

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

Thursday, August 28, 2014

9:30 a.m. – 12:20 pm

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

Meeting Notes

Present: Tom Bressner (Wisconsin Agro-Business Association), Jim Kerkman (Council on Forestry), Brian Kuhn (DATCP), Greg Long (Needles & Leaves Nursery), Pat Morton (The Nature Conservancy), Travis Olson (DOA), Ken Raffa (UW), Jim Reinhartz (UW-Milwaukee), Paul Schumacher (Wisconsin Lakes), and Jack Sullivan (DNR).

Others Present: Tim Campbell (Sea Grant, Extension, and DNR), Chrissy Hursh (DNR), Dreux Watermolen (DNR), and Christa Wollenzien (DOT).

Absent: Danielle Johnson (Tourism), Todd Matheson (DOT)

Call to Order and Introductions

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

Approval: June 5, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes

Sullivan moved to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2014 meeting. Second by Kuhn. Motion carried.

Action: Adoption of Council Goals

Chairman Schumacher explained that the Executive Committee received comments on the draft Council goals, which were distributed in advance of the meeting. The Committee generally incorporated the comments received and revised the document for consideration at this meeting. Several goals were modified, a few were dropped, and a few were left as they were in the earlier draft. The Executive Committee felt it made sense to align the biennial goals and the biennial budget cycle, with the goals being for the period 2015-2017.

Chairman Schumacher walked through the revised goals. Several Council members asked how the Council goals relate to the recently adopted strategic plan. Reinhartz and Raff asked if pet sales and bait sales were adequately covered in the strategic plan. Schumacher explained that the Council goals will help the Council focus its efforts when implementing the strategic plan. Internet/mail order, bait, and pet sales were identified separately in the Council goals because these are specifically mentioned in the Council's authorizing legislation. Raffa mentioned that it is important that the strategic plan not be forgotten. As ad-hoc issues come along, the Council should fold them into the strategic plan instead of leaving them as stand-alone items. If individual ad-hoc issues are perceived as stand-alone it weakens the strategic plan. Sullivan noted that DNR is using the strategic plan as it develops budget proposals. Schumacher emphasized that by identifying the three areas from the statutes, the Council is recognizing them as bodies of work that haven't yet been addressed.

Goals for the Education Committee focus on leadership and oversight for Invasive Species Awareness Month activities, the Invaders Crusaders Awards program, the Invasive Species Education Summit, and work with state agencies on outreach specific to NR 40. Morton asked if the DNR had already established goals for NR 40 outreach. Watermolen explained that the department had not committed to any particular course of action yet. The direction in part depends on what resources are available. The bulk of species proposed for regulation are terrestrial plants, so there will be an impact to the nursery and greenhouse community, and we'll need additional outreach to that community. The GLRI grant research focused on aquatics in pet stores, but staff also noticed other regulated species. For example, there is a parrot interest group (monk parrots are a prohibited species). In doing some internet surfing, department staff found vendors in Wisconsin that are selling those. There are two sources of input: (1) our experience implementing the first round of NR 40; we learned what worked and didn't work, and (2) our understanding that there are people we haven't dealt with yet. Also, DATCP inspectors and law enforcement staff have given ideas of tools they want for their outreach.

Goals for the Research and Regulations Committees focus on reviewing the SAG process for possible improvements, and reviewing and providing endorsement for NR 40. The Council discussed the lack of progress on the current SAG review process. Sullivan explained that the goals are for a two-year period and that the DNR staff's focus right now is on getting the NR 40 revisions adopted. Next thing after NR 40 is to hire staff and make progress on some of the other areas. Schumacher urged that letters be sent out to SAG members to initiate the review.

Kuhn pointed out that ad-hoc committees don't have to be made up exclusively of Council members. We have connections with others that can participate on these ad hoc groups. To make progress, efforts will have to extend beyond the Council. Raffa noted that a big challenge for dealing with Internet sales will be doing more interstate cooperation. This is an issue beyond state borders. For this ad-hoc committee, we should seek representatives from surrounding states to participate on the committee.

Watermolen reminded the Council that one purpose of this exercise is to provide guidance to staff regarding what they need to work on to support the Council. Agencies have a statutory charge to provide support on these issues for the Council. These provide good guidance, we can develop good work plans. It provides a framework to move forward, as the Council learns more about those topics we can adjust our course in the strategic plan and modify goals.

Sullivan moved to adopt the goals, with caveats that it's a living document that is used in conjunction with the strategic plan, and the Council can revisit the goals at a later date. Second by Raffa. Motion carried.

Invasive Species Updates

A document with "Invasive Species and Program Updates" was distributed to the Council. The Council briefly discussed the various items included in the updates. Highlights include:

Chairman Schumacher announced that the governor had reappointed Raffa through 2018.

Watermolen explained that the DNR was undertaking an outreach effort focused on crazy worms (*Amyntas*). Staff members have done a number of presentations for trade associations and educator conferences. A post on DNR's Facebook page with a video clip of crazy worms in a flower pot was the most popular Facebook post in the month of July. The media coverage has resulted in lots of reports coming into the DNR. Kuhn noted that reports in the media are pointing at the nursery trade as the source of the introductions but state inspectors and the American Horticulture Society haven't found evidence of their movement in nursery stock. People ask, "How do they get here?" but that message [that nurseries are

the main source of crazy worm infestations] has gotten generalized and blown up. In some cases, municipal mulch piles and landscaping practices look like a likely source. The landscape industry gets lumped in with the horticulture industry in the media.

No further work has occurred on the GLMRIS project, but a number of legislators from around the Great Lakes including Sens. Baldwin and Johnson signed a letter that went to the CEQ. They asked the Asian carp director to take a leadership role in proposing solutions to keeping carp out of the Great Lakes. Schumacher requested that copies of the letters be distributed to the Council members.

TASK: Watermolen to circulate letters to Council.

There's a new bill on ballast water management, it was first introduced in March. Some action taken by the Senate in July, three amendments, and now it's sitting in committee. The Updates document contains the Congressional Research Service's summary. The bill establishes a national standard for ballast water, calling for the Coast Guard to oversee it, and preempting any state ballast water laws.

Schumacher noted that there was a June 10 news release from the DATCP relating to a zebra mussel control experiment. The U.S. Geological Survey proposed using Zequanox, a product derived from a bacterium that the zebra mussels consume, in an in-lake enclosure experiment. The bacterium disrupts the digestive system of the mussels, but appears to be non-toxic to mammals and birds and breaks down in the water within hours. An experimental permit was requested for work on Keyes Lake. We already know what this product does to zebra mussels. The experiment was to test the impact on native freshwater mussel populations. Somehow that story blew up into "The DNR wants to treat the entire lake." The county health director wrote a letter to DATCP raising concerns. The experiment did not happen because of this public opposition. An update was sent to the Council on this when the media coverage appeared. The DNR and USGS agreed that if there was local opposition, the experiment could be done somewhere else. USGS has not gone forward with the experiment; they're considering a different place. Olson asked if there was any follow-up among agencies involved, in terms of lessons learned. Watermolen indicated that a debriefing had occurred and that the forestry staff had provided some suggestions for how to handle future communications.

Raffa stated that the opportunity shouldn't be lost. The Council heard about this material in a presentation for the strategic plan at the Fish Hatchery location last year. The precedent has been set for the communication methods used for gypsy moth control with *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (B.t.k.). A lot of education preceded the gypsy moth campaign. It ended up the biggest concern was "What will this do to the finish on my car?" Same communication issues with the release of parasitic wasps against the emerald ash borer. We had media right there when we did the releases. Shortly after the releases, Raffa received calls from the county about bee keeper concerns regarding the wasps attacking bees. Another issue is non-targets. People have legitimate concerns about native fauna. A researcher like me can easily do an experiment using treatment and control. But in the real world, what is the impact of this treatment method on native species versus what is the effect of the invasive species on natives?

Kuhn noted that the public relations side of this stuff is very important. It's a lot of work and investment, and easy to lose, an example being the light brown apple moth. Limited information gets amplified. Even this year on gypsy moths, there were extreme complaints. To keep local communities on board, DATCP employed a full-time public information officer just to work on gypsy moth issues. Organic growers were concerned and we reassured them that their certifications were not in jeopardy, instead of them going to the legislature to complain. Schumacher suggested that next time the agencies can work with partners like Wisconsin Lakes and the River Alliance.

TASK: Watermolen to compile information on Zequanox to share with the Council.

Update: NR 40 Rule Revision Update

Watermolen provided an update on the NR 40 rule revision process. The public comment period ended on June 30. The DNR held two public hearings: one in Madison and one in Green Bay. Nine people participated (including one via webcast). Five people offered verbal comments. At Madison, two greenhouse owners commented about the timing of the hearing (June is a busy month for them) and expressed concern about the length of the phase-out period for plants. They suggested 5 years for herbaceous plants and woody vines, and 10 years for trees and shrubs, not 3 and 5 years, respectively. They also commented about water hyacinth being one of their best sellers and suggested that it can't overwinter. A representative from the Green Industry Federation spoke about support from the industry and that members supported it. There were 49 written comments, 15 of those were letters of support. Six of the 49 opposed the rule. There were a number of letters that addressed specific species. More people were in favor of the proposal than opposed. One local greenhouse operator sent a mass email to his customers urging them to comment on the proposed listing of several plants. Nine people forwarded his email and stated "we agree" and about an equal number who forwarded it said "we don't agree". There were some recommendations for adding species, all of them were ones we'd already assessed and made a decision about or ones we had decided to put in the next batch for revisions. DNR staff will prepare a response summary. The DNR is tentatively planning to take the final proposal to the Natural Resources Board in October.

A "green sheet" packet will be ready prior to the board meeting. As soon as the green sheet is available, DNR will circulate it to the Council. Schumacher noted that last spring the Council provided support for NR 40 and support for moving forward with the hearings. The Council could take similar action in support of the final rule proposal. The Council could do that at a future meeting or could take action via an email vote.

Sullivan noted that each Natural Resources Board member will be offered an opportunity for a briefing prior to the meeting. He also noted that public appearance before the Board is weighted equally as written comments, so if you want to be present at the meeting to comment that works too.

State Budget Process Updates

The Council discussed the state budget process. Kuhn distributed a flow diagram outlining the State Budget process. State agencies currently are working on budgets to submit to the DOA and state budget office. These are due in September. Both the DNR and DATCP budgets are subject to board approval prior to submission.

Sullivan reported that the Governor gave instruction to state agencies on July 9. The budget direction was that agencies maintain their budgets at 2014-2015 levels. Major budget policies include that there will be zero growth in GPR for state agencies. Budget requests are due by September 15. Agencies were given a lapse in the last budget and that continues. Agencies accomplish the lapse by maintaining vacancies. This applied to transportation and conservation funds. Sullivan noted that it's not unusual to get zero growth, but he thinks there's an opportunity as the governor gave instructions on reallocating and maximizing federal grants. Agencies have to work within the budget guidelines.

Motion by Reinhartz that the Council send a letter to agency secretaries encouraging them to use their budgets to fund priority invasive species work. Second by Kerkman. Motion carried.

TASK: Schumacher to send letter to agency secretaries encouraging them to fund priority invasive species work.

Committee Report: Council's Education Committee

Christa Wollenzien (DOT) presented a report on behalf of the Council's Education Committee. The committee met in July and discussed three items: Invasive Species Awareness Month, the Invader Crusader Awards, and the Invasive Species Education Summit. Minutes from the committee meeting were distributed along with the Council's meeting materials. The committee is considering changing the time of year that the Education Summit is held. The committee is also considering holding the summit every other year. Invader Crusader Awards will continue annually in June. The University of Wisconsin Sea Grant program has committed to helping with a video contest again next year.

Information Item: Summary of Great Lakes BIOTIC Symposium

Chairman Schumacher introduced Tim Campbell. Campbell was a co-organizer of the UW Sea Grant-sponsored BIOTIC Symposium held in Milwaukee in June. Campbell provided an overview of the symposium and highlighted key points from symposium presentations, with a focus on the live bait industry and pet trade.

Symposium objectives included:

- Advancing knowledge & understanding of organisms in trade (OIT) invasion pathways
- Identifying research gaps to improve management of OIT
- Facilitating efficient transfer of information between researchers, managers, educators, OIT industries/associations, and the public
- Better preparing people to address OIT pathway issues

The symposium targeted five OIT pathways:

- Aquarium release
- Water garden escape
- Live study specimen release
- Live food/aquaculture release
- Live bait release

With respect to the live bait industry, Campbell summarized as follows:

- *When given a large enough sample size, the improbable becomes probable*
 - Much like watercraft
- Glass half-full: *many* harvest events and angling trips benign; strong management, outreach & enforcement success
- Key control points exist: manipulating bycatch and release rates best opportunity to manage invasion risk
 - HACCP – Work with Wisconsin Aquaculture Association
 - Do Not Release/Habitattitude – Work with WI AIS Partnership

Watermolen noted that Dr. Bret Shaw expressed a willingness to present to the Council on work he's done with bait shops.

With respect to the pet trade, Campbell summarized as follows:

- Many species are low risk, science based risk assessments can identify high risk species
 - NR-40 & SAGs can utilize RA
- Regulations can work; collaborative approach with industry has been effective
- Release behavior still an issue
- Establish better alternatives to release

- This is pet focused – water garden information exists

A question was asked regarding pet surrender networks discussed in the presentation and what species were brought in/no longer wanted. Campbell indicated that he was unsure but noted that the folks he's worked with to develop the networks would like to work with other pet stores to record what stores get in.

Raffa asked if there are opportunities for sterilization in the pet trade for fish and other species. Can stores be certified to sell sterilized pets? Campbell indicated that has been brought up in the discussions he's been involved with. In aquaculture, a lot of "certified" sterilized weren't actually sterile. In the aquarium trade, they have breeder awards and breeding of aquatic fish is a big deal to them. One option might be micro-chipping exotic animals to trace back to people that release them to increase enforcement efforts.

Long asked if there are any plans for a second BIOTIC Symposium? Campbell answered that there were no such plans at this time, but the responses from the symposium evaluations suggested doing this again in the future, perhaps in 3-4 years.

TASK: Watermolen to circulate Campbell's presentation slides to Council members as a PDF document. Campbell asks that the slides not be shared broadly as they are not all his.

Information Item: Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference

Watermolen announced that several state agencies are sponsoring the conference, which will be held in Duluth on October 20-22. As a result of the agency sponsorship, the Council is prominently featured on the website and in the literature as a conference host. Other conference hosts include the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin, Midwest Invasive Plant Network, and Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council. Agencies received complimentary registrations based on the amount of funding they provided and are making some of these available to Council members who wish to attend. Interested Council members were asked to let Watermolen know of their interest so he could provide instructions for registering. The complimentary registrations will be first-come, first-serve. More conference information is available at <http://www.umisc2014.org/>.

Reinhartz and Long announced a "Where Ecology Meets Economy: Season 2" session being hosted by SEWISC and Johnson's Nursery on Wednesday September 17. The forum will run from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and will be followed by tours of Johnson's Nursery until 3:30 p.m. The session will bring together growers, land managers, nurseries, etc. The inaugural session was well attended and offered a good flow of information between attendees. You can find additional information at the website. [Website: <http://sewisc.org/sewisc-events/311-where-ecology-meets-economy-a-forum-for-green-industry-professionals-land-managers>. Registration and program schedule: <http://sewisc.org/all-documents-for-doctrack/all-document/event-documents/138-w-eco-meets-econ-low-res-regist-form2014/file>]

Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

TASK: Watermolen to conduct another doodle to schedule a Council meeting in November.

Adjourn

Chairman Schumacher adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.