

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
Mary Fee	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Marcie Clement	Avista Utilities
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
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
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington State Department of Ecology
Allen Pleus	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Justin Bush	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation

Guests & Alternates:

Sven-Erik Spichiger	Washington State Department of Agriculture (Alternate)
Captain Eric Anderson	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Abby Tobin	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Joey Hulbert	Washington State University
Robert Compton	United States Bureau of Indian Affairs
Alexa Brown	Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

Stephanie Helms	Executive Coordinator
Julia McNamara	Board Liaison
Maria Marlin	Outreach and Education Specialist
Jessica La Belle	Invasive Species Program 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. Of note, **Member Mary Braswell** and **Member Andrea Thorpe** were absent.

Motion: Approval of September 28, 2023, Agenda

Moved by: Member **Willard**

Seconded by: Member **Seebacher**

Decision: Approved

Motion: Approval of June 15, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Member **Ripley**

Seconded by: Member **Clement**

Decision: Approved

Motion: Approval of 2024 Meeting Calendar

Moved by: Member **Willard**

Seconded by: Member **Burke**

Decision: Approved

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) briefed the council on the quagga mussel detection in Twin Falls, Idaho. **Allen Pleus**, WDFW outgoing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Unit Manager, described the history of zebra and quagga mussels, which originated in Eastern Europe and came to the United States in the 1980's. Until recently, the Columbia River Basin was the last remaining basin free of zebra/quagga mussels in the United States.

Justin Bush, WDFW's new AIS Policy Coordinator, explained that on September 18, 2023, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) confirmed the presence of quagga mussel larvae in the Centennial Waterfront area of the Snake River, and multiple larvae samples detected in the Twin Falls area of Idaho by ISDA's Early Detection Monitoring Program.

ISDA initiated a rapid response and the 100th Meridian Initiative Columbia River Basin Aquatic Invasive Species Team, coordinated by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has mobilized a regional response plan, and a regional Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group has been activated. WDFW is the lead Washington state agency for management of aquatic animals including zebra/quagga mussels and is on standby to assist Idaho's incident management team. Mr. Bush emphasized that to date no invasive mussel detections had been found in Washington waters, including the Snake River, and WDFW's AIS unit is continuing monitoring.

Captain Eric Anderson highlighted WDFW's robust monitoring plan that partners with multiple agencies and stakeholders and the watercraft inspection sites across Washington, which includes a strategically placed site in Clarkston. Of the 1,065-watercraft inspected in Clarkston in 2023 WDFW dealt with one mussel boat. If zebra/quagga mussels are detected the Governor's Office and Legislature would be engaged to initiate emergency actions.

Following initial monitoring, Idaho closed areas from Twin Falls downstream to Niagara Springs, which includes adjacent streams and reservoirs. Additionally, Idaho has two watercraft decontamination sites available to the public.

Mr. Bush directed the council to ISDA's [Snake River Quagga Mussel webpage](#) for more information and will continue to provide the council with updates as the situation unfolds. Captain Anderson emphasized the state of this emergency and that WDFW is preparing for a future situation in Washington. Mr. Pleus added that this is a new and separate pending emergency and will not change Washington's response to European green crab (EGC).

Member Ripley asked what the eradication methods are when planktonic larvae are detected. Captain Anderson answered that eradication methods depend on the environment, whether the aquatic body is a river, stream, or lake. Aquatic molluscicides such as copper sulfate and pot ash can be used, but application depends on the location of detection. Additionally, physical methods can be used such as the watercraft inspection and decontamination stations.

Chair Reeves shared that other agencies are ready to assist should the need arise. Captain Anderson added that WDFW needs assistance in the form of support and will likely develop a Legislative request to increase monitoring.

Item 1: Council Staff Report and New Staff Introductions

Stephanie Helms, the new WISC Executive Coordinator briefly introduced herself to the council before providing the council staff report.

Ms. Helms highlighted events that WISC staff participated in since the last meeting. Most notably, staff participated in the Urban Forest Pest Readiness workshop in Tacoma and had a booth at the Padden Triathlon to spread awareness on the New Zealand mud snail, which is present in Lake Padden. Additionally, staff trained IslandWood Summer Camp staff at the Brightwater Environmental Educational and Community Outreach Event. IslandWood staff later piloted WISC's modified invasive species curriculum in July.

Coming up, staff will participate in the October 17-18 Urban Forest Pest Virtual Summit. Ms. Helms shared additional upcoming events, highlighting the October 26-27 Transboundary Feral Swine Tabletop Exercise, and the November 28 presentation at University of Washington Aquatic Invasion Ecology Class, which will be an opportunity to spread awareness of the zebra/quagga mussel incident in Idaho.

The council and staff were featured in the media when the Tri-Cities Herald covered the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) and Tree-of-Heaven and how to use the WISC reporting app as well as EGC efforts. Additionally, in an article announcing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service funding to support distribution of boot brushes to protect sage grouse habitats in Washington.

Ms. Helms took a moment to recognize WISC staff, Maria Marlin and Jessica La Belle, for continuing this critical work as the Executive Coordinator position was being filled.

Maria Marlin, WISC Community Outreach and Environmental Education Specialist, provided a social media and website update for the council. Facebook experienced an increase of 2.4 percent in likes from the previous quarter, with a reach of 44,346 people, an increase of twenty percent, noting an increase in activity from the Emerald ash borer look-alike guide posted in July.

The council's Instagram has over 3,000 followers now but saw a decreased reach of around twenty percent. The most popular posts for the quarter were one welcoming Stephanie Helms, an invasive pacu fish caught in Oklahoma, and WDFW's Northern Pike rapid response plan.

On X, formerly known as Twitter, the council has seen a decrease in impressions since the last quarter. Ms. Marlin explained that this could be due to an overall decrease of users since Twitter's transition to X and encouraged members to send in interesting stories and links.

The council's website continues to be found mostly through organic search. Since the previous meeting, staff has added WDFW's [Safeguard Our Shellfish](#) campaign to the website.

Mary Fee stepped away from the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Ms. Marlin highlighted Member Horton for her initiative in distributing materials at Fish Fest put on by the National Park Service at Lake Roosevelt. Member Horton represented the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and distributed spotted lanternfly and northern pike outreach items at the event and spoke with over 250 people. The new WDFW invasive species educational trailer was on display at this event as well.

Staff submitted two funding requests. The first was to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: America the Beautiful Challenge. The project proposal is called “Addressing Invasive Frogs to Support Conservation and Recovery of At-Risk Species in the West” and includes three activities: a west-wide virtual summit, at least six in-person field trainings and workshops, and the development of a Western Invasive Frog Action Plan. Staff should know by November 2023 if this proposal was approved for funding.

The second request was for funding from the Plant Protection Act 7721 to fund activities like the Puget Sound Invasive Species and Exotic Pet Workshop, Tribal Government Invasive Species Summit, Invasive Ant Surveillance and Identification Virtual Workshop, Port Interception Workshop, and updates to the Washington Invasives Reporting mobile application. Staff expects to hear the outcome of this request by March 2024.

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) funding was extended, which Washington State uses to respond to invasive mussel detections. Phase III of the Urban Forest Pest Readiness playbook from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is nearing execution and will fund more workshops for municipalities. Finally, council staff are collaborating with King County to update their page on invasive species.

Ms. Helms asked for council volunteers to join the Boot Brush Volunteer Interagency Advisory Committee and informed the council of a new yearly exercise that will confirm primary and secondary contacts of verifiers in the Washington Invasives reporting application.

Member Cook-Tabor asked who to contact for the WDFW educational trailer to be showcased at future events. Ms. Marlin answered that Nicholas Knauss is the contact at WDFW.

Vice Chair Murray stepped out at 9:51 a.m.

Item 2: White-nose Syndrome in Bats Update

Abby Tobin, WDFW Bat Biologist and White-nose Syndrome Coordinator, provided an overview of White-nose Syndrome (WNS) in the state. Bats play a critical role in Washington’s ecosystem primarily as insect control. Across the United States, bats save an estimated \$3 billion in crop damage and pesticide costs each year. Today, bats face modern threats such as loss of or degraded habitat for foraging and roosting, modern structures such as wind turbines, climate change, and diseases like WNS.

Ms. Tobin described the disease triangle which requires a pathogen, susceptible host, and a favorable environment. In the case of WNS, the pathogen is a fungus,

Pseudogymnoascus destructans (Pd). Hibernating bats are the susceptible host and can have WNS spread to them through bat-to-bat, and bat-to-environment, and humans can inadvertently spread WNS to bats and their and their roosts with contaminated footwear, clothing, or gear. WNS prefers an environment that is cool and dark such as caves, mines, talus slopes, crevices, and other similar environments.

Vice Chair Murray returned at 9:54 a.m.

WNS was listed by the council as a priority invasive species in 2017. This pathogen disrupts healthy cell function causing more frequent arousals which causes increased energy expenditures in hibernating bats with limited fat stores. Infected bats emerge early from hibernating in winter or spring, dehydrated and emaciated. Some bats experience immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome, which can contribute to wing damage or death. Of note, clinical signs of WNS such as the “white nose” have not been seen in Washington yet. The white nose is only visible in hibernating bats.

While the Pd fungus has been found in other western states, Washington is the only western state to have the disease confirmed in bats. The first case in Washington occurred in 2016, and as of 2023 there are 216 WNS cases primarily centralized in the Puget Sound area but has been found in eleven counties and confirmed in four bat species, the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), long eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), and the fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*). In Washington, there are potentially eight other hibernating species that remain vulnerable to WNS. Non-hibernating species can be vectors, and the fungus has been confirmed in the long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*) and the silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*).

WNS has a greater than ninety percent mortality rate for some species and has killed millions of bats in eastern and central North America. The impacts of these deaths have caused the listing of bat species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the little brown bat is currently being assessed for listing by the United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). It is difficult to know which species are more vulnerable because little is known about the natural life history of many species. Washington species tend to hibernate in small, dispersed, inaccessible, or unknown locations and there is limited baseline data on population trends when WNS arrived in the state. Researchers have had to simultaneously learn about the natural history of western bats while developing new monitoring and surveillance approaches.

Ms. Tobin explained the management actions taken that include learning the natural history to identify summer and winter roosts, community education with conservation messaging, population monitoring with maternity colony counts and acoustic

monitoring, WNS surveillance to determine occurrence and species susceptibility, and WNS treatments that are in the pilot phases. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), USFWS, non-governmental organizations, and WDFW work together to conduct emergence counts at fifty maternity colonies annually, prioritizing little brown bat and Yuma myotis colonies. Biologists use these counts as one metric to detect changes due to WNS as well as monitoring declines in summer colony sizes and declines in landscape acoustic activity both of which mirror bats in hibernacula.

Due to differences in roosting ecology, treatments for WNS only recently became feasible in Washington when biologists shifted from considering hibernacula centric options to summer options. Summer treatments include a probiotic powder developed by the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Thomson River University, and McMaster University, and an oral vaccine developed by the United States Geological Society. As the first state in the west to participate, Washington is at the forefront of summer treatments. These projects target little brown bats and Yuma myotis maternity colonies in human made structures and treatments are accompanied with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging and banding bats to monitor efficacy.

WDFW plans to continue treatment trials into 2024 and beyond depending on funding. Additionally, WDFW plans to conduct a mark-recapture data analysis to assess treatment efficacy. Currently there is sufficient vaccine data for analysis, but the probiotic treatment needs more time to test.

Member Horton suggested utilizing a citizen scientist approach to possibly provide the probiotic treatment and noted that the dispersed colonies could provide some natural protection. Ms. Tobin acknowledged considering the citizen scientist approach, particularly for monitoring and surveilling colonies, and possibly with treatments.

BREAK: 10:23 – 10:30 AM

Item 3: 2023 Tribal Invasive Species Workshop

Members Cook-Tabor and Anderson were out of the room after the break and returned at 10:32 a.m.

Dr. Joey Hulbert, Washington State University (WSU), celebrated the partnership between the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), WISC, and WSU to develop invasive species workshops and webinars for tribal audiences.

Robert Compton, BIA Rangeland and Management Specialist for the Northwest Region, shared that the primary goal of the northwest region has been to support the transfer of programs, services, functions, and activities formerly provided by the BIA to those tribes who desire to exercise their governmental rights through self-determination (contracting) and self-governance (compacting). The Northwest Region covers Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana, and southeast Alaska where there are fourteen agencies and forty-five tribes. There are seven Rangeland Tribes: Colville, Flathead, Fort Hall, Spokane, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Yakama.

The Northwest Region works with tribes on noxious weed control and eradication in compliance with regulations; however, funding for this assistance is non-recurring and tribes must compete with other tribes for funding.

Northwest Region Funding				
	Fiscal Year 2022		Fiscal Year 2023	
	Number of Tribes Awarded Funds	Funds Awarded	Number of Tribes Awarded Funds	Funds Awarded
Invasive Species (non-agricultural)	17	\$1,569,261	14	\$1,422,525
Invasive Species (agricultural/rangeland)	11	\$856,571	8	\$810,231
Endangered Species	23	\$2,349,014	17	\$1,450,434
Non-Base Funds	5	\$470,000	6	\$470,000

Requests for proposals for the next fiscal year (FY) will go out in November and will be due January 12, 2024.

Mr. Compton and the BIA partnered with Dr. Hulbert to provide invasive species workshops to tribes across the region and looks forward to participating in more next year.

Dr. Hulbert explained that USDA APHIS provided funding for the webinar to supply no-cost educational materials and help in co-organizing these workshops. 2022 was the first-time funding was received to enrich Tribal management and resilience to invasive species with co-designed educational resources, and 2023 was successful in securing more funding. The first two years of this funding was focused on Washington Tribal communities, and the recent proposal aims to expand the opportunities to all forty-five Tribal Nations that Mr. Compton engages with in the Northwest Region.

In March 2023 there was a two-day invasive species workshop to engage Tribal audiences, which was followed by four individual webinars throughout April. Over thirty Tribal communities throughout the region participated in this workshop and webinars. Attendees shared an interest in a mix of invasive species from insects to AIS to noxious weeds.

All the workshops and webinars were recorded and are available at <https://extension.wsu.edu/invasive-species/recordings/>. There were presentations provided by Vice Chair Murray and Member Ripley, as well as presentations from the Tribal community that provided unique perspectives, like Anthony Capatillo from the NiiMiiPu/Nez Perce Tribe, and Member Maroney from the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. In the future, Dr. Hulbert would like to work more with Tribal Nations that have plant nurseries to discuss invasive species and best management practices for restoration nurseries. To date, there have been over 800 views of the recordings and almost fifty hours viewed.

Member Maroney commented that the format for the presentations being spread out over several weeks worked well and was excited at the turnout.

Item 4: Department of Natural Resources European Green Crab Decision Package

Chair Reeves, DNR Assistant Manager of the Aquatic Resources Division, requested a letter of support from the council for an agency request for the EGC Management Decision Package that includes carry-forward funding. To date, DNR has received \$801,808 in emergency EGC funding, used to purchase essential equipment, hire permanent staff, complete a work plan, and execute trapping. DNR has removed nearly 9,000 EGC from Washington waters, thirty of which were gravid females, and are projecting to trap over 10,000 EGC in the calendar year.

DNR has developed an EGC Work Plan. With current funding, DNR is only able to accomplish around fifty percent of what is needed to protect state-owned aquatic lands. Additionally, there is no long-term guaranteed funding for state agencies, and although WDFW has been working with other state and federal partners to secure additional funding, DNR is seeking nearly double the funds in the next biennium to complete 100 percent of the workplan.

Council members discussed their support. WDFW is supportive of DNR's request for carry-forward funding and the letter of support.

Motion: Move that the council provide a letter of support to the Washington Department of Natural Resources European Green Crab Decision Package for additional funding.

Moved by: Member **Allen Pleus**

Seconded by: Member **Adam Fyall**

Decision: Approved

Adam Fyall added that he expects additional letters requesting support to come in December as agencies finalize their funding requests.

Item 5: Recognition of Member Allen Pleus

In recognition of **Member Allen Pleus** retiring, **Chair Reeves** summarized Member Pleus' career in AIS, his dedication to the EGC emergency, and his time on the council.

Member Pleus provided a brief presentation on his career and plans for retirement, while sharing his delight in transitioning his position to **Justin Bush**, both as WDFW's AIS Policy Coordinator and as WDFW's seat on the council.

Jessica La Belle, EGC Multiagency Coordination (MAC) Group Coordinator, shared her appreciation for Member Pleus' leadership and presented a gift on behalf of the council, a marine compass to help guide him in his future adventures and to help him find his way home.

Staff and members of the council shared stories of working with Member Pleus through the years.

At the lunch break Member Pleus stepped down and Member Bush took his seat on the council.

LUNCH: 11:21 AM – 12:30 PM

Item 6: Update Council Invasive Species Prioritization Assessment Tool Overview

Vice Chair Todd Murray provided an overview of the council's prioritization assessment tool, beginning with the ecological definitions that serve as a foundation for the tool. For the reasons of the council, invasive species are defined using the definition found in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.25.310 and is summarized as a species that is non-native to the ecosystem, causes economic or environmental harm, is capable of spreading, and is not livestock, intentional crops, or non-harmful exotics. The council also distinguishes between native and non-native species.

Prioritization is important in achieving the council's mission and previously the process has included recruiting "taxa teams" of specialists in Washington, rolling out individual group calibrations, and two rounds of meetings with taxa groups.

The assessment tool scores based on ecological impact, economic impact, human health impact, invasive potential (ability to prevent/take early action), impact on culturally or historically significant resources, and the justification for prioritizing. These categories are given a numeric value, which are then totaled to determine how different species may impact life in Washington State, i.e., a higher Total Impact score corresponds to a greater detrimental impact caused by a species, and a higher Current Ability to Prevent/Take Action Early score corresponds to a greater likelihood of Washington state agencies being able to effectively respond to a species.

Vice Chair Murray noted a new impact that should be added to the scoring tool: impact on culturally or historically significant resources and food resources. The council discussed this in 2021 but the scoring practice has not yet been implemented.

Member Bush highlighted the value of this process and importance of this tool for the council to be able to provide information to the Legislature on why certain species should be of interest to the state.

Stephanie Helms added that prior discussions of the assessment tool focused on using the tool to figure out how to approach adjacent emerging issues that may not have a lot of evidence but could still be impactful in Washington.

Ms. Helms discussed the next steps in integrating the assessment tool, which will likely be a step-by-step process and an evolving tool. The council should become well versed in using the tool in case an issue emerges quickly. The first step should be fitting in the new cultural impact aspect.

Chair Reeves directed staff to continue to work with Vice Chair Murray and the working group to complete updates to the tool and provide a brief update at the next meeting.

Item 7: Invasive Pest Working Group

Jessica La Belle further discussed the topic of forming an Invasive Pest Working Group, originally brought up at the previous council meeting in June. Ms. La Belle highlighted the council's mission, particularly "*The council is tasked with improving the coordination of state invasive species activities to ensure the investments made today are the right investments for the future.*" And the council goals found in the [Washington Invasive Species Council 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#).

Ms. La Belle emphasized that MAC groups work well, and the council has an impressive history of bringing the right people to the table to find balanced solutions to invasive species issues.

Invasive species create concerns across multiple agencies and many groups have shared primary contacts. The proposed Invasive Pest working group would improve interagency communications and efficacy, maintain the council's presence as a central hub for invasive species coordination and response, and eliminate the inefficient cycle of building contacts for each project or pest, which dissolves or lapses when funding expires. The proposed structure of the working group would be formalized under WISC and could address target species on an as-need basis.

There is an interagency agreement with DNR through 2025, which is currently in process that would provide \$10,000 for the development and facilitation of an Interagency Invasive Pest Working Group. The specific language states *"The working group will hold meetings to alert agencies to new pests on the horizon, new interceptions at ports-of-entry, and newly detected pests in Washington and neighboring states and provinces."*

Chair Reeves asked how this working group would work in relation to existing MAC Groups. Ms. La Belle answered that this proposed working group would be for new pests, not established MAC Groups with existing funding, and would serve as a valuable resource to improve efficiency.

Stephanie Helms reminded the council that early detection and rapid response is part of the council's 2020-2025 Plan, and being able to close communication times between member agencies regarding a new detection is paramount at being able to respond quickly.

Council members discussed the general structure of the proposed working group, and who could be included. Ms. La Belle clarified that the purpose of the group is to improve communication between agencies. Additionally, anyone who could benefit from this group could be involved, including tribes, higher education, and other stakeholders.

Member McMaster left the meeting at 1:16 p.m. Hearing agreement from the council that this is a good idea, but needs more clarity, **Chair Reeves** directed staff to bring a draft summary of the work group to the next meeting for council response.

BREAK: 1:20 – 1:45 PM

Item 8: Revisiting Council Priorities

Stephanie Helms discussed the importance of the council's work and the role it has played in her career. With more than 200 known invasive species in Washington, scientists estimate that just twenty-two of these species could cause \$1.2 billion in economic loss and damage without prevention or management, but the council remains "one of the best examples of functional and effective government," according to Past Chair, Member Ray Willard. Ms. Helms expressed her gratitude at being included in the council that can achieve so much.

Ms. Helms provided the council priorities in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan to strengthen the commitment to them in the context of celebrating council accomplishments to prime the council for mapping out future successes. These priorities include state and federal policies and programs; statewide leadership and information sharing; sovereign nations and municipalities; coordination and partnerships; unified industry and government; and coordination and response structure and process.

One of the more notable achievements of the council was having the Washington State Legislature unanimously vote to extend the council to 2032. Others include being appointed by Governor Jay Inslee as representation at the Western Invasive Species Council in 2019, working with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Invasive Species Working Group, and successfully executing a first of its kind Incident Command System (ICS) exercise for zebra/quagga mussels.

Looking towards the future, the council will continue to work with regional groups like PNWER, Western Invasive Species Council, and the Transboundary Feral Swine Working Group. Additionally, enhanced coordination and information sharing structures for tribal and municipal governments will continue to expand the council's reach, and the council will stay ahead of neighboring issues and potential spreads, and understanding what emerging issues could be with the update of the prioritization assessment tool.

The council's priorities for innovation and research include vulnerable species resources, and infrastructure; understanding and evaluating impacts and invasion pathways; resilient landscapes and climate change; and diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Ms. Helms highlighted the council's innovation and research achievements, including assessing and adjusting language of invasive species; the WSU Tribal and Municipal Government Invasive Species capacity and capabilities surveys; integrating species

awareness into other plans; and participating in the Northwest Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change Network Symposium. Going forward, council staff will focus on matrixing plant and wildlife diseases and making the work the council does more inclusive through translation of education and outreach materials.

Educational and outreach priorities are focused on public awareness and mobilization; youth and adult citizen science; policy maker awareness; formal and informal education; and professional development and cross-training. Many of these priorities have been achieved through increasing online engagement with social media, updating the council's website, creating a middle school curriculum in 2019 and increasing awareness through news and press releases. Participation in Invasive Species Awareness Week in Washington and promotional events like August Tree Check Month have helped council staff boost awareness. Staff will continue to create engaging campaigns, build upon existing social media strengths, and broaden education to more age groups.

Prevention is the most effective tool in the council's toolbox, and the priorities include understanding and addressing invasion pathways; developing prevention protocols and public adoption, response readiness, and understanding and addressing risk. These priorities have been achieved through WDFW's Clean-Drain-Dry-Dispose (CD3) units and mobile trailer, watercraft inspection and decontamination training, the Safeguard Our Shellfish Campaign, and the 2021 Marimo moss ball incident. Going forward, staff will work on finishing the Interagency Port Interception Response Plan for Washington and Oregon; increase prioritization around tribal efforts, needs, and resources; protecting the sagebrush biome; understanding pathways; and spreading the word about the reporting application.

Priorities of early detection and rapid response include early detection capabilities; response plans and exercises; emergency funding; optimizing and sharing response resources; and diagnosis and notification. Some of the successes the council has achieved include the 2022 EGC emergency order; being proactive in the Washington State Spotted Lanternfly Action Plan; and conducting a statewide census of Tree-of-Heaven. Coming up there will be an Urban Forest Pest Summit in October 2023, as well as a Transboundary Feral Swine tabletop exercise. Additionally, staff will be incorporating ICS into response frameworks, build upon communication protocols in response plans, and hold response exercises.

Eradication, control, and containment priorities include adequate and sustainable funding; evaluation and reevaluation; data collection, sharing, and mobilization; asset-based management for protection and natural or economic assets; and optimization of

response operations. Some of the council's achievements include uniting organizations for EGC management, creating a flowering rush cost-share program, and the spartina success story. Staff intends to source funding that supports management goals of lead agencies, empower municipalities and local communities doing invasive species work, and continue to offer resources through trainings and workshops.

Member Ripley asked about staff capacity and whether the council was fully staffed or if there were plans for interns or other capacity-raising resources. Ms. Helms answered that Jessica La Belle is approved to supervise interns, which is being considered to broaden support. New funding sources and projects are always being sought, which requires staff time, but staff is currently funded through the next biennium. **Chair Reeves** expressed staff funding as a priority to the council. **Vice Chair Murray** emphasized that council staff did a wonderful job highlighting their value at RCO.

Member Bush would like to see this type of report more frequently so that the council can see their achievements more often. There is also the need to ensure that RCO has the staff to support the council, as well as members offering continued support from their own agencies.

In a final note, Ms. Helms emphasized the importance of the council being the regional hub for information and would like to explore the council's website as a place to host different scientific publications.

Member Willard would like to see the council focus on land management, especially along roadsides, to create more resilient public lands, noting that most invasive species are likely to arrive by some sort of transportation device.

Item 9: Future Meeting Planning Roundtable Discussion

In 2024, the council can expect to decide on updates to the prioritization assessment tool; include more topics on issues of concern for Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities regarding invasive species; discuss criteria for volunteer recognition; and attend a travel meeting, potentially in Walla Walla.

Chair Blain Reeves opened the discussion up for other 2024 meeting topics and projects. Chair Reeves added that some potential projects could include cross-training for equipment like drones; a page on the council's website for job postings as well as a "clearinghouse" page to host scientific publications.

Member Cook-Tabor suggested adding links to presentations to the "clearinghouse" page, listed by subject matter. **Member Ripley** added that the "clearinghouse" could

also be used as a place for a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) page, noting that presentations and an FAQ could be more valuable than linking scientific papers.

Member Bush would like to provide a quagga mussel update, ballast water update, and a Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA) overview.

Vice Chair Murray suggested bringing industry stakeholders in to discuss their current and future concerns, such as forestry and shellfish.

Member Willard offered to provide a Department of Transportation (DOT) overview on a landscape asset management tool and noted that DOT will be seeing support for funding requests.

Member Spichiger noted that Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has five major invasive species eradication efforts underway that he could provide a report on.

Member Horton requested that alerts to citizen scientists be added to the council’s website so that citizen scientists can be made aware of an issue and be better involved.

Member Ripley offered to provide an update on Oregon’s emerald ash borer and Mediterranean oak borer.

Member Cook-Tabor offered to present on the impact of non-native species on salmonids in Lake Washington.

General Public Comment

None.

Adjourned at 2:30 PM

The next regular meeting will be held on December 7, 2023, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. SE, WA 98501.