

## WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

**Date:** March 21, 2024

**Place:** Hybrid – Room 175, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE; Olympia, WA and online via Zoom

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

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Blain Reeves, Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Todd Murray, Vice Chair	Washington State University
Joe Maroney, Past Chair	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Marcie Clement	Avista
Adam Fyall	Benton County
Steven Burke	King County
Stacy Horton	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Jason Anderson	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Alexei Calambokidis	Washington Council of Trout Unlimited
Luca Furnare	United States Customs and Border Protection
Yolanda Inguanzo	United States Department of Agriculture
Carrie Cook-Tabor	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Greg Haubrich	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Justin Bush	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
Mary Fee	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Andrea Thorpe	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

### **Guests & Alternates:**

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Thomas Sexton	Benton Conservation District
Rachel Little	Benton Conservation District
Roy Hamblin	United States Customs and Border Protection (Alternate)
Sven-Erik Spichiger	Washington State Department of Agriculture (Alternate)
Tiffany Pahs	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Wes Glisson	Washington State Department of Ecology (Alternate)
Chase Gunnell	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Zeima Kassahun	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Em Roberts	Washington State Department of Natural Resources

### **Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:**

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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

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) retains a recording as the formal record of the meeting. Timestamps have been provided that correspond with a video of this recorded session, available at [www.youtube.com/@WashingtonRCO](https://www.youtube.com/@WashingtonRCO). Please note, each link will open a new video tab. Timestamps can also be found in the video description.

#### Welcome and Call to Order ([0:00:00](#))

**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 and determined quorum. Members Todd Hass, Heidi McMaster, and Karen Ripley were absent. Member Adam Fyall was absent at the time of roll call. Of note there is a vacancy in the member position for the United States Coast Guard (USCG).

**Motion:** Approval of **March 21, 2024, Agenda** ([0:06:35](#))

**Moved by:** Member **Carrie Cook-Tabor**

**Seconded by:** Member **Justin Bush**

**Decision:** **Approved**

**Motion:** Approval of **December 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes** ([0:07:26](#))

**Moved by:** Member **Steve Burke**

**Seconded by:** Member **Andrea Thorpe**

**Decision:** **Approved**

#### Item 1: Council Staff Report ([0:08:47](#))

**Stephanie Helms**, WISC Executive Coordinator, Maria Marlin, Education and Outreach Specialist, and Jessica La Belle, Program Specialist, provided an overview of events, work and social media engagement.

Past events included the February 2024 European Green Crab (EGC) Manager's Symposium, Seattle Emerald Ash Borer Seminar, Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week (WISAW) from February 26 to March 1 in parallel with National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW), a speech lead by Ms. La Belle on the Washington State Spotted Lanternfly Action Plan at the first International Invasive Species and Climate Change Conference (IISCCC), and the February 14 presentation by Ms. Marlin at Washington State University's Pesticide Recertification Workshop in Spokane.

Staff anticipate four upcoming events, including the 2024 Invasive Species Workshop and Webinars for Tribal Audiences.

Staff were continuing work on the 2022-2024 Biennial Report, the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, publishing bylaws on the council website, and preparing for a new chair in December.

Staff will resubmit a proposal to the America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) for bullfrog management in western states and they submitted suggestions to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection Quarantine (PPQ) Plant Protection Act 7721, which were included in the final spending plan.

**Maria Marlin**, Outreach Specialist, noted overall social media reach increased during this past quarter mostly due to WISAW. Of note, almost five percent of followers on Instagram are in Portland, and five percent are in Canada, emphasizing the importance of transboundary collaboration.

## **Item 2: Recognition of New Members and Introductions** ([0:34:40](#))

**Stephanie Helms** introduced Luca Furnare as the new council member from United State Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Member Roy Hamblin will serve as alternate.

## **Item 3: European Green Crab communications Update** ([0:39:32](#))

**Chase Gunnell**, WDFW Communications Manager, explained how WDFW's EGC public awareness campaign can serve as a model for other invasive species communications and outreach efforts. WDFW's initial response to the 2022 EGC Emergency Proclamation deployed short-term communications with simultaneous long-term planning. The campaign determined the objective, target audience, prioritized messaging, and clarified available channels, tools, and materials. As they moved out of the rapid response phase, WDFW created the [EGC Hub](#) and refined messaging, materials, and community outreach efforts. Overall, consistency across communications, outreach, and marketing is key to increasing success across issues.

**Chair Reeves** asked what public citizens should do about EGC. Mr. Gunnell shared that photographing and reporting is the priority messaging to avoid misidentification, emphasizing that the public is not encouraged to trap or kill EGC. **Member Bush** added that data shows that most reports are misidentifications and would like to develop a way to train the public in correct identification.

#### **Item 4: Prioritization Assessment Tool Revision Update** ([1:14:24](#))

**Stephanie Helms** gave a brief review of the December meeting when the council supported revising the Priority Assessment Tool (PAT) and including cultural resource impacts.

Updates and revisions to the PAT will finalize cultural resource criteria and conduct an overall priority species review, which has not been updated since 2017. Staff proposed performing a formal review of the entire list prior to updating the Strategic Plan. Ms. Helms requested council members designate themselves or a representative from their agency to serve on a taxa group to finalize the priority species list to formally adopt at the September meeting.

**Vice Chair Todd Murray** summarized how the taxa groups will convene and species will be broken down by taxa group. The review will rely heavily on jurisdictional agency and council input to determine fifty priority species, while maintaining flexibility.

During council discussion, members suggested recruitment of subject matter experts in coordination with policy specialists from agencies, the importance of sharing the full list of 700 invasive species, how to best organize by taxa, and possibly reducing the top priority species list, which is currently fifty.

**BREAK: 10:34 – 10:40 A.M.**

#### **Item 5: Celebrating Fifty Years: Washington's Spongy Moth Program** ([1:42:33](#))

**Tiffany Pahs**, Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Managing Entomologist and State Survey Coordinator, highlighted the Washington Spongy Moth Program that began with the first detection in King County in 1974. Since then, almost 6,000 moths have been trapped and 109 eradication projects have been completed.

Every year between 20,000 and 35,000 traps are deployed statewide with detections occurring primarily in western Washington. WSDA uses trap data to pinpoint eradication efforts. Outreach and education are essential to the success of the program.

The highest concentration of spongy moths in 2023 occurred in Thurston County where seventy-seven moths were trapped in the Steamboat Island community and in Concrete in Skagit County. WSDA has proposed an eradication project to treat a combined 2,303 acres with *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk) and three years of post-treatment monitoring. The 2024 survey season will begin in early June and deploy approximately 20,000 traps.

During council discussion, members inquired on sterile male moth deployment, which Ms. Pahs noted is a less effective eradication method; what Btk is, to which Alternate Member Spichiger explained it is a naturally occurring soil bacterium that impacts caterpillar ability to digest food; and spongy moth has not become resistant to Btk

#### **Item 6: Don't Pack a Pest! Campaign** ([2:12:11](#))

**Member Luca Furnare**, CBP Supervisory Agriculture Operations Manager, provided an overview of CBP, their [mission statement](#), and role in preventing the introduction of invasive species to Washington. In Washington in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, there were over 2 million air passengers, almost 650,000 seaport containers and 161,000 air cargo shipments processed through Washington ports, all potential vectors for invasive species. Nationally, USCBP has intercepted around 400,000 prohibited materials to date in FY 2024.

Member Furnare highlighted CBP's [Don't Pack a Pest! Campaign](#) that includes the "Beagle Brigade" – invasive species detecting beagles, and signage in multiple languages at the international arrival terminal at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Of note, interceptions of federal noxious weed seed contaminants and wood-boring pests have increased significantly, and agricultural specialists have obtained high levels of skill in detecting these contaminants.

**Member Burke** noted that educational messaging has improved in recent years with an effective communications program, making a difference for users of the system.

#### **Item 7: Volunteer Award Update and Discussion** ([2:33:24](#))

**Past Chair Joe Maroney**, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, provided an overview of three annual [awards categories](#) that include distinguished leader, valiant volunteer, and outstanding organization.

Past Chair Maroney proposed opening nominations now through September 15. Nominees will be reviewed, and awardees selected ahead of being announced at the December meeting. Award recipients will be highlighted during WISAW.

In addition to the three categories, a lifetime achievement award will be considered.

Hearing no concerns about the award process, **Chair Reeves** opened nominations.

#### **Item 8: 2024 Invasive Species Awareness Summary and Ideas for 2025** ([2:42:51](#))

**Maria Marlin** provided a brief overview of the [2024 WISAW](#), during which council staff hosted webinars on [Spongy Moth](#), [European Green Crab](#), Agricultural Inspections,

[Quagga and Zebra Mussels](#), and Mediterranean Oak Borer; and an invasive species poetry contest, sharing the winner during WISAW. The governor's proclamation was updated and signed on January 8.

Outreach conducted at the Capitol Building was initiated by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (NWCB) and volunteers from a variety of agencies staffed outreach tables. Ms. Marlin's goal is to make WISAW at the Capitol building as popular as Potato Day.

**Anne Schuster**, NWCB Education Specialist, briefly explained the logistics of tabling an event in the Capitol Building, noting that in the future three days would likely suffice. Feedback indicated that food items are likely to draw more people to the building.

Next year, council staff plan to lead the tabling event with shorter hours and a target group of invasive species each day. Additionally, there will be less paper material and a "hook" to draw people in. Ms. Marlin invited feedback and ideas for next year from council members.

During discussion members emphasized the importance of being in front of legislators; suggested a more prominent location next year with fewer printed materials; and considered other ways to draw attention to WISAW including tangible items like boot brushes, Japanese knotweed honey sticks, and an invasive species cook-off.

#### **LUNCH: 12:10 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

Member Adam Fyall joined the meeting during lunch, at 12:55 p.m.

Member Greg Haubrich left the meeting during lunch.

#### **Item 9: Next Phase of Urban Forest Pest Readiness (3:03:11)**

Mary Fee and Ray Willard returned from lunch at 1:02 p.m.

**Zeima Kassahun**, Urban and Community Forest (UCF) Specialist, explained DNR's UFC program which provides educational, technical, and financial assistance through funding from the United States Forest Service (USFS) and [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 76.15.100](#). UFC developed the [Urban Forest Pest Readiness Playbook](#) to address the need for pest preparedness and to close the readiness gap by identifying areas for improvement and where action is needed. The Urban Forest Pest Readiness Project is a three-phased collaborative initiative between the council and DNR to provide UFP with education and tools for people working in urban forestry in Washington.

In 2024, the Community Forest Grant Assistance program awarded \$8 million to support local jurisdictions, protect urban trees, increase canopy cover, and provide tree ecosystem services across Washington.

During discussion, **Em Roberts**, DNR Urban Forestry Technician, noted that it is difficult to track how many communities have adopted the pest readiness program, but there would be benefit in having a way of surveying people who have adopted the program.

**Stephanie Helms** emphasized that engaging municipalities is a part of the council's [Statewide Strategic Plan](#).

#### **Item 10: Water Stargrass: The Unusual Case of an Invasive Native Pest** [\(3:26:31\)](#)

**Thomas Sexton**, Benton Conservation District (BCD), provided a brief history of the Yakima River Basin. Following changes to irrigation practices in the early 2000's, the lower Yakima River experienced an increase in light penetration, inadvertently creating ideal conditions for water stargrass (*Heteranthera dubia*), a native aquatic plant that is problematic in high concentrations causing concern for fish recovery in the Yakima Basin. BCD has conducted hand pulling efforts and purchased a mechanical harvester resulting in sustained reductions of water stargrass and immediate improvements to water quality.

Managing the harvested materials and maintaining the nearly forty miles of the lower Yakima River with only one harvester continue to be a challenge. BCD is working to secure funding for continued management and monitoring; identify crucial areas and access points; and improve the understanding of water stargrass dynamics and impacts on water quality.

Members asked whether habitat improvements had been considered and about funding sources. **Rachel Little**, BCD, answered that habitat improvements have been considered. Member Fyall noted there was a special appropriation from a coalition of irrigation and mosquito control districts but that a large appropriation is needed.

#### **Item 11: 2024 Member Agency Updates and Look Ahead** [\(3:57:48\)](#)

##### **Recreation and Conservation Office** [\(3:58:22\)](#)

**Brock Milliern** highlighted [House Bill \(HB\) 2293](#) that will establish an avian salmon predation workgroup under WDFW.

In November, Washington State voters will decide whether Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding will continue, which would impact funding across RCO programs.



RCO was asked to complete a recreational impact study for if the Lower Snake River dams are removed.

Looking forward, RCO will begin their agency budget review in April to discuss staffing and other budgetary needs.

#### **Department of Natural Resources** (4:03:33)

**Chair Blain Reeves** emphasized that DNR's proposed EGC supplemental request was funded for \$850,000 in FY 2025. DNR has begun developing their next decision package that will request carry-forward funding for EGC.

DNR revenues have allowed their [Watershed Resilience Action Plan](#) to advance salmon recovery with potential for Japanese knotweed control efforts.

**Member Burke** requested specific references for EGC appropriations for accurate tracking and commenting. **Member Bush** noted the appropriations are included in substitute [Senate Bill \(SB\) 5950](#).

#### **Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife** (4:10:46)

**Member Justin Bush** highlighted substitute [SB 5950](#) that reaffirmed the EGC budget for FY24 and FY25, allowing EGC agreements to be written. WDFW will submit a management plan to the Governor's Office in October. Additionally, WDFW received \$174,000 in funding for EGC genome sequencing, annotation, and international publishing. WDFW does not intend to ask for additional EGC funding in the next biennium but has made federal appropriation requests for Federal FY25 for EGC and are awaiting results.

WDFW received \$1.81 million for zebra and quagga mussel response and monitoring with the authority to leverage an additional \$1.81 million from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

[SB 5306](#) allows WDFW to establish disease interdiction and control at check stations.

#### **Washington State Department of Transportation** (4:17:18)

**Member Ray Willard** presented to the Washington Transportation Commission explaining why roadside management and weed control is such a challenge for WSDOT. There was a budget proviso for an alternative use for state highway right-of-way for \$500,000 with \$100,000 dedicated to roadsides. Passthrough funding from DNR will go towards fire suppression treatments. Additionally, WSDOT received a research grant to buy a spray drone.



**Member Cook-Tabor** asked if remediation efforts for tire dust (6PPD-quinone) were funded. Member Willard noted that while 6PPD-quinone was not called out specifically, it is included as part of WSDOT's [stormwater program](#).

#### **Washington State Department of Agriculture** ([4:22:45](#))

**Alison Halpern** highlighted that substitute [HB 2147](#) passed for early detection and rapid response for agricultural pests and disease, and includes ongoing funding of \$1 million per FY. Supplemental budget requests for Japanese beetle and invasive moth eradication and detection were included and funded.

WSDA is looking at funding gaps and staff needs as they develop their plant protection decision package.

#### **Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board** ([4:27:07](#))

**Member Mary Fee** highlighted changes to the 2024 Noxious Weed List and briefly summarized the process for listing a species.

NWCB partnered with WSDA to create native pollinator seed packets and, in January, NWCB submitted a proposal to the United States Bureau of Reclamation for a multiple state and agency flowering rush plan for the Columbia Basin.

#### **Washington State Parks** ([4:33:25](#))

**Member Andrea Thorpe** shared that State Parks received funding for cultural integrity assessments and recreation impact studies; post-fire restoration work to address invasive species at Ginko Petrified Forest State Park; and to survey noxious weeds along the Palouse to Cascades Trail.

State Parks will likely request support for natural resources stewardship focusing on controlling noxious weeds and proactive preparation against invasive insects.

**Chair Reeves** asked if mooring-buoys and seagrasses will be included in the recreational impact study. Member Thrope noted that the impact of mooring on seagrass is its own issue.

#### **Washington State Department of Ecology** ([4:39:09](#))

**Member Wes Glisson** noted that recruitment for Lizbeth Seebacher's former position would open soon. In 2024, surveying, monitoring, and treatments for Class A aquatic noxious weeds will continue across the state.

Ecology awarded eleven grants in 2023 primarily focused on noxious weed control and in 2024 received twelve grant applications.

**Alternate Member Spichiger** highlighted that the Entomological Society of America's Better Common Names Project is considering changing the names of nine species and the Port of Tacoma will move forward with developing property where vineyard snail was detected.

**Member Calambokidis** noted that [SB 5931](#) streamlined Ecology's process around making changes to 6PPD-quinone. [HB 1226](#) passed giving authority to WDFW to license the removal of invasive carp and crawfish.

Addressing Alternate Member Spichiger's comments, **Member Fee** noted that NWCB will likely form a group to discuss name structures of noxious weeds.

#### **Item 12: Future Meeting Planning and Roundtable Discussion** ([4:46:03](#))

**Member Bush** offered to provide a zebra and quagga mussel and proviso implementation update. The Quinault Indian Nation recently declared an EGC state of emergency which could be a topic for discussion.

**Stephanie Helms** will send a survey regarding preferences for the travel meeting.

**Member Willard** recommended an area in Walla Walla as a potential field trip location and would try to coordinate a drone demonstration.

Ms. Helms suggested a drone panel with tips and tricks for using drones as a future topic.

#### *General Public Comment*

None.

#### **ADJOURNED: 2:58 P.M.** ([4:50:15](#))

The next council meeting is a travel meeting and will be held on June 27, 2024, Washington Department of Transportation Building, 1210 G Street, Walla Walla, Washington 99362.