

Quarterly Meeting of the Governor's Invasive Species Council of Pennsylvania

Thursday, March 16th, 2017

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Conference Room 309
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Meeting Summary

Drafted by Trilby Libhart, Interim Council Coordinator

Voting Agencies Represented:

Fred Strathmeyer, Jr., PA Dept. of Agriculture, Designated Council Chair
Robert Morgan, PA Fish & Boat Commission
Sarah Whitney, PA Sea Grant
Lisa Murphy, University of Pennsylvania
Mary Beth Ruh, PennAg Industries Association
Eric Miller, PA Game Commission (via teleconference)
Don Eggen, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Diane Wilson, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
Joseph Demko, PA Dept. of Transportation
Enzo Campagnolo, PA Dept. of Health
Andy Ernst, PA Farm Bureau
Charles Bier, Western PA Conservancy

Voting Agencies Absent:

The Nature Conservancy
PA Landscape & Nursery Association
PA Forest Products Association
PA Lake Management Society
Penn State University

Other Attendees:

Sara Stahlman, PA Sea Grant
Andrew Rohrbaugh, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Sven-Erik Spichiger, Pa Dept. of Agriculture
Amy Jewitt, Western PA Conservancy
Jeff Wagner, Western PA Conservancy
John Baker, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Brian Pilarcik, Crawford County Conservation District (via teleconference)
Ruth Welliver, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Destiny Zeiders, PA House of Representatives, House Ag Committee
Trilby Libhart, PA Dept. of Agriculture, Interim PISC Coordinator

Call to Order/Welcomes

Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer, Jr., Designated Council Chair, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

After confirming a quorum count was attained, Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer, Jr. (PDA) called the meeting to order, thanked the group for coming, welcomed members and interested parties. He asked all attendees to introduce themselves and their affiliations.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA) briefly discussed the information that was placed on Facebook for National Invasive Species Awareness Week in late February. Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) noted that the National Invasive Species Council began the National Invasive Species Awareness Day in Washington D.C., and asks states to implement activities that bring attention to the problem of invasive species. They have a “model” proclamation on their website that states can have their Governor use to proclaim a National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Amy Jewitt (WPC) had recently brought up the idea of having longer meetings and having some work time in those meeting days. A field day/meeting inviting members of the PA House & Senate would also be an interesting idea. Could hold this meeting in May/June or Aug/Sept. Andrew Rohrbaugh (PA DCNR) suggested some good invasive species areas that are not far from Harrisburg.

Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer Jr. (PDA) spoke about PISC’s communication with the Governor. An annual report would work well. Something that could be distributed to members and others. All organizations need to be very visible and get the word out.

Council Business

Twelve (12) voting members or their alternates were present for the meeting. Voting members from the PA Forest Products Association, PA Lake Management Society, Penn State University, The Nature Conservancy, and the PA Landscape and Nursery Association, and their designated alternates were absent from the official quorum count. Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer, Jr. (PDA) asked for any additions or updates to the agenda and called for any additions or changes to the December 2016 meeting minutes. 1. 3rd page- “temp appt. runs until the end of July”- should be the end of March. Next meeting- March 16th, not September 15th. On 3rd page- DCNR Secretary Norbeck, should be DCNR Deputy Secretary Norbeck. Corrections were noted and will be changed.

Robert Morgan (PA F&B), would like to speak under new business. This will added to the agenda.

Deputy Strathmeyer (PDA) then called for a motion to approve the minutes:

Motion to Approve the December 2016 Meeting Minutes by Diane Wilson (PA DEP)

Motion Seconded by Joseph Demko (PennDOT)

Comments/Discussion: None

Vote to Approve the Motion: Motion Passed Unopposed.

Updates on December 2016 Action Items

Action Item 1 – PA-ISMP- Andrew Rohrbaugh, PA DCNR

Andrew Rohrbaugh (PA DCNR) Sent out last draft and did receive comments back. Most were from Western PA Conservancy. Charles Bier (WPC) noted that the Western PA Conservancy spent a lot of time going over the plan and made comments for some major changes- 1. Executive summary would be useful as a separate document 2. Add goals to executive summary, but don’t include recommendations 3. Accomplishments look incomplete because actions were individual and not linked to goals. Suggest that they be removed from the plan. 4. Include a work plan to explain how the council functions 4. Wording should be proactive, “will” should replace “should.” Amy Jewitt (WPC) believes that the action items are too broad and they do not give direction on how to get started. Analyzing action items is critical. Don Eggen (PA DCNR) responded that the actions items are not meant to be specific- an annual work plan could be specific. The management plan was specifically meant to be broad. The work the agencies and organizations do is also part of PISC, so it is appropriate to highlight the accomplishments whether they were done by and individual agency or not. It still means that we are moving forward. Executive summary and recommendations in the front are a good idea.

Charles Bier (WPC) suggested that the achievements be placed in the annual report or appendix. The appendix could be updated every year.

After discussion, changes to the PISC Management plan would include: improved wording, executive summary in the beginning, and achievements in the appendix. Work on an annual plan.

“Not really the plan, it’s the planning that is important.”

Robert Morgan (PA F&B) Having written a business plan- different than the annual plan. Groundwork for funding and heavy in financials. The management plan would be conceptual, and the business plan tells how to get there and is very specific. How do we get funded and how do we do this?

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA)- we accomplish this by getting legislators out to see and learn, invite them to field days, and look at various methods to achieve funding.

Action Item 2- 2017 Farm Show Booth- Trilby Libhart, Interim Council Coordinator, PA Department of Agriculture

Did not get any suggestions for what to display at the 2017 Farm Show so the booth focused on three important invasive weeds: Wavyleaf basketgrass, Palmer amaranth, and hydrilla. The booth was successful with a lot of people stopping to visit and ask questions. We were in the opposite corner as last year in a high traffic area. Many thanks to those that volunteered from PISC and from the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry.

Action Item 3- PISC Coordinator Position- Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer, Jr., PA Department of Agriculture

In the process of interviewing. Four applicants to interview, 2 already finished. Position is a specialist position with a pay grade of eight. Looking for someone with experience in managing programs and have a good list of candidates. Once the interviews are finished, should be able to make a decision fairly quickly.

General Announcements

Trilby Libhart, Interim Council Coordinator, PA Department of Agriculture

Agency Changes: None

Agency Updates:

Entomology Update

Sven-Erik Spichiger, PA Department of Agriculture

Port meeting in Philadelphia assessing risk of commerce inadvertently bringing invasives into the U.S. They are able to incinerate and are now working on incinerating infested materials. Rice coming into the port of NJ is clean.

Baltimore is no longer doing pesticide fumigation. Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer spoke about how the PA Hardwoods Council is working with the port of Philadelphia. Invited those in ag commodities to look at site and fumigation of logs/lumber. They seemed very engaged at the Phila. Port, which is encouraging for those who work with invasives.

Events and Meetings

Funding Opportunities

Sarah Whitney, PA Sea Grant

PA Sea Grant in conjunction with Western PA Conservancy, Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the PA Game Commission have applied for GLRI funding. This is an FY17 grant that would fund work including iMap invasives, aquatic invasive species work in the Lake Erie watershed, and boat inspection stations in 5-10 state parks. Hopefully this would not be affected by a potential presidential budget cuts.

Next Meeting Date and Location

- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Conference Room 309, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA on Thursday, June 15th 2017 from 10-2. Meeting will be brief with a breakout workgroup session afterwards.

Special Announcements

- None

Ongoing Invasive Species Response Updates

Hydrilla and Pymatuning Reservoir Update

Brian Pilarcik, Crawford County Conservation District

Gearing up for the 2017 Boat Launch Stewart program at Pymatuning. This is the 2nd year for the program.

An AIS grant will allow for purchase of color shirts for those working the stations, and pressure washing stations.

A scout who is working on his Eagle Scout title is building disposal stations for when AIS are pulled off boats. Plan is to install 16 of the disposal stations at Pymatuning.

ODNR provided \$50,000 in funding for 2017 with similar funds from a Growing Greener grant. Some trouble again in obtaining permits due to some freshwater mussels that are downstream. The treatment program got a late start last year because of a hesitation in permitting due to the same problem. Having a hard time making case to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as they are federally listed mussels.

Rob Richardson spoke about hydrilla at the PALMS conference in State College. He has a good background in working with hydrilla and gave a good overview.

Diane Wilson (PA DEP) noted that Barb Lathrop has prepared a map of where hydrilla has been identified in lakes throughout PA. Harvey's Lake community is continuing to work with the DEP and a Growing Greener grant they have obtained.

Amy Jewitt (WPC), explained the Western PA Conservancy is working with one of the private landowners who had hydrilla in their pond. There is a contractual chemical application being made to the pond in 2017 for control of hydrilla.

Spotted Lanternfly Program Update

John Baker, PA Department of Agriculture

There has been an expansion of the quarantine and treatment of properties is ongoing. Have four contractors working on with 36 properties that are outstanding. A total of 966 positive properties, with 41 properties completed in Pike Township.

Continuing outreach with a targeted Facebook campaign in the area outside of the quarantine. Began shooting two videos- one on "What is lanternfly?" and the other "How to report lanternfly-what homeowners can do". Also public meetings planned. Most common question asked is "What can homeowners do?" Egg mass scraping is one doable thing that homeowners can do with 1.4 million egg masses being scraped since 2014. Also putting out a call for volunteers to help with the volunteer banding program.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer noted that the public meetings are very well attended and that the community is very involved. Gratitude to John and his team for a job well done and that their work is very much appreciated.

Legislative Updates

Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law

Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer, Jr., PA Department of Agriculture

Thought was that the bill would pass in the fall but that did not happen. The bill is getting moving again and it is a high priority to get it through. Would like to have support from PISC members for this bill. Letters to legislators in support would be appreciated. Destiny Zeiders (Ag & Rural Affairs Committee), mentioned that the bill should move soon. Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer asked for a motion for PISC to support the bill. Question from Charles Bier (WPC) concerning the controlled plant part of the act. Ruth Welliver (PDA), explained that this bill has been in process for 12 years and that it was run through PISC multiple times, which included meetings putting the potential law together. It would be beneficial to have letters of support.

Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) noted that PA Sea Grant cannot support legislation. DCNR and PLNA support the act, PA Lake Management Society needs to check.

New Business

Attention of PA Legislators

Robert Morgan, PA Fish & Boat Commission

A frustration in the ability to get things moving with PISC. Would like to propose a PISC initiated “drive-in” to get in front of legislators, similar to the State Wildlife Grant Program which does a “fly-in” to the Capitol in Washington D.C. This is done to get as much face-time with legislators as possible and let them know how important invasive species are. Bob has someone to help organize but the council has to make a commitment. Many legislators don’t know that this problem exists and it’s an effort to get as much support as possible.

Destiny Zeiders (PA House of Representatives), noted that it is best to have an executive summary and good talking points before going to visit. Also make sure that it is a session day, make an appointment with the legislator you are going to visit, have some talking points and handouts prepared, make sure that your message is consistent. Also visit the Ag committee first and look up your personal rep/senator from your home area and visit them.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (PA DCNR) suggested including a planned field day as part of the talking points (Michaux State Forest, hydrilla site, etc). Could pay visits during National Invasive Species week.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA)- we need to get legislative schedules so that we know when they are in town. Email the schedule out to everyone.

Lisa Murphy (U. of Penn.) asked if visits could be construed as lobbying? Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA) replied by saying that we are not asking for money, we are simply letting them know who we are and giving them some education and information. Give them information about the PISC and the council’s role. But it needs to be a precise message, cannot deviate. Also need to approach in small groups and be very strategic. New coordinator can pick this up as a task.

Don Eggen (DCNR), noted that we would need a targeted list of who to visit, such as Ag committee, Forestry committee, so there is a lot of work to do beforehand. Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) said that PA Sea Grant would be willing to work with this.

Ideas include doing a series of field tours; take people out when activities are happening- get their hands dirty- makes an impact; do an activity in a legislator’s district; visit areas with invasives to see. Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) willing to put together a list- sent Andrew a list of field trips, events and areas with invasives to visit. Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) – would be good to move meeting around the state.

Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant)- The Great Lakes Invasive Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species is at the Sheraton Hotel in Erie, PA, June 20-22. Great place to learn what is happening in other Great Lake states.

Sea Grant has also been 0’d out by the President’s potential budget. She has a draft of a letter to send to support PA Sea grant.

Enzo Campagnolo (PA DOH) has offered to give a brief presentation on the human health perspective at one of the upcoming PISC meetings.

Charles Bier (WPC) noted that PISC needs to pull together an annual work plan to use as a guidance mechanism for the council. Would it help to have longer meetings? Can produce a template and decide what we want to work on during the year. New coordinator can work on putting a work plan together and provide guidelines.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) and Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) will work together to decide what is broad and specific in plan. Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA) spoke about expanding to 14 organizations and revisit adding the Conservation Districts (Piper Sherrburne). Need to look at expansion and needs of the council, possibly structure meetings differently. Get meat and potatoes done early and have a working lunch with a work time afterwards. Form work groups around tasks that need accomplished. Work groups could include summer field trips, management plan, informational piece about PISC for legislators. Possibly do meat and potatoes in conference call and actually do work during 4 hours.

Bob Morgan (PA FBC) like to know actual definition of “lobbying” so that we don’t run afoul.

Action Items

Additional Comments

Adjournment

Deputy Strathmeyer (PDA) asked for a motion to adjourn:

Motion to Adjourn by Robert Morgan

Motion Seconded by Sarah Whitney

Meeting adjourned.