

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Wisconsin DNR Horicon Marsh Education & Visitor Center
N7725 Hwy 28, Horicon, Wisconsin

Meeting Notes

Members Present: Tom Bressner (Wisconsin Agro-Business Association), Tom Buechel (McKay Nursery), Drew Feldkirchner (DNR), James Hughes (DOT), Jim Kerkman (Council on Forestry), Brian Kuhn (DATCP), Greg Long (Needles & Leaves Nursery), Travis Olson (DOA), Ken Raffa (University of Wisconsin, via telephone), Paul Schumacher (Wisconsin Lakes), and Hannah Spaul (The Nature Conservancy).

Others Present: Jason Granberg (DNR), Kari Hagenow (Door County Invasive Species Team), Amy Kretlow (staff, DNR), Krista Lutzke (Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department), Bob Wakeman (staff, DNR), Dougal Walker (staff, DNR), Dreux Watermolen (staff, DNR), and Christa Wollenzien (staff, DOT).

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Schumacher called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Council members introduced themselves and welcomed two new members.

Approval: December 1, 2015 Council Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kerkman moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2015 Council meeting. Second by Mr. Kuhn. Motion passed.

Council Membership Appointments

The governor has appointed Tom Buechel to the Council. He replaces James Reinartz whose term expired after many years of service. Mr. Buechel is the head of production for McKay Nursery and has been involved in invasive species issues for several years.

Mr. Long moved to acknowledge Dr. Reinartz's service with a Council resolution. Second by Mr. Kuhn. Motion passed.

TASK: Watermolen will provide Chairman Schumacher with a resolution certificate to be signed and mailed to Dr. Reinartz.

DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp has appointed Drew Feldkirchner to serve as her designee on the Council. Mr. Feldkirchner is the recently appointed director of the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.

The Department of Tourism Secretary's designee on the Council, Patrick Reinsma, passed away earlier this month. At Chairman Schumacher's request, the Council observed a moment of silence for Mr. Reinsma.

State Agency Invasive Species Staffing

Dreux Watermolen provided an update on DNR staffing. Tim Lizotte has replaced Allen Crossley as the wildlife management representative on the Department-wide Invasive Species Team. The Bureau of Fisheries Management has hired a replacement for Bill Horns. William (“Willy”) Fetzter began working in the program earlier this spring. Bob Wakeman announced that Aimee Krietden will be replacing Amanda Perdzok as the new AIS monitoring and rapid response specialist. Libby Hess has been hired and is returning as an LTE to assist with AIS monitoring and response in southeast Wisconsin. The hiring process to replace Tim Plude, AIS monitoring and rapid response coordinator in southeast Wisconsin, is underway. The DNR has assembled a bait fish team, which is led by Kate Strom Hiorns.

Mr. Kuhn announced that Chris Folkner has been hired as DATCP’s gypsy moth coordinator.

Input for DNR’s Annual Report to Legislature, Governor, and Council

The DNR is required by *Wisconsin Statutes* to submit a biennial report to the legislature, governor, and Invasive Species Council detailing Wisconsin’s invasive species programs, the state’s progress in controlling invasive species, current expenditures, and future needs. The report is due by October 1 in even numbered years, with an interim report required in odd numbered years. Last year, the DNR prepared a report covering fiscal year 2015 to meet the interim reporting requirement. It is available online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/ss/SS1149.pdf>. Council members offered suggestions for topics to be addressed in the fiscal year 2016 report which is due this fall.

Mr. Schumacher suggested the report should have an executive summary that highlights information on dollars and jobs (economics).

Mr. Kuhn commented that it is important to place a higher priority on the need for funding for terrestrial invasive species as there are comparatively little funds available for this category of invasive species. He noted that these species have significant effects on forestry, agriculture, and tourism industries.

Several questions were raised regarding the current status of relying on grants, especially the GLRI. Mr. Schumacher emphasized that this is not a sustainable practice for a state invasive species program.

Mr. Olson asked how this legislative report relates to the state budget process. Mr. Watermolen explained, in the past DNR staff have used the Council approved strategic plan as a basis for identifying the future needs included in the legislative report and to help build budget requests. Paul Schumacher asked how invasive species as a whole was prioritized through the DNR’s recent core work analysis. The DNR staff present commented on how each agency program prioritized invasive species.

Ms. Spaul asked if the expenditure figures included in the report were accurate and a correct representation of what is being spent on invasive species. Mr. Watermolen answered that the figures are as accurate as possible, but could actually be underestimates due to time and expense accounting practices. Several Council members commented that if the state is spending more on invasive species, then it should really get credited for it.

Mr. Buechel commented that more economics should be included in the report. Maybe showing full figures could open eyes. Recreation → Tourism → Job growth. He also commented that if more economics information was included, a non-technical reader could better understand the importance.

Mr. Bressner asked if the department has ever received any feedback on this report from members of the legislature. He also wondered if there is anything the Council can do to get feedback and suggested as a starting point he and other Council members could take the report to legislators and other lobbyists. Mr. Watermolen suggested it would be important to consider the timing of events: October 2016 – Report due; November 2016 – Election; January 2016 – Newly elected officials take office.

Chairman Schumacher and Mr. Kuhn have already submitted written comments to Mr. Watermolen.

TASK: Council members to email any additional comments to Mr. Watermolen by June 30, 2016.

New report draft should be available for fall Council meeting.

Council Education Committee Report

Christa Wollenzien, DOT, provided a report on recent activities of the Council’s Education Committee.

Invader Crusader Awards – Nominations received: 47; individuals and groups nominated: 37. Judges were Jerry Doll, Mr. Long, Mr. Kerkman, Ms. Spaul, and Chairman Schumacher. Awards given: 11. Mr. Long commented, after reading all the submitted entries, they all were winners. He also thanked Dougal Walker, DNR’s science communications manager, for organizing all the entries and coordinating the nomination and judging processes. The Council acknowledged DNR’s Forest Health program for covering the costs for the Invader Crusader awards ceremony.

ISAM Video Competition – Entries: 21; votes cast: 451; number of Facebook “likes”: 81; number of video views: 1,400.

First Place – 253 votes – “We mean it!” by Katie Poepping and middle school students at the Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy – *Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” re-written with a focus on aquatic invasive species control.*

(Shown to council)

Second Place – 56 votes – “Freeing the Old Oak” by Charlie Luthin and Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance – *A time-lapse video of Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance members clearing invasive species from under an oak on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant grounds.*

Third Place – 44 votes – “Clean Boats Clean Waters Vice” by Chris Hamerla and his dog Cisco – *A hero dog reminds a boater to remove invasive species and drain water from his boat before departing.*

DNR “Ask the Experts” Chat – “Ask the Experts” is an online chat series hosted by the DNR. Department employees answer questions about specified topics. Earlier this week, the DNR held a chat titled “Invasive Species: Land, Water, and other Nasty Pests.” Participating in the chat were water resources management specialist Maureen Ferry, forest health specialist Colleen Robinson, invasive forest pest program coordinator Andrea Diss-Torrance, aquatic invasive species coordinator Bob Wakeman, invasive plant specialist Mike Putnam, and plant and pest disease specialist Bernie Williams. About 30 members of the public participated with a variety of questions. The chat is archived on the DNR website.

Posters/Placemats from Arbor Vitae Elementary School – Bob Wakeman presented to the Council posters/placemats made by a 4th grade class that highlighted the fight against invasive species. The Council expressed appreciation to the 4th grade class for helping in the fight against invasive species.

AIS Strategic Planning Process

Bob Wakeman, DNR aquatic invasive species coordinator, provided an update on the AIS strategic planning process. The original AIS Strategic Plan was written in 2003. This update will focus on pathways and the spread of invasive species in Wisconsin. It will be written so it can be used for the next 5-10 years. The principle coordinator and author is Tim Campbell. Mr. Kuhn represents the Council on the drafting committee. Once completed, and subjected to through a public comment period, the DNR will seek approval from the national AIS Taskforce. The Council should see a draft by the end of 2016. Review and final approval should be completed in early 2017.

DNR's Invasive Species Response Framework

Dreux Watermolen provided an update on the DNR's invasive species response framework. The department previously developed a response framework for aquatic invasive species as part of a federal grant. In response to the Council's input in 2014, the DNR's invasive species team reviewed the AIS response framework and modified it to cover approaches for both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and to factor in the department's stepped enforcement process for NR 40. Because the framework affects external stakeholders, the department considers it to be a "guidance document" and made it available for public review earlier this spring. Mr. Watermolen provided an overview of public comments received on the framework and the resulting changes to document. The DNR expects to have the final guidance document available in the next couple of months.

Presentation: Phragmites Control and Local Ordinances

Kari Hagenow, Door County Invasive Species Team Coordinator, and Krista Lutzke, Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department, made a presentation on "Four years of Phragmites control in Door County, WI, and a blueprint moving forward." Lake Michigan water levels dropped significantly which led to an explosion of Phragmites growth all along the Door County shorelines. Prior to 2011, in 2009 only ~1 acre treated and in 2010 ~10 acres were treated. Through grants and private donations in 2011, 300 acres of shoreline were treated. In 2012-2013, 32+ more acres of shoreline were treated and 16 acres of ROW were treated. In 2014 and 2015, local ordinances were adopted in the towns of Nasewaupsee and Jacksonport. Under the ordinances, landowners must control Phragmites on their property or it will be controlled by a representative of the Town and reflected as a charge on their tax bill. There has been interest from additional townships for similar ordinances. Some are also interested in the county's inventory efforts and outreach. Jacksonport continues Phragmites control as a town budget item.

Chairman Schumacher commented that these are great examples of the use of local ordinances and perhaps they could be used for controlling other invasive species.

One Council member asked the presenters if there was any resistance to using chemicals for Phragmites control. The presenters indicated that people generally agreed to use what was felt to be the best method of control for their property, be it chemical or mechanical.

Another Council member asked about the approximate cost per landowner. The presenters indicated that this was a difficult question to answer due to the different densities of Phragmites on different properties and the different means of control used.

Chairman Schumacher extended the Council's appreciation to the presenters for their willingness to travel to the meeting and for sharing their experiences.

Presentation: DNR's "Invasive Species Archive" and Xenos Model

Dr. Jason Granberg, DNR water resources management specialist, made a presentation to the Council on the "Invasive Species Databases and Xenos Threat Model" that he has developed. Presently, there are numerous invasive species databases (GISN, MISIN, EDDMaps, GLEDN, DNR's SWIMS, etc.) with potentially millions of Wisconsin records. Dr. Granberg has extracted all of the invasive species data from these systems and compiled it in a single system called the Invasive Species Archive. The archive currently holds 114,000 records. With this system, one can generate lists of species for specific areas or regions and can do regional and site analyses. It can be used to help determine where multiple species occur within counties, find gaps in reporting, and project potential future threats. This can help localize outreach to certain species and help determine a focus on what to watch for. The Archive can also be used to help determine habitat suitability. The Invasive Species Archive can be used either by ArcGIS or GoogleEarth, using KMZ files. The Xenos model helps create a threat score for invasive species reports. This model will help determine how much of a threat a species can be in a region, area, and habitat.

One Council member asked if the Invasive Species Archive was a snapshot in time or a live link. Dr. Granberg indicated that it is currently a snapshot in time, but the DNR is hoping to work with partners in Michigan through the U.S EPA's National Environmental Information Exchange Network to link databases in real time.

Another Council member asked for clarification on whether the archive included only occurrences reported to/verified by the DNR or if it accumulated records from all databases. Dr. Granberg answered that the archive includes records from all databases including DNR. Staff members in the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation are presently writing codes so the database can be maintained in the future.

A Council member asked if this means the DNR now has the most comprehensive collection of data and whether others can access it. Dr. Granberg indicated the archive represents the most comprehensive compilation. He also explained how duplicate records have been eliminated and how Dr. Mark Renz, UW-Extension and First Detectors Network, and the DNR have maintained links between their data to ensure completeness.

Chairman Schumacher extended the Council's appreciation to Dr. Granberg for his work and presentation.

Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC)

Dreux Watermolen, DNR, provided an update on state agency sponsorships of the UMISC. Due to agency sponsorships, the Council will be identified as a sponsor. Each sponsoring department will get a tally of complimentary registrations. See <http://www.umisc.net/>

NR 40 Implementation

Dreux Watermolen, DNR, gave an overview of recent NR 40 implementation efforts. Consistent with the Council's Invasive Species Strategic Plan, priority efforts have focused on prevention, response, control, and permitting. The DNR and DATCP are working closely together regarding Organisms in Trade. Amy Kretlow, invasive species outreach specialist, has been accompanying DATCP nursery inspectors on visits to retailers. The DATCP is compiling a weekly spreadsheet of NR 40-regulated species found during nursery visits and is sharing it with the DNR for appropriate follow up.

Council Questions and Feedback on Written Invasive Species Updates

A written "Invasive Species and Issues Updates" document was distributed to the Council with the meeting materials. See that written report for additional details and staff contact information.

Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

Adjourn

Chairman Schumacher moved to adjourn the Council meeting. Motion was seconded and passed. Chairman Schumacher adjourned the Council meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Note: PowerPoint presentation slides and handout materials from several of the meeting presentations/discussions were distributed to Council members via email following the meeting.