessing other species. Ms. Helms outlined the new criteria and how the impact on culturally or historically significant resources will be scored. Pending a more formal review with cultural resource experts, these will be included in the update.

Vice Chair Murray shared that by going through the list of priority invasive species and comparing them to the impact criteria, forty out of fifty species would have some sort of cultural impact, while ten need further research. The WISC priority species matrix charts the proximity of invasive species, as well as their impacts; whether ecological, economic, human-health related, or cultural; and the ability to prevent and/or manage them based on invasive potential, difficulty to control, and feasibility of early action and prevention.

Ms. Helms explained that with eighty percent of the priorities having either a direct or indirect impact on cultural resources, adding a criterion for cultural resources to the PAT is necessary. Ms. Helms requested council support to move forward with the PAT review

and adding the cultural impact criterion to be adopted at the next meeting. Additionally, Ms. Helms and Vice Chair Murray will be recruiting “taxa teams” of specialists in Washington to review the current list of priority species with the new cultural impact criteria and look at plant and wildlife diseases.

Chair Reeves and **Member Maroney** emphasized the importance of including cultural resources in the PAT. **Member Bush** added that taking a comprehensive look at which species can be removed from the list through the lens of the council’s strategy is smart and recommended thinking about pathways and bundling priorities. **Member McMaster** highlighted the importance of considering cultural resources and including them in the PAT could bring national attention to issues in the future.

Ms. Helms noted that she will be working with the cultural resources department at RCO.

Item 10: Future Meeting Planning Roundtable Discussion

Chair Blain Reeves asked the council to provide ideas for future meeting topics.

Member Bush would like to see WDFW EGC communications and public engagement staff present on the work they have done in the last two years of the EGC emergency.

Member McMaster offered to present on the National Early Detection Rapid Response framework and a pilot funding opportunity, and a USFWS proposal for managing barred owls.

Stephanie Helms wanted to hear an update on Mediterranean oak borer beetles, and noted Alternat Member Sven-Erik Spichiger has offered to provide updates on WSDA priority species.

Julia McNamara noted the travel meeting moved to June 6 in Walla Walla.

General Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNED: 2:43 P.M.

The next regular meeting will be held on March 21, 2024, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. SE, WA 98501.