

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: December 5, 2024

Place: Hybrid – Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Washington, 98501 and online via Zoom

Invasive Species Council Members Present:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blain Reeves	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Murray	Washington State University
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe Maroney	Kalispel Tribe of Indians
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sven-Erik Spichiger	Washington State Department of Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mary Fee	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

<input type="checkbox"/> Marcie Clement	Avista
<input type="checkbox"/> Adam Fyall	Benton County
<input type="checkbox"/> Steven Burke	King County
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Horton	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Hass	Puget Sound Partnership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Anderson	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alexei Calambokidis	Trout Unlimited
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cory Sandow	United States Bureau of Reclamation
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	United States Coast Guard
<input type="checkbox"/> Luca Furnare	United States Customs and Border Protection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yolanda Inguanzo	United States Department of Agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> Carrie Cook-Tabor	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
<input type="checkbox"/> Karen Ripley	United States Forest Service
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wes Glisson	Washington Department of Ecology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Justin Bush	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andrea Thorpe	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Helms	Executive Coordinator
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julia McNamara	Board Liaison
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica La Belle	Invasive Species Program Specialist
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maria Marlin	Outreach and Education Specialist
<input type="checkbox"/> Marissa Dallaire	Intern
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Montgomery	Board and Policy Administrative Assistant

Guests & Alternates:

Crystal Durbecq	United States Forest Service
Shawn Ultican	Washington Department of Ecology
Susan Brush	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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. Please note, each link will open a new video tab. Timestamps can also be found in the video description. **Please note, the recording starts after the Welcome and Call to Order.**

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Blain Reeves called the Washington Invasive Species Council meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Board Liaison performed roll call and determined quorum. Members Marcie Clement, Adam Fyall, Steven Burke, Luca Furnare were absent.

Motion: Approval of **December 5, 2024, Agenda**

Moved by: Member **Mary Fee**

Seconded by: Member **Joe Maroney**

Decision: **Approved**

Motion: Approval of **September 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Moved by: Member **Ray Willard**

Seconded by: Member **Justin Bush**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 1: Council Staff Report (0:00)

Stephanie Helms, council executive coordinator, shared that staff presented at a Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine class, the North American Invasive Species Management Association 32nd Annual Conference in Missoula, the Washington State Weed Conference in Wenatchee, and at the University of Washington on Washington's approach to aquatic invasive species prevention, attended an European green crab open house and the Zebra and Quagga Mussel Statewide Summit, and hosted an Urban Forest Pest Readiness workshop in Bellingham.

Crystal Durbecq joined the meeting at 9:10 a.m. as Alternate for Member Karen Ripley.

Upcoming events include the Columbia River Basin Aquatic Invasive Species Team Meeting, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Annual General Meeting, celebrating the successful eradication of northern giant hornet from Whatcom County, Urban Forest Pest Readiness workshops in Spokane and Yakima, Washington State University statewide pesticide recertification conferences, the Seattle Boat Show,

European Green Crab Manager's Symposium, Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week, and the Invasives 2025 Forum with the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia.

Maria Marlin, communication and outreach specialist, provided an overview of the council's social media and website engagement. Engagement on Facebook reached just over 17,000 more people this quarter. Maria highlighted the top Facebook post related to native seed packets available through the Noxious Weed Control Board which reached almost 18,000 people. **Member Fee** added that the Washington State Department of Agriculture funded the native seeds. The second Halloween Invasive Species Pet Costume Contest increased engagement across platforms, and the first place winner was Walter Smiles dressed as a brown marmorated stink bug. The council website had over 16,000 users with sessions derived primarily from an organic search. Ms. Marlin highlighted the Washington State Noxious Weed Conference in Wenatchee hosted by the Washington Vegetation Management Association.

Jessica La Belle, program specialist, highlighted her presentation at the North American Invasive Species Management Association 2024 Annual Conference on spotted lanternfly and the importance of considering invasive species impacts to cultural resources.

Ms. Helms noted a review of priority species is underway and will continue through the spring of 2025. Cultural resources criteria will be completed and added to the priority assessment tool in the spring. The biennial report will go out for review by the end of December 5, and the Bylaws update will go out for review on January 1. There are two interagency agreements in process: \$47,000 from the Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forest Program to create a Washington Emerald Ash Borer Resource and Management Guide funded by the United States Forest Service and \$34,000 for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Washington State Transboundary Dreissenid Mussel Response Readiness funded by the United States Bureau of Reclamation.

Lastly, the council website added two new pages, one for [job opportunities](#) and one for [grant opportunities](#). Ms. Helms intends for staff to send monthly emails to the council that highlight activity on these pages.

Member Glisson noted that applications for the [aquatic invasive plants management grants program](#) are being accepted through December 17 and noted these grants would be a good addition to the new grant opportunities webpage.

Member Anderson suggested the council consider an effort to collect peer-reviewed materials to be made available on the council website to practitioners and the public, possibly with an additional web page. Ms. Helms wants to explore cross-referencing existing scientific databases as there can be issues in creating an original host platform for external scientific information on the council website. **Member Calambokidis** added that Trout Unlimited has good information on their website that could be interlinked with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the council's websites.

Item 2: Brainstorming for 2025 Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week [\(32:46\)](#)

Maria Marlin gave an overview of council efforts at last year's Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week, which included outreach at the Capitol Building. Feedback indicated that the council should be responsible for coordinating the event and should consider shorter hours that targets a different group of invasive species each day; use less paper material; have a hook to draw people in; and provide tangible items like boot brushes, Japanese knotweed honey sticks, and other pre-packaged food items.

This year, Washington Invasive Species Awareness week is from February 24-28, but the tabling event will run February 25-27 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day and incorporate ideas from the feedback. Volunteers will be recruited to staff the table. Ms. Marlin invited the council to provide ideas for outreach at the tabled event at the Capitol Building, webinar topics and speaker ideas, and an awards ceremony.

Member Willard suggested organizing a scavenger hunt that utilizes the Washington Invasives application for participants to report roadside weeds with a prize at the end of the week. **Member Bush** emphasized a message of safety would need to be included for participants. **Alternate Member McNatt** suggested a road trip motif that highlights different invasive species in different geographical regions of the state, with a different region highlighted each day. Member Bush liked this idea and suggested bringing together council agencies to speak on various issues across regions.

Stephanie Helms noted that Invasive Species Award recipients will be highlighted during Invasive Species Awareness Week and **Member Maroney** added it is the intention to have recipients attend in-person. Members suggested annual grass and fire prevention in eastern Washington, tribal perspectives and impacts of invasive species on tribal lands, and eastern Washington issues as webinar topics.

Member Bush suggested focusing on the economics of invasive species during Invasive Species Awareness Week and highlighting reports that look at the annual cost for mitigation and response efforts.

Item 3: Quagga and Zebra Mussel Prevention and Readiness Update ([45:20](#))

Member Justin Bush, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife aquatic invasive species policy coordinator, provided an overview of the 2023 quagga mussel incident near Twin Falls in Idaho and shared that continued monitoring efforts detected additional quagga mussels in September 2024 in the same area. In response, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has considered potential pathways that could bring quagga and zebra mussels to Washington, in addition to downstream movement from Idaho. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is working to increase mandatory watercraft inspection capacity and early detection monitoring by adding a dedicated year-round monitoring team.

Mr. Bush also provided a brief update on the August Marimo moss ball zebra mussel incident, which prompted a collaboration with Washington State Department of Agriculture, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and United States Department of Agriculture. All 1,000 Marimo moss balls that entered Washington were found and had not entered the environment. Washington's response is being used as the national model to find the other 25,000 potentially contaminated products. The overall message from this incident is [Don't Let it Loose](#) and highlights the importance of increasing awareness for prevention.

When Idaho's quagga mussel detection was announced last year, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife responded by developing short term actions to prevent and prepare for the invasive mussels, including a new state response plan. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is increasing awareness and engagement by emphasizing the [Clean, Drain, Dry](#) campaign, which prevents invasive species of all kinds.

In March, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife began working with Oregon to address their shared waters of the Columbia River. In October, both states convened a joint state working group to develop near-term actions. A final report on findings and recommendations is expected to be completed in December. Mr. Bush suggested zebra and quagga mussels as a webinar topic for Invasive Species Awareness Week.

On December 3, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife hosted a quagga and zebra mussel prevention and readiness summit in Spokane in partnership with the

Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. The summit covered Idaho's quagga mussel response; roles, prevention, and readiness actions; perspectives of water users; Tribal cultural resource impacts and management implications; federal updates and opportunities; legislative perspectives and response panel; and near-term actions and next steps. Mr. Bush highlighted the Snake River site-specific response plan, noting other jurisdictions are considering developing their own site-specific plans, including Lake Whatcom and the Pend Orielle River. The council can anticipate inclusion in the process and the Snake River plan to be complete by June 2025.

Currently, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is performing risk assessment and a mitigation system scoping analysis and looking at existing guides like [Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide for Raw Water Infrastructure](#) from the Canadian Okanagan Basin Water Board and working with the United States Geological Survey to develop a United States focused version with increased information on mitigation systems by July 2025.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was provided \$1.8 million of the state general fund for one year and leveraged \$1.81 million through the United States Army Corps of Engineers to begin implementing the short-term actions and have executed an agreement with the Pacific State's Marine Fisheries Commission. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife submitted a \$7.2 million request to State Legislature for quagga and zebra mussel prevention; readiness; outreach, education, and public engagement; and building local government and Tribal capacity in the 2025-2027 biennium. Half of this funding would be federal funds.

Lastly, Member Bush alerted the council to a recent golden mussel detection around Stockton, California on November 6. This is the first golden mussel detection in the United States. They behave and have similar impacts to quagga and zebra mussels but prefer to settle in soft sand. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is working to create a Washington State risk assessment for golden mussels as boats from this area are known to have traveled to Washington and as far as Alaska.

Member Hass noted the latest Puget Sound Action Plan does not include ballast water and would like to look for a complementary way to include ballast water as a transport mechanism.

Member Maroney asked if Fin, the mussel sniffing dog, could detect golden mussels. Member Bush noted that additional training for canines is needed, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is procuring an additional canine next year. Additionally,

the agency is looking at how many targets a canine can have with the addition of this emerging mussel.

Item 4: Celebrating the Successful Eradication of Northern Giant Hornet in Whatcom County ([1:21:08](#))

Member Sven Spichiger was honored to announce, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture, a celebration of the successful eradication of the northern giant hornet from Whatcom County with an event on Wednesday, December 18 at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal. Member Spichiger provided a recap of the 2020 detection of northern giant hornet in Whatcom County and the efforts involved in the successful eradication.

Please note: the celebration event was cancelled in response to travel restrictions for cabinet agencies announced on December 2.

BREAK: 10:35 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

Item 5: Protecting Washington's Sagebrush Biome – Boot Brush Project, A Year in Review ([1:38:01](#))

Maria Marlin provided an overview of the sagebrush biome, which is home to 350 species of plants and animals considered to be species of conservation concern. Intact sagebrush environments provide food products from livestock production, hunting opportunities, recreational opportunities, and provide water for municipal, industrial, and irrigation uses. Noxious weeds in the shrub-steppe lead to more frequent and expansive wildfires, damage habitat and infrastructure, threaten human safety, deplete soil water, reduce grazing land, and are expensive to manage.

Fifty boot brush stations were funded by the United States Forest Service Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to limit the spread of noxious weeds in the shrub steppe of eastern and central Washington. The stations include a customizable weather-proof sign panel with the patented [PlayCleanGo](#) campaign, wooden panels, and a boot brush. Thirty boot brushes were distributed in 2024 and the remaining twenty will be distributed in 2025. Interested organizations applied. Sites that were recently burned, trailheads, restoration sites, areas bordering agricultural land, sites that are already being treated for noxious weeds, and sites with heavy usage were all considered.

Ms. Marlin explained improvements that will be made to the process in 2025, including the addition of secondary contacts and an estimated installation timeframe to the interest form, a smoother customization process for signs, and cultural resources

assessment guidance in accordance with Executive Order 21-02. Council members were invited to help spread information about the boot brush interest form.

Member Willard noted that there would be many seeds around the used boot brushes and asked if there was a plan to manage the area immediately around each station. Ms. Marlin noted there is a section in the application that notes that each organization is responsible for the boot-brush station maintenance. Ms. Marlin added there is funding available to purchase handheld boot brushes and that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife also has council-branded boot brushes.

Item 6: Invasive Species Awards Recognition Ceremony ([1:55:52](#))

Past Chair Joe Maroney presented the Invasive Species awards. State Representative Mary Dye received the Distinguished Leader Award for displaying outstanding leadership, direction, advocacy, and support to invasive species policy, prevention, or management, and playing a crucial role in securing the \$1.8 million proviso for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's invasive mussel response efforts. Evan Hiatt received the Valiant Volunteer Award for going above and beyond to prevent, contain, or manage invasive species in Washington. Specifically, Mr. Hiatt discovered and reported a northern pike in the pond at the Limekiln Preserve on San Juan Island. Jill Silver accepted the Outstanding Organization Award on behalf of the 10,000 Years Institute which provides landscape-scale jobs in restoration across jurisdictions to prevent the spread of invasive species in coastal watersheds on the Olympic Peninsula through their Pulling Together in Restoration Project. Award recipients provided comments on their efforts and awards.

Member Bush noted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is working with San Juan County Conservation Land Bank to address the population of northern pike on San Juan Island. Of note, the northern pike caught on San Juan Island was genetically distinct from any northern pike populations in the Columbia River in Washington.

Winners will be recognized in a ceremony during the 2025 Invasive Species Awareness Week. Nominations for the 2025 award cycle will open March 20, 2025.

Item 7: Passing of the Gavel and Honoring Chair Blain Reeves ([2:39:16](#))

Chair Blain Reeves highlighted the Department of Natural Resources first annual Spartina Week held in cooperation with the Stanwood Spartina Cooperative on October 21-24. During Spartina Week, crews surveyed the Skagit Bay Estuary for spartina, treated and discovered new spartina sites, and bagged spartina. Chair Reeves spoke about his time on the council, as chair, and his career.

Stephanie Helms thanked Chair Reeves for helping guide her through her first year as the new executive coordinator of the council. **Jessica La Belle** presented Chair Reeves with a gift to commemorate his time as council chair.

Motion: Nominate the vice chair, **Todd Murray**, to become the chair of the Washington Invasive Species Council today (2:54:48)

Moved by: Chair **Blain Reeves**

Seconded by: Member **Justin Bush**

Decision: **Approved**

New Chair Todd Murray called for a nomination for Vice Chair.

Motion: Nominate **Member Mary Fee** (2:57:53)

Moved by: Member **Justin Bush**

Seconded by: Member **Joe Maroney**

Member Fee accepted the nomination.

Decision: **Approved**

LUNCH: 12:07 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Item 8: Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Update and 2024

Accomplishments (3:01:33)

Karen Ripley and Steven Burke joined the meeting online at 1:15 p.m. after lunch.

Susan Brush, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination section lead, provided an overview of the Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination (WID) section that operates five watercraft inspection sites across the state and as of November 15, had inspected 53,722 watercraft, detected thirteen mussel-fouled watercraft, and performed 1,663 decontaminations in 2024.

Ms. Brush provided an overview of the [Call Before You Haul](#) program that provides a twenty-four hour hotline to alert Washington, Oregon, Idaho, or Montana of the movement of watercraft from throughout the country into these states and fills the gap between industry needs and state objectives to maintain protection against the introduction of aquatic invasive species. Ms. Brush highlighted a mussel-fouled boat that was traveling from Lake Michigan to the Puget Sound via Interstate 90 and was intercepted through this program.

WID is following the golden mussel detection in California, as mentioned in Item 3, and is preparing a risk assessment. In 2025, WID will continue optimizing the existing infrastructural investments by ensuring each watercraft inspection station is operating at

full capacity and by directing funds. Also in 2025, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will launch a pilot station on Newport Highway in Spokane County and will investigate site expansion in southwestern Washington.

Member Horton asked if the movement of construction equipment is considered. Ms. Brush noted all aquatic conveyances are required to stop at check stations and a Call Before You Dig notice can be made for construction equipment.

Alternate Member McNatt asked about ballast water transfer protocols. Ms. Brush answered that WID is considering how it can complement the ballast program and port activities. **Member Bush** suggested inviting Dr. Amanda Newsom to discuss ballast water and biofouling at a future council meeting and noted that almost 80 percent of incoming vessels into the state are treating ballast water. **Member Willard** asked if the introduction of golden mussels in the Bay Area was from ballast water. Ms. Brush explained this was the initial assumption; however, with where golden mussels are continuing to be found, it is less known where the initial introduction came from.

Member Bush noted there is space for new partnerships with Washington Department of Ecology around aquatic noxious weeds. **Member Glisson** agreed this would be a good opportunity for collaboration.

Item 9: Invasive Species Strategy for Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda Update ([3:27:37](#))

Member Todd Hass requested council members contribute their expertise to updating the [Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda](#), a four-year plan that charts the course for Puget Sound recovery. The [2022-2026 Action Agenda](#) built a solid foundation and incorporates invasive species in Strategy Fourteen. The Puget Sound Partnership would appreciate the involvement of interested council members to serve as subject matter experts in facilitated content refinement sessions in the coming months to better align the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda with the council's Strategic Plan. Following refinement, the resulting draft content will be open to review and feedback from other close partners and a public review. Member Hass noted the opportunity to create a regional Puget Sound invasive species focus group from the council for this effort and other potential purposes.

Stephanie Helms noted the council has funding available through the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection Act 7721 to organize and host a Puget Sound invasive species workshop, and that efforts refining the Puget Sound Partnership Action Plan and the Washington Invasive

Species Council Strategic Plan updates could help inform future council facilitated workshops and events.

Member Maroney suggested clarifying language used to describe invasive species in the new action agenda and calling out priority species.

Member Bush noted the funding implications tied to the strategic initiatives in the action agenda and strategic plans and emphasized the importance of council involvement for better federal funding opportunities, noting ballast water is not explicitly identified in the action plan.

Ms. Helms will help coordinate the council members willing to participate in this endeavor. Member Maroney asked to clarify what type of input the Puget Sound Partnership was looking for from the council. Ms. Helms noted that recommendations and activities are outlined in the [meeting materials](#) and that Puget Sound Partnership is looking for subject matter experts. Ms. Helms will be developing a clarifying guidance document.

BREAK: 1:53 P.M. – 2:05 P.M.

Item 10: Strategic Plan Update for 2026-2030 – Brainstorming Kickoff ([4:04:57](#))

Stephanie Helms provided an overview of the key priorities, achievements, and next steps for each of the six key strategic areas: leadership and coordination; innovation and research; education and outreach; prevention; early detection rapid response; and containment, management, and eradication. Goals and a timeline for the strategic plan working group are included in the [meeting materials](#). Throughout the process, the council will have opportunities to review and provide feedback on strategic plan updates. The proposed timeline will begin with a working group convening in January and end in July with a final draft of the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Members expressed concern about the timeline and emphasized the importance of the initial process being discussed by the council. Members would like to be involved but with the short timeline are unable to be. **Member Bush** suggested extending the timeline past the Legislative session. Members supported dedicating a large portion of the next council meeting to rank priorities as a large group and then breakdown to a working group for additional steps. **Member Willard** volunteered for the working group and suggested a gap analysis.

Ms. Helms would rework the timeline based on feedback and plans to dedicate the March meeting to this topic. Additionally, the surveys will be restructured to optimize council feedback.

Item 11: Future Meeting Planning Roundtable Discussion ([4:44:22](#))

Hearing a desire to dedicate a large portion of the March meeting to the Strategic Plan Update, **Stephanie Helms** provided a list of additional topics for future meetings throughout 2025, including a Washington Department of Transportation drone update, the [Call Before You Haul](#) campaign, whirling disease, an overview of Caulerpa, a deeper briefing from the 10,000 Years Institute, a discussion on bylaws, and a National Invasive Species Awareness Week debrief. **Member Bush** suggested a state agency budget update roundtable.

Members discussed potential travel meeting locations and with support for holding the travel meeting in Bellevue, which could coincide with the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region 2025 Conference and draw a larger audience.

Alternate Member Shawn Ultican, Washington Department of Ecology, noted a draft permit for [zostera japonica eelgrass management](#) is available for review and comment through January 14, 2025. Two additional permits will be renewed 1) aquatic plant and algae in 2025 and 2) noxious weed control in 2027. The Washington Department of Ecology and Ms. Helms will coordinate to include the council in the review process.

Member Bush noted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife applied for funding from the Washington Commission on Integrated Pest Management to investigate anecdotal evidence that *Spartina anglica* may be becoming resistant to imazapyr and suggested the council hear a spartina update at a future meeting.

General Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNED: 2:56 P.M. ([4:55:58](#))

The next council meeting will be held on March 20, 2025, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, Washington 98501.