

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

November 15, 2007

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Mahaffy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Wendy Brown	Department of Natural Resources
Joan Cabreza	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Barbara Chambers	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Tom Root	Department of Transportation
Dana Coggon	Kitsap County
Gene Little, Vice Chair	Washington Noxious Weed Control Board
Bridget Moran, Chair	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brid Nowlan	Washington Invasive Species Coalition
Jeff Dickison	Squaxin Island Tribe
Melodie Selby	Department of Ecology
Mary Toohy	Department of Agriculture

Call to Order:

Bridget Moran opened the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Welcome announcements were made by Bridget Moran. Bridget asked Council and audience members to introduce themselves.

Recreation and Conservation Office Director Remarks:

Bridget introduced Kaleen Cottingham as the new Director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

Before becoming director, Kaleen helped the former Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation get the Invasive Species Council formed and up and running. She informed the Council that RCO's role is to provide staff to the Council. She will provide additional assistance in any way she can.

Introduction and Announcements:

- Bridget Moran introduced Rachel Utley as new staff support to the Council.
- Dana Coggon discussed the topic of feral swine as recently reported on the news. She has conducted further research on this topic and noted that some states are addressing feral swine with hunting licenses and recreation hunting. Feral swine pose potential economic damages to farmers.
- Oregon is addressing this topic within their invasive species council. The Council would like to research the issue of feral swine further to determine its threat to Washington.

- Allen Pleus, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) discussed the topic of zebra mussels. He recently attended a table exercise for training on this issue by the Columbia River Basin Team, who are working on a recovery plan. The team hired a consultant to run an exercise based on an incident command system. Part of the exercise was used to determine what Washington would do if a nearby state found a zebra mussel. Groups also determined what it would take to declare a state of emergency.
- The 100th Meridian invited many entities with regulatory authority to this exercise. They discussed who allocates funds in these types of situations. Allen is the state Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator, so that if there is an outbreak in another region he will be contacted.
- Members think that it might be useful to meet with other state invasive species councils to partner and organize a plan to deal with zebra mussel infestation response plans.
- It would be useful to continue to assess the economic impact of zebra mussels and to determine what each level of response costs. This information could be used to encourage quick response times.
- Washington has inspections for commercial boats and has the authority to use random check stations. WDFW enforcement has issued fines and has successfully found a couple of infected boats already.
- Washington State has the authority to contain all boats that have been in infected waters if that time should come. This method could be used in a rapid response plan. WDFW also has decontamination stations to treat infected boats.
- The Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee hopes to give a presentation to the Council in the first part of the year regarding their 2008 plans.
- Washington State Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture are working on the eradication of a Mediterranean snail - a terrestrial pest currently found in the port of Tacoma. The slime from the snail can actually stop harvest machinery from working. Their eradication plan is based on a similar infestation that occurred in another state. It will most likely be a multi-year effort.
- Early detection is truly the most effective method to deal with all invasive species.
- Members suggested that invasive species border inspection stations be developed within Washington State.

Council Business Items:

Bridget Moran called for a motion to approve the August 20, 2007 meeting minutes. **Gene Little** moved to **APPROVE** the August 20, 2007 meeting minutes. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the August 20, 2007 meeting minutes.

Public Comment:

- Darrel Wallace, Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, noted that this organization is concerned with keeping public trails open. To do this they attempt to be good stewards. They are interested in helping to control the spread of noxious weeds. Colleagues in the Northeast part of the state have developed a pre-proposal grant to purchase tools, backpack sprayers and to implement a project to identify and control weeds in the Colville National Forest. They are partnering with county weed boards and many others.

They are trying to be part of the solution. They would like to partner with the Council on rapid response using their volunteer teams if needed.

- The Council would be willing to write a letter of support on behalf of the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington to use in their grant proposal.
- Diane Cooper, Taylor Shellfish, noted that within the aquaculture industry they are still struggling to determine the best lines of communication, since there are so many groups and entities working on invasive species. She encouraged the Council to establish better lines of coordination, and communication with the other invasive species organizations. She also encouraged the council to work hard at including more commercial shipping industry representatives.
- Bill Brookreson noted that the Starflower Foundation has recently sun-set. They put together a curriculum on native plants and native plant ecosystems. This information is now housed on the Native Plant Society web site. This will be a great asset to people working on restoration efforts. The Washington Native Plant Society is planning to ask the Governor for a week to be designated as native plant appreciation week. The Council is welcome to be a sponsor on this effort.

Melodie Selby moved to **APPROVE** that the Council sponsor the native plant appreciation week. Gene Little **SECONDED** the motion. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the motion to sponsor native plant appreciation week.

WISC Partner Reports:

Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee:

Agenda item presented by Joan Cabreza.

- Joan resigned from the chair of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee, although she is still a member of the committee. Their 2008 workplan is still in progress.

Biodiversity Council:

Agenda item presented by Lynn Helbrecht, Executive Coordinator of the Washington Biodiversity Council.

- Lynn noted that their strategic plan has gone to print and is currently 150 pages. The executive summary will be a separate document about 20 pages in length. A third separate document will be made to highlight key findings.
- The Biodiversity Council had a formal comment period that lasted one month. They received a lot of comments; however, they could have reached out for more comments and could have used more time to process them. She encouraged the Invasive Species Council to consider all of these elements when developing their strategic plan.
- Lynn passed out two documents for the Council to review. One listed the sections of the biodiversity strategy that include the topic of invasive species.
- The Biodiversity Council felt strongly about having a "roll-out" to make the strategy live and to introduce it, so they have planned a conference in December. They are expecting about 200 guests and encourage invasive species council members to attend.

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:

Agenda item presented by Alison Halpern, Executive Secretary of the Washington State Noxious Weed Board.

- Alison is now the Executive Secretary of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. The State weed board is looking for a new outreach and educational specialist.

Alison explained how weeds can be proposed by the public for addition to the state noxious weed list. She also provided a presentation to the Council that listed various plant species which had either recently been added to the list, or moved within the classes A, B, and C.

Nancy Phelps, United States Forest Service, discussed the forest service perspective on the issue of seed certification. She wanted all partner groups to know that the weed free forage program is not in any way meant to limit public use on national forest service land.

Supplemental Budget Report:

- Bridget reviewed a handout regarding the summary of the budget decision package recently delivered to the Office of Financial Management and the Legislature.
- Members noted that it was not entirely clear what the baseline assessment is, as listed in the handout. Bridget reminded staff that the handout is purely meant for the Council as a summary and the full decision package document has more specific and expanded language. The Council will be updated on the progress of the decision package as it goes through the legislative process. Bridget reminded the Council that if funding for the baseline is approved that it will not be in time to educate the Council for the initial strategic plan, but can be used to answer many of the questions the plan outlines.

Annual Report Discussion:

- Bridget reviewed the annual report outline provided to the Council. The report is due to the Legislature on December 15, 2007. The outline describes what will be fleshed out in the full annual report. It includes important components regarding the noxious weed funding report, the questionnaire and the Council's process for writing the strategic plan. The annual report can also be used as an educational opportunity to explain "why this matters". Case studies along the side of the report can relay real life stories. Members also suggested that the budget request also be listed in the plan even if it is just mention of the fact that the plan was submitted. Members suggested that the factoids be listed on the front cover or on front page to alert people to the read further.

Bridget Moran called for a motion to approve the outline for the annual report with Council revisions. The full annual report will be sent to the Council for review via email before being sent to the Legislature. The Council will have one week to provide feedback to staff. Gene Little moved to **APPROVE** the annual report outline with Council revisions. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the outline for the annual report.

Strategic Plan Discussion:

Framework:

- Members noted that the executive summary handed out by staff would work better as the introduction of the strategic plan. They would still like a one page executive summary as well.

- Members commented on the idea of an action agenda document as part of the strategic plan. The Idaho Invasive Species Council wrote their action agenda in sections, considering what they are monitoring, what they are taking action on, etcetera.
- The action agenda can be a living document and link to the web site in some way. The Council would like to review the Idaho invasive species council action agenda for ideas.
- The Council is waiting to see what comes out of each workgroup before deciding what materials will be included in an appendix.
- Case studies can be listed in each workgroup section of the strategic plan. This is not a requirement for each work group to include, but if it is appropriate they are encouraged to tell important stories in the sidebars of the plan.

Bridget Moran called for a motion to **APPROVE** the revised framework. The Council stated that they want more time to review the framework for future flexibility. Motion did not carry. Bridget Moran called for a motion to **APPROVE** the process listed in the framework as an outline. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the process listed in the framework.

Timeline:

- The Lead workgroup has met to discuss and outline a recommended timeline for achieving the strategic plan deadline in June, 2008. Council members recommended that staff begin advertising that public comments will be welcome in March through April 1. Staff can get this word out in January via email to the interested persons list and to recipients of the questionnaire.
- Bridget's role as Chair of the Council was a one year agreement, which will be over in January, but she is willing to stay on for the following six months so that the change over does not happen during the legislative session. She encouraged members to consider the role of Council Chair.

Work Group Draft Reports:

Executive Summary

- Staff presented this agenda item. Staff reminded the Council that this document is a first draft and welcomed feedback from the Council.
- Bridget asked the Council to reflect on how they want to approach the executive summary. Members suggested that staff wait to finish the introduction until more of the draft report is finished so that facts and specifics can be included.
- Members would like to see a section about "What we are doing now" and "What the status of the state is". This is really the "Why" of the strategic plan. Members suggested that the title just simply be Strategic Plan rather than the title staff used. They like the idea of starting the plan with the positive spin and focus.
- The Council wants to emphasize invasive species issues by listing examples of what the impacts would be to individual citizens. Eric Anderson has a great presentation that does just this thing. He should be invited to the Council to show these examples.
- Would the positive spin give the message that invasive species is not as big of a problem as we need to emphasize?
- The Council needs to remember who the audience is that they are trying to reach with the Strategic Plan. The Council views the plan's audience as the Legislature, but they need to

remember that this plan is for the Council to refer to for guidance and action within the State.

- The stand alone document can be made from the executive summary with an entirely different tone to reach a different audience, since many times the people who read the executive summary will be different than the people who will read the whole plan.
- The Council needs to remember that stakeholder groups are going to read the strategic plan in depth and will provide comments and feedback and will be looking at the Council to follow through with the recommendations listed.
- The Council wants to ensure that recommendations will be listed in the introduction or executive summary.
- The Council agreed that the executive summary draft handed out by staff is generally what they want, but should be put aside for now until the rest of the workgroup sections are written, since much of the executive summary and introduction will be shaped by the workgroup sections.

Technical:

Agenda item presented by Mary Toohey.

- Mary reviewed a spreadsheet put together by the technical workgroup including lists of invasive species management in Washington. Although risk analysis is being conducted, it is hard to find. The group is working on recommendations for transparency and consistency in the format of documents, such as risk analysis.
- Mary asked for input from Council members to make the spreadsheet more complete. The spreadsheet can be listed as an appendix rather than being in the body of the report. In the body of the outline, working definitions will be listed to better describe the categories of the spreadsheet.
- Through the groups discussion on recommendations a couple of themes came up, including the idea of a portal or web site access for a central clearinghouse. Links to various lists of invasive species and links to risk analyses conducted could be listed in this clearinghouse.
- A further recommendation for technical expertise, scientific advisory committees, and taxonomic identification was proposed by the workgroup.
- Members suggested that the group work on flowcharts, templates and potential obstacles.

Coordination:

Agenda item presented by Gene Little.

- Gene reviewed the interview summaries that the coordination workgroup used to develop the initial draft of their outline. Gene asked the Council to review the outline and to provide suggestions for the workgroup to focus on.
- Since cooperative weed management areas (CWMA) seem to be working well, can the group apply the model of CWMA's to other arenas of invasive species?
- The example of successful CWMA's could be the case study the group uses in the strategic plan. Members suggested that the workgroup at least describe CWMA's or define how they could be a model for other species or areas of the state.
- Members suggested that the workgroup combine common themes from the interviews to display success models or recommendations.

- Gene stressed the importance of federal and state cooperation since both parties own much of the land within the state and without cooperation many gaps will exist.
- Almost every group they interviewed mentioned that they have a funding problem. Funding can be used to tell part of the story. Use this to explain that one of the hindrances to coordination is appropriate allocations of resources.

Education:

Agenda item presented by Dana Coggon.

- Dana reviewed the draft outline and workgroup charter presented to the Council. They want to create messaging specifically to the public because many times they are the links to early detection.
- The workgroup wants the Council to develop an information hub. They have reviewed much of the educational information already created, but all materials are different from one another.
- The education group wants to ensure that their scope is not limited to plants only. Members suggested that the group explain that many educational materials are being duplicated by various counties. This duplication is expensive. Since the Council is mandated to coordinate at all levels they need work on this issue.
- Members suggested that the group determine if the educational materials are successful. Are they reaching the targeted audience? How are they being distributed? Can materials be distributed together to maximize efforts?
- Perhaps a recommendation needs to be for the Council to coordinate with the Invasive Species Council of Oregon and Sea Grant to find out the results of their focus group research regarding the effectiveness of their educational materials.

Funding:

Agenda item presented by Wendy Brown.

- Wendy reviewed the outline to the Council. She explained the complexity of interpreting the results from the Questionnaire. Many organizations listed multiple project purposes such as control and eradication, which made it hard to determine which funds were spent on each project purpose.
- Wendy reviewed key questions and recommendations that the funding workgroup is going to research and review further. She reminded the Council that many of the numbers listed are preliminary and not fully represented - they are simply a glimpse of the bigger picture.
- Members asked whether or not the workgroup is going to address gaps. The group has not yet decided on how they will approach this issue. The workgroup can contact people who did not respond to the questionnaire to ask specific organizations that are underrepresented to ensure that the figures are more complete.
- Did the workgroup include departmental spending within agencies? Not yet, but they can if members feel it is needed.
- Wendy explained the process that she used to determine the categories of spending such as eradication and control. Perhaps the group can identify direct and indirect funding to better explain that while a chunk of money might be spent on vegetation management, not all of it is going directly to invasive species control, but general weed control as well.

- In the long run the funding workgroup might want to look at the overall costs of invasive species, not just funding specifically.
- The methodology used to determine the funding results will need to be listed in the appendix.
- Should a goal or recommendation of the strategic plan be to make the funding spent on prevention higher, since right now it is a small slice of the pie?
- The Department of Transportation roadside management control work and the complexity of reporting invasive species work would make a great case study for the strategic plan.

Regulation:

Agenda item presented by Melodie Selby.

- Melodie reviewed the handouts presented by the regulation workgroup. She asked the Council for feedback and additions about regulation laws listed in the handout. The State Water Pollution Act is not listed and needs to be added.
- The group has also compiled case studies for their draft section. They do not currently have an outline, but before they write one they would like to get feedback from the Council about their next steps.
- The group would like to recommend that a group of experts be put together to review regulation laws further for potential improvements.
- As the group has reviewed the law summaries they have discussed the possibility of looking through the lens of pathways versus species. Melodie encouraged the Council to have a discussion about this. She also solicited feedback from members about what laws might impede one another.
- Although members like the pathway approach, they feel that using such a different approach might take a lot more work and time. A pathway approach would call for the review of funding allocations, detection, and control work by specific pathways.
- Perhaps only detection work should be done by a pathway approach and control work could still be done by a species approach. The pathway approach could take more work in the beginning since it would be a new process and might take away from the immediate work needed to make the strategic plan deadline.
- Members suggested that the group review pros and cons and review which approach is most appropriate at certain times.
- Members also recommended that the group consider how federal regulations coincide with state regulations to look for gaps and overlaps.
- Perhaps when the draft of the strategy is put out for public comment staff can request feedback about the pathway versus species approach.
- Melodie asked for the Council to approve that the workgroup list areas for further research and review rather than actually recommending specific new regulations: The group's work is too premature and does not include as much involvement from outside industries as they need. The Council agreed that general recommendations are probably the best approach for now, but as much detailed analysis as possible should be listed to explain areas for improvement.

Next Steps:

Bridget Moran called for a motion to hire a technical writer to begin working on the strategic plan. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** to hire a technical writer to begin working on the strategic plan.

Meeting Agenda:

Bridget suggested a couple of revisions to the next agenda. She asked other members to review the agenda and send revisions to staff.

Adjourned:

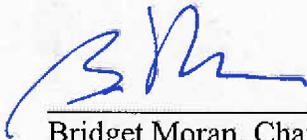
Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Next meeting:

January 23, 2007

Location TBD

Invasive Species Approval:



Bridget Moran, Chair



Date