

# Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2015

DNR Science Operations Center – Northwoods Conference Room  
2801 Progress Road, Madison Wisconsin

## Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** James Hughes (DOT), Jim Kerkman (Council on Forestry), Greg Long (Needles & Leaves Nursery, via telephone), Paul Schumacher (Wisconsin Lakes, via telephone), Jack Sullivan (DNR), and Melody Walker (for Brian Kuhn [DATCP])

**Others Present:** Maureen Ferry (staff, DNR), Eric Verbeten (staff, DNR), Bob Wakeman (staff, DNR), and Dreux Watermolen (staff, DNR)

**Members Absent:** Tom Bressner (Wisconsin Agro-Business Association), Travis Olson (DOA), Ken Raffa (University of Wisconsin), and Jim Rienhartz (UW-Milwaukee).

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Schumacher called the meeting to order at 9:12.

### **Approval: April 29, 2015 Council Meeting Minutes**

Sullivan moved to approve the minutes of the April 29, 2015 Council meeting. Second by Kerkman. Motion passed.

### **Update: Council Membership and Staffing**

The DOT Secretary has formally appointed James Hughes as his designee on the Council.

Chairman Schumacher has corresponded with the Governor's appointment office. Former Council member Pat Morton's replacement has not been appointed at this time. Chairman Schumacher has asked the DNR Deputy Secretary to request that an appointment be made.

Jack Sullivan announced that he would be retiring from the DNR in the near future.

### **Update: State Budget Process**

The Joint Finance Committee continues to work on finalizing a recommended budget. Last week, the Joint Finance Committee voted to maintain DNR staffing reductions included in the governor's budget proposal. This includes a reduction of 18.4 positions in the DNR's Science program. It is unclear how the proposed reductions will impact the filling of the invasive species coordinator vacancy. Chairman Schumacher noted that the Council relies heavily on Science staff for support on invasive species issues. Bill Cosh, Director of the DNR's Office of Communications, is the spokesperson for DNR budget issues.

## **Invasive Species and Issues Updates**

A written “Invasive Species and Issues Updates” document was distributed to the Council. See that written report for additional details and staff contact information.

*“Ask the Experts” Internet Chats* – “Ask the Experts” is an online chat series hosted by the Wisconsin DNR. Employees from the department answer questions about their topic of expertise. The DNR will host a number of these Internet chats during Invasive Species Awareness Month.

Question: How many people participate? Participation is variable. A chat focused on NR 40 was held on May 28. There were 45 live participants. As of today, 30 people reviewed the chat after it concluded. The majority of readership happens after chat sessions when users can read transcripts.

Question: How are the chats promoted? DNR promotes the chats through social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter and via announcements on the DNR homepage.

*Federal and Regional Legislation* – The Council was previously briefed on the Defending Our Great Lakes Act and the Federal Lands Invasive Species Control, Prevention, and Management Act. There has been no substantive activity on either bill since the last Council meeting.

*New Species Occurrences* – The DNR is responding to the discovery of starry stonewort and faucet snail at sites in Wisconsin. In both cases, the DNR is following its response framework. The DNR is actively working on starry stonewort with the local lake district, which is taking the lead on eradication efforts. It is unlikely that eradication of faucet snail is feasible. We may need to take a “contain the spread” approach using BMPs. The response framework will help us determine the most prudent next steps.

Question: Does the parasite found in the snail affect other snails. Yes, but faucet snail appears to be the primary host. It is unclear how prevalent the parasite is.

## **Presentation: Status of New Zealand Mud Snail and State Response**

Maureen Ferry, Water Resources Management Specialist, Wisconsin DNR, made a presentation to the Council regarding the introduction of New Zealand mud snail to Black Earth Creek and the DNR-led response. PowerPoint presentation slides from Ms. Ferry’s presentation are available.

The Council was previously briefed on the discovery of New Zealand mud snails in Black Earth Creek (Dane County) in October 2013. Black Earth Creek is a popular trout fishery. Snails were collected as part of routine benthic sampling in October 2012.

The response strategy began with intensive monitoring to help evaluate the risk posed by the snails. This included an effort to collect further benthic samples (extensively using volunteers) and eDNA sampling in a tri-state area. The Council was previously updated on the eDNA sampling results (March 27 email with new release). No mud snails were detected outside of Black Earth Creek.

Monitoring was followed by an effort to place signs and boot/wader brush stations: 277 AIS signs and brushes were placed in Dane, Iowa, Grant, Crawford, Richland, Vernon and Sauk counties.

The DNR updated its Disinfection Manual Code. The effort was based on an extensive literature review to determine the most effective methods for each species of concern. The code applies to all DNR staff as well as agents, contractors, and permittees of the department.

Next steps include additional monitoring and further outreach. Efforts will be made to assess the effectiveness of the cleaning tools and to improve outreach products. Ms. Ferry concluded with a few lessons learned to date.

The Council had a short discussion about appropriate responses and response capabilities.

### **Presentation: ANS Task Force Great Lakes & Mississippi River Panels**

Bob Wakeman, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Wisconsin DNR, made a presentation to the Council regarding the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and its Great Lakes and Mississippi River Panels.

Thirteen federal agencies are involved with the intergovernmental Task Force, an “all-encompassing” organization focused on preventing and controlling aquatic nuisance species. Six panels (Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Gulf, South Atlantic, Mississippi River Basin, and Great Lakes) advise the Task Force. Information about the Task Force and the panels is available online at <http://www.anstaskforce.gov/>.

Mr. Wakeman represents the Wisconsin DNR on the Mississippi River Basin and Great Lakes panels. The panels meet about once every nine months and six months, respectively. The panels advise the Task Force and are helpful for communicating with AIS coordinators nationwide and getting outside perspectives. In April 2015, the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin panels held a joint meeting at the Pyle Center on the UW-Madison campus. A variety of topics were covered including: the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS), the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) and how AIS moves through it, inconsistent regulation of grass carp across the U.S. (some states employ strict prohibition, others are more lenient), invasive organisms in trade (the BIOTICS meeting in Milwaukee in June 2014 was emphasized), and the Great Lake Commission’s efforts to track online sales of prohibited species (the Internet web crawler tool). The Great Lakes Panel held a discussion about crayfish. Maureen Ferry gave a presentation on New Zealand mud snails to the Mississippi River Basin Panel. Mr. Wakeman noted that Wisconsin is seen as a leader in ANS efforts, particularly in aquatic plant management.

Question: What federal agency runs the ANS Task Force? The Task Force is jointly administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA.

### **Presentation and Discussion: AIS Strategic Plan and Planning Process**

Bob Wakeman, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Wisconsin DNR, made a presentation to the Council regarding the current aquatic invasive species (AIS) strategic planning process. See also written “Invasive Species and Issues Updates” document

Mr. Wakeman noted that Wisconsin was one of the first states to prepare an AIS strategic plan. That first plan focused on specific species. Since then, our approach has evolved. An updated plan is necessary for the state to remain eligible for various federal programs.

As previously discussed with the Council, a core team of about 13-14 people representing various interests has been assembled. UW-Extension staffer Tim Campbell is taking the lead on the planning effort. Brian Kuhn is representing both the DATCP and the Council on the committee.

The team began by reviewing existing plans such as Michigan's and Minnesota's. The team has identified critical introduction pathways (rivers, boats, internet sales, bait, etc.) for invasive species and is currently developing proposed action items to address those pathways. The goal is to have a draft plan prepared by the end of 2015. The plan must be compliant with ANS Task Force guidelines as it will be submitted to the Task Force for approval.

Efforts are being made to ensure that the AIS Strategic Plan is consistent with the Council's Statewide Strategic Plan. In addition, we hope to have a plan that other states could use as well spreading the benefit throughout the region.

Question: How did Wisconsin do with implementing the first AIS plan? The initial plan was a success in terms of guiding efforts.

Question: Were there any short-comings? Things have changed in the 12 years since the plan was developed. We learned that it is hard to foresee the future too far in advance. The plan attempted to be forward looking, with goals for 10 to 15 years and that may not have been practical or realistic.

Question: What is the timeline looking forward for the current effort? We are using a 5-year planning horizon.

Chairman Schumacher offered Council support for the planning effort and asked that the Council continue to be informed as the plan is developed.

### **Committee Report: Council's Education Committee**

Christa Wollenzien, Wisconsin DOT, provided an update from the Council's Education Committee.

*Invader Crusader Awards* – The Invader Crusader Awards ceremony will take place on the afternoon of June 4 (following this Council meeting) at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Jim Kerkman will be representing the Council. DNR Deputy Secretary Kurt Thiede will also participate. Nine awards will be presented. Tours of the gardens will be made available following the awards presentation. A good turnout is anticipated.

*2015 ISAM Video Competition* – There were 10 entries, which received 91 likes and 1,242 views of the page. Thirty-seven votes were cast. A winner and runner up have been selected. Winning entries will be shown at the Invader Crusader Awards ceremony. [The Council viewed the winning entry following the meeting.]

*Educators Summit* – The Committee continues to develop plans for an October 27 Invasive Species Educators Summit. Committee members will be touring the MacKenzie Center in the next couple of months. A preliminary agenda has been developed. The committee will survey potential participants for agenda topics.

*Gubernatorial Proclamation* – The governor has issued a proclamation for Invasive Species Awareness Month. It will be displayed and noted at the Invader Crusader Awards ceremony.

TASK: Dreux Watermolen will speak with DNR communications office on media outreach to promote receiving proclamation.

TASK: Dreux Watermolen will provide Chairman Schumacher with contact information for the Governor's proclamation office.

The Council recommends media outreach to highlight the importance of invasive species control.

**Committee Report: Council's Research & Regulations Committees**

The Research and Regulations Committees have not met recently. Work has been held up by a lack of DNR staff resources. A letter to SAG members has been drafted and approved and will be sent to SAG members in the near future.

**Committee Report: Council's Interagency Committee**

Dreux Watermolen, Wisconsin DNR, provided an update from the Council's Interagency Committee. The Committee has not met recently, but the DATCP and DNR are working together on outreach efforts on the invasive species rule (NR 40, Wis. Adm. Code) to the green industry. A joint communication will be sent via email to all registered nurseries in the next week. That will be followed up by a mailed information packet in a couple of weeks. The DNR's website is being updated with nursery-specific resources. The two agencies will also be contacting the "top 100" out-of-state suppliers and wholesalers to inform them about Wisconsin's law.

**Public Comment**

There was no comment from the public.

Council member Greg Long shared a link to a *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* article regarding Asian carp being found in the St. Croix River:

<http://www.jsonline.com/sports/outdoors/asian-carp-invade-farther-north-in-st-croix-river-b99512660z1-306077071.html>.

**Adjourn**

Chairman Schumacher adjourned the Council meeting at 10:50.