

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

Tuesday, September 19th, 2017

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

Meeting Summary

Drafted by Trilby Libhart, PA Dept. of Agriculture

Voting Agencies Represented:

Fred Strathmeyer, Jr., PA Dept. of Agriculture, Designated Council Chair
Robert Morgan, PA Fish & Boat Commission
Gloria Day, PA Landscape & Nursery Assoc.
Sarah Whitney, PA Sea Grant
Lisa Murphy, University of Pennsylvania (via teleconference)
Ron Ramsey, The Nature Conservancy
Gary Walters, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
Enzo Campagnolo, PA Dept. of Health
Jeff Wagner, Western PA Conservancy
Brian Pilarcik, PA Lake Management Society
Mary Beth Ruh, PennAg Industries Association
Andy Ernst, PA Farm Bureau
Kelly Sitch, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources

Voting Agencies Absent:

PA Dept. of Transportation
PA Game Commission
PA Forest Products Association
Penn State University

Other Attendees:

Tim Schaeffer, PA Fish & Boat Commission
Sven-Erik Spichiger, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Nick Decker, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Jocelyn Behm, Temple University
Matthew Helmus, Temple University
Martin Mikulus, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Amy Jewitt, Western PA Conservancy
Destiny Zeiders, PA House of Representatives
Ruth Welliver, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Haitao Lin, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Greg Podniesinski, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Cathy Corrigan, PA Landscape & Nursery Assoc.

Grant Gulibin, PA Fish & Boat Commission
Dave Malin, PennDOT
Kendra McMillin
Phillip Harchak
Trilby Libhart, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Dave Scott, PA Dept. of Agriculture, Interim PISC Coordinator

Call to Order/Welcome

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

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer (PDA) began the meeting by thanking everyone in attendance and who have traveled distances to be at the meeting. It is important to the council.

There appears to be a rejuvenation in the council, now we just need a coordinator. Letters of support would be helpful in getting a coordinator in place.

We would like to welcome Gary Walters as a new council member, replacing Diane Wilson in representing the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection. Gary is an aquatic biologist and Chief of the DEP's Assessment Section, which deals with water quality and impaired waters due to invasive species.

We would like to take a minute to remember our fellow council member, Paul Lyskava, who passed away in late June. Paul represented the Pa Forest Products Association on the council from 2002-2017. Paul was also very instrumental in development of the Woodmobile. He was the first person to enter the office of Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer when he became Deputy Secretary. Paul will be sorely missed by the industry and the council.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer noted that the three people that have applied for the PISC coordinator position are still interested.

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.

Council Business

Eleven (11) 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 March 2017 meeting minutes. No changes were added.

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

Motion to Approve the June 2017 Meeting Minutes by Gloria Day (PLNA)

Motion Seconded by David Malin (PennDOT)

Comments/Discussion: *Changes to March notes:* Proposed Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law in Appropriations. Need and executive order to add the additional four members to the council.

Vote to Approve the Motion: Motion Passed Unopposed

There were votes by council members on the adaptation of the PISC updated Management Plan, Work Plan and the newly created Guidance for PISC activities.

Motion to Approve Management Plan by Gary Walters (PA DEP)

Motion Seconded by Jeff Wagner (WPC)

Motion to Approve Work Plan by Brian Pilarcik (CCCD)
Motion Seconded by Gary Walters (PA DEP)

Motion to Approve Guidance for PISC Activities by Gary Walters (PA DEP)
Motion Seconded by Brian Pilarcik (CCCD)

Presentation - Trials and Tribulations of the Fish & Boat Commission

Tim Schaeffer, PA Fish & Boat Commission

Bob Morgan introduced Tim Schaeffer, noting that they go back 10 years and that Tim can give an overview of experiences with receiving funding and getting the support of the legislature. The Fish & Boat Commission has faced the same challenges as PISC is facing and knows how hard it is to get funding for these types of issues.

Example in Wayne County where State Senator Lisa Baker and Representative John Fritz became interested in the problem of hydrilla because of getting phone calls from people around the lake. Had a conference call with many different people on the line where they sketched out a game plan. It's important to get the right parties in the room. Wayne Conservation District has a public meeting taking place this month. This is significant because they have the legislators ear. They can get a game plan together and start pitching ideas.

When Asian carp made an appearance- went directly to members of Congress and held their hand to draft legislation. Good idea to make it easy for legislators. Start with legislators that have problems in their district and explain those problems and why they are relevant.

Ways to be successful- Do not use recreational aspect. Use human health and public safety aspect, not environmental. Great to work with committee chairs to get things done. They hold an enormous amount of power in controlling what gets pushed through. The new coordinator needs to form relationships, do work for the legislators, plant seeds. Cultivate relationships with select members and staff in Harrisburg. It's a tough place to do business these days.

Enzo Campagnolo noted that this is a good opportunity to tie in with One Health. Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer mentioned that the council did have a One Health presentation by Dean Hendricks last year.

Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law

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

The Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law has passed through the house and is presently in appropriations. The Department of Ag recently had a meeting to clear up some of the questions that they had about the potential law. An article in Lancaster Farmer Newspaper, "Farmer Finds Noxious Weeds in Pipeline" spurred some discussion and some rewording and additional language in the law. Legislature would either pull it back into ag or make the changes on the floor. Bill must be considered 2 additional times in the Senate before going back to the House for final approval.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer explained that it is important for the council to stand together, as it is difficult to stand alone. Need stakeholders and other organizations to be involved in change as that often carries more weight. The council has made progress in the past two years and there has been a different attitude around the table. Sitting on the council is not always easy but appreciative of everyone's dedication and time.

Show n' tell is a great way to engage legislators. Rep. Causer brought legislators to see forest pests and weeds in McKean County. Take the opportunity any time you can show problems in person.

Senator Stefano, in the Fayette and Washington Co. part of the state, is a mover and a shaker and is someone with whom to be in contact. Bob Morgan -Also need to look at how to act proactively, and have legislators understand how important it is to act proactively. Unfortunately, we are always putting out fires.

General Announcements

Entomology Update

Sven-Erik Spichiger, PA Department of Agriculture

Spotted lanternfly is now in six counties and counting. We need better support from Pennsylvania and the USDA. We have a critical mass and the population has exploded. The lanternfly is a good hitchhiker and has the potential to have a major economic impact. Have been conducting training sessions for sister agencies. Also have many new items or commodities that are being affected, including black walnut, horseradish and basil, and are being seen in orchards.

Have recently switched to a Facebook campaign to spread awareness. We now have over 1,000,000 views. The community is engaged and we are starting to get calls from the rest of the state.

Sven showed some short videos of Spotted lanternfly on apples that are ready to harvest. Spray is not an option for control at this point. This causes a problem as apples that are to be shipped to the rest of the country are going to need to stay here. Also saw a video of Spotted lanternfly on grapes. Sven pointed out the honeydew that was being secreted by the insect onto the grapes and the plants. The Spotted lanternfly were thick in air at the orchard.

The PDA did receive an extra million dollars this week which is being used to work on transportation. We are also getting a full-time outreach person from Penn State.

Even though we are working very hard it is not going to be enough with the resources we currently have available. There is concern of hitchhikers going to places like PSU football games at State College. We have used every tactic to inform people who can do something. What we need is footage of the damage or what we are going to lose if nothing is done. Ailanthus grew like crazy this year due to the rain.

Destiny Zeiders (PA House), did share that the House and Senate Ag Committees had scheduled an informational meeting on Spotted Lanternfly for the beginning of November. After seeing short clips of SLF on apples and grapes the meeting had been moved up to October.

Ruth Welliver (PDA), explained that the state, along with the USDA as a partner, has had three seasons to look at SLF, with each season being clearer. It became clear that the level of work had to ramp up and engage the SLF at a different level.

A Program Revision Request, which would shift money around, was sent the Secretary with input from Dana Rhodes (PDA) and Sven Spichiger (PDA). We need to shift the regulatory response. Agencies such as the DCNR and the DEP can help develop a more robust plan. Organizations can engage with us and take that back to their own organizations. Don't necessarily need money, but more cooperation.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer noted that Sven's group was going to be meeting with those from Biglerville in Adams Co. for the first time, and also the first time for this group to be seeing the SLF. Concern also for the northwest part of the state as this is a big grape growing area. No idea how many acres of grape production there are in those counties. The council needs to be doing our due diligence and speak up. Sent out a list of some controls-get word out to stakeholders. In the core area, some people think that we are doing nothing. Need to reach out to railroads and trucking companies. Is this a safety issue for PennDOT?

Gloria Day (PLNA), asked where we should refer people to for information? Website, hotline, Facebook?

Sven noted that Facebook went viral when they placed the SLF information there, but the website is also an excellent resource.

DCNR Invasive Plant List

Kelly Sitch, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DCNR is getting prepared to release an updated version of their Invasive Plant List. This list help with decisions regarding management activities. Service foresters and land managers throughout the state use it often. This is a non-regulatory list that is updated every 3-5 years.

Andy Ernst (PA Farm Bureau), asked if this is an internal document. There are species on the list that are in the trades. Concern that the list gets out to the public and then those species are listed as invasive. Kelly noted that this has been a previous concern. Japanese barberry is on the list, but also in the trade, and can cause severe environmental problems. It needs to stay on the list.

Mary Beth Rue (PennAg), noted that there are species on the list, such as tall fescue, where the harmful effects are not understood. We don't want to vilify. Kelly explained that these plants are moving into shale and pipeline areas and are threats to forests and wetlands in the state. Gas companies want to plant seed mixes in natural areas that have some of these plants in the mix. The list helps convince the companies that those plants will be a problem if planted.

Would like to have comments on the list in the next two weeks. Can send out electronically next time. Will also put on agenda.

PA Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law Update

Destiny Zeiders, PA House of Representatives

The Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Law has moved onto the Senate. There are some concerns expressed by republican members. Amended to move back into Chapter 3 bonding requirement. Addition to from Senator Vogel to add poison hemlock. Also adding a few technical changes, further explaining the definition of landowner, but that can be done on the floor. Currently in Senate appropriations and do not expect it to be done before the budget.

Agency Updates:

PA Fish & Boat Update

Robert Morgan

Oriental weatherfish recently found in PA. Has been in New York and New Jersey for a while. It is a diabolical little creature, similar to African lung fish. It can survive droughts and also can survive with very little oxygen. Eats small insects. This fish will wind up as a competitor for game fish.

Western PA Conservancy

Amy Jewitt

Water Chestnut Chasers Challenge- there were boots on the ground with 11 people participating in the challenge. It was very successful because of new findings and it's easy to control.

PA Sea Grant

Sarah Whitney

There will be a Mock Rapid Response program on November 16th. There will be more information forthcoming.

PA Department of Environmental Protection

Hydrilla was found in Possum Lake in Cumberland County. The population is estimated at 72% density and 55% dominance. Also the Coastal Zone Grant application process closes the 2nd week of October. Requires a 50/50 match. Information is on the website.

Next Meeting Date and Location

- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Conference Room 309, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA on Wednesday, December 12th 2017 from 10-2. Meeting will be brief with a breakout workgroup session afterwards.

Special Announcements

- None

Ongoing Invasive Species Response Updates

European Frog-bit

Brian Pilarcik (CCCD), shared news of the discovery of European Frog-bit at Maurice Goddard State Park. A ranger working for the boat launch steward program found the frog-bit at a launch at the park. European Frog-bit looks like a giant duckweed and is a fast spreading invasive. The population that was found was manageable by hand.

Nick Decker (PA DEP) also noted that there is a much larger population in State Game lands 270. This is the second finding of European Frog-bit in PA.

Additional Comments

Reminder that there are work deadlines listed on the PISC work plan and business plan.

Jeff and Robert spearhead a letter to get out to the Governor? Send out to group.

Thank-you to Tim Schaeffer for his presentation.

Get legislative people to a meeting!

Adjournment

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

Motion to Adjourn by Robert Morgan

Motion Seconded by Gloria Day

Meeting adjourned.

Governor's Invasive Species Council of Pennsylvania Roundtable Notes

Tuesday, September 19th, 2017

Getting Legislative Attention-

- Look at county records- overlay legislative districts
- Find best districts and legislators to contact
- Have strong local support in the area
- Agencies invite legislative directors for next meeting. This is a conduit to having conversations. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.
- Create relationships, get to know your face....
- Invite them to the Farm Show and ask them to come to the booth
- Pamphlets as a mechanism to get information out there
- Take advantage of Public Officials Day