

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

Tuesday, December 12th, 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
Keith Fisher, The Nature Conservancy
Gary Walters, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
Charles Bier, Western PA Conservancy
Brian Pilarcik, PA Lake Management Society (via conference call)
Marci Mowery, PA Parks & Forest Foundation
Mary Beth Ruh, PennAg Industries Association
Don Eggen, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources

Voting Agencies Absent:

University of Pennsylvania
PA Dept. of Health
PA Dept. of Transportation
PA Game Commission
Penn State University
PA Farm Bureau

Other Attendees:

Lawrence Barringer, 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
Jeff Wagner, Western PA Conservancy
Ruth Welliver, PA Dept. of Agriculture
Sara Nicholas, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Cathy Corrigan, PA Landscape & Nursery Assoc.
Tim Schaeffer, PA Fish & Boat Commission
Kendra McMillin
Bill Neilson, PA Farm Bureau
Kelly Sitch, PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources

Kevin Hess, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
Gregg Robertson, PA Landscape & Nursery Assoc.
Sara Stahlman, PA Sea Grant
Andrew Rohrbaugh, PA Dept. Of Conservation and Natural Resources
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.

We would like to welcome Keith Fisher as a new council member, replacing Ron Ramsey in representing the Nature Conservancy. Keith works with land management conservation activities for the Nature Conservancy. He also worked in Florida for 12 years doing environmental protection.

Also new to the council is Marci Mowery who is representing the PA Parks & Forest Foundation. Marci previously worked for the National Audubon Society with experience that includes invasive species and native plants.

We would also like to welcome Dr. Ben Jones to the council. He is not present today, but will be representing the PA Game Commission.

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 Dept. of Health, PA Dept. of Transportation, Penn State University, PA Game Commission, and the PA Farm Bureau, University of Pennsylvania 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 September 2017 meeting minutes. Deputy Strathmeyer (PDA) then called for a motion to approve the minutes:

Motion to Approve the September 2017 Meeting Minutes by Gary Walters (DEP)

Motion Seconded by Mary Beth Ruh (PennAg)

Comments/Discussion: *Changes to September notes:* Kelly Sitch is representing DCNR.

Vote to Approve the Motion: Motion Passed Unopposed

Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer Jr, informed the council that we are still in the process of obtaining a full-time coordinator. The Secretary wrote a letter to the Governor to talk about Spotted Lanternfly and also mentioned PISC in the letter. Questions -has the Civil Service list expired? Will interviews need to be redone? Aside from the compliment being available, is the funding in place for the position? Yes, adequate funding is in place. We will let the budget office know that we can support a position now and in the future.

Mock Rapid Response Hydrilla Exercise

Sara Stahlman, PA Sea Grant

On November 16, 2017 the PA Sea Grant held a Mock Rapid Response Hydrilla exercise at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie. It was a day for learning so there were some gaps and challenges. There were about 25 people there from state and federal agencies, and organizations. The day was planned to be a mock rapid response to a hydrilla find in the Lake Erie watershed to see how things would work in response to a find.

Things that were learned from the exercise:

1. Recognition and acceptance of the plan – many people did not know that the plan existed. Need to raise awareness. Sara Stahlman and Sarah Whitney both worked on the rapid response trainings. Looking for 2-3 places to do training before Spring.
2. Reporting – first step is to report to the council coordinator. Need general reporting mechanisms, reporting hotlines. Who is to check?
3. Lack of funding – other states have funding designated to rapid response

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer asked if we hold training or something similar in other parts of the state, such as Harvey's Lake so that legislators could see this type of thing. Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) explained that the mock exercise needed to happen in Erie because of funding, but the training can happen anywhere. Also need to get the Aquatic Rapid Response plan out because people are asking about it. Need to expedite that process.

Legislative Visit with Senator Baker, Senator Brooks, Representative Fritz

Sarah Whitney, PA Sea Grant

Meeting with legislators was a huge success this morning. Thanks to Sarah, Tim, Nick and everyone else who helped make the meeting possible. Gave a briefing on hydrilla and talked about invasive species in general. Legislators were given packets which contained Sea Grant hydrilla information sheets, boat launch steward info, AIS activities in other states, a quick overview of PA vs. other states. The legislators seemed interested, asked questions, asked "what can we as legislators do?" Includes outreach and education, funding for PISC coordinator, help with funding for control efforts. Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer suggested that as we move forward we need to think about solutions that we can offer them and need to continue to talk about the issues. Need to show the economic impact of invasive species. The legislators seem to have a definite interest with Senator Baker giving us a big opening. Jeff Wagner (WPC) –need to find and have specific examples of economic impact in PA. Get a reference for that information and send to a specific person to gather those examples. Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant)- Is it possible to figure out the economic impact of invasive species in Pennsylvania? How do you do that? How can we engage researchers? Center for Rural Development does that type of research.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer- Problem with proving economic impact of SLF to USDA is it's not just an agency issue, it's also important to organizations. We are a team. How can we help each other help us get to a better place?

Andrew Rohrbaugh explained that it's also the cost of treating invasives. The cost of invasives is a cost economically and environmentally. Need numbers sooner than later. What is the cost of not treating invasives?

Hardwoods council is a great resource for this information. Can have a discussion in roundtables on economic impact. It may be difficult to find the numbers, but it needs to be part of the conversation.

Tim Schaeffer- Had a nice informal conversation. Senator Baker asked "What can we do to help?" There were 3 main take-a-ways from this morning's meeting:

- Are there any law or regulation changes needed to help deal with the hydrilla issue
- Funding – what are the costs – not just dollars to control but economic losses too
- Who does what – what groups are or should be involved, conservation districts etc.

Mike Nerozzi - Advisory committee of legislative staff that can do research. Look for similar nexus with legislators. Build template around hydrilla as we need to start somewhere. Legislators will be looking for follow-up from group.

The following individuals attended the Legislative Meeting held at the capital prior to the meeting:

Tim Schaffer, Bob Morgan, Charles Bier, Barbara Latrhoop, Trilby Libhart, Ronald Ramsey, Mike Nerozzi (Joint Conservation Committee), Brenda Zablotsky (Rep. Boback's Office), Barb Dysard (Rep. Peifer's Office), Lisa Baker (Senator), Fred Strathmeyer Jr, Chloe Mandara (Sen. Brooks Office), Chris Ramsey (Sen. Lisa Baker's Office), John Norbeck, Nick Decker, Rachel Reese, Brian Gallagher, Jonathan Fritz (Representative), Sarah Whitney, Jeffery Wagner.

First Finds

Southern Pine Beetle- southern pine beetle in Nottingham. Also in southern Delaware, Connecticut, Long Island, Serpentine barrens. Attacking pitch pine that are overstressed and over mature, and also unmanaged. Trees have been pretty decimated.

Oriental weatherfish- Found in upper Susquehanna river. Not sure of infestation.

Asian swamp eel- found in New Jersey. Not sure of infestation.

Farm Show 2018

Dave Scott, Interim Invasive Species Council Coordinator

Farm Show is coming up quickly, January 6-13. Need volunteers to man the PISC booth. This year will be mainly focusing of Spotted Lanternfly since the quarantine was recently expanded. We will have a lanternfly story map looping on a TV at the booth. Passing around a sign-up sheet for volunteers- so please sign up for as many hours as you can. We have a good location with a substantial amount of people coming by. DEP just launched a story map called "Below the Surface" if you would like to see an example of a story map.

Spotted Lanternfly Update

Ruth Welliver, PA Dept. of Agriculture

PDA has been battling this new invasive since September 2014. Lanternfly causing problems in forests with tree health and there is concern about the understory because of the honeydew. Issue – Don't know where they are going until it is too late. They are building to a level that people can't stand. At this time, the adults have died due to the cold temperatures. SLF overwinter in egg masses. The quarantine has been expanded and updated; expanding by counties, rather than individual municipalities. Thirteen counties are now covered by the quarantine. PA Department of Agriculture is looking for additional partners to fight this pest. Also looking for sources of funding. Funding would include costs for outreach and education, vegetation management and control, and lanternfly management and control. DCNR and Penn State are involved.

Gregg Robertson (PLNA) asked how PennDOT is engaged? Ruth explained that they are doing Ailanthus management and are trained to recognize lanternfly. They are moving away from large tree removal to more herbicide treatments, hoping for a biocontrol of Ailanthus to replace the chemical controls are available.

Spotted lanternfly is native to China and entered South Korea as an invasive. We have gathered a lot of information from South Korea. Once it was introduced to South Korea, it crossed the country in three years (size of PA).

Gregg also asked if the goal was still eradication. Ruth responded that yes, it was, but not sure if we have the resources to accomplish.

Deputy Secretary Fred Strathmeyer (PDA)- The spotted lanternfly problem is not just an agency problem; it is everyone's problem. This pest spread needs to be controlled first then we can work on eradication. Dead insects have now been found in New York and Delaware. We all need to work together and have a constant conversation. We need to be prepared to deal with this problem. The egg masses will hatch in spring. Outreach will be our greatest tool. The message is critical.

Charles Bier (WPC) asked if the spotted lanternfly is Ailanthus obligate? Ruth replied that it is a strongly preferred host. It has three hosts in China. Only one here in PA.

Council Website

Emily Dempsey, Digital Director, PA Dept. of Agriculture

Invasive Species Council website needs updating. Emily Dempsey in to update on how agencies are revamping their websites. Would be great to have things such as the mock RR exercise on the website.

The website is antiquated; very old with some issues. It is not mobile responsive and web traffic is now 70% mobile. It has many security vulnerabilities and is not compatible with all web browsers. It currently gets about 400 visitors a month.

There are two options to deal with this. One, redesign the whole site (~ 6-month process), or two, bring it into the Department of Agriculture's website (~ 3-month process). Would ultimately be Governor's office decision.

Council can vote on what they would like to happen with the website.

Don Eggen moves to put the PISC website on the PDA's website.
Gary Walters seconds the motion.
No opposition. Motion passes.

Emily- we can begin to start reviewing what is relevant. Everyone should look over website and determine what needs to stay, go, or be added.

DCNR Invasive Plant List

Andrew Rohrbaugh, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DCNR - Invasive Plant List and Conservation of Native Wild Plants – Andrew Rohrbaugh reported that the DCNR list of invasive plants proposed for DCNR internal use was vetted with only minor changes. The agency is also preparing the regulation change to IRRC for final approval to update the native plant list. All three public comments received were supportive of the revisions to the current list.

Agency Updates:

Bill Neilson, PA Farm Bureau noted that the Farm Bureau has published and shared information on spotted lanternfly. Will there be a grant from the USDA? Will they become more involved?

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer responded. Be conscious of compliance agreements as far as movement. Get in front of that process to avoid any issues. We need to be talking about moving egg masses. Vehicles, etc. are being moved throughout the state or country. USDA has a technical work group engaged, taking a scientific look at the problem. Need to work side by side with the policy group that provides the funding. The Secretary reached out to Secretary Perdue for resources. From legislative standpoint- write letters to them to let them know what is happening. We have asked for 12-15 million for this year. Let us know what we can do next. There is still a lot of research that needs to be done.

Mary Beth Ruh (PennAg) said that she is looking for the piece, "I have spotted lanternfly- what can I do?" Would like to have a definitive piece that puts everything together.

Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer commented on the passing of the Controlled Plants and Noxious Weeds Law and requested that members consider individuals and submit their names to him to provide a pool of candidates to fill the three non-governmental members of the new Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee (representing a, farm organization, the turf, the ornamental and Horticultural industry, and an institution of higher education).

Next Meeting Dates and Location

- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Conference Room 309, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA on Wednesday, March 14th, 2018, and Tuesday, June 12th, 2018. Both meetings will be brief with a breakout workgroup session afterwards.

Special Announcements

- None

Ongoing Invasive Species Response Updates

- None

Additional Comments

Charles Bier (WPC) questioned where we are with the work plan we voted on last meeting. How are we using that? The coordinator? Deputy Secretary Strathmeyer replied that yes, a new coordinator would take that document and move it forward. Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) stated that the Tier 1 and 2 are items to make progress on in the next year. We can discuss what is going on and then work on top tier items in the work plan with a person(s) responsible for following through with the items. Some Tier 1 items are being worked on- no Tier 2. Charles Bier also addressed the group on the need to develop a list of the top invasive issues we should be on guard for and lead the roundtable addressing that issue.

Roundtable Notes

Web Site Reconstruction – Gary Walters lead the group which concurred with the recommendation to move from the .com site to the PDA site. The group viewed the current site and will review it and report back to Gary and Dave Scott the content that needs to be removed. Suggestion was to replace the “governor’s letter” with a video clip message from the Secretary. One main question to be explored is where to link to publications at other agencies and organizations or repost the information on this site. Facebook and twitter accounts should also be considered when the coordinator is in place.

Legislative follow up – Tim Schaeffer lead the discussion on next steps. Thank you, letters will be sent to legislators and staff that attended, including a follow up of offers to provide local training hosted by the representative for local groups/conservation districts on hydrilla and to provide articles for their use in mailings they send to their districts. Attached is the list of persons that met with legislators in the morning.

Prevention group – Charles Bier lead the discussion on identifying new threats in the region. Review DCNR list, Mid-Atlantic Invasive Species Council list and neighboring states to identify species of concern new to the region and develop training for identification and reporting.

Adjournment

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

Motion to Adjourn by Gloria Day
Motion Seconded by Robert Morgan

Meeting adjourned.