

Governor's Invasive Species Council Quarterly Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

PDA Conference Room 309

In attendance: Chris Urban, Gary Walters, Joe Demko, Andy Ernst, Mary Beth Ruh, Julie Urban, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Jeffrey Wagner, Kimberly Bohn, Piper Sherburne, Elizabeth Hanson (alternate for Keith Fisher), Fred Strathmeyer, James Grazio, Kris Abell, Mike Hutchinson, Ruth Welliver, Sara Grove, Mike Moltz, Bob Morgan (retired from Fish and Boat), Sarah Jones, Jacob Manley, Kyle Knepp, Tom Cermak, Bill Nielsen, Brian Rider, Tammy Pepper PDE, Destiny Zeiders, Kevin Hess, Stephen Rudman

Phone: Brian Pilarcik, Gloria Day, Gregg Robertson, Lisa Murphy, Jack Hannish, Kate Harms, Maddie Stanisch and Jody Groshek

Introductions, Minutes, and Announcements

Fred Strathmeyer welcomed everyone to the meeting and started a round of introductions. Elizabeth Hanson and Julie Urban were introduced as relatively new council members. A motion was made by Gary Walters to accept the September meeting minutes. Chris Urban seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted.

Fred commented that he was pleased to see the action items generated in last meeting. Want to continue to see solid movement forward. Close to having full slate appointed for Council.

New and Continuing Priority Threats

Chris Urban reported on a snakehead occurrence in (?) River in September. Appeared to have been released, not part of an active population. Rapid Response Protocol followed -- believe fish grew very quickly in aquarium and subsequently released... Electrofishing turned up no more. First report in Ohio Basin.

Asian Carp not detected in PA yet. Leading edge is in central Ohio. USFWS doing routine genetic testing in Great Lakes, with negative results so far. Fred said KY had major issues and might (unfortunately) be building a culinary market for this invasive.

Julie Urban: SLF regional research meeting (recorded, available online) generated a list of management recs for regulatory, grape, nursery, and landscapes. Other states are looking for guidance on SLF from PA.

Piper discussed conservation district control grants for SLF. Mike Hutchinson built on the idea of partnerships with other agencies to get boots on the ground. It has been challenging finding enough contractors to deal with Ailanthus trees.

Joe Demko – Forest pest taskforce meeting, looking at expanded Ailanthus removal in right-of-ways.

PISC Coordinator Update

Kris presented a report :

Invasive species hotline update – aquatic invasives option being added; still insect, plant, and SLF

Today's meeting – focus on workgroups.

Logistics – travel reimbursement process has been worked out.

Location for PISC meeting in March? – Invitation from PennVet New Bolton Center, Kennett Square. SLF detection by working dogs – 3 dogs on that project right now; Stroud Water Research Center.

Another option going forward – a DCNR site around the state?

PA Fish and Boat regional office is right in middle of state, good facility for a meeting as well.

One meeting east, then next year one meeting west?

Fred suggested having meeting at PennVet in June-July instead of March, to see more SLF – also recommend lengthening the time to allow more of a field trip experience for those traveling from afar. Julie Urban willing to work with Lisa on a SLF program. Housing on-site at New Bolton, in addition to several nearby hotels

Farm Show slots available! – sign up with Kris

Gravel, Sand, Forage, Mulch Certification Programs: Important invasive species pathway that could be addressed in Pennsylvania through certification. Programs available through NAISMA. State agency holds MOU with a state agency. Inspectors can be drawn from other pools of professionals outside of state agency. NAISMA is willing to have a speaker come here to present to the council. Interest? Voted to invite for March meeting passed. Kris will make arrangements.

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species – Report

Jim Grazio provided presentation (attached), describing panel's origins and mission. Currently 7 regional ANS Panels – PA is in 3: Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, Mississippi River... Consider a PISC rep on panels?

GLANSIS (A NOAA project)- database of non-native species in the Great Lakes Basin. Now includes a clearinghouse for exotic species risk assessments.

Genetic biocontrol progress moving rapidly, from RNAi to sterile males to Gene Drives/Prime Editing. Can state invasive species regulations keep up with advances in genomic sciences? Need to keep flexible. Do we need regs for release of GMOs for population control? (Andrew says there are some regs in DCNR that may need modified – Chris Urban said they are re-writing Chapter 71,73 chapters on AIS... genetic modification did come up)

Least Wanted AIS – progress in PA.

Invasive Species List Workgroup: Membership, Report, Discussion

Kris Abell gave presentation. Six members – add Joe Demko to the group; Suggestion – it would be great to add someone from Don Eggen's Forest health group?

Objectives, next steps (finding assessment tools, finding experts, where and how to publish)

Rapid Response plan for AIS has a rudimentary assessment tool for aquatics. To add additional species to regulatory AIS list (FBC chapter 71 and 73), need to develop a formal process with all the following: objective criteria, documentation, expert panel for review, commissioners vote, public comment, final rulemaking. Looking to have established in two years. Bob Morgan is point person for development of this process.

Tammy – K12 schools and informal communication – has an invasive species module – would want to share Council lists when they are available.

Kris doing research on other tools, such as GISS – Generic Impact Scoring System, and Washington State Assessment Tool.

Fred stressed the need to make a decision soon.

Consensus to move forward with simpler process rather than detailed – GISS seems like good possibility – distribute assessment to entire council by listserv. Workgroup can adopt Western PA assessment tool for plants and start creating that list for Council review. Still need to select one assessment tool for remaining taxonomic groups. Workgroup to make decision on which tool to use by next Council meeting.

Legislative Workgroup – 4 members – Jeff Wagner, Mike Nerozzi, Gregg R, Sarah Whitney

Julie Urban requests to join group.

Rapid Response Fund status, How to create a consistent flow of communication with legislators, identify priorities.

Keep in mind the 5 recommendations of Legislative and Regulatory Efforts to Control Invasive Species report by Sara Grove and Michael Molt

Legislative liaisons at agencies and NGOs will be key –

Fred suggests – Determine where invasive species are in the state – cross reference with legislative districts... can then say, “these are some of the things you might want to be aware of in your districts.” Bring the message home, make it personal.

APIPMA applied for grants from the Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account and were awarded. How will funds be awarded in the future? This workgroup needs to develop recommendations.

Stephen Rudman would like to help workgroup to build a specific plan for legislative discussion when they come back in session. Kris to set up a conference call with workgroup.

Destiny asked if there would be a benefit to develop an AIS law with same framework as CPNWL? Chris thinks they are OK with the process they are already developing, which ends in rulemaking.

Are there any types of species that slip through the legal authority/framework? Terrestrial vertebrates...

Break for lunch

CISMA Workgroup

Added Kimberly Bohn to workgroup

Should be full spectrum of invasive species represented, not just plants...

How do we delineate zones – watersheds, conservation district regions (there are 6), ecoregions, legislative districts, PDA regions, DCNR regions, social use (like PA Dutch area),

4 active CWMAAs

Identify partners, policy and funding, discussion and planning.

- Need lead entity for each area to organize partnerships and fundraising
- Need commonality of invasive species concerns and interests
- Need administrative flexibility (develop MOU with ease for example)
- Reach – not too big, not too small... just right!
- Member groups need to be engaged for group to work.

Online cookbook for forming a CISMA is available.

Piper feels PACD conservation regions are great fit -- Brenda Shambaugh putting together quarterly meeting now (for January). Need an overlay – what are we protecting in Pennsylvania, what are impacts of invasive species? Do conservation district regions have resources to do administration and networking?

Julie Urban - What are we trying to protect, and are those areas already being protected from invasive species or are they falling through the cracks? Start looking to fill the gaps.

Need a person, or small group, to build a steering committee, grass roots. But useful to have large-ish areas, too, which makes that hard.

Need ability to react quickly, not splitting hairs....

Gregg R – Made a motion that county conservation district regions serve as a point of contact to coordinate regional CISMA effort. Second by Piper.

Discussion – Do CD regions have resources to administer and coordinate? Piper thinks so. Regional Directors meet with PACD (PA Assn of Cons Districts) to coordinate grant monies and programs.

Johan Berger joined in – felt a much larger discussion needed to be had. For example, Assn, SCC, agency, and other funding streams have very different purposes.

Tammy – used to work with DCNR... conservation landscapes, cooperatively managed from different agencies.

Is there any one agency with capacity to do the overview piece?

How about CD regions being the coordinators, not the leads?

Call for a vote -- 3 yes, 4 abstain, 3 no

Motion: that workgroup further investigate the feasibility of CD Regions facilitating formation of CISMA's. Andy Ernst, second Piper

Discussion – If capacity is there, move forward.

Expand to look at emergent examples to see what organizations are leading (such as Master Gardeners...)

Need capacity, interest, stamina to do it – how can we identify whether this is best mechanism?

Vote – passed unanimously

Joe – motion to adjourn; Gary second.