

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

December 13, 2017
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

DATCP Conference Room 266
2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison
Google Map Link: <https://goo.gl/maps/T5pH7BSjtvF2>

[Join Skype Meeting](#)
Trouble Joining? [Try Skype Web App](#)
Join by Phone
Toll-free number: [+1 \(866\) 715-6499](#)
Toll number: [+1 \(719\) 325-2776](#)
[Find a local number](#)
Conference ID: 4493275897

Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Tom Buechel (Green Industry), Brian Kuhn (DATCP), Drew Feldkirchner (DNR), James Hughes (DOT), Lauren Leckwee (DOA), Ken Raffa (UW-Madison), Julie Fox (Tourism) via SKYPE, Greg Long (Needles and Leaves Nursery), Tom Bressner (Wisconsin Agri-Business Association), Hanna Spaul (TNC)

Others Present: Tara Bergeson (DNR, staff), Christa Schaefer (DOT), Bob Wakeman (DNR), Mary Bartkowiak (DNR)

Call to order & introductions

Chairman Buechel called the meeting order at 9:05 a.m.

DATCP Secretary Harsdorf joined the group for approximately ten minutes to meet the Council.

Mr. Kuhn: DATCP is working on emergency rules for palmer amaranth and water hemp.

Action item: Approval of September 27, 2017 Council meeting minutes

Mr. Bressner made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Raffa seconded. The September 27, 2017 Council meeting minutes were approved.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will post the minutes to the website.

Status of Council member terms

Mr. Feldkirchner reported that the DNR got some questions from the Governor's office regarding Council candidates, so there appears to be some movement.

Ms. Spaul asked why the process takes so long? Mr. Feldkirchner and Mr. Kuhn notes that it is just the way the process seems to work. The Governor's Office is responsible for appointments to many, many Boards and Councils, all of which are on different schedules for member appointments. Mr. Bressner pointed out that there has been a lot of turnover in the Governor's office, which may impact some of these appointment processes.

Mr. Raffa mentioned that he will be retiring in 2018 and will not be seeking another term. He suggested that Mark Renz would be a good fit for the Council. Mark's expertise is more on the plant side, which would be a good fit given that the upcoming Species Assessment Group (SAG) process will focus largely on terrestrial plants. The Council overall expressed support for Mr. Renz if he were to apply for a seat.

Mr. Raffa would be willing to continue representing UW until a replacement for him is identified – if the process takes a while again.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will send information about the Council, along with a link to the Governor's online application form to Mr. Renz.

Ms. Spaul asked if the Council makes recommendations to the Governor's Office for individuals to fill the vacant seats. Mr. Long replied that in the past the Council has submitted a letter to the Governor's Office with recommendations for Council members.

Mr. Raffa wondered if this an opportunity to formalize the Council's process for recruiting members? It would be helpful if the Council's website indicated when terms are expiring and provided information about how to apply. Mr. Long mentioned that individuals do not need to be members of the Council to participate on the Council's committees. It can be a good stepping stone for those individuals.

Mr. Kuhn noted that it would be helpful to have others on the committees in addition to just the Council members. The Council has made recommendations for Council appointments in the past and the Governor's office has then chosen someone else, so it is not a certainty that Council recommendations are accepted. This may be the first time that there have been more candidates than seats.

Ms. Spaul noted that it would be best if the appointing parties are aware of the needs of the Council.

Mr. Raffa wondered if the Council could offer to help by making formal recommendations, or reviewing the applications? He added that that he thinks it would be good for the UW to have Council representation, though not essential.

Mr. Buechel reiterated that having these long-term vacancies makes it difficult for the Council to do its work.

Ms. Spaul suggested that the Council make a formal recommendation and submit it to the Governor's office. It should include the date at which the seats were/will be vacated.

Mr. Buechel reminded the Council that he did send a letter to the Governor's office asking that the appointments be made in a timely manner.

Mr. Long noted that sometimes the Secretaries of the state agencies have made recommendations.

Mr. Buechel stated that the topic of appointments could be included somehow in the onboarding process.

Mr. Kuhn noted that another option is to work directly through the state agency's Secretary's offices. He noted that the Council appointments for the state agencies tend to happen quickly when needed. Mr. Feldkirchner pointed out that he has taken this issue through the DNR Secretary's office channels. But, now there is a new Secretary at DNR with lots of other issues.

State agency invasive species staffing

DATCP recently held interviews for a new unit supervisor position. This position will be involved in the new emergency hemp rules, which must be completed in 90 days. Two agency employees who worked in the gypsy moth program have retired. The positions will be filled, but the responsibilities will be updated. One is the new supervisor position mentioned earlier. This position should be hired before the end of 2017.

DATCP has a new Secretary – Sheila Harsdorf. She is well acquainted with DATCP. She has received briefings on hemp and emerald ash borer. DATCP also has a new Deputy Secretary – Keeley Moll. There is not a new Assistant Deputy Secretary yet, and there is no established timeline for this position. There is also a new legislative liaison, and the Chief legal counsel is relatively new.

Future direction of the Council

The Council will hold their 2018 meetings in March, June, September, December. The June meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 6 in conjunction with the 14th Annual Invader Crusader Awards. The ICA Ceremony will take place at Olbrich Botanical Garden in Madison. The dates for the September and December meetings will be determined soon, once Council members have an opportunity to complete a Doodle Poll of possible dates.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will send doodle polls to find dates for the September and December Council meetings.

The Council discussed meetings locations and considered holding some meetings at locations around the state. Mr. Feldkirchner pointed out that the Council does not have a budget, so travel expenses are an important factor in considering meeting location.

Ms. Spaul noted that traveling around the state should be based on relevant opportunities, and that travel within an hour or so of Madison seems reasonable. Ms. Schaefer pointed out that one potential opportunity would be to meet in conjunction with the joint AIS Partnership and CISMA meeting, which will take place on March 6 and 7 at Beaver Creek Reserve near Eau Claire. Other possibilities for future Council meetings in collaboration with another group include: 1) the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (it will be in Rochester, MN in October 2018; a future Wisconsin location might be possible); 2) IPAW Field Days (in conjunction with Mark Renz and UW-Extension), 3) SEWISC meeting (good way to connect with a regional group); 4) Wisconsin Wetlands Association Wetland Science Conference.

Mr. Buechel suggested the 2018 December meeting be held at a venue where the Council could have lunch together.

Mr. Kuhn suggested taking an inventory of events that might connect with our quarterly dates.

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will ask Council members for ideas about presentation topics for meetings and ideas for connecting with other groups that have an invasive species focus/interest.

Chairman Buechel's survey of Council members – results & discussion

The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council is established in Chapter 15, *Wis. Stats.* The Statute defines the Council's committee and their roles. One role of the Council is to "conducting studies of issues related to controlling invasive species." Council members recognized that the Council itself doesn't have the resources to conduct studies, but rather, relies on state agencies, universities, and other organization to do this work. The classification of invasive species (another role of the Council) is one example of a concrete task of the Council.

Ms. Spaul state that, while the Council is established to be advisory to the DNR, she is not clear about what the DNR would like from the Council. Are there specific topics that DNR is asking the Council for

advice on? Mr. Feldkirchner gave the example of the Species Assessment Groups (SAG) and updating NR 40 as clear, concrete areas of focus, where the Council's work is helpful to the department. The SAG review process is underway now.

Mr. Raffa noted that the Council initially worked on development of NR 40. This made the Council think about the characteristics of invasive species, thinking about the differences between aquatic and terrestrial, pathogens and pests, etc. This was constructive work of the Council. After NR 40 was established, the Council entered a different phase and moved toward developing the "Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Species." After that, there was: 1) a lack of resources to implement the strategic plan; and 2) enormous turnover in DATCP and DNR. Development of the Strategic Plan was a success., but implementation of it has not necessarily been a success.

The Council is currently revisiting and reviewing the SAG process, having recognized the need for a very transparent process about how species are reviewed and rated. There is also a need to be clear about why the SAG process includes different levels of scrutiny in different areas. For example, the case of evaluating and deciding to recommend listing emerald ash borer in the first round of NR 40 didn't take long. The problems were clear with that invasive pest species. Now, there will be some more contentious considerations. For example, in the green industry, some plants are both invasive species and commercial products. The good news is that there is a wealth of information about many of these plants. Contrast this with the aquatic pet industry where we don't even have scientific names for some of the organisms.

The Council determined that two general options for moving forward might be: 1) focus on a few things, or 2) go large (e.g. strategic plan was this).

Mr. Buechel brought up the idea of advising the DNR on grants. This relates to two big challenges within the invasive species world: 1) building enough people to do the work on invasive species; and 2) finding funding to do the work.

The Council discussed the need to reassess the goals of their committees.

Mr. Raffa suggested identifying the areas where there is unlikely to be much contention and solicit help in these areas. For example, in aquatics...nobody likes seeing their favorite water body in poor condition. Invasive pests in urban and forest sectors offer opportunities, too, because no one likes these pests either. The Council could also speak on behalf of funding for work at the regional level. Regional projects require buy-in from neighboring states. The DNR supported Mr. Raffa's work on oak wilt, and he leveraged this support by going to the U.S. Forest Service with a research proposal.

Mr. Kuhn expressed his support for choosing smaller targets—a handful of items on which to focus, while also keeping in mind that Council has a statutorily defined direction. The Council could weigh in with letters of support for funding proposals. For example – Farm Bill funding for plant pest issues and the Wisconsin First Detector's Network (WIFDN). There is a connection between tribes and WIFDN. If the tribes could participate in WIFDN training, it builds more people on the ground. The Tribes have now asked Kuhn to connect them with Mr. Renz.

Mr. Buechel would like the Council to do more "advising."

Ms. Spaul suggested making a list of potential focus areas for the Council, ensuring that they are in alignment with the strategic plan and Council goals. It would be nice to be able to tell people at least two things that the Council is actively working on right now. It would help define the Council and make it more purposeful.

Mr. Buechel added that with a focus on fewer things, it doesn't mean that the other items are lost or forgotten about, but are more appropriate for the longer term.

Mr. Kuhn would like to be able to say that the Council's priority is "Topic X" for 2018. This could be education or something else.

Mr. Feldkirchner stated that the SAG process should be a high priority for 2018-2019.

A next step is to begin drafting a goals document that could be taken back to the agencies for input. Proposed 2018-2019 goals might be: 1) SAG process; 2) NR 40 implementation; and 3) Education and partnership-building.

Ms. Spaul suggested considering how “education and partnerships” can support the SAG process and implementation of NR 40, rather than listing “education” as its own priority.

The other things areas of the Council’s statutory provisions are still there, but just not the focus of specific work for the coming year. There is still work going on in other places related to those areas (e.g. pet industry, bait fish, etc).

Mr. Kuhn asked whether there are specific things that the Department Invasive Species Team (DIST) needs from the Council?

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will bring this question to the DIST at a future policy meeting.

When new members join the Council, it would be beneficial to have a presentation about DNR’s Invasive Species Team (DIST) and what they do.

Ms. Schaefer pointed out that she would need to understand how the Education committee would help with the SAG process and NR 40 implementation. Are we talking about current NR 40 education or for the next round?

Mr. Long noted that one way Education Committee can help is to provide clarification about why something is on or not on the NR 40 list. This seems more straightforward with aquatics than with green industry and terrestrial plants.

Mr. Kuhn pointed out that there is not a plan right now to implement the SAG process or an update to NR 40. Rather, the Council is reviewing the SAG process now. The review team has discussed what the SAG team leaders and members need to successfully move through the SAG process.

Mr. Buechel stated that educating the public on the SAG process is important. The SAG process is done for positive reasons. Once a plant gets a “negative” reputation, it is hard to bring it back to market again. There is a challenge of having enough tree options for municipalities and yards. It’s critical to keep the industry involved in the process.

Mr. Raffa added that it is important that education is not centered around NR 40 and the SAG process. Education needs to focus on overall invasive species issues. It begins with pathways and pests –what are they? Education is also about practices. There are many things we can do about invasive species. Policies are a subset of practices.

Pathways > Pests > Practices (policies)

Ms. Spaul stated that there is a lot of refinement needed within education. Who are the target audiences? How can it be cheap, easy, and engaging for professionals to learn what they need to know?

The timing is good for a refocusing of the Education Committee. It would be very helpful if the Council had a couple of specific focus areas for the education committee. Marketing is also important. Target audiences and approaches.

Mr. Feldkirchner state that he thinks DNR social media is underutilized for invasive species. More of the current focus is on wildlife, fisheries, and rare species.

Ms. Spaul added that the Council could identify a few key areas of the SAG process to focus on and could get targeted messages to key audiences.

Example of deer hunting. The discussion around deer and hunting is always focused on the same topics. It would be helpful if there was more focus on getting hunters talking about invasive species and their impact on hunting (e.g., trying to crawl through buckthorn to take a deer). Is there an opportunity to put information on invasive species in the hunting regulations or fishing regulations pamphlet?

Pathways seem to be an important area for educational focus.

Mark Renz trained gypsy moth staff on three invasive species that they could focus on them while they're out setting traps etc.

Hannah Spaul stated that the DNR did a good job with the "don't move your firewood campaign." It has made a real difference in how people do things. Mr. Kuhn added that the department did surveys before and after the campaign to understand how the information made an impact.

TASK: The Executive Committee will put some ideas on paper and will schedule a call of the Council just for this topic.

Does the Statewide Strategic Plan need to be updated?

Mr. Kuhn suggested that, at minimum, we should put it on docket for review, but with a deadline for revisions. Overall, it is still a structurally sound document.

TASK: The Council will review the Strategic plan for anything that is not accurate. Could then put a note on the website saying it's not being updated right now and why.

TASK: Mr. Feldkirchner and Ms. Bergeson will learn more about who did the work for the current strategic plan. Is there someone at DNR who could make updates?

The printing of hard copies of the Strategy were funded by DOA's Coastal Management Program and Pittman-Robertson.

Mr. Long asked how the Strategic Plan will be used? Will we again reach out to legislators? Maybe the plan is good as it is and we should be focused on biennial goals instead.

Focus will be:

- ✚ Refresh the document by checking for inaccuracies. Update the online version. No reprinting right now.
- ✚ Make the document be more accessible.
- ✚ In the longer term, the document can be updated more thoroughly.
- ✚ New biennial goals for 2018-2019
 - If we completed certain items in the 2015-2017 goals, let's document them.
 - There are aspects of the current goals that are being done in the agencies. Don't need to repeat at Council level. Council gets updates.

Onboarding

The Council discussed onboarding for new Council members. Ms. Spaul noted that it is important that when someone joins a new effort, they have a clear assignment. For the new Council members, maybe joining one of the committees is a first assignment. Mr. Raffa noted that onboarding should be a two-way process. New members should have a voice and an opportunity to let the Council know about their interests, expertise, skills, etc. Offering them an opportunity to give an introduction at their first Council meeting is a good way to start. Ms. Spaul asked if there are written expectations for Council members,

including the expected number of meetings each year, hours of preparation for each meeting, etc. The Council's Statutory provisions and By-Laws are currently the existing resources for Council members. Mr. Raffa mentioned that another important expectation for Council members is to be prepared and willing to answer questions from the public.

Ideas for Onboarding include:

- Provide Strategic Plan
- Provide Council By-Laws
- Summary of the state agency roles in invasive species work
- Provide New Council members with a mentor

TASK: Ms. Bergeson will create a starting list of onboarding items and send to Council members for feedback.

Committee Report: Council's Research Committee (Greg Long)

The SAG Review process is moving forward with a group discussion of past SAG Team Leaders scheduled for Feb 13, 2018. The discussion will be facilitated by DNR Social Scientist, Jordan Petchenik. Following the group discussion, a summary will be provided to the Council's SAG Review Team and to the Council. Ultimately, a revised SAG process will be developed.

Ms. Spaul requested that the process include an opportunity for the Council to provide feedback and advice. The Council should also ask the SAG Teams what the Council can do to support them.

Committee report: Council's Education Committee (Christa Schaefer)

The Education Committee met in October 2017. They have been discussing goals for moving forward. The date for the 2018 Invader Crusader Awards ceremony has been set for June 6, 2018. The ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m. at Olbrich Gardens. The group has established tasks and a timeline for both the ICA and video contest. The Committee will meet again in January 2018 with Invasive Species Awareness Month and Invader Crusader Awards the primary focus of the agenda. Christa has list of folks that we will invite to join the committee. Three Council applicants will be invited. Will also reach out to UW Extension to see if they have someone interested.

The Vice President of the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin (IPAW) recently invited Tara to attend a future IPAW meeting. IPAW would like to talk about connections and shared opportunities among their group and the Council.

Updates from Council Members

Ken Raffa (UW-Madison) – Has completed his work on oak wilt vectors (funded by DNR). The objective was to help set guidelines for periods of no cutting of oak trees. Guidelines that are too broad interfere with commerce, while guidelines that are too narrow may fail to prevent the spread of oak wilt. Mr. Raffa will present his research to the oak wilt advisory group (date TBD) and to the Plant Pest Summit (February 27, 2018). A manuscript was submitted to a peer-reviewed journal and is in the anonymous review stage right now.

Brian Kuhn (DATCP) – The DNR will be going to public comment soon on a proposal to retire the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program. This wouldn't impact DATCP'S Slow the Spread (STS) Program.

DATCP has been in discussion with tribes and APHIs about emerald ash borer quarantine. The checkerboard of quarantine areas makes the regulatory program challenging for DATCP.

Drew Feldkirchner (DNR) – The department continues to implement its strategic alignment initiatives. January will bring many “boots on the ground” changes. Prescribed fire will be implemented under a new system this spring. Fire is one of most important tools for controlling invasive species on public lands, so this is an important issue for the department. The Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation’s Annual Report is published and will be provided to Council members. The State Natural Areas program managed more acres in 2017 than ever before. There is a need for more funding for terrestrial invasive species on these properties and all other DNR properties. Donations and grants are NHC’s main funding sources. The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program and the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network are jointly hosting *The Wisconsin Summit for Natural Resources Volunteers* March 22-24 in Eau Claire.

Christa Schaefer (DOT) – Just finished managing the 2nd round of *Phragmites* work in the prohibited counties (western part of state). DOT issues Right-of-way permits, which allow groups to do invasive species control work in rights of way. This is a good example of a successful partnership. DOT has also just finished a first round of tree planting at rest area where trees were removed because of emerald ash borer.

Jim Hughes (DOT). DOT has about 25 remnant prairies along roadsides that will be up for burning/restoration. Madison DOT will move into a new building at the end of February.

Greg Long (Needles & Leaves Nursery) – Reminded the Council about the WI Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology and the Coastal Management Program as potential opportunities for future Council meeting collaborations.

Tom Bressner (WI Agri-Business Association) – Mentioned the Discovery Farms report as a compelling and unifying product to get a message across. This is a potential example for a concise format for the Executive Summary of the Invasive Species Report to the Legislature in the future.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjourn

Mr. Raffa Made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Feldkirchner seconded the motion. Mr. Buechel adjourned the meeting at 12:33 p.m.