

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, August 29, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
via SKYPE

Meeting Notes

Members present: Tom Buechel (Green Industry), Drew Feldkirchner (DNR), Brian Kuhn (DATCP)

Others present: Tara Bergeson (DNR staff)

Chairman Buechel called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Agenda Repair

Mr. Kuhn requested the addition of an item from the Western Governors Association related to a data management initiative. This item was added to the agenda to be discussed later.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kuhn motioned to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from May 15, 2007. The motion was second by Mr. Feldkirchner. The minutes will be posted on the Council's website.

Update on Council Appointments

The DNR Secretary's office contacted Mr. Dreux Watermolen in early July. They are aware of the vacancies on the Council and that there have been several applications submitted for those vacancies. In addition to two public member vacancies, Mr. Bressner and Mr. Long's terms expired in July. Both have reapplied for their Council seats.

Former Council Chair Schumacher had indicated that he intended to write a letter of recommendation for Ms. Valerie Johnson.

Task: Ms. Bergeson will check with Mr. Schumacher to see if he submitted the letter.

Chairman Buechel noted that the Council appointment process seems to take longer than it should. Having vacancies for an extended time hinders the work of the Council. Would a letter from the Council encourage some action on the appointments?

Mr. Kuhn pointed out that the Invasive Species Council is just one of many Governor's councils and committees that all use the same application process. There is an ongoing process of reviewing and appointing members to these groups. There has been at least one instance where the Governor's office declined one of the WISC applicants for reappointment.

The committee discussed whether the Council should put together a letter outlining the applicants and re-applicants.

Mr. Kuhn noted that the Council needs a member with strong forestry experience.

TASK: Mr. Feldkirchner will check with the Secretary's office for their input on the best approach for getting recommendations to the Governor's office.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will provide details of Council vacancies and applicants to Mr. Feldkirchner.

Once there is feedback from Secretary's office, the Executive Committee will determine next steps, which might include drafting a letter from the Council (Mr. Buechel).

Mr. Kuhn remembers that former Chair Schumacher has, in the past, written letters to the Governor's office with recommendations for Council members.

DNR Invasive Species Staffing Updates

Colleen Robinson left her position as a Natural Resources Educator with the DNR's Forest Health Team to take a position at the Forest Stewards Guild. Colleen was a member of the WISC Education Committee and was active in the planning and implementation of the Invader Crusader Awards and ISAM events.

Update on Species Assessment Group (SAG) Process Review

Chairman Buechel briefly summarized the progress of the review team to date, noting that plans are being finalized for getting feedback from past SAG team leaders and members. The group has a draft set of questions that will be used to obtain feedback.

Ms. Bergeson summarized feedback from Jordan Petchenik, DNR Social Scientist. In a meeting with Ms. Bergeson, Mr. Watermolen, and Ms. Kelly Kearns, Mr. Petchenik reviewed the draft questions and provided feedback and recommendations for how to best obtain input from past SAG leaders and members.

The SAG Process Review Team will meet on August 30 to continue their work of assessing the past SAG process and defining a process for moving forward. At that meeting, the group hopes to narrow the list of questions and interviewees and reaffirm a timeline. The Review Team will report on progress and products at the September 27 Council meeting.

Chairman Buechel noted the need to be diligent in identifying appropriate SAG leaders and members for the next round of SAG reviews.

Review Minutes and Tasks from June 8, 2017 Council Meeting

The Committee reviewed tasks identified during the June 8, 2017 Council meeting.

Task from June 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Bergeson will include Mr. Kerkman on the WISC email list. **Status: completed.**

Task from June 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Bergeson will follow-up on the public records questions and report back to the Council. **Status: in progress – waiting on response from DOA public records staff.**

Task from June 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Kearns and Mr. Watermolen will identify the past SAG members by reviewing the past SAG membership lists. **Status: completed.**

Task from June 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Bergeson will locate the past SAG process flowchart.
Status: completed.

Task from June 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Bergeson will post DNR's upcoming live chats on the Council's website. **Status: completed.**

Preparation of agenda for September 27, 2017 Council meeting

Ms. Bergeson asked Chairman Buechel if he had a preferred location for future Council meetings. Mr. Buechel stated that he is more likely to try to move the location around from time to time. Maybe future Council meetings can be coordinated with other events in the future?

The Committee reviewed a list of possible agenda topics for the September 27, 2017 Council meeting. Topics considered for the agenda include:

1. Call to order
2. Introductions
3. Action: Approval of June 8 Council meeting minutes
4. Discussion on future Council meetings (location, model, etc.)
5. Status of Council member terms
6. State agency invasive species staffing
7. Feedback from Chairman Buechel's letter to Council members
8. Team Building/New Member Onboarding Discussion (SAVE FOR FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA)

The Committee likes the idea of including onboarding/orientation for new Council members, and recognized that it would best be done once the current vacancies have been filled. There is an opportunity to consider a new model for Council meetings given that there will be several new members soon. Potential topics to include for onboarding include:

- a. History of the Council
 - b. Statutory Language
 - c. Bylaws
 - d. Biennial Goals
 - e. Meeting schedule
 - f. Getting to know with one another
9. Committee report: Council's Research Committee (Greg Long)
 - a. SAG Review Update (this will be an information item; not action item)
 10. Committee report: Council's Education Committee (Christa Schaefer)
 - a. Ms. Bergeson pointed out that Ms. Schaefer, Chair of the Education Committee, would like to have more participation on that committee, either from Council members or from other interested groups. Can the Council help with this?

- b. Mr. Kuhn noted that Ms. Schaefer can bring this up during her update for the Council. Council members can reiterate the importance of this committee and the need for dedicated members. Mr. Buechel noted that there are probably more ways people can participate than just by attending the committee meetings. We should consider this going forward. There is also a need to recognize that there may be more work than the current committee members can accomplish. They all have many other responsibilities, too. People get too many things on their plates and can't do them all.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will let Christa know that the Executive Committee discussed this and that they requested that she raise the topic at the September 27, 2017 Council meeting.

- 11. Check-in on ad hoc committees: Baitfish, OIT, etc. These ad hoc committee are identified in the statute and related to the Council's Biennial Goals. There may be a need to reformulate these topics as the Council moves forward. It would be helpful to have clearly established process to check in on timelines, progress, for each ad hoc committee. For the committee to function, there must be people assigned to them, including leaders. The Council should evaluate which tasks of the ad hoc committees have been accomplished, and which have not (and why). There is a need to manage expectations for what can realistically be accomplished. The charge for these groups has not been very clearly defined.

The list of tasks to accomplish is long. Are they all feasible? Funding is an important consideration and plays a key role in defining what gets accomplished.

The Council should consider setting a timeline for reviewing and possibly simplifying the list of ad hoc committees and tasks.

- 12. Information Item: Bsal & Lacey Act (Tara Bergeson)

Ms. Bergeson offered an update on the salamander chytrid fungus (Bsal). The Executive Committee supported this. It is an interesting example of a unique way to use the Lacey Act.

- 13. Updates from Council Members

- 14. Other Business

Mr. Kuhn shared some information about a data management initiative by the Western Governors Association. He received the information through the National Plant Board. He will assess the information more and determine if it should be on the September Council meeting agenda as an update item.

- 15. Public comment & adjourn

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will develop a draft agenda for the September Council meeting and send it to the Executive Committee for review and feedback.

Agency/Program Updates on Invasive Species

DATCP (Mr. Kuhn). There has been some back and forth with DNR and DATCP discussing gypsy moth programs. The Suppression Program is managed by DNR, while DATCP manages the Slow the Spread program. DNR program is small and they may be looking to downscale. DATCP has a contract to treat many acres. The DNR, through the Suppression Program, may only need to treat 40 acres in each year. This treatment is just tagged into the DATCP contract. There is a conference call coming up late in September with the two agencies where they will discuss the future of the programs.

At some point in time, the Slow the Spread Program will no longer apply in Wisconsin. Mr. Kuhn noted that, while that is true, the invasion front hasn't moved dramatically. Wisconsin is probably on the downward side of gypsy moth now, but it has taken 20-25 years. In time, the Wisconsin program will ebb, while Minnesota will become more active. MN had a small treatment program two years ago, with either no or very little spot treating last year. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will probably be looking to de-emphasize gypsy moth suppression and concentrate on Slow the Spread. Eastern states still spend millions on suppression. The USFS may not continue to invest there if they need to shift resources.

DATCP has some new emerald ash borer (EAB) detections. They will probably be adding to quarantine in the coming months.

DATCP Secretary retired. The interim Secretary is Jeff Lyon.

DNR (Mr. Feldkirchner, Ms. Bergeson)

Secretary Cathy Stepp has left the agency to take the role of EPA Deputy Administrator for Region 7 based in Kansas City. Kurt Thiede is the Interim Secretary.

The DNR's Strategic Alignment was approved by the Joint Finance Committee. So, some things that have been on hold will now proceed once the budget is finalized. There are some impacts to invasive species management in that there are shifts in responsibility for prescribed fire. Prescribed fire has been administratively taken over by the Forestry program. The Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) will still be involved in conducted prescribed burns. The department will also be prioritizing habitats for management, including invasive species management.

The required invasive species annual report to the Legislative is being prepared by the department's Invasive Species Team. Ms. Bergeson is leading this effort and will provide a copy of the report to the Council. The report is due October 1st. Ms. Bergeson is working with department administration on a review schedule and process for sharing with the legislature.

Ms. Bergeson is working with DNR's Law Enforcement program to plan NR 40 training for the department's Investigative and Environmental Enforcement Units. Training on the department's stepped enforcement process for NR 40 is also being planned for department staff who work with invasive species.

A portion of DNR's Pittman Robertson funds (source: sale of firearms; ammunition) have been designated to support invasive species work over the next three years. Ms. Bergeson is leading a team that is working on a process to identify how and where the funds will be spent.

The department is also working on a process to identify priorities for invasive species management over the longer term. The process will incorporate the department's newly identified habitat priorities, fire-dependent habitat prioritization (process in progress), and existing data (Invasive Species Archive; modeling capabilities; NR 40 status etc.).

Other Business Allowed by Law

The committee considered no additional business items.

Adjourn

Mr. Kuhn made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Feldkirchner seconded the motion.

Mr. Buechel adjourned the meeting at 11:39 AM.