

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Tom Bressner (Wisconsin Agro-Business Association), Danielle Johnson (Tourism, via telephone for part of meeting), Jim Kerkman (Council on Forestry), Brian Kuhn (DATCP), Greg Long (Needles & Leaves Nursery, via telephone), Todd Mattheson (DOT), Travis Olson (DOA), Jim Reinhartz (UW-Milwaukee, via telephone), Paul Schumacher (Wisconsin Lakes), and Jack Sullivan (DNR).

Others Present: Terrell Hyde (staff, DNR), Brett Shaw (presenter, University of Wisconsin), Scott Van Egeren (presenter, DNR), Eric Verbeten (staff, DNR), Dreux Watermolen (staff, DNR), Mark Renz (presenter, University of Wisconsin-Extension, via telephone)

Absent: Ken Raffa (University of Wisconsin)

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Schumacher called the meeting to order. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Approval: August 28, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes

Sullivan moved to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2014 Council meeting. Second. Motion carried.

Chairman Schumacher urged members to keep a focus on the Council's goals for 2015, both short-term and long-term.

Information Item: Bait Shop “Toolkit” Opinion Leader Outreach and Case Study

Dr. Brett Shaw, Associate Professor with the University of Wisconsin's Department of Life Science Communications and Environmental Communication Specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Extension, made a presentation to the Council. Dr. Shaw's presentation focused on how to effectively encourage behavior change through mediated and interpersonal communication. He described a two-step process for the flow of information: media to opinion leaders, and opinion leaders to individuals with whom they connect. He described a prevention initiative (survey and outreach work) conducted by the UW-Extension under contract with the Wisconsin DNR. This work focused on bait shop owners and operators as opinion leaders.

Dr. Shaw noted challenges for working with these opinion leaders that included: 1) uncertainty about AIS issues, 2) lack of self-efficacy, and 3) time. He also noted opportunities for working with this group: 1) bait shop owners are willing to help, 2) point of sale is a prime opportunity to share information, and 3) customers appreciate giveaways. UW-Extension applied a social marketing approach to working with bait shop owners. Dr. Shaw described the various outreach and education materials (floating key chains,

trailer stickers, etc.) and recognition approaches (news coverage, certificates of recognition, etc.) employed in the effort. Dr. Shaw then described a follow-up survey used to evaluate the effort. The survey assessed: 1) awareness/knowledge, 2) the outreach efforts, and 3) participation in prevention initiatives.

Dr. Shaw's work has shown that most (>80%) bait shops currently engage in some type of AIS prevention activity, with "passive" activities (displaying signs, handing out materials, etc.) being most common. He noted that owners and employees are least likely to engage customers in one-on-one conversations about AIS. Dr. Shaw highlighted the role of social norms and perceived knowledge in bait shop owners' willingness to engage in AIS prevention activities. He noted that many knew their local AIS coordinator and that visits by/conversations with the local coordinator increased the bait shop owners' confidence in talking about AIS.

Discussion ensued. Tom Bressner noted that when pursuing support for similar efforts, it would be helpful to have someone directly connected to AIS (like a bait shop owner) who would be willing to help push things along. Todd Matheson suggested the Council's Education Committee should look at how findings from Dr. Shaw's work can be integrated into education efforts. Watermolen briefly described how DNR's efforts are being informed by Dr. Shaw's work. He noted that there is related work looking at firewood transport and surveys with state park visitors. Brian Kuhn emphasized that the "opinion" leader idea is a key area. Watermolen explained that DNR distributed tens of thousands of brochures to private campground owners who DNR saw as opinion leaders. Jim Rienertz asked who the opinion leaders would be related to terrestrial invasive species. Greg Long suggested arborists might be one good place to start. Jim Kirkman suggested gardeners might also be good targets as opinion leaders.

The Council thanked Dr. Shaw for his presentation and expressed an interest in continued dialog. Presentation slides are available.

Action Item: NR 40 Rule Revision Update

Terrell Hyde and Dreux Watermolen provided an overview of the NR40 revision process. Last April, the Council voted to support proposed NR 40 revisions and the suggestions for species to be regulated, in concept. That support was communicated to the Natural Resources Board via a letter from Chairman Schumacher. The Natural Resources Board authorized the DNR to take the proposed rule revisions out for public hearing. In May, the rule proposal was sent to the Legislative Clearinghouse and public hearings were announced. Two public hearings were held in June, one in Madison (with an Internet option) and one in Green Bay. Brian Kuhn attended the Madison hearing. Chairman Schumacher attended the Green Bay hearing. The public comment period extended through the end of June.

Hyde explained that since the last Council meeting, staff members have reviewed all comments received during the hearings and the comment period. Staff worked to tweak the proposed revisions to incorporate or otherwise address public comments. Changes to the proposed rule are outlined in a document titled "NR 40 Administrative Rule Revision Update: November 5, 2014" that was distributed to the Council. The next step in the process is to seek adoption by the Natural Resources Board.

Paul Schumacher noted that Ken Raffa had some follow up discussion with staff related to mountain pine beetle and the blue-stain fungi sometimes associated with it. Mountain pine beetle has not been found in Wisconsin. Watermolen explained that DNR staff have been in communication with DATCP staff and Dr. Raffa on these issues. Mountain pine beetle is a destructive forest pest and is a vector for fungi, which cause blue stain in trees. The Forest Pest Species Assessment Group (SAG) suggested listing mountain pine beetle as a "prohibited" species. Dr. Raffa asked that the fungi also be included and the group felt

that made sense. Since that time, however, DNR staff have realized that if we list the fungi as prohibited, it will be problematic to enforce the law. Dr. Raffa correctly states that trees can be treated in advance, but that's only one part of enforcement and DNR has recognized a number of other enforcement-related issues. Staff are looking at other ways to try to deal with the issue. The DATCP is working with partners in Minnesota to implement an exterior quarantine. The quarantine will prevent logs from coming into the state from mountain pine beetle-infested areas. DATCP believes that if we prevent the beetle, then we have a good chance of also preventing the blue stain fungi.

Brian Kuhn indicated that DATCP has been working with the plant group in the Midwestern states. Mountain pine beetle is the poster child for forest problems in western states. Wisconsin has been trying to get a multi-region work group going, but that hasn't been moving forward. The NR 40 rule revision allows us to get moving on the issue quicker and allows the state to address the biggest issue (i.e. mountain pine beetle). In the work that the DATCP has done, they have not been able to document logs from western states coming here. Debarking is most likely enough to kill pathways on low value logs that can potentially come to our region. Minnesota is moving ahead of us; their commissioner can write an order, but Wisconsin has to go through a full administrative rule process. The main concern is that if we put the blue stain fungi in NR40 today, it ties our hand in writing the quarantine language. Minnesota has chosen to not regulate the fungi, only the beetle. We need to have a face-to-face conversation with industry leaders. Watermolen noted a desire to strive for consistency across industries and across states as much as practical. If we were to list both organisms, but only enforce the rule for the beetle (due to enforcement problems with the fungi), this would be inconsistent and create undue burden on these industries and we could see opposition. Brian Kuhn indicated that he thought the quarantine rule process would take at least two years, but an emergency rule was also an option if we needed to move faster. In that case, NR 40 would serve as a backstop.

Greg Long asked how the Natural Resources Board would handle mountain pine beetle and the fungi. Watermolen explained that the DNR's intention in the proposed rule revision is to regulate mountain pine beetle as a "prohibited" species but not to regulate the fungi. He pointed out that there does not appear to be a difference of opinion about the underlying science, but rather about what is practical for enforcement purposes and about how to be consistent as DATCP goes forward with the proposed quarantine. There will also be options for revisions in a future NR 40 revision process.

Jim Kerkman noted that we already have some blue stain, but not mountain pine beetle. He emphasized that we certainly don't need another beetle, and commented that it could move naturally across Canada through jack pines or from the Black Hills. Brian Kuhn added that we're trying to cut off that pathway, but it may not happen at all. It was always killed back in past through cold climate, but with milder winters...

Paul Schumacher asked how a conservation warden will be able to recognize a mountain pine beetle should one show up in a log shipment. Watermolen explained that when NR 40 is adopted, the DNR will provide training for staff to cover the newly listed species. The DNR and other agencies will also do outreach to affected industries.

Tom Bressner noted that there were some questions about how reed canary grass is treated in the rule. Some of his forage seed dealers had not heard of some of the seed cultivars. He needed to identify these for them and provide updates and clarifications. Watermolen explained that the proposed rule revision only regulates a single genetic variety of this species. It is a variety used as ornamental landscaping. That variety is extremely invasive, but it was recognized way back in the process that the species does not fit the definition of "prohibited." But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to prevent the spread of the most aggressive cultivar. The DNR recognized that reed canary grass is used as a forage crop and for erosion

control and so is only looking to regulate the ornamental variety used for landscaping. The DNR didn't receive any comments at public hearing regarding this. Research will likely continue on this species.

Watermolen explained which counties are proposed as "restricted" and which are proposed as "prohibited" for Phragmites. On the map provided with the updates document, the purple line is the dividing line: east of the line are counties where the species will be restricted and in the west are counties where it will be prohibited. This is a slightly different proposal than what the Council saw previously. The DNR received substantial public comments in June indicating that people do not want Phragmites invading their ditches and wetlands. Where occurrences have been found in the proposed prohibited counties, the DNR has talked to landowners and there are commitments to eradicate Phragmites in those areas. The DNR has some resources through GLRI, Lake Protection grants, and other AIS grants to help with eradication. Paul Schumacher emphasized the need for a commitment to control Phragmites to the east as a means of reducing source populations. He asked about roadside mowing's role in the spread of Phragmites. Watermolen noted that DNR staffers have indicated that the populations in the western part of the state are almost all in roadside ditches, but mowing done at the right time might be an important tool in helping control further spread. Todd Matheson expressed an interest in learning more about this and a commitment to working to eliminate Phragmites from DOT right-of-ways. Watermolen and Matheson mentioned that this is a species that they get a lot of calls about.

Hyde and Watermolen discussed the proposal to list the golden mussel as a prohibited species. This mollusk is native to Asia and has been introduced to South America, where it has spread rapidly. Similar to zebra and quagga mussels, golden mussel is quite prolific and can cause problems for industries. The invertebrate Species Assessment Group did not assess this species due to an oversight. Nonetheless, this is a species on the Great Lakes Governors' list of 10 least wanted AIS and Wisconsin's governor made a commitment that Wisconsin would regulate it. DNR staffers have done a comprehensive literature review on all aspects of its biology. The mussels are filter feeders that can alter the phytoplankton communities which can ripple through the entire food chain. It is also a biofouling organism with a great potential to spread. It therefore fits the statutory definition of an invasive species. It is not a species available in trade. The DNR is recommending it be regulated as a prohibited species.

The DNR hopes to release the "green sheet" package next week so the rule proposal can be placed on the board's December meeting agenda. Schumacher asked when the Council would get a chance to see the revised text. The final rule proposal would be available when it goes to the Natural Resources Board.

Paul Schumacher suggested that the Council have a conference call after receiving the final rule revision proposal to consider a motion in support of the proposed revisions. The Council would have until third week in November to take action in time for the Natural Resources Board meeting.

TASK: Watermolen to poll Council members to identify potential dates for a conference call meeting.

TASK: Council members will review proposed rule revisions and be prepared to consider a motion in support of the proposed revisions during the conference call meeting.

Hyde noted that in the NR 40 green sheet package, the best place to find what has changed is the "comments response" document. It goes through all comments verbatim along with considerations and resulting changes.

Watermolen expressed the DNR's appreciation for all of the Council's assistance in developing the proposed rule revisions and the help of members in engaging affected stakeholders.

Updates: Invasive Species and Program Updates

A written “Invasive Species and Issue Updates: November 5, 2014” document was distributed to the Council in advance of the meeting.

Paul Schumacher expressed appreciation for the “incredible pack of program updates.” He noted the information on the cooperative invasive species management areas and the southeastern Wisconsin group in particular. He indicated an interest in inviting representatives of these groups to attend Council meetings to share the incredible work they are doing. Jim Reinhartz noted that he is currently the treasurer for the Southeast Wisconsin organization.

Watermolen reported that Wisconsin DNR was awarded additional GLRI funding to work on organisms in trade. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funds will allow some additional follow up to Chrystal Schreck’s work. The DNR will likely hire LTEs to help with the outreach, but the timing is uncertain.

It was noted that Pat Morton is retiring from The Nature Conservancy in November 2014. She did not reapply for a position on the Council. She continues to serve until a new appointment has been made. No one has been appointed to replace her yet. Schumacher stated that he felt it is important to have somebody from a group who owns a lot of land with terrestrial experience. The Nature Conservancy is a large land trust, with some 50,000 acres or more in the state. As such, Schumacher reached out to the TNC Wisconsin director and asked her to consider forwarding a name. After review of their staff, TNC recommended Hannah Spaul as a potential replacement for Morton. Ms. Spaul has served on one of the species assessment groups (SAGs). Appointments are made by the governor. Schumacher asked the council to consider sending a letter to the governor’s appointment office endorsing Ms. Spaul as a new member for the Council. Greg Long asked if that would be setting a precedent. Schumacher answered that there are already precedents established.

Motion by Jim Kerkman to send a letter of endorsement for Ms. Spahl. Second by Brian Kuhn. Motion passed.

TASK: Watermolen and Schumacher to prepare and send an endorsement letter to the governor’s office.

Watermolen announced that the DNR’s Science program had received approval to proceed with filling the vacant Invasive Species Coordinator position. The department anticipates announcing the vacancy in the near future with a start date sometime after January 1.

Schumacher noted that the DNR’s Invasive Species Team is missing a representative from the Fisheries Management program. He also asked if the Forestry program would be replacing Tom Boos, who recently left the agency. Watermolen explained that the Fisheries program is currently recruiting a replacement for Bill Horns who retired earlier in the year. The Forestry program has hired Scott Schumacher as an LTE to do invasive plant work while they figure out how to proceed with the permanent position.

Information and Action Item: Zequanox®

Scott Van Egeren, Lake and Reservoir Ecologist, Wisconsin DNR, made a presentation to the Council. His presentation provided background on a product developed to control zebra and quagga mussels. A publication titled “*Pseudomonas fluorescens* CL145A (Zequanox®) for Zebra Mussel Control: A Synopsis of Peer-reviewed References” was distributed to the Council along with a material safety data sheet for the product and the DATCP’s “preliminary Environmental Assessment for a Proposed Experiment Use Permit.”

Mr. Van Egeren overviewed the current regulatory framework (NR 107 and ATCP 29, Wis. Admin. Code, and s. 281.17(2), Wis. Stats.), described the product background (development timeline, soil bacterium active ingredient, application methods, etc.), and explained the control potential and limitations as currently known. He described a recent proposal to test the product in a northern Wisconsin lake that became a little controversial. (Note: The Council previously received an update on that proposal.) Mr. Van Egeren concluded his presentation by outlining some remaining questions that DNR staffs have as they review proposals for the use of the product.

Discussion ensued.

Motion by Greg Long to support research on Zequanox in the fight against zebra mussels. Second by Jim Kerkman. Motion passed, with one abstention by Tom Bressner to avoid a potential conflict of interest.

Brian Kuhn emphasized the need for detailed communications plans of any future Zequanox research projects. Van Egeren responded that this is a high priority research topic for the DNR, that the department recognizes the importance of up front communications, and that the department will keep the Council updated as research progresses.

The Council thanked Mr. Van Egeren for his presentation and expressed an interest in continued dialog. Presentation slides are available.

Report Out: Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference

Dr. Mark Renz, Assistant Professor, Department of Agronomy, University of Wisconsin and Weed Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension, joined the Council meeting via telephone.

There were 667 paid attendees at the Duluth, Minnesota conference. Representatives came from 23 states and provinces. As in past years, attendees were mostly from Minnesota and Wisconsin; about 58% were from Minnesota and 24% from Wisconsin. This is why the organizers try to have the conference near the border of the two states.

Renz noted that 17 groups, including the Council, sponsored the conference. There were 26 exhibitors. Renz expressed appreciation for the Council's support.

The conference has evolved: there were mostly aquatic species talks in 2008, with lesser talks addressing forest health. At Duluth, there was good representation on aquatic, forest health, terrestrial and cross-disciplinary topics.

Brian Kuhn explained that one benefit of these conferences is the ability to connect with others in different disciplines to gain other ideas for your own work. He commented that there were great speakers and pertinent topics.

Jim Kerkman indicated that he attended and focused much of his participation on EAB issues. He commented that there were great plenary talks and that he appreciated the ability to choose different topics to attend. He said he liked the jumping worm exhibit.

Todd Matheson attended for DOT. He indicated he would have liked to see more representation from the transportation sector and would try to get additional key players to attend future events.

Watermolen noted that 13 DNR staffers made presentations, some giving multiple talks. We were able to share a lot of what is going on in Wisconsin. The DNR's entire Forest Health Team and almost all of the Aquatic Invasive Species staff were able to attend. He noted being impressed by cross discipline talks about social science and natural science.

Brian Kuhn said it was inspiring to be around others who are engaged in similar field. He also noted that Michigan either is or has been working on formalizing their Invasive Species Council which might be a potential new fiscal resource.

Renz noted that this is possibly the largest invasive species conference in the U.S.—we can consider the effort to be a leader in the nation. He indicated that the organizers will be meeting in November to decide on a location for the 2016 conference. It will be in Wisconsin. More information to come.

Schumacher congratulated Renz for an excellent conference.

Updates: Internet and Mail Order Sales, Bait Industry, and Pet Industry

Watermolen explained how after the Council adopted goals, he sketched out a preliminary work plan for staff as a means of identifying resources we can tap into to help move goals forward. The Interagency Committee can begin a discussion regarding potential work group members to address the topic areas: Internet and mail order sales, bait industry, and pet industry. Some work is already underway that we will want to tap into:

Internet and mail order sales: Contacts from the BIOTICS symposium, Great Lakes Commission (their web crawler is nearing completion), etc.

Bait industry: Brett Shaw, Cornell University social science team (GLRI project looking at strategies to identify fish pathogens at bait shops and other groups - concluded working with bait dealers may be less effective than working directly with anglers), etc.

Pet Industry: Pulling together information. For each area identified each area, contacts. Need to do gap analysis to build agenda around it. Once the DNR has a coordinator on board, we can overlay outreach efforts for NR 40 with pet industry outreach to create a comprehensive work plan.

Watermolen has a list of individuals who could be invited to address the Council on aspects of these topics. We can then look to see how we can integrate their efforts into future agency/Council work. This might provide a logical way to start identifying gaps. The Executive Committee could consider as future agendas are structured.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjourn

Chairman Schumacher adjourned the meeting at 3:55.