

## WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

**Date:** March 20, 2025

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

### Invasive Species Council Members Present:

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Murray	Washington State University
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mary Fee	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blain Reeves	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
<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
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marcie Clement	Avista
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam Fyall	Benton County
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Burke	King County
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Horton	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
<input 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 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:

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<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Montgomery	Board and Policy Administrative Assistant

### Guests & Alternates:

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Sara Mounts	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
April Gassman	Puget Sound Partnership
Heidi McMaster	United States Bureau of Reclamation
Reagan McNatt	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

**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. Please note, the recording begins at the start of Item 1: Council Staff Report.**

## **Welcome and Call to Order**

**Chair Todd Murray** 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. Member Steve Burke was absent.

**Motion:** Approval of **March 20, 2025, Agenda**

**Moved by:** Member **Ray Willard**

**Seconded by:** Member **Regan McNatt**

**Decision:** **Approved**

**Motion:** Approval of **December 5, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

**Moved by:** Member **Blain Reeves**

**Seconded by:** Member **Joe Maroney**

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

**Alternate Member McNatt** noted the December meeting minutes did not accurately reflect United States Fish and Wildlife Service's attendance: Member Carrie Cook-Tabor was absent and Alternate Member McNatt was present. These changes will be made to the December 2024 minutes, and the amendment was approved.

## **Item 1: Council Staff Report ([1:22](#))**

**Stephanie Helms**, council executive coordinator, highlighted events staff attended, hosted, or presented at since December. Additionally, **Member Justin Bush** highlighted the 2025 European Green Crab Manager's Symposium that was hosted virtually this year and had around 100 attendees, **Member Stacy Horton** highlighted the Spokane Urban Forest Pest Readiness Workshop on March 6, and **Chair Todd Murray** highlighted the Virtual Ant Surveillance and Identification Workshop on March 11.

Staff will be involved in several events next quarter, including the Washington State University Pesticide Continuing Education Credit Workshops on March 26, Tribal

Workshops on Invasive Species on April 1 and 3, and touring boot brush stations in June.

Ms. Helms noted the [2023-2024 Biennial Report to the Legislature](#) is now available on the council's website. The council's application to the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection Act, Section 7721 funding, submitted under Goal Five – Education and Outreach, was awarded. The award is pending guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture. The council has around \$125,000 in funding from the United States Bureau of Reclamation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

In the past quarter, the council was mentioned in the media fourteen times, notably during Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week.

**Maria Marlin**, outreach specialist, provided an overview of the council's social media and website engagement. On Facebook and Instagram, likes and followers were up slightly from last quarter, while reach went down slightly. The top website pages visited this quarter was "Find a Priority Species" and "Nutria." Ms. Marlin highlighted the [Job Opportunities](#) page on the council's website, and urged members to share additional invasive species related job and [grant opportunities](#). Nominations for [Invasive Species Awareness Awards](#) are open until September 15. Award categories include Distinguished Leader, Valiant Volunteer, and Outstanding Organization. **Past Chair Blain Reeves** requested members join the review committee and encouraged members and their colleagues to submit nominations.

Ms. Marlin's quarterly highlight was the Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week, which saw 274 people attend the webinars throughout the week. Notably, Governor Bob Ferguson signed the Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week proclamation.

**Jessica La Belle**, program specialist, provided an update on the Washington State Flowering Rush Cost-Share Program. The Fiscal Year 2025 program's upstream agreement changed from being with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to the United State Army Corps of Engineers. It has the same downstream agreement sponsors as 2024, including two county weed control boards, three Tribes, and one conservation district. Pending approval, the total 2025 program cost is \$581,269. **Past Chair Blain Reeves** noted the Department of Natural Resources also contributes to flowering rush. Following the meeting, **Vice Chair Mary Fee** and Ms. La Belle would discuss a possible memorandum of understanding with the United States Bureau of Reclamation regarding flowering rush.

Member Steve Burke joined at 9:31 a.m.

Ms. La Belle's quarterly highlight was the Washington State University Pesticide License Recertification Seminars in January and March.

## **Item 2: Aquatic Invasive Species of Greatest Concern Update** ([26:31](#))

**Member Justin Bush**, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife aquatic invasive species division manager, highlighted organizational and Aquatic Invasive Species Division leadership changes, noting Raquel Crosier is the Aquatic Invasive Species Management Coordinator and European Green Crab Incident Commander, and Lindsey Parker was promoted into the role of European Green Crab Management Unit Leader. Additionally, there is a vacancy in the watercraft inspection and decontamination unit leader position.

Member Bush explained the two-pronged approach the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife uses in managing invasive species, including different levels of Prohibited Levels One, Two, and Three and Regulated Species Type A, B, and C. An emergency rule, [Washington State Register 24-23-055](#), corrects taxonomic errors for mitten crabs. Future rulemaking will update the aquatic invasive species of greatest concern; these updates will improve accessibility, update taxonomy, and correct typographical and spelling errors in invasive and nonnative species listings. Longer-term rule making, in coordination with the council, will establish standards for determining invasive risk levels and criteria for determining beneficial use that consider environmental impacts and effects on native species, salmon recovery, and threatened or endangered species.

Since December, golden mussels, a quagga and zebra mussel-like mussel, have not been detected outside of California in the United States; however, there is risk of movement via overland vessels and ballast water. Over one million European green crab were removed from Washington waters in 2024; a European green crab long-term management plan was developed; and a federal appropriations request is being developed for submission to the United States Congress. The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' [Resolution #25-08](#) for invasive species funding in the Pacific Northwest will be included in the federal appropriations request. Lastly, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife continues watercraft inspections across the state to intercept invasive mussel-fouled watercraft, which the department is treating as an imminent threat.

In January, twenty-one gallons of invasive mussels were intercepted on just one infested tugboat traveling from Lake Michigan, notably outside of the recreational boating season.

**Member Maroney** asked if the department would reclassify which fish are game fish, and which are not. Member Bush answered possibly, and expressed interest in council feedback as reclassification efforts proceed.

Vice Chair Mary Fee left the meeting at 9:52 a.m. and returned at 10:02 a.m.

**UNSCHEDULED BREAK: 10:02 A.M. – 10:07 A.M. ([54:41](#))**

### **Item 3: 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Update Activity ([54:59](#))**

**Stephanie Helms** gave a brief history and purpose the council's strategic plan, noting the current 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is the council's third and most ambitious plan yet. The 2026-2030 Strategic Plan will be made up of six key strategic areas: Leadership and Coordination; Innovation and Research; Education and Outreach; Prevention; Early Detection, and Rapid Response; and Control, Eradication, and Containment.

Ms. Helms asked that members consider the following throughout the activity: who is taking the actions; whether it is the council, staff, agencies, etcetera; which elements are stronger coupled together and which should be decoupled; how achievements should be measured moving forward; how the current strategy could be refined or fortified; and what is realistically achievable given current funding challenges.

**Alternate Member Regan McNatt** asked if there was a compilation of what has been achieved and if it has been compared with the current strategic plan. Ms. Helms answered that achievements can be found on the [council website](#). **Past Chair Blain Reeves** noted the council's [Biennial Report to the Legislature](#) crosswalks with the strategic plan by topic and encouraged member participation in the biennial report process.

**Member Ray Willard** suggested condensing the document to be more precise and focusing efforts moving forward and would like to see the council work to identify gaps in research and data related to prevention, detection, rapid response, and control to better explain how the work gets done.

**Member Steve Burke** noted the plan should not be too constrained by current funding challenges and focus on optimizing available funding.

Members participated in an activity to identify key priorities, objectives, and what will be achieved for the six strategic areas into "Keep without Discussion," "Keep with Discussion," "Retire – Achieved," and "Retire – Not Relevant" categories.

Member Fyall left the meeting at 11:25 a.m. and returned at 11:45 a.m.

Members suggested combining similar items to consolidate messaging when it is time to report.

**LUNCH: 12:03 P.M. – 12:59 P.M.** ([2:50:06](#))

**Item 4: 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Activity Wrap-Up, Debrief, and Next Steps**  
([2:50:57](#))

Heidi McMaster left the meeting at 12:45 p.m. during the lunch break.

**Stephanie Helms** welcomed members back from lunch to complete the final three topics of the Whiteboard exercise.

Ms. Helms will create a draft recommendations document summarizing the outcome of the activity and integrate feedback into a survey. Results of the survey and synthesized feedback will be provided for review by June 26. Members should expect to discuss the topics put in the "Keep with Discussion" category at the July meeting.

Member Fyall left the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

**Item 5: Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda 2026-2030 Update – Invasive Species Strategy Workshop Debrief** ([3:14:34](#))

**Stephanie Helms**, on behalf of Member Todd Hass, explained the Puget Sound Partnership 2026-2030 Action Agenda update, including updating Strategy 14 in the action agenda, which is dedicated to invasive species. Council staff helped solicit participation and facilitated a workshop to update Strategy Fourteen. The workshop streamlined content, balanced actions, integrated more communities and stewards, added greater recognition of horizon scanning and understanding and mitigating pathways of spread, applied science-backed innovation, and incorporated risk assessment, data collection, containment, ecological resilience to climate change, and invasion pathways from the council's strategic plan.

**Robb Krehbiel**, Puget Sound Partnership environmental planner, explained how over the next year, the Puget Sound Partnership will work with social science and climate advisors to review content and provide feedback to topic leads, consult with Tribes and

host workshops with frontline communities, hold a public comment period before the action agenda is approved in June 2026.

**Member Ray Willard** asked how the Puget Sound Partnership is promoting watershed management and watershed councils through the overall action agenda. Mr. Krehbiel noted that most focus with watershed councils falls under habitat-oriented topics in the action agenda.

#### **Item 6: 2025 Council Bylaws Update** ([3:26:41](#))

**Stephanie Helms** shared council feedback received prior to the meeting on the draft council bylaws:

- Review membership annually, with a decision at the beginning of the council meeting.
- Remove duplicate goal "Serve as an avenue for public outreach and for raising public awareness of invasive species issues" which is listed twice in the 2023 bylaws.
- Consider changing Chair and Vice Chair terms from two to three years and allow Chair to become Past Chair even if they step down before the two-year term.
- Include Chair in addition to Executive Coordinator as a delegated authority.
- Add a seat for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and look at adding other seats from the Department of the Interior such as United States Geological Survey.
- Consider adding the State Conservation Commission.

Members discussed the feedback and **Member Justin Bush** noted that previously membership was limited to space at the table; however, with the use of a virtual option there is less limitation. **Member Yolanda Inguanzo** suggested creating subgroups if additional agencies are added. Ms. Helms noted a federal advisory panel could be an option. Member Bush noted if the State Conservation Commission was not interested in joining, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts might be interested in joining an industry panel. **Member Wes Glisson** supported including more agencies.

Ms. Helms summarized the council discussion on the feedback suggestions, noting the council agreed on reviewing membership annually and adopt at the beginning of the meeting, removed the duplicate goal, kept chair and vice chair terms to two years, including the Chair in the delegated authorities so long as there is not a conflict with the council's ethics and responsibilities as outlined in the bylaws, and reaching out to federal entities and the State Conservation Commission to extend an invitation to join the council.



Member Bush suggested adding the Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, and United States Navy or another military seat.

**Motion:** Move to accept it [the bylaws as noted] with the caveat that that piece [membership] is open ended to include other agencies as we [the council] become aware of them. (3:48:17)

**Moved by:** Vice Chair Mary Fee

**Seconded by:** Member Ray Willard

**Decision:** Approved

Ms. Helms noted the bylaws can be edited and voted on as seats are added. Before invitations are sent, the council can review the list of potential additions.

**BREAK: 2:00 P.M. – 2:10 P.M. (3:49:25)**

## **Item 7: Roundtable for State Agency Session Updates (3:50:05)**

### **Recreation and Conservation Office (3:50:28)**

**Brock Milliern**, RCO policy and legislative director, noted that RCO has been tracking around seventy bills with impacts to RCO and the council throughout the legislative session, most of which have died. Earlier in the week, the latest revenue forecast was available and is around negative \$850 million over the next two biennia. The House and Senate operating budgets are expected soon, with a budget hearing anticipated on Tuesday and an executive session on Thursday of the following week. Senate Democrats released a [revenue generating package](#). RCO anticipates implementation guidance bills for the two operating budgets following their release. Mr. Milliern anticipated the session ending past April 27. The capital budget is expected in the week of March 31.

**Past Chair Blain Reeves** asked if RCO's director, Megan Duffy, had been officially appointed. Mr. Milliern answered no, and she is in acting capacity.

### **Washington State Department of Natural Resources (3:56:00)**

**Past Chair Blain Reeves** noted that although the Washington State Department of Natural Resources was asked to provide scenario reductions, carry forward reductions in the general operating funds for invasive species management were not anticipated. The department has a decision package and a budget line item in Governor Inslee's budget that is expected to be in Governor Ferguson's budget. The request is for \$2.5 million to continue European green crab management on state owned aquatic lands. Additional invasive species management funding was requested through conservation corps resources.



### **Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife** (3:58:55)

**Member Justin Bush** highlighted the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's priority in continuing prevention and readiness for quagga and zebra mussels, noting the Legislature provided the department with a one-time proviso to increase readiness due to the detection of quagga mussels in the Snake River near Twin Falls, Idaho. The department has since requested to make the one-time funding ongoing and submitted a decision package seeking \$1.81 million in state funds per year to leverage with \$1.81 million in federal funds through the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

### **Washington State Department of Agriculture** (4:01:01)

**Member Sven Spichiger** announced Susan Brush as the new invasive moth coordinator at the Washington State Department of Agriculture and Nathan Chambers as the new eradication coordinator. [Firewood quarantine](#) work is in the public comment stage. Effective March 27, Virginia rescinded their spotted lantern fly quarantine, making it no longer illegal to transport spotted lantern fly outside of Virginia and raising concerns over other states following suit. The department is looking into instituting an external quarantine. The department created a website with instructions on what to do with [unsolicited seed packages](#). Lastly, Member Spichiger received a framework from the National Plant Board on how to contact big box stores and online merchants if they are selling regulated items illegally in the state.

**Alison Halpern**, policy assistant, noted Governor Inslee's proposed budget included pest program decision packages funded at the levels requested for Japanese beetle, spongy moth, and spotted lantern fly; however, the department's request to fund core positions with state funds rather than federal was not included. The department's best program bills addressed ways to improve reducing and managing solid waste and requested amendment language to ensure pest quarantines were included in any legislation addressing increasing the amount composting and transfer of compost waste.

In February, the department created a working group to look at how to move forward with holly, which is recognized as an important agricultural crop and an invasive plant that needs to be controlled.

### **Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board** (4:10:17)

**Vice Chair Mary Fee** provided an overview the [noxious weed list](#) update process. Round leaf bitterweet and marsh thistle were proposed in November and added January 1 first as Class A noxious weed species. Holly was also proposed but has a complicated history and only some species within the genus are invasive. The board postponed the vote on

holly until March when they voted to include common holly as a Class C noxious weed except where commercially grown.

Vice Chair Fee explained that both [Senate Bill 5018](#) and [House Bill 1707](#) were dropped, but noted they may return in future legislative sessions. The board was approved by the Washington Department of Ecology to have flowering rush funding for Lake Roosevelt in the next biennium, provided Ecology has available funding. Additionally, the board linked with the Washington State Department of Agriculture pollinator program to do publications linked with pollinators.

#### **Washington State Department of Transportation** [\(4:17:14\)](#)

**Member Ray Willard** emphasized that the Washington State Department of Transportation does not request payment through text messages, noting the recent uptick in [Good To Go](#) scam text messages.

The transportation budget is debating between sacrifices to project development and addressing the growing backlog in system preservation and maintenance. The department continues to struggle with limited funds for system maintenance and preservation, and the limited budget has resulted in reductions in purchasing herbicide materials and chemical treatments, requiring more mechanical and manual treatments.

This spring, the department will update their integrated roadside vegetation management plans for 2025, working with county weed control to prioritize weed control species, and mapping locations for planned treatment. The department has several research projects underway, including right-of-way weed control with unmanned aircraft systems, partnering with the Bureau of Land Management and Washington Department of Natural Resources on annual grass control for roadside fire breaks, and roadside landscape lab at Scatter Creek Safety Rest Area.

#### **Washington State Parks** [\(4:22:36\)](#)

**Member Andrea Thorpe** noted Governor Inslee's proposed budget included a \$400,000 decision package for resource adaptation; however, this was not included in Governor Ferguson's budget. The most recent budget included a \$100,000 reduction in forest health funding, which will impact western Washington weed projects.

Alternate Member April Gassman left the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

To meet the requested reductions, State Parks may need to reduce operating staff support. The focus will be on basic services to keep parks open and clean with potentially less capacity for natural resource management. [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5390](#) increases the fee for the annual Discover Pass from thirty to forty-five dollars but

maintains the day pass fee. The bill also changes the distribution of Discover Pass funding between agencies. Lastly, some previously frozen Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding was unfrozen to continue post-fire and shrub steppe restoration at Ginko Petrified Forest State Park. Member Thorpe noted lessons learned regarding pre-emergent cheat grass treatments at the park and was interested in connecting with Member Ray Willard this spring.

#### **Washington State Department of Ecology** [\(4:28:50\)](#)

**Member Wes Glisson** noted the Washington State Department of Ecology's freshwater invasive plant management program is funded by a three-dollar annual boat trailer registration fee which is used to offer two-year grants for aquatic invasive plant management, planning, and research. The program received seventeen applications, and the ranked funding list includes eleven projects totaling \$557,000.

**Past Chair Blain Reeves** added Washington Lakes Protection Association has had discussions on how to apply this funding.

#### **Item 8: Future Meeting Planning Roundtable Discussion** [\(4:30:43\)](#)

**Stephanie Helms** noted the July meeting will heavily focus on the Strategic Plan topics put into the "Keep but Discuss" category during the activity. Other topics may include a Washington State Department of Transportation drone update, and update from Trout Unlimited on invasive fish control in Lake Sammamish, and possibly a field trip. The meeting will likely be at the Washington State University Research and Extension Center in Puyallup.

#### *General Public Comment* [\(4:35:58\)](#)

None.

#### **ADJOURNED: 3:56 P.M.** [\(4:36:05\)](#)

The next council meeting will be held on July 17, 2025. Location to be confirmed.