

**INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL**

**MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING**

April 16, 2008

Room 259, Natural Resources Building  
Olympia, Washington

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**INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kate Benkert	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wendy Brown	Department of Natural Resources
Barbara Chambers (via phone)	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ray Willard	Department of Transportation
Gene Little, Vice Chair	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Randy Marshall	Department of Ecology
Bridget Moran, Chair	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brid Nowlan (via phone)	Washington Invasive Species Coalition
Mary Toohey	Department of Agriculture

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**Convene and Welcome:**

Bridget Moran, Council chair, opened the meeting at 8:40 a.m. Bridget announced that the purpose of this special meeting is to approve changes to the current draft strategic plan following the public comment period. This is a Special Council meeting so there is only one agenda item. Due to time constraints, it is not possible to wait until the next council meeting on May 7, 2008. The Council strategy is due June 7, 2008.

Bridget began introductions then went over the agenda.

**Public Comment:**

Bill Brookeson, Washington Native Plant Society, noted that he would like to see the research and Washington State University Extension Communities included more in the plan. He emphasized the need for risk assessments and noted that there was not enough emphasis on the cost of delaying response. He finished by saying that, in some cases there are not environmental or socially acceptable means to handle an invasive species and that taking no action is sometimes the only choice.

Keith Starum, Washington Shellfish Growers Association, discussed not using pesticides in Washington waters. He showed the Council a petition signed by 800 people supporting no pesticides in Washington and a handout introducing the Independent Shellfish Growers of Washington. He is especially concerned with Spartina treatments that may cause damage to spat.

The Council chair reminded Keith that this meeting is only to discuss draft changes to the strategic plan. Keith stated that his biggest concern would be if decisions were made without people having a chance to become involved.

### **Discussion of Strategic Plan Revision:**

Council staff sent the draft strategic plan to over 1000 people for review. Council staff also made follow up calls to reviewers. The Council received approximately 50 comments during the public comment period. In general, readers felt it was a good road map for action. Some readers felt that the order of prioritized actions were unclear. It was difficult at times to tell who was responsible for completing the directed actions, the timelines for actions seemed unclear, and some terms needed clarification. Comments also included suggestions for implementation. Reviewers voiced strong support for having an information clearinghouse. Staff felt they received a lot of positive feedback during the public comment period.

Council members were concerned that the strategy did not convey a strong call to action. The Council's role was not clear in the draft strategy. It is important to share the council's path for addressing invasive species in Washington. The Executive Summary is still under development and will not be finished until the strategy is complete.

Bridget proposed that the strategy be named "Invaders at the Gate," and have a strong visual graphic on the cover. The Council will review graphics and case studies at the May 7, 2008 meeting. The suggested graphic is a wrought iron gate covered in ivy; the gate is ajar with invasive species coming through it. There was concern with using "Invaders at the Gate" as the title, but Filiz, our technical writer confirmed that there would be no infringement in using that title, as long as we do not attempt to sell our document.

The Council wants to show short and long-term goals and to stress that the public must be informed. It was noted that terms such as management, control, and eradication should be more consistent. The Council decided that climate change would have its own section because it is important but is not an invasive species.

Members were concerned with overstating the human health implications. If the document focuses too much on human health, it may sound alarming.

Section 3 has undergone the most revisions. This section lists goals for the next 20 years. The intent is to explain the barriers being addressed. However, the section title is confusing. To avoid confusion or speculation over whether the Council is trying to close the gate or protect the gate this section will be called "Roadmap for action" or "Recommendations for action". The strategy format will show the problem, the recommendation, and the action statement together.

The Council's intent is to build on existing infrastructure, programs, and successful models such as The Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. It is important to acknowledge the Weed Board as a nationally recognized success and note that their program may be a model for other species. The strategy will also state that the Weed Board received federal funding, ensuring their success.

The strategy needs to clarify that there is some existing funding, however, the Council must have further funding to be successful in this action plan. Members discussed the added complicated of varying fiscal years between federal, state, and private entities.

There are many programs already in place for monitoring invasive species, including ballast water and tunicates. Unfortunately, this is not uniformly true among all species. It should be clear that funding is required to complete the actions listed in the plan. If the budget does not provide funding the action plan would stop, as no one has the resources to complete the plan without further money.

The current recommendations are in the order that the Council collectively ranked and voted on at the last Council meeting. Recommendation one, the baseline assessment, ranked first because it would assist in creating a web-based clearinghouse. Members were concerned that the order of the short-term recommendation will imply priority to Legislators reading the strategy, so they should be listed in order by funding priority.

Comments from the public expressed concern that if a clearinghouse were established, the information would need to be kept current. The idea of a clearinghouse sounds simple, but the reality is that information changes continuously and is very complicated to keep up to date. One of the ways to keep it updated is to link the clearinghouse to databases that are kept updated, instead of trying to keep track the changes.

In some cases, the Council will only be able to look at dated snapshots of information, so the snapshots must be clear. With tools for measurement changing within the scientific community, the Council and others may be able to measure numbers of species more accurately over time.

It was recommended that a flow chart be created to show who has invasive species authority and what steps are to be used in an actual emergency event. This information could also be included in the clearinghouse.

The Education and Outreach section should be broadened. It would be best to raise public awareness, and tell the public how to take action. Idaho has a good example for public awareness. Education recommendations can be combined, and shortened. The draft needs to clarify how the Council supports the development and coordination of tools for people working in the field such as permits, and diagnostic capacity.

Currently, section headings are awkward and need to tie back into the roadmap. It will be tough to change this with the short timeline left for completion of the strategy, but staff will try. Some recommendations were deleted because the Council does not have authority to mandate, only to recommend.

The Council APPROVED by consensus the reorganization of the draft strategic plan as presented.

Staff will send the case studies for review in their current format. Any additional comments from the Council or public must be given to staff no later than 3:00 p.m. Friday by either email or hardcopy. At the May 7, 2008 meeting, members will see the final draft of the Washington Invasive Species Council Strategic Plan: Invaders at the Gate.

**Adjourned:**

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Next meeting:

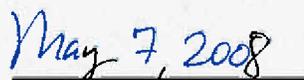
May 7, 2008

Natural Resource Building

Room 172

Invasive Species Approval:

  
Bridget Moran, Chair

  
Date