

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Meeting

September 29, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Tara Bergeson, Jason Granberg, Eric Roscoe, Greg Long, Amy Kretlow, Scott Goodwin, Robert Stroess, Tom Buechel, Hannah Spaul, Drew Brandenburg, Julieann Fox, Matt Puz, Christa Schaefer, Tom Bressner, Brenna DeNamur, Scott Goodwin, Patrick Siwula, Drew Feldkirchner, Lauren Leckwee, Hannah Spaul, Doug Cox, Mark Renz, Erin McFarlane, Amanda Smith, Carroll Schaal, Shelby Adler, Brian Kuhn, Donald Gallo, Patricia Cicero, Alex Selle, Liz Tanner, Sara Fanning

MINUTES

Introductions & agenda repair

Meeting called to order at 9:03. Motion to approve agenda seconded by Mark Renz. Seconded by Drew Feldkirchner.

Action Item: Approve June 30, 2022, Council meeting minutes

Motion to approve by Tom Bressner, Seconded by Brian Kuhn. Meeting minutes approved

AIS Update (Amy Kretlow)

Amy's provided an update on the department's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program and provided examples of some case studies of work done by staff. Amy discussed the Red Swamp Crayfish response by Tyler Mesalk. Five former project staff have been hired to permanent FTE positions. In the past, the department had three positions in the northern and coastal portions of the state, and 2 additional positions. These positions are now permanent, providing consistency. Matt Puz is assisting with the program on the Wetland Invasive Species issues. Matt is developing a statewide non-native Phragmites control strategy. Matt is also assisting with wetland monitoring within the division of Environmental Management. Amy listed the range of roles and responsibilities for the regional coordinators (see attached presentation).

The AIS program is using a Pathways approach for addressing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasives. With the AIS program, the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network (LMPN) program is in its second year. The department takes \$1 million and divides it among the county organizations for the AIS program – a change from the competitive system that was used historically. The core activities (listed within the presentation) were described. The partners work with the AIS coordinators to determine what activities are best suited for the region and local capacity. Amy displayed the range of projects and accomplishments that were conducted this year.

An update on Red Swamp Crayfish was provided. The initial inquiry was from 7/15/22 in Altoona, WI. Tyler Mesalk received a specimen from a landowner that was verified by multiple staff at the department and at Beaver Creek Reserve. Amy provided a map of the locations of crayfish traps. Tyler conducted over

1,600 trap hours, and 4 crayfish were caught. Tyler used a variety of baits and examined efficacy. Additional trapping has been done since the initial find, focusing on retention ponds.

Amanda Smith and Matt Puz provided updates on European Frog-bit activities during the past year. Matt gave an introduction on the biology of European Frog-bit. This species is found in Michigan and along the Great Lakes shorelines. In the northeastern Wisconsin counties, there are multiple estuaries, river miles, and deep channels and drainage ditches. These features make the area prime habitat for European Frog-bit. The initial plants were discovered by a biologist working on a Great Lakes Management Project. The department mobilized partners to assist with monitoring and response. Amanda provided examples where the plants were found among different habitats. Activities included monitoring and control by hand pulling, with one herbicide application at a State Natural Area. After the field responses, a meeting was held to develop a strategic response across four major goals.

Clean Boats/Clean Waters Updates

Updates from Erin McFarlane: CBCW watercraft inspectors discuss AIS issues with boaters and anglers. These inspectors include lake groups and lake districts, many are volunteers and grant funded. Activities have been ongoing since 2004, but boater education started in 2003. The program started as a grass-roots effort. Community members are important for accomplishing CBCW efforts. Watercraft inspectors help by educating the public about invasive species, and which parts of a boat should be checked and locations within the boat and trailer where invasives tend to be found. The CBCW members also collect data that is useful for tracking activities at the specific lakes and boat landings. Erin mentioned studies that compared visual inspections against pro-active removal, and how reports can be used for targeted monitoring at proximal lakes. Erin presented a graph that displayed the number of hours conducted by volunteers and how it changed from voluntary efforts to paid efforts. Some areas with challenges include lack of consistent support for CBCW across the state. Processes have improved by an inclusion of regional partners and department staff. CBCW inspectors are having more support at the local level. Erin discussed what behaviors are consistent among boaters and anglers across years. The number of contacts and inspection has not significantly changed over the years.

Update from Scott Goodwin (Florence County): Florence County has run a program since 2014 and does inspections at multiple boat landings. He mentioned that the positions offered for watercraft inspector positions are not being offered at a competitive level of compensation. The program has contacted over 6600 people. There have been reductions in the number of people contacted in recent years, likely due to increases in gasoline prices.

Update from Patricia Cicero (Jefferson County): Involved in the CBCW program since 2014. Patricia lauded the CBCW program and its effectiveness. Jefferson County has tried to get volunteers to do the work at the boat launches. The arrival of CBCW grants improved the data collection and participation once they became paid positions. Applicants have been a challenge, and likely associated with the rate of pay and is likely not competitive. CBCW funding helped in maintaining a position.

DNR Law Enforcement OIT Update (Bob Stroess)

Update from Bob Stroess: Bob gave updates on Organisms in Trade (OIT) activities by the Warden Service and his role as it relates to the commercial fishing industries, DNR fisheries and AIS programs, and other interstate DNR and Federal programs. Bob gave an overview of the DNR's warden program. In 2019 GLRI funding was provided to hire wardens, which can cover some AIS OIT related functions; especially as it relates to crayfish and wholesale fish dealers. Bob gave additional examples of the movement of organisms across Wisconsin and online trade sales and adjudicated cases.

Council Member Terms Renewed (Bressner and Long)

Tom Bressner and Greg Long's positions on the Council have been renewed. The Council recognizes their involvement and appreciates their ongoing service.

Education Committee Update (Christa Schaefer)

The Education committee met in July and will be meeting on October 20th. Invader Crusader topics to be discussed in January.

Update and Proposed Timeline: Addressing Inconsistencies in NR 40 (Tara Bergeson)

DNR staff and partners have been going through Species Assessment Process prior to official NR 40 rulemaking. Currently, department staff are reviewing the NR 40 criteria, evaluating whether they are consistently applied across all taxa, and proposing improvements. Department staff are looking at other metrics and considerations for the overall NR 40 update process (Including the SAG process). One model being considered for adoption/adaptation is the California Invasive Plant Council's metrics and approach.

Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference Sponsorship Updates

Mark Renz provided updates. Checks have been received from all sponsors. Wisconsin DNR is a Champion level sponsor for the event. DATCP is also a sponsor. 360 people have registered, 260 planned for in person and 100 planned for remote attendance. There are 160 talks planned, and many planned for remote access. Organizers are awaiting details for Preston Cole, WDNR Secretary, who is invited to give an opening presentation. The Oneida Nation will also be giving an opening speech.

Council Member Updates

Tara Bergeson reminded Council members to complete the required public records law training. All members of Councils and Boards are required to take public records training. Council members should have received an email with the annual Invasive Species Legislative Report, which includes information about the department's invasive species funding. If Council members have feedback, please get in touch with Tara.

DATCP staff updates from Brian Kuhn: DATCP has hired a Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey position, which will be working closely with APHIS. DATCP has several staff attending UMISC 2022. Spotted Lantern Fly is a focal species for the agency, and they will be holding a partnership meeting with other state agencies.

DNR updates from Drew Feldkirchner: Positive news about the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) as it continues to have strong bi-partisan support in Congress. It will focus on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) as identified in state Wildlife Action Plans and includes invasive species as eligible for funding. RAWA would provide much-needed stable funding for non-game species.

DOT updates from Christa Schaefer: DOT will continue to control NR40 Prohibited species along ROWs. If you detect any Prohibited species, let Christa know. This does apply to non-native Phragmites within Prohibited Counties and to Restricted Frontier counties that are adjacent to Prohibited counties. More traction on purple loosestrife beetle collections along ROWs, and this does require permits. If you have any

ROW issues, contact Christa. DOT has joined the Monarch Butterfly cooperative, which includes activity and tracking along ROWs.

The Nature Conservancy updates from Hannah Spaul: The AIS grant application process when well this year, thanks to department staff.

Updates from Council Chair, Tom Buechel: Attended conference aimed at landowners to improve forest and wildlife habitat in Woodruff. Interesting event.

Other Business

No other business was identified.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 11:30. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.