

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, February 6, 2015
via Conference Call

Meeting Notes

Chairman Schumacher called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Members Present: Schumacher and Kuhn
Others Present: Watermolen (for Sullivan, staff)

Approval of Minutes: August 15, 2014 Executive Committee meeting

Motion by Kuhn to approve minutes. Second by Schumacher. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: October 28, 2014 Executive Committee meeting

Motion by Kuhn to approve minutes. Second by Schumacher. Motion carried.

Update on DNR Invasive Species Staffing

Watermolen provided an update on the recruitment of the Wisconsin DNR's invasive species coordinator. The position was announced prior to the holidays with an early January application deadline. Civil services exams have been graded and Watermolen has received a list of 16 individuals who have been certified to receive interviews. Interviews are scheduled for February 9 and 10, but provisions included in the State Budget proposal may impact our ability to hire at this time.

Update on Council Appointments

Council member Morton's term ended in 2014. The Council previously recommended a replacement for Ms. Morton in a letter to the governor's office. The governor's office has not indicated its intentions with respect to a replacement. If an appointment has not been made by early March, Chairman Schumacher will contact the governor's appointments office to inquire.

Council member Matheson has announced that he will be moving into a different position at the Wisconsin DOT. He will be stepping down from the Invasive Species Council and the DOT will appoint a replacement. Christa Wollenzien will continue to be involved with the Education Committee and will fill in for Matheson until an appointment is made.

Report from Council's Education Committee Meeting

The Council's Education Committee has been meeting bi-monthly. Draft minutes from the January 29, 2015 meeting were circulated to the Executive Committee prior to the conference call. The committee activities have been focused on planning for Invasive Species Awareness Month activities.

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The theme for this year's Invasive Species Awareness Month will be the same as what was used in previous years ("Protect the Places where You Play: Keep Invasive Species out!") and will be used as a means of branding the month's activities.

Invader Crusader Awards – Council members were invited to comment on the 2015 nomination solicitation and judging criteria document. Council members were invited to serve as judges. Responses from Council members are due today (February 6). The Executive Committee feels that we should not limit nominations to single award categories. It is okay if categories change from year to year. The nomination process will be announced next week (week of February 9).

2015 Video Competition – The competition will be announced on April 1 and will run through May 30. The competition will be managed through the Wisconsin DNR Facebook page. Promotional materials are being developed.

New Council Website – The committee has been working with Wisconsin DNR staff to develop a new Council website. The domain name has been purchased and the department has signed a 2-year contract with the web hosting service. Wisconsin DNR staff (and other authorized users) will now be able to regularly update and maintain the site without the constraints of a DOA firewall. The site will go live next week. There are several subcommittees that will work with Watermolen to refine content over the next several months. The initial priority is having the Invader Crusader materials available.

Review of Minutes (November 5, 2014 and November 20, 2014 Council meetings) and Status of Tasks

The final draft minutes from the November 5, 2014 were not yet available for review. Watermolen provided a recap of the meeting and the task assignments. The committee reviewed the draft minutes for the November 20, 2014 meeting. All tasks have been completed.

TASK: Watermolen will prepare the final draft minutes for the November 5, 2014 meeting and distribute to the Executive Committee for review.

Watermolen provided an overview of a draft annual work plan that he prepared to help guide staff work related to the Council and its various committees and work groups. The work plan will be considered at a future Executive Committee meeting.

TASK: Watermolen will send the draft annual work plan for the Council and its committees and work groups to the Executive Committee for review.

Update on Invasive Species Provisions in State Budget Proposal

Bill Cosh, Director, Office of Communication, is the Wisconsin DNR's spokesperson on State Budget issues for the department.

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The governor's budget proposal includes several provisions related to invasive species management:

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council – The governor did **not** approve the Wisconsin DOA's recommendation to eliminate "Inactive Boards, Councils or Commissions," including the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council. There is no language included in the budget related to the Council or its authorizing legislation.

Ballast Water Fees – The governor has recommended eliminating the December 31, 2015, sunset on the payment of ballast water fees. This will allow the Wisconsin DNR to continue inspections of ballast water while monitoring whether new federal standards are adequate to protect Wisconsin waters. This was a recommendation of the department's Invasive Species Team.

Fox River Navigational System Authority – The governor's budget includes funding for the Fox River Navigational System Authority. Included is a goal of maintaining and improving "the navigational system to allow recreational use, ensure safety and control the spread of invasive species." Objectives/activities in support of this goal include:

- Prepare plan for a boat transfer/aquatic invasive species cleansing station at the Rapide Croche lock site.
- Monitor aquatic invasive species above and below the Rapide Croche barrier and adopt an aquatic invasive species management plan.

Another goal is continuing to operate locks that are restored and currently open for public use. An objective/activity in support of this goal is:

- Maintain the aquatic invasive species barrier at Rapide Croche.

AIS Funding – The budget includes \$68,500 in segregated funds each year of the biennium for aquatic invasive species control. The budget includes \$3,169,000 in the first year of the biennium and \$3,099,000 in the second year in the Water Resources Management account for lake, river, and invasive species management. The budget includes \$4,029,100 in the first year of the biennium and \$4,029,100 in the second year in the Environmental Aids account for invasive aquatic species and lake monitoring.

The budget proposal is over 1,800 pages long and agency staff members are still analyzing its provisions and their potential implications for invasive species management. Bill Cosh, Director, Office of Communication, is the Wisconsin DNR's spokesperson on State Budget issues for the department.

Items for Consideration at Interagency Committee meeting

Kuhn provided an overview of the recent multi-agency Pest Summit. The annual event included staff from the Wisconsin DATCP, DNR, University of Wisconsin-Extension, USDA-APHIS, USDA-Forest Service, several Native American tribes, etc. It served as a venue for the exchange of current scientific and management information regarding a variety of invasive species and pest organisms. Watermolen mentioned that Wisconsin DNR's forest health staff found the meeting useful.

Watermolen reported that the Wisconsin DNR has convened a working group to develop reasonable precautions to prevent the introduction and further spread of crazy worms (*Amyntas* spp.). The work group includes representatives from the Wisconsin DATCP and University of Wisconsin as well as

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municipalities and private sector businesses. The goal is to develop reasonable precautions prior to the upcoming field season.

Future Council Meetings – Schedule and Agenda

TASK: Watermolen will conduct a Doodle poll to identify possible dates for a Council meeting during the last couple of weeks of April.

TASK: Watermolen will send a “save the date” reminder to the Council for the already scheduled June meeting.

Added Agenda Item: Update on NR 40 Rule Revision

Watermolen provided an update on the rule revision process. At its December 10, 2014 meeting, the Natural Resources Board took action to adopt the final NR 40 rule revision proposal. The rule was submitted to the governor’s office for approval on December 16, 2014. The Wisconsin DNR received an approval from the governor on January 7, 2015. The proposed rule was then submitted to the legislature’s Administrative Code Register and Administrative Rules Clearinghouse on January 15. The rule was referred to the Senate’s Committee on Natural Resources and Energy (Sen. Cowles, chair) on January 21 and to the Assembly’s Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage (Rep. Ott, chair) on January 27. Rep. Ott requested a briefing from Wisconsin DNR staff. Watermolen provided that briefing on February 4. Either committee or the Joint Committee on Review of Administrative Rules could decide to hold a hearing on the proposed revisions. If the committees opt to not hold hearings, the rule will take effect after a specified time period. If they choose to hold hearings, the effective date will be delayed and the department may receive direction for further revisions.

Adjournment

Motion by Kuhn. Second by Schumacher. Motion carried.