

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PGISC)  
Thursday, June 8, 2023 | 10:00am

(Hybrid meeting; held in-person at 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA  
and virtually via Microsoft Teams)

*\* All text in italics indicates additional information included by the minute taker, except where scientific names are mentioned.*

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**Council Members Present:** Amy Jewitt, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Brian Harris, Emily Shosh, Fred Strathmeyer, Grant Gulibon, Gregg Robertson, James Grazio, Jeff Wagner, Jocelyn Behm, Joseph Demko, Julie Urban, Kate Harms, Kerry Golden, Mary Beth Ruh, Piper Sherburne, Ruth Welliver, Sara Stahlman, Sarah Whitney, Scott Bearer

**Other Participants Present:** Adam Scherr, Ali Bowling, Amanda Mullen, Amber Rose Stilwell, April Moore, Bailey (*last name not provided*), Becca Manning, Brenda Wasler, Brian Gallagher, Cara Gibson, Catherine Zeigler, Dani Jurina, Deb Klenotic, Denise Uzupis, Derek Lentz, Ekaterina Nikolaeva, Emilee Boyer Euker, Erica Tramuta-Drobnis, Eve Adrian, Holly Miller, Jamie Kopko, Jay Losiewicz, Jessica Crum-Lasko, Jessica Lenker, Jonathan Geyer, Jordan King, Kierstin Carlson, Kris Abell, Kristen Markley, Kyle Van Why, Lawrence Barringer, Lisa Candelore, Lydia Martin, Marie Maiuro, Mason Crouthamel, Michael Parker, Nick Decker, Noah Chronister, Norris Muth, Paul Smith, Sara Metz, Shishir Paudel, Stephen Rudman, Susan Marie Boser, Tamara Pepper, Tara Ramsey, Thomas Allgaier, Zachary Newby

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**Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Fred Strathmeyer (Deputy Secretary for Plant Industry and Consumer Protection, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – PDA) provided opening remarks.

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**Announcements, Roll Call, Approve March 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) conducted the roll call. Fred thanked Amy Jewitt (PA iMapInvasives Program Coordinator, Western PA Conservancy – WPC) for putting together the meeting minutes from March; a fantastic job! Fred hoped everyone had a chance to review them prior to today's meeting.

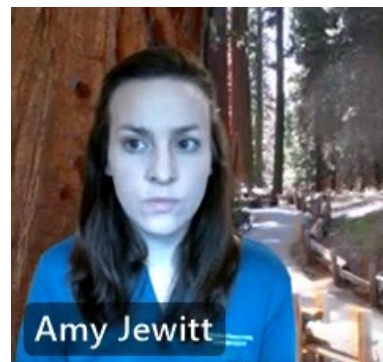
**MOTION:** Jeff Wagner (Director of Heritage, WPC) moved to approve the March 16, 2023 PGISC meeting minutes. Grant Gulibon (Regulatory Affairs Specialist, PA Farm Bureau) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) recognized Dr. Ruth Welliver (Director for the Bureau of Plant Industry, PDA) (*present in person at today's meeting*) and mentioned that she will soon be retiring. Ruth served 35 years at PDA and also many years on the PGISC. Fred commented that Ruth has been a mentor and influencer for him and many others and is one of the most positive people he knows. Fred and other Council members present at the meeting thanked Ruth for her time, passion, and years of service. Ruth expressed her thanks for the kind words offered.

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### **PGC – WPC Collaborative Projects**

Speakers: **Scott Bearer**, Chief, Habitat Planning and Development Division, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) ([sbearer@pa.gov](mailto:sbearer@pa.gov)); **Jeff Wagner**, Director of Heritage, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) ([jwagner@paconserve.org](mailto:jwagner@paconserve.org)); and **Amy Jewitt**, Pennsylvania iMapInvasives Program Coordinator, WPC ([ajewitt@paconserve.org](mailto:ajewitt@paconserve.org))



Scott Bearer (PGC) thanked Kris Abell (PGISC Coordinator, PDA) for his efforts to help spur forward this multi-year collaboration and partnership between the PGC and WPC.

Scott mentioned that the PGC takes invasive species very seriously. Invasives are a threat that PGC staff are constantly battling in their wildlife habitats across the 1.5 million acres that PGC manages across the state (and these are areas the PGC tries to maintain, restore, and promote resilience in).

To ensure PGC is doing the right thing, PGC has been working with WPC over the past few years (Amy, Jeff, etc.) to learn how the agency can best strategize and prioritize the work they have going on. This has led to some very interesting and novel developments in making sure PGC is coordinating with the Pennsylvania iMapInvasives program (*a program administered by Amy Jewitt and other staff at the WPC*) in a much more aligned way. That led to an

iMapInvasives presentation that Amy gave to PGC staff in 2022. That presentation spurred things on to where additional priorities developed further.

Where we are now, Amy and her colleagues at WPC have developed an incredibly valuable and educational resource for the Northwest (NW) PGC region titled “[Invasive Species Field Guide for PGC’s Northwest Region](#)”. This resource is in the format of an ArcGIS StoryMap. The PGC is hopeful that WPC can create similar resources like this guide for the other five PGC regions (SW, NC, SC, NE, SE).

Scott also mentioned the technician position that WPC and PGC have partnered on together. The role of this technician will be to conduct field surveys and identify invasive species in areas where important plant populations exist. Information from these surveys will allow PGC to better prioritize where they should target their invasive species control efforts.

To further highlight the ArcGIS StoryMap that Scott mentioned (*above*), Amy Jewitt (WPC) provided a brief demonstration at today’s meeting by scrolling through the guide and showing some of the information it provides.

Amy explained the purpose for creating the field guide was to help PGC staff in northwest PA have a better understanding of what established (common) invasive species are found in that region as well as emerging (present, but not common) and potential (not yet present) invasive species to be on the lookout for. The guide highlights a total of 26 species and includes a variety of media, showcasing both photographs and video content. The guide also includes a plethora of hyperlinked information which connects viewers of the guide with trusted content that further describes each of the 26 species.

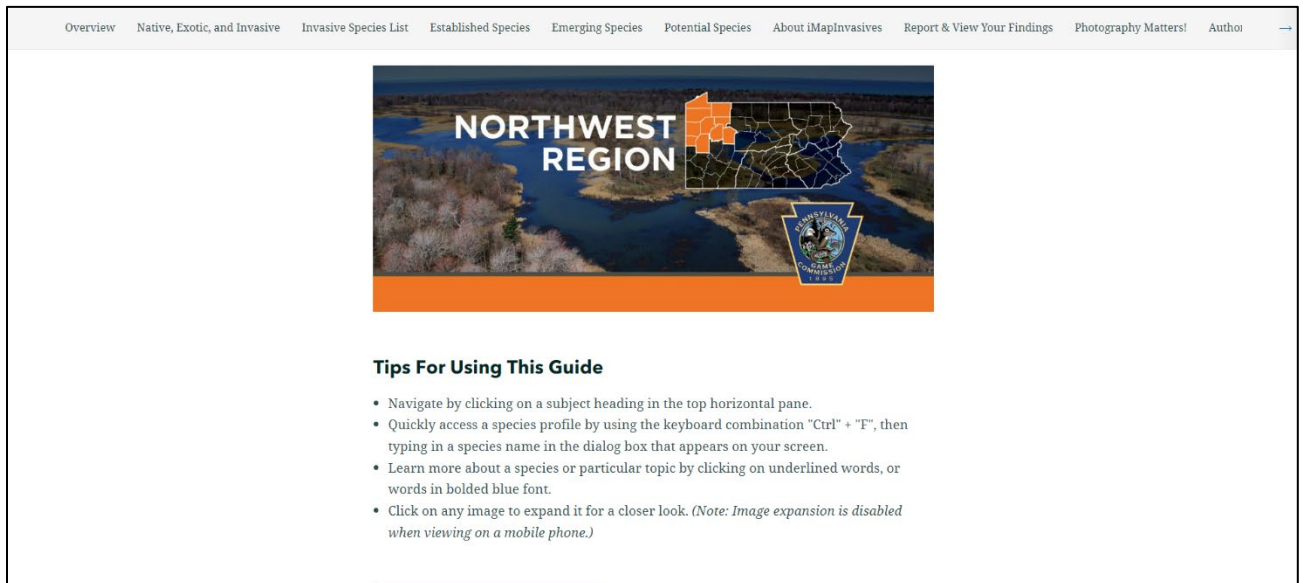
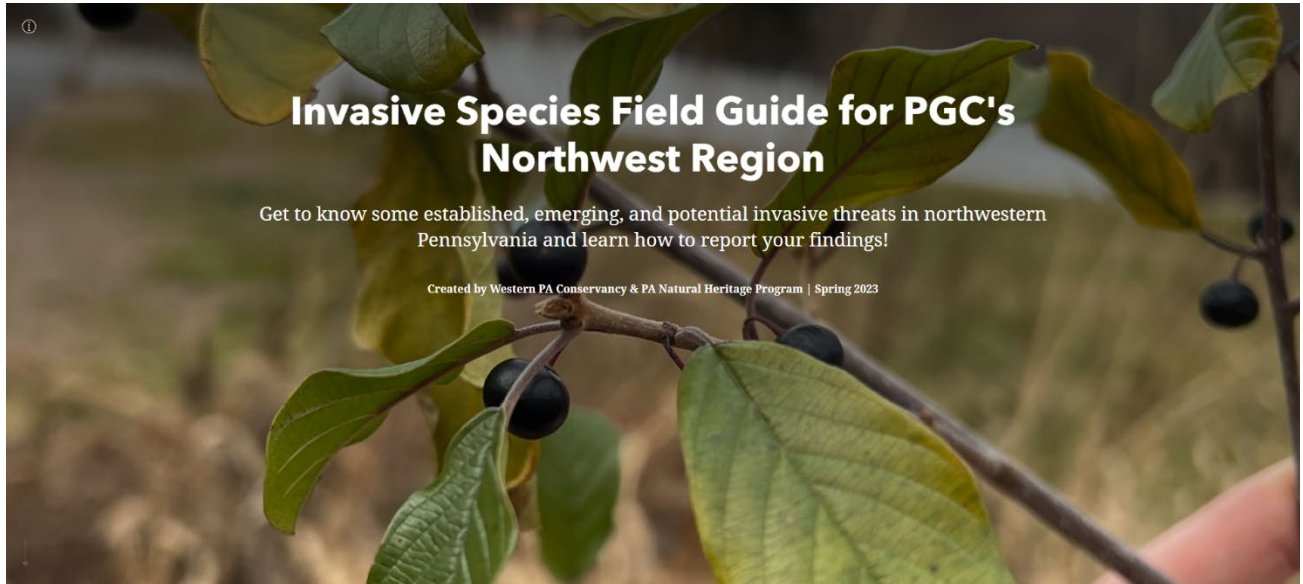
Each species profile within the guide highlights the following topics:

- Gallery of images showcasing what it looks like
- Why it’s a problem
- Identification tips and harm caused
- Videos
- Look-alike species
- Preferred habitat
- Additional notes
- Status in Pennsylvania (distribution map, most of which are dynamically sourced from iMapInvasives – meaning as soon as new records are confirmed in the iMapInvasives database, they will appear on the maps in the guide)

The guide also provides information on iMapInvasives, how to report invasive species findings to this online database, and helpful video tutorials. Tips are provided on how to take good quality photographs (when submitting invasive species findings to iMapInvasives) for purposes of expert-vetting.

Amy mentioned that WPC will be hosting a webinar on June 15, 2023 for PGC staff to learn more about this new digital field guide. This guide, though not fully comprehensive for all invasive species pertinent to the NW region, serves as a helpful resource to get started on building a better knowledge base on invasive species.

The following images showcase part of the demonstration of the digital PGC field guide provided by Amy during today's Council meeting:

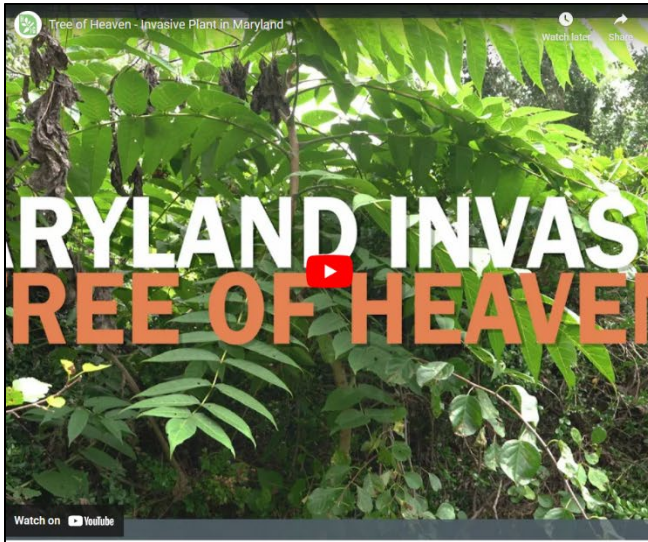




🔗 TREE-OF-HEAVEN



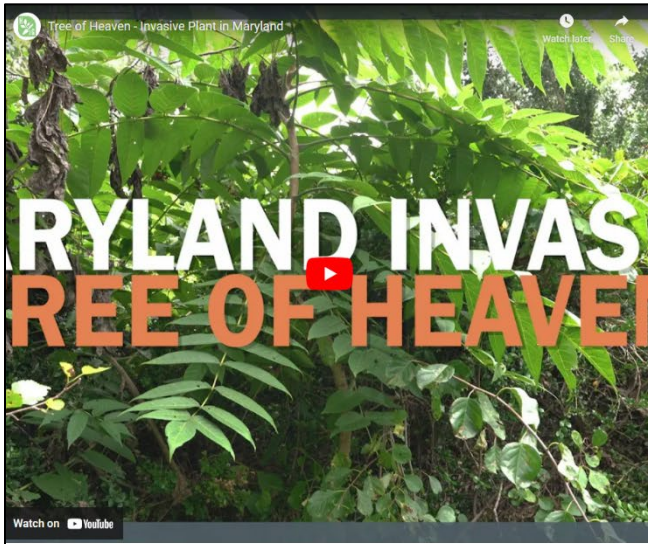
(Left to Right): Tree-of-heaven can reach a height of 80 feet with up to a six-foot diameter trunk. | Leaves are pinnately compound with 10-41 leaflets with smooth leaf margins. When leaves are crushed, scent glands on the back of leaves produce a rancid smell. | Bud scars of tree-of-heaven are large and shield-shaped.



**Tree-of-Heaven**

Scientific name: *Ailanthus altissima*

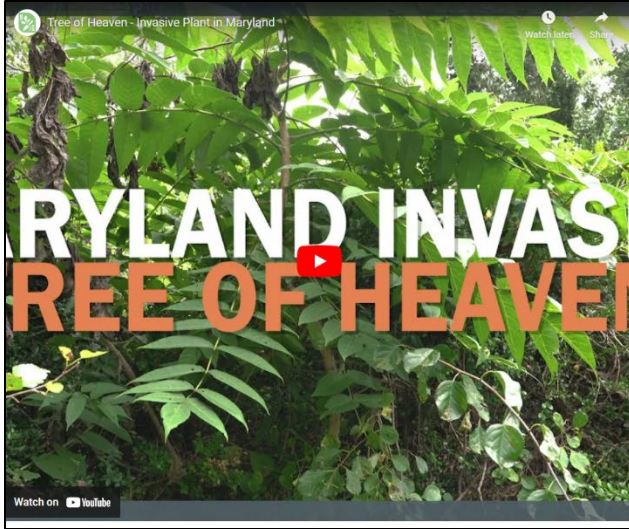
- **Why It's A Problem:**
  - Tree-of-heaven produces chemicals in its roots that prevent the establishment of other plant species nearby. Its fast growth limits habitat for other species. Its root system may be extensive and has been known to cause damage to sewer lines and building foundations. Tree-of-heaven is a known host tree for the invasive [spotted lanternfly](#). (PA DCNR)
- **Identification Tips & Harm Caused:**
  - ["Tree-of-Heaven"](#) by Penn State Extension
  - ["Invasive Plants of Pennsylvania: Tree-of-Heaven"](#) by PA DCNR
  - ["Tree of Heaven"](#) by Western New York PRISM
  - ["Threats To The Forest: Insects, Plants, and Diseases"](#) by PA Hardwoods Development Council
  - ["Mistaken Identity? Invasive Plants and Their Native Look-Alikes"](#) by Delaware Department of Agriculture
- **Videos:**
  - ["Tree of Heaven - Invasive Plant in Maryland"](#) by University of Maryland
  - ["Tree-of-Heaven: Native Lookalikes"](#) by Penn State Extension
  - ["Invasive Species: Tree of Heaven"](#) by Potomac Highlands Cooperative Weed & Pest



- **Look-Alike Species (all native):**
  - [Black walnut](#) (*Juglans nigra*) & [butternut](#) (*J. cinerea*)
  - [Staghorn sumac](#) (*Rhus typhina*) & [smooth sumac](#) (*R. glabra*)
  - [Hickory spp.](#) (*Carya* spp.)
  - [White ash](#) (*Fraxinus americana*) & [green ash](#) (*F. pennsylvanica*)
  - [Black locust](#) (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) & [honey locust](#) (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)
  - [Box elder](#) (*Acer negundo*)

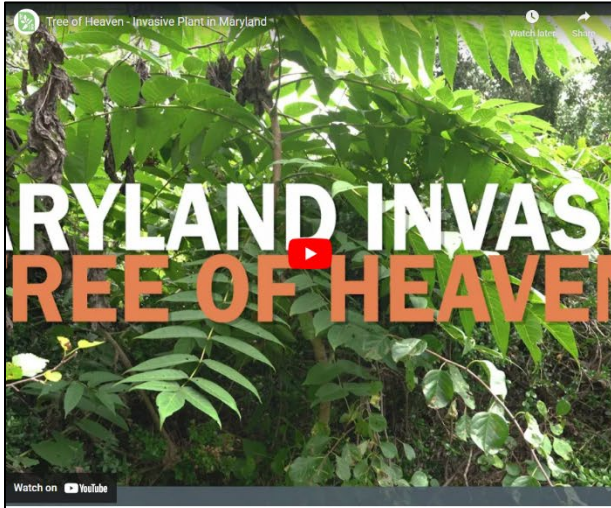




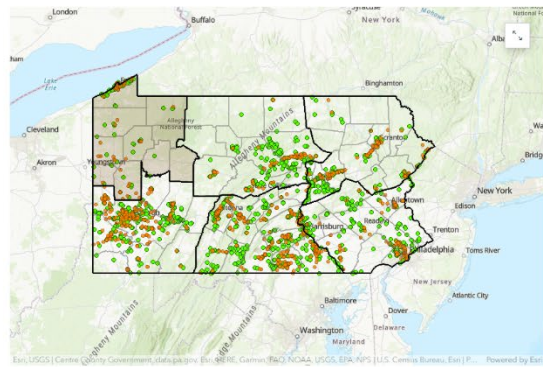


- **Notes:**
  - Tree-of-heaven is a favored host plant for the **spotted lanternfly**, an invasive pest currently regulated by the PA Department of Agriculture. Report any sightings of spotted lanternfly immediately to Penn State Extension via their [online reporting tool](#).

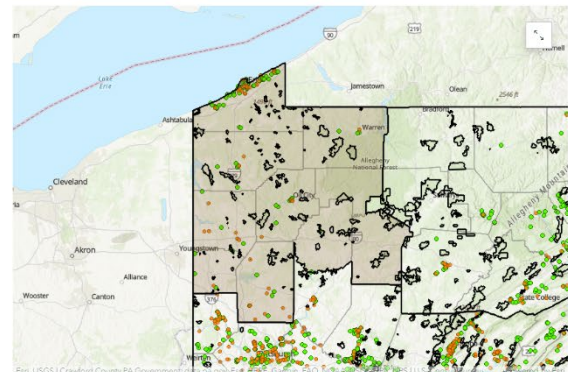
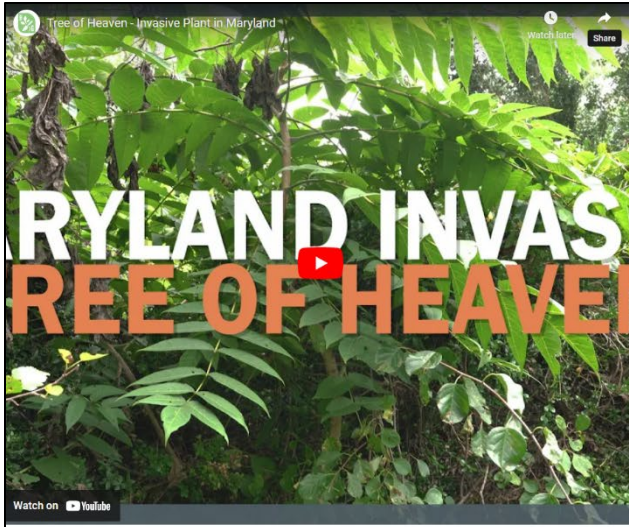
[Report Spotted Lanternfly](#)



- **Status in Pennsylvania:**
  - Established (*Common*)
  - Class B noxious weed ([view full list](#))



Tree-of-heaven detections in PGC regions, dynamically sourced from iMapInvasives. Click the double arrows in the top right corner to expand/pan/zoom the map and view the legend.



Tree-of-heaven detections in northwest Pennsylvania with views of PGC game lands; dynamically sourced from iMapInvasives. Click the double arrows in the top right corner to expand/pan/zoom the map and view the legend.



## Photography Matters!

When reporting your findings of invasive species, keep in mind the following tips.

- **Tip #1.** Take close-up images of the species you observe.
- **Tip #2.** Ensure your images capture a species' distinguishing characteristics. This ensures your observation(s) can be confirmed by a species expert in iMapInvasives.
- **Tip #3.** Take photos that are clear and crisp.
- **Tip #4.** Ensure your camera is focused on the target species, not background vegetation.
- **Tip #5.** When possible, include an item in your image that shows scale (e.g., hand, coin, ruler).
- **Tip #6.** Avoid taking photos from a distance.



Jeff Wagner (WPC) commented that much of WPC's work related to invasive species is occurring in NW PA, based on current funding coming from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Jeff said he and others felt it would be a great idea to get some more intentional, dedicated survey work done on game lands. PGC came up with some funding which was used to hire a seasonal person to survey solely on game lands in western PA, though mostly in the NW. We don't know how many game lands we'll be able to survey from this effort; however, our methodology is to survey high value ecological places. These are the areas we'll spend our effort in as far as survey of and control for invasives.

The places where we plan to survey thus far include known populations of rare plants. We will work from those locations outward to encompass the habitats of concern. It would be ideal that after conducting our surveys, we find that few invasives species are posing a problem, but whatever the findings are, we will document them (*in iMapInvasives*). That information can then be utilized by the PGC to help manage those areas.

Jeff commented that WPC is also working with the PGC by using some of our control funding that WPC has through GLRI to work on game lands. We've been doing that for a number of years. However, this effort is to understand what invasives are present in the areas being surveyed and determine what the next steps should be.

Beginning in 2023, we have a 3-year agreement (contract) in place for this survey work in the NW region. Moving forward, it would be great to have some level of survey work occurring in each PGC region of the state (or whatever agency WPC might be working with).

Jeff commented that for most staff working for a PA state agency, "the hat they wear" is not to deal with invasive species primarily (with the exception of Sean Hartzell, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator with the PFBC); it's more of a peripheral part of their role. Therefore, to supply capacity for proactive surveying of invasive species is where we're trying to go with this project.



We're also working with DCNR and the Pennsylvania Plant Conservation Network (PPCN). Some of the locations where we're working (both with the PGC and a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation - RKM) is to look at and develop monitoring plans for 10 sites across the state. So, we're trying to lump everything together and bring all the partners together as much as we can so the areas we're picking are high ecological value. There's already some interest there, either from DCNR or PGC, and we're trying to take the lowest hanging fruit in terms of what are the areas we really should be working in and begin working there.

All of this is a start. We're hoping that the areas WPC and the PPNC are working in can later be handed over to the PRISMs (when they are initiated) to put into the repertoire of the areas where they are working over time. Essentially, everything we do is leading up to the PRISMs happening. No one entity is able to keep up with invasive species management and stewardship work, so we need something that will be permanent to keep going with these tasks. For example, we're discovering that up in the Lake Erie watershed, we've done a lot of work (with the Cooperative Weed Management Area – CWMA - in that region), but now we've got to go back to these sites and continue follow-up efforts.

Jeff feels that PRISMs are the state's best strategy as far as making long-term management and stewardship efforts continue sustainably in areas across the state, and the work WPC/PGC are doing is helping to provide little steps along the way.

Eve Adrian (Executive Policy Specialist 2, Office of the Secretary, PDA) asked if the crowdsourced photos that are used in the PGC digital field are usable by state entities for outreach purposes? Amy Jewitt (WPC) responded, saying that many of the photos in the field guide are sourced from iNaturalist and the credits for those images are provided at the very end of the field guide. Eve followed up by asking if the images could be used with the photographer's permission? Amy said that as long as the photos are being credited, they could be used.

Eve Adrian (PDA) asked how the high ecological value areas that Jeff Wagner mentioned are chosen? In other words, is the methodology for how those locations were chosen listed in the field guide either currently or in the future? Jeff Wagner (WPC) responded, saying that this information is not listed in the field guide. The methodology used to select the 10 high ecological value areas (*as part of the WPCs RKM Foundation-funded grant work*) is part of the PA Natural Heritage Program's (PNHP) internal and standard methodology. The PNHP has all the locations for rare species found in PA and we sort through this information by G-Rank (global), S-Rank (state), and any threats that we know of.

Eve Adrian (PDA) asked when the results of the survey work would be made available. Jeff Wagner (WPC) said the results would be available at the end of 2023. Amy Jewitt (WPC) followed up by saying that all the findings from the invasive species surveys are being documented in [iMapInvasives](#) and that information is available for viewing at any time and could



even be looked at today. The information is not fully comprehensive yet in iMapInvasives since surveys are continuing, but there is information readily available now in the database. Eve asked if the information is being uploaded in batches to iMapInvasives at various incremental times? Amy responded that the WPC surveyors are using the iMapInvasives mobile apps for data collection in the field which allows for data to be uploaded the same day the surveyor collects it. Jeff commented that likely a summary will be compiled at the end of the year, mainly for the PGC, showing what was done and the locations where surveys were completed at (but not a formal report).

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked Scott Bearer (PGC) about once this project is done, is this something the PGC is looking to expand to other regions? Scott responded (*in relation to the digital field guide*) that it is certainly the hope to expand this work to other areas across PA. Working with Jeff and Amy on additional educational resources like these guides is something that's been talked about, but Scott also recognizes it took a lot of work to put the guide together and he wants to be sensitive to Amy's time. Additional guides made for other regions would have a different list of priority species.

With that educational resource now being available, it's the hope of the PGC that their staff will be more diligent about entering new hotspots and populations of emerging invasive species into iMapInvasives. This information will then benefit the PGC for use in prioritizing areas for management and treatment. And as Jeff previously mentioned, as PRISMs are developed, we could use that resource to help control any problem that arises (*on game lands*).

Amy Jewitt (WPC) also mentioned that in the back of her mind, as she was developing the NW PGC invasive species field guide, she wanted to take the all-too-often overwhelming feeling that we get when we think of invasive species and provide information on the topic as more of a "chunk" than the whole issue itself. That was why the guide only highlighted 26 species and not all species found in the NW region. The hope was that as PGC staff use the guide and get more familiar with the species that are in the region and where they work, it could serve as a stepping stone and a foundation for PGC staff to build their knowledge base and be encouraged to learn more about other invasive species at their own pace. Amy finished by saying that she hopes WPC is able to continue working with PGC's other regions by giving them this same type of resource, similar to the NW PGC field guide. Additional conversations will likely follow on strategizing next steps.

Scott responded, saying that was what PGC's habitat crews, foremen, and land managers struggled with. Essentially, the guide gives PGC staff a mechanism for what they should be looking out for and what was important to treat.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) followed up on his previous question to Scott by asking that by using the high ecological areas' impact and value as priority for Scott and others at PGC, and knowing there is a multitude of area to cover, it's then picking those high ecological areas that have value to communities, tourism, hunting, etc. By doing so, you're able to address these issues which

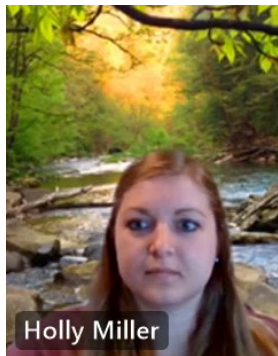
leads into PRISM. Once that is in place in a region, they'll have this same tool to be able to work through to prioritize in any given region. Jeff responded that yes, the prioritizing process will vary by PRISM, but ultimately, we would advocate that if you're going to work on invasive species, you can't work everywhere; you have to pick your battles. And to us, the battle is, where do you have the resources that are going to be most impactful? There are things that come into play that each PRISM will have to deal with.

Fred wrapped up by saying that what Jeff described is the creation of a model that PRISM essentially can move forward with, and that is where the pilot PRISM program can feed off of this work being done.

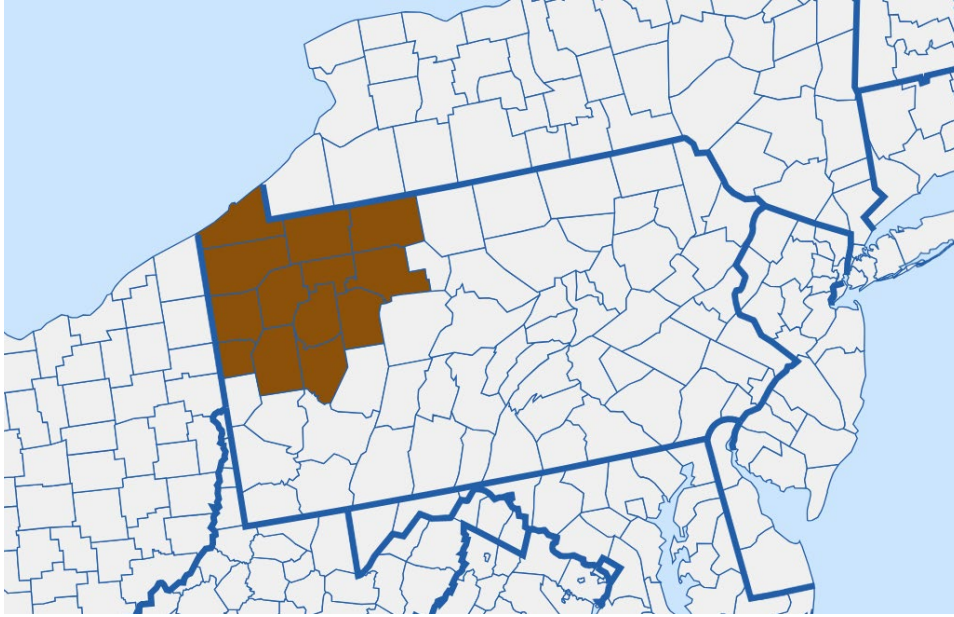
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### **PACD Pilot PRISM Program in NW PA - Update**

Speaker: **Holly Miller**, Program Manager, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) ([hmillier@pacd.org](mailto:hmillier@pacd.org))



Holly began by saying that the PACD was awarded a \$210,000 [Landscape Scale Restoration grant](#) from the U.S. Forest Service to pilot a Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) program in Pennsylvania beginning in the Northwest (NW) region. The program will cover 13 counties: Erie, Warren, McKean, Crawford, Mercer, Venango, Forest, Elk, Lawrence, Butler, Clarion, Jefferson, and Armstrong.



*Map showing the 13 counties where a pilot PRISM program is slated to take place in NW PA. (Map provided by minute taker.)*

Of the grant total, \$40,000 will be used for education and outreach mini grants. The NW conservation districts will apply for up to \$2,000 at a time to offer things like project tours, guided walks, invasive species visuals and fact sheets, workshops and trainings, community science projects, etc. Also, \$149,000 will be used for invasive species management projects. Like all of PACD's mini grant programs, the conservation districts will be the exclusive applicants to PACD.

We met with the 13 NW conservation districts in April 2023 to begin planning for the roll-out of the program which will begin on July 1, 2023. We decided how to best distribute the funding so the projects would be completed across the region and not in just a couple of counties. We decided the funding would be evenly divided among the counties participating in the program. If a district chooses not to participate or does not allocate the funds to projects, the money would be returned to the program for other counties to utilize. We also determined that projects can be multi-county.

The big part of the PRISM idea (and we can look at New York, for example) is diverse partnerships. Therefore, we want to bring in as many stakeholders, partners, and community members as possible. Each conservation district is forming an advisory committee that will identify and rank projects within their county. The formation of these advisory committees will allow for local control and expertise when it comes to prioritizing projects.

The PACD, PDA, and DCNR met in March 2023 and provided some organizations and names of individuals to the conservation districts who should be included in the advisory committees. The committees will include conservation district staff, local community groups, environmental enthusiasts, and local, federal and state partner staff. Also to be included are those who pledged



match to the program, including the DCNR, PDA, Master Watershed Steward program, Western PA Conservancy, Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative, the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, and others.

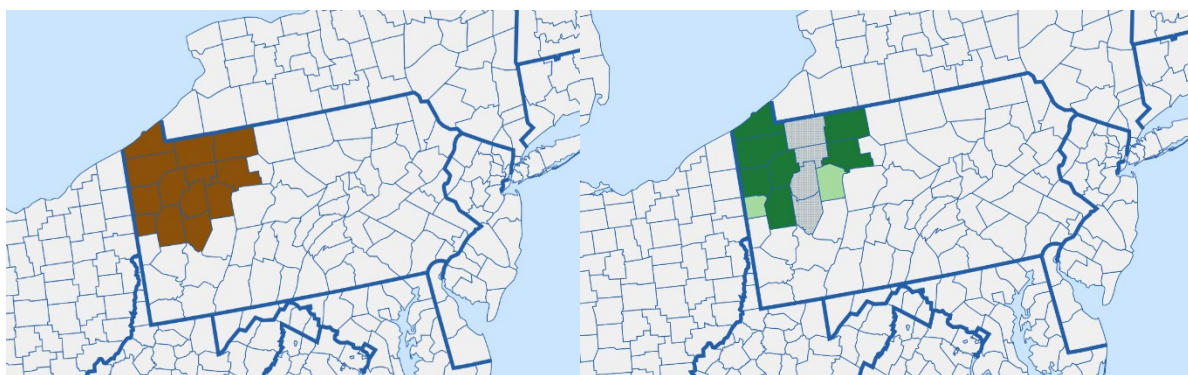
Conservation districts will be submitting the names of folks on their advisory committees by July 1, 2023 to PACD. Priority projects will be determined by the advisory groups who will then present them to the conservation district board. Applications will then be sent to PACD for funding. The multi-county projects can be submitted as one application through one conservation district; however, we are suggesting that all the local advisory committees be consulted.

It was also determined that most projects will probably take a few years to complete with repeat treatments which makes the timeframe of this grant perfect for on-the-ground treatment projects, especially larger ones. The grant period ends June 30, 2027, so we have a few years to complete the projects.

Regarding match for this program, there is a 50/50 match required. The organizations previously mentioned pledged match to the program in the form of staff time, volunteers, on-the-ground treatment projects, etc. Match will be documented on final reports that the districts submit to PACD. This will allow PACD to have the details when it comes to reporting and submitting paperwork to the U.S. Forest Service.

Regarding education and outreach printed materials, the conservation districts will be sharing materials and using existing resources where they can. If anyone knows of any good invasive species publications, please let Holly know (via email at [hmillier@pacd.org](mailto:hmillier@pacd.org)) so she can get the permissions and share them with the conservation districts. This will be helpful for the education and outreach effort instead of reinventing the wheel.

Of the 13 NW counties previously mentioned, Holly has received a list of which counties plan to participate in the program. They include Mercer, Butler, McKean, Crawford, Elk, Erie, and Venango. Jefferson and Lawrence counties also plan on participating, but only in the education and outreach portion.



**Left:** Map showing the 13 counties where a pilot PRISM program is slated to take place in NW PA. | **Right:** Counties colored dark green indicate those that plan to participate in the pilot PRISM program. Jefferson and Lawrence counties (shown in light

*green) also plan to participate but will only be doing education and outreach tasks. Counties not participating (shown in light grey) include Warren, Forest, Clarion, and Armstrong. (Maps provided by minute taker.)*

When PACD met with the districts, some already had projects in mind and some had really creative education and outreach ideas. Holly feels that with the partnerships and the advisory groups, we're really going to see some nice projects come out of this pilot.

Once we have the results from the program and garner that information, we can present it and justify the funding for a statewide PRISM program. Hopefully we can have a regional program that is as successful as other states, like New York. As the pilot program is not open yet (will begin on July 1), we are currently drafting all the templates, application forms, and reporting forms now. The districts are also forming their advisory groups.

Piper Sherburne (South East Region Director, PACD) commented that since Amy Jewitt (WPC) previously provided training to PACD on the use of iMapInvasives, how many counties in NW PA took that training and will be doing some survey work and entries through iMapInvasives? Amy responded, saying she did not know the number of NW counties that participated in the training off the top of her head. Amy commented to Holly that additional trainings on the use of iMapInvasives could certainly be offered again.

Jeff Wagner (WPC) asked if PACD would be supplying any guidance or criteria for the individual conservation districts and their respective advisory committees in terms of site selection? How will project sites be prioritized? Holly responded, saying PACD will be leaving project site selection up to the counties themselves; however, PACD will have guidelines documents for the program as a whole. Jeff followed up by asking what are the guidelines? Holly said PACD has guidelines documents that tell how to do the application process, what would be eligible under the program, etc. These documents are not quite finished (still in the drafting process), but when they are finished, Holly can share them out with interested individuals.

Jeff Wagner asked about the individual projects and individual conservation districts - are they required to bring a certain amount of match to the table? Holly responded that there is a 50/50 match required. In working with the partners that pledged for staff time, volunteer time, on-the-ground projects, etc., they would document those kinds of match sources. Also, during PACD's conversations with the conservation districts, they also had some additional match sources as well, mostly in terms of on-the-ground treatment projects that are already in the works. That will also be documented as match.

Eve Adrian (PDA) commented that Holly had said multiple counties can submit for funding to do a project and there would be a lead county in charge of that effort. Would that lead county be responsible for administering the funding and reporting efforts (like how the county-wide action plan model works)? Holly answered yes to Eve's question; the lead county would oversee the application, the reporting, etc.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented on Holly's earlier mention about the funding for the pilot opening July 1, 2023. She also mentioned about the counties that would not be participating and that their allotted money would go back into the pool of funds being administered by PACD. Since this project covers a five-year span (*till 2027*), just because a county may not initially have a project, is PACD eliminating those counties all together? In Fred's opinion, the prudent thing to do is to allow this pilot program to have a timeframe that counties could examine and work with participants and collaborators to help counties find projects that might be about high priority ecological areas that could use some work and maybe just need to be identified. Fred feels it may be shortsighted for PACD to say the program is open and now closed, and for example, Elk County didn't decide to do a project now, but a year from now they've identified something, but they're no longer able to be included, even though the extent of this grant is for five years. Fred asked Holly if PACD is taking that into consideration? Holly responded, saying there have been conversations on how to go about this particular aspect of the program. PACD asked folks at the districts to go to their boards and decide if they were participating in the program or not. That was how the decision was made of whether or not particular counties would be participating in the pilot. Fred's point would be something to look into, but Holly is not sure how it would go.

Piper Sherburne (PACD) commented that PACD will be having its conference in July 2023 and Piper feels that Fred's comments (*listed above*) should be discussed there. The whole idea behind the pilot PRISM program is for all the conservation districts to be involved, and all said they were interested in doing outreach and education for the PRISM program. Piper feels that since this pilot program is so new, conservation districts may think the pilot is happening now and they are not geared up for it and they also didn't think there would be enough funding. Piper feels if PACD tells the districts about what's going on with the pilot program in NW PA, you'll likely get everyone participating with it because we had a unanimous vote of support for the PRISM program in Pennsylvania. Piper agrees with Fred – there should be an open enrollment period for the whole term of the program.

To build off of the conversation between Fred and Piper, Eve Adrian (PDA) commented that when PGISC first started talking about a statewide PRISM program, PDA discussed with the House Ag Committee about this proposal for a statewide PRISM program and there was concern about there being language that if money was not expended, it would go back into the pool for other counties to use. That was an issue for some legislators because it seems like it's penalizing for exactly the reason Fred mentioned (*above*). We'll have to discuss that more because that will be a pinch point for the statewide PRISMs conversations that we have in the future. Piper (PACD) agreed with Eve, saying she felt that money not being used by a certain county could instead go to a partner affiliated with the conservation district(s) to implement some type of project.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented that starting up a pilot program is hard work. To take it on and get a plan in mind to start spending money in a useful way is hard. Ruth thanked Holly and PACD for their work and efforts thus far. However, Ruth said she is struggling with understanding what makes this a regional (PRISM) program and not just a county-by-county



program? Holly responded, saying it's set up to follow the format of how PACD offers subgrants to conservation districts. That is where the local "conservation district by conservation district" application plays into it. PACD will not be doing the site ranking (or anything like that). As far as the regional aspect of the program, that is where the multi-county projects will come in wherein the districts can work with each other and build projects on a regional basis.

Jeff Wagner (WPC) commented to Holly that PACD has advisory committees on a county-by-county basis. How about having a regional advisory committee that would help guide the region and then the individual counties would spin off from that? Holly said PACD did talk about having a regional advisory committee, but there was concern that the meeting times (and pulling everyone together) would be difficult to do. Also, separate counties would have different folks that they would be pulling into the advisory groups. In follow-up to Holly's response, Jeff stated that it's hard to overcome what Ruth Welliver (PDA) is addressing (*in her statement above*) without having some structure to make that happen (*at a regional level*).

Piper Sherburne (PACD) mentioned to Holly that PACD has their region meetings twice a year and every region has the opportunity to put some sort of advisory program in place. That's something PACD should consider.

Deb Klenotic (Deputy Director of Communications at the PA Department of Environmental Protection - DEP) commented that to both Ruth's and Piper's points just mentioned (*above*), the pilot program is a great project getting underway and Deb is wondering if there's going to be a dedicated website or some other way that Council members internally and (at some point) the public and stakeholders can follow the progress of this effort? Essentially, how will PACD communicate broadly about what is happening, who's involved, how it's working, and progress being made? The PGISC Communications Committee would love to partner with PACD on such an effort. Holly responded, saying nothing like what Deb is suggesting has been incorporated into the pilot program. This would definitely be something PACD should communicate on and see if something like this could be done.

Emily Shosh (Communications and Outreach Advisor, Potter County Conservation District) commented in the meeting chat: "Holly, perhaps for the sake of communication/education to stakeholders, something similar to the [Keystone 10 Million Trees Mapping system](#) could be developed? This would also help with grant reporting, I would assume. I could email you more on that."

Jim Grazio (Great Lakes Biologist, DEP) asked Holly where the regional management aspect of this pilot program comes in and how does it differ from a small grant program? Jim asked Holly to forgive him for asking a very blunt and awkward question, but Jim felt he was not the only one thinking this. Jim feels this is an important question to flesh out to ensure the pilot program is as successful as it can be. This pilot will set the tone (and viability) for the rest of the state. Jim asked if the Council could discuss this further in a subsequent meeting. Holly responded, saying

she wasn't sure how to answer that question and felt there would likely need to be further conversation regarding it.

Jeff Wagner (WPC) commented that three Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) including the Lake Erie Watershed CWMA, Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area, and the French Creek CWMA make up a good portion of the NW region being covered by this pilot program. There are communications and partnerships currently in place with these entities that could be melded into this effort related to the pilot. Jeff was hoping that would be the administrative emphasis of this grant, to pull together something that represents that PRISM region.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) followed up on Jeff's comments, saying that CWMAs are very similar to PRISMs, but operate at a smaller scale and come up with their own funding. Many of them, such as the Lake Erie Watershed CWMA, have been functioning for some time now and have partnerships already in place. They also have determined priority locations where work is currently happening. In other words, the wheel has already been invented with these CWMAs in their respective regions. Amy feels that it's a perfect blend into what is trying to be done with the pilot program in the NW to ensure we are including those folks from the existing CWMAs and building upon the work they have already done.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented that conservation districts have been a big part of the CWMAs, with Jeff Wagner (WPC) concurring.

Deb Klenotic (DEP) suggested that when the structure is in place, we need to ensure this is a regional approach and that PACD will publicly present it that way. For example, a NW regional pilot PRISM program website would probably be a good starting point. By having something like a website in place, it will help ensure that all the work happening in the 13 different counties is packaged as a regional pilot PRISM. Amy Jewitt (WPC) added onto Deb's comments, saying that each of the respective PRISM regions in New York have their own website. Amy suggested to Holly that she may want to look at these websites for inspiration. Holly said she would.

*For reference, the eight New York PRISM websites include the following:*

- [St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario PRISM \(SLELO\)](#)
- [Western New York PRISM](#)
- [Finger Lakes PRISM](#)
- [Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership \(CRISP\)](#)
- [Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program \(APIPP\)](#)
- [Lower Hudson PRISM](#)
- [Capital Region PRISM](#)
- [Long Island Invasive Species Management Area \(LIISMA\)](#)

Jeff Wagner (WPC) commented that the people who coordinate and fund the existing CWMAs would be very happy to help brainstorm and think through some things (*to help assist PACD with this pilot program*).

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) thanked Holly for taking the time to present to the Council today on the PACD's pilot PRISM program. Fred hopes that what Holly takes away from today's conversations is that this Council and others from around the state are very engaged and we are here to help make this pilot PRISM program a positive experience for the conservation districts in the NW. In the big picture, PACD's success is imperative to Jim Grazio's (DEP) point because as this Council continues to push for PRISM across the state, it's going to be imperative that we can look to this pilot and show legislators and administration that this concept in Pennsylvania can work and that it's been done collaboratively and with a lot of thought behind it as to next steps for the state and at the state level. Please don't hesitate to reach out to this Council; you've got plenty of help here!

Holly wrapped up the discussion by thanking Fred and others for all the suggestions and advice and for the opportunity to present an update about the pilot to the Council. She looks forward to reaching out to PGISC members and folks should feel free to reach out to her also via phone or email. Holly commented that we can definitely work through some of the ideas that were tossed around the table today.

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## **Communications Committee**

**Speaker: Deb Klenotic**, Deputy Director of Communications at the PA Department of Environmental Protection and Chair of the Council's Communications Committee ([dklenotic@pa.gov](mailto:dklenotic@pa.gov))

Deb began by saying that the Communications Committee is interested in helping to make the pilot PRISM program as successful as possible. Back in March 2023 when funding for the pilot program was discussed, Deb had mentioned to Brenda Shambaugh (Executive Director, PACD) that PGISC could do a press release when the pilot program gets rolling; that could be another way the Communications Committee could help. We could talk about the timing of that (i.e., when is the ideal time we can say the program is getting underway and what is happening.)

We're looking forward to partnering with policy and legislative folks on additional PRISM outreach; we had started a strategic communications plan on that late last year. We're at a point of picking that up again, so Eve Adrian and folks, let Deb know when you're ready to work on this again as we're happy to help.

We're looking forward to the September 2023 Council meeting to be held at the Temple Ambler Field Station. If anyone on the Communications Committee or the Council is interested in



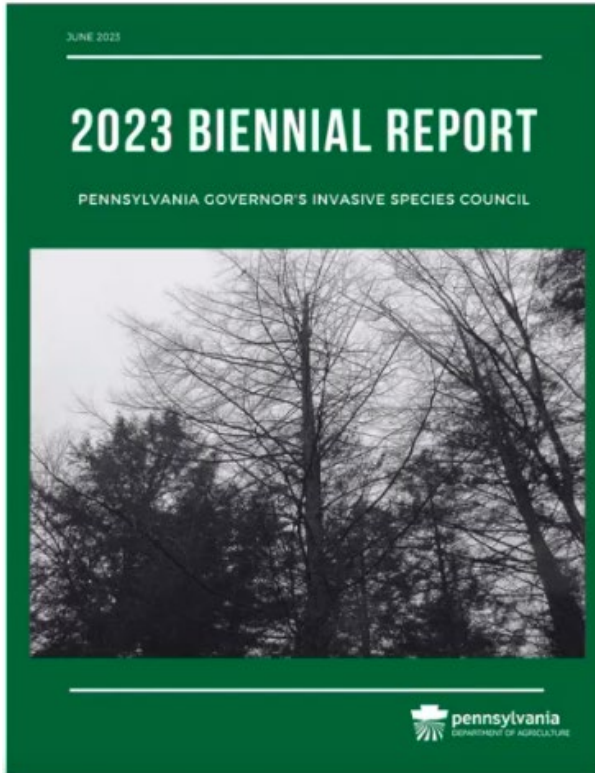
helping develop that event, please let Deb or Kris Abell ([krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)) know. Some of the things we'll be looking at are whether we might invite legislators and whether we break the event into a public or media event with legislators. Planning is also taking place regarding doing a site visit first and having a working meeting afterward.

Also coming up is the next Council e-newsletter (which reaches over 1,000 recipients). We're aiming to get that published by the end of June 2023. So far, content that's been penciled in for it includes:

- Pennsylvania Native Species Day
- Pilot PRISM
- Report from June 8 council meeting
- Game Commission – Western PA Conservancy projects partnership
- Seasonal item – Boating – check for invasives/Great Lakes Aquatic Landing Blitz
- **Your item here?** Email [krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)

If you are interested in submitting an item for inclusion, please send it to Kris. The way to think about the e-newsletter is that it represents the collective work of the Council and includes milestones, new initiatives being launched, and other news from individual Council members. If there's something you'd like to get out to the stakeholders who receive the newsletter, let us know.

Several individuals on the Communications Committee and folks from the policy office have been teaming up on the Council's 2023 Biennial Report. We had a great start on material from Jeff Wagner (WPC) and Amy Jewitt (WPC), and the group has since built on that and developed a report of the Council's activities and accomplishments in 2021-2022 into a beautifully designed report by Jamie Kopko (Executive Policy Specialist, PennDOT). In the report, we've highlighted the Council's accomplishments and activities with a primary focus on PRISM. We're ironing out the very last details on that report and a draft report should be ready for internal review by the end of tomorrow (June 9) - we're that close! After internal review, the report will be shared with the Governor's Office (with starter questions for discussion) and then be shared publicly.



Contents of the report are slated to include the following:

- Executive summary
- Letter from Secretary Redding highlighting PRISM; a practical solution to a pressing issue
- Highlighted activities and accomplishments, 2021-2022:
  - PRISM plan
  - First Pennsylvania Invasive Species Impacts Survey
  - Legislative hearing with Center for Rural PA
  - First Pennsylvania Native Species Day
  - Council newsletter launch
  - New searchable public database on 150 invasive plants of most concern to PA
  - Improved aquatic invasive species rapid response plan
  - 833-INVASIVE hotline
  - StoryMap of Council members' work

Deb also mentioned the Council's second annual Pennsylvania Native Species Day which occurred on May 18, 2023.



Deb was very impressed with the stakeholder engagement for this year's event. As compared to last year when at least 10 parks and organizations participated with public education and volunteer activities, this year we at least tripled that. We started outreach for this event back in January and hosted a webinar with interested organizations which was well attended. Deb heard from many interested organizations who wanted to ensure they were listed as being participants in this year's PA Native Species Day on the [PGISC webpage](#) (which garnered 3,000+ views). All were appreciative for the opportunity to share their programming. Like last year, everyone understood the combined message of the importance of protecting our biodiverse native ecosystem and the challenges and pressures from invasive species. Therefore, a lot of the activities this year focused on that dual message.

The Council had a fantastic media event for the 2023 PA Native Species Day that featured speakers from six of the agencies with representation on the Council. The PA Landscape and Nursery Association talked about the importance of natives and the challenges from invasives at North Creek Nurseries. Commonwealth Media Services captured the speakers' remarks. A plethora of information was provided on what agencies and Council members are doing on invasives issues.





*The Governor's Invasive Species Council underscored the importance of sustaining native plants, insects, and animals on land and in our waters during a visit to North Creek Nurseries on May 18, 2023 to celebrate the second annual Pennsylvania Native Species Day. ([Watch video here.](#))*

Next year, Deb feels it would be good to think ahead about any activities, project announcements, or news that we could time to coincide with PA Native Species Day.

Deb wrapped up by asking for photos of invasive species impacts. For example, our committee is looking for images that show damage, loss, hazard, and scale caused by invasive species. In the last Communications Committee meeting, we talked about some potential platforms for sharing these photos. Kris Abell (PDA) and Jay Losiewicz (PDA) will be looking into that more. These photos will be used primarily in Council communications and outreach efforts.

Eve Adrian (PDA) asked if photos from iMapInvasives can be used for Council purposes? Deb responded, saying we want to be sure we're not using photos that are crowdsourced or use an image that we did not get user permission for. For example, at DEP, photos are not used that do not originate from DEP or its partners, like Council members. Amy Jewitt (WPC) followed up on Deb's comments, saying that some of the data (*and affiliated photos*) received in iMapInvasives are coming from agencies or entities that are members of the Council; not all the data is coming from community scientists. There is always the option of reaching out to an iMapInvasives data contributor and asking their permission to use their image(s). Amy said she could almost guarantee that in most situations, individuals would be happy to allow the Council to use their photos as long as we provide a photo credit.

Piper Sherburne (PACD) asked if educational materials could be developed that would include both native and invasive species together on one pamphlet. For example, a pamphlet about spotted lanternfly (SLF) could include info on the native species that attack SLF. For example, in the SLF epicenter (*in SE PA*), Piper has observed assassin bugs, wheel bugs, dragonflies, praying mantises, and other species that feed on or attack SLF. If more people knew that these native

species are helping to protect our natural environment by attacking SLF, it might encourage them to protect these species (like praying mantises). People currently are just not making that connection.

Jocelyn Behm (Assistant Professor, Integrative Ecology Lab, Temple University) commented in the meeting chat: “Just an FYI: often the common praying mantis we see is not a native species. It’s also from Asia, like the spotted lanternfly.”

Deb loved Piper’s idea and wondered if PDA or Penn State Extension has generated any information along these lines. Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented that Penn State Extension is doing a big study on SLF that includes data on what species are eating the SLF. Julie Urban (Associate Research Professor, Penn State University) commented that Kelli Hoover, Professor of Entomology at Penn State University, has a doctoral student who’s been doing some tests of predation on SLF and she’s also collected some community science reports about birds, etc. Julie also commented that Piper’s observation concerning the wheel bugs is “spot on”. Julie said she could encourage Kelli to work with Penn State’s communications lead, Amy Duke, to put together a media story on that topic which could later be shared. The media folks at Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences often look for reports that they can put in the Penn State newsletter and other places about ongoing research. If folks think that would be a good venue, Julie could help push that along.

Deb thought Julie’s idea was great, commenting there is a counter narrative that one reason invasive species expand is because they don’t have predators in the ecosystem (*where the invasive species are invading*). If there are some native species that are starting to become predators for SLF or other invasive species, that would be a good message to get out. Julie followed up by saying that as SLF’s range expands, SLF encounters different native species. So, for example, as SLF is moving into northeastern PA, it might be picking up different predators than what we’ve seen. Getting people aware of these natural happenings for reporting purposes would be useful also. Deb felt that more traction is needed on this idea, so Julie said she would get things moving along on her end at Penn State.

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## **Legislative Committee**

**Speaker: Eve Adrian**, Executive Policy Specialist 2 at the PA Department of Agriculture and Chair of the Council’s Legislative Committee ([eadrian@pa.gov](mailto:eadrian@pa.gov))

Eve began by discussing the committee’s big picture planning. Ideally, we are trying to take the legislation we’ve been crafting, take the PRISM model we’ve been advocating for, and fit it into Governor Shapiro’s initiatives. However, there is a chance that since this effort (*with the draft legislation*) is a remnant of the Wolf administration, it may come across as not being a unique aspect of the Shapiro administration. Eve feels there are several ways we can combat this

potential issue. For example, Governor Shapiro has been emphasizing the extension of organic, and many people feel that invasive species and organic agriculture are inextricably linked. Also, the rural and economic development elements that Governor Shapiro has been trying to push also pair well with the invasive species work this committee is doing. This will take full agency and partner coordination and also includes townships, municipalities, and counties.

Recent meetings with Secretary Redding (PDA) and the Governor's policy office have been very positive. Secretary Redding has been a champion of invasive species, specifically for spotted lanternfly in the past. However, we've been shifting into talk about PRISM (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management) and how that will play out in Pennsylvania. A contact of the Governor's policy office, Jason Finkle, has been very interested in the topic of PRISM, though has admitted he does not know much about it. Therefore, we've indicated we want to do more outreach and education to the Shapiro administration.

The strategic outreach plan we've been working on continues to evolve. We originally planned to do presentations for key personnel of the Shapiro administration and the Governor's policy office. However, it sounds like that plan is no longer necessary as Jason Finkle said the concept behind PRISM makes a lot of sense to him and he can do the necessary education on his end.

We've also been talking about doing legislative site visits. We would love to have two site visits ahead of our September 8, 2023 quarterly PGISC meeting. About two months ago, the entire House Agriculture Committee was in an informational hearing on the topic of organic; the venue was the Rodale Institute. We would like to model exactly what they did (but for invasives) which included site visits and a House Ag Committee informational hearing.

This outreach is taking the form of many stakeholder events. With every Legislative Committee meeting we have, we discuss events that people are doing because we want to "cross-pollinate" our events and outreach that we're doing while also being efficient.

We are working on solidifying the draft legislation language. It is currently going through the public document routing system. It will then be sent to the Governor's office for their review, and afterwards be proposed.

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### **Invasive Species Listing Committee**

**Speaker: Andrew Rohrbaugh**, Section Chief, Program Services and Support Section, Division of Forest Health, Bureau of Forestry, PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources ([anrohrbaug@pa.gov](mailto:anrohrbaug@pa.gov))

The updated invasive [Plant List](#) is now available on the PGISC website. Note: Access to the Plant List may be restricted if using a government computer, but for members of the public, the

site loads without issue. Several different species assessments have been completed over the last year as well as changes to the [Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee list](#). Kris Abell (PDA) submitted suggested updates for the [Insect, Aquatic Animal, and Plant Pathogens lists](#) which are now live on the PGISC website also.

Twenty-two new species assessments were completed. Andrew thanked the various individuals who helped make that achievement happen (DCNR and WPC staff). Those species and their risk assessment scores are as follows. *(For more information on the species listed below, reference links are provided from DCNR, WPC, PA Sea Grant, and iNaturalist):*

Species	Score	Species	Score
<a href="#">Hardy kiwifruit</a> ( <i>Actinidia arguta</i> )	69.8	<a href="#">Policeman's helmet</a> ( <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> )	66.67
<a href="#">Alligatorweed</a> ( <i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i> )	66.7	<a href="#">Golden rain tree</a> ( <i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i> )	54.4
<a href="#">Giant reed</a> ( <i>Arundo donax</i> )	77.4	<a href="#">Wax-leaf ligustrum</a> ( <i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> )	64
<a href="#">Musk thistle</a> ( <i>Carduus nutans</i> )	90.9	<a href="#">Chinese privet</a> ( <i>Ligustrum sinense</i> )	80.2
<a href="#">Japanese sedge</a> ( <i>Carex kobomugi</i> )	68.6	<a href="#">Asian spiderwort</a> ( <i>Murdannia keisak</i> )	78.16
<a href="#">Diffuse knapweed</a> ( <i>Centaurea diffusa</i> )	59.4	<a href="#">Java water-dropwort</a> ( <i>Oenanthe javanica</i> )	77.4
<a href="#">Marsh thistle</a> ( <i>Cirsium palustre</i> )	67.9	<a href="#">Sawtooth oak</a> ( <i>Quercus acutissima</i> )	35.7
<a href="#">Poison hemlock</a> ( <i>Conium maculatum</i> )	74.4	<a href="#">Common chickweed</a> ( <i>Stellaria media</i> )	69.8
<a href="#">Swamp stone crop</a> ( <i>Crassula helmsii</i> )	80.2	<a href="#">Ravenna grass</a> ( <i>Tripidium ravennae</i> )	63.1
<a href="#">Reed mannagrass</a> ( <i>Glyceria maxima</i> )	79.52	<a href="#">Narrow-leaved cattail</a> ( <i>Typha angustifolia</i> )	78.5
<a href="#">Yorkshire fog</a> ( <i>Holcus lanatus</i> )	65.6	<a href="#">Greater periwinkle</a> ( <i>Vinca major</i> )	54.2

Andrew commented that WPC aims to complete more species assessments in the future.

Next steps include adding some of these assessments to the PGISC website. A number of invasive plant assessments have already been completed by folks in New York (which are available online), so they do not need to be reposted on the PGISC website. However, for species assessments completed for PA (and not already completed by NY), it makes sense to include those on the PGISC website.

On the PGISC website, there is a list of “top concern” plants (voted on as such by the Council), many of which have already been addressed by the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee (CP&NWC). Question: Should PGISC update this list/revamp it for recommendations for inclusion on the CP&NW list? Specifically, should the list be updated to remove species that already have been addressed? And should the list be updated to include new species? Andrew said any feedback is welcome.

For reference, the current “top concerns” list is as follows. ***Note: Species listed in the table below are not ranked in any particular order.***

*(For more information on the species listed below, reference links are provided from DCNR, WPC, PA Sea Grant, and iNaturalist):*



2021 Top 25 Invasive Plant Recommendations for Addition to the Pennsylvania State Noxious Weed List:

<u>Notes</u>		<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
	1.	<a href="#">Reed canary grass</a>	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>
	2.	<a href="#">European barberry</a>	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>
Buckthorn Group	3.	<a href="#">Glossy buckthorn</a>	<i>Frangula alnus</i>
		<a href="#">Common buckthorn</a>	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>
Olive Group	4.	<a href="#">Russian olive</a>	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>
		<a href="#">Autumn olive</a>	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>
Honeysuckle Group	5.	<a href="#">Japanese honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>
		<a href="#">Amur honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera maackii</i>
		<a href="#">Morrow's honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera morrowii</i>
		<a href="#">Tatarian honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>
		<a href="#">Beautiful honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera morrowii x bella</i>
		<a href="#">Standish honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera standishii</i>
		<a href="#">Sweet breath honeysuckle</a>	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>
	6.	<a href="#">Eurasian watermilfoil</a>	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>
Privet Group	7.	<a href="#">Japanese privet</a>	<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>
		<a href="#">Chinese privet</a>	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>
		<a href="#">Border privet</a>	<i>Ligustrum obtusifolium</i>
		<a href="#">Common privet</a>	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Euonymus Group	8.	<a href="#">Winged euonymus</a>	<i>Euonymus alatus</i>
		<a href="#">Wintercreeper</a>	<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>
	9.	<a href="#">Porcelain berry</a>	<i>Ampelopsis glandulosa</i>
	10.	<a href="#">Japanese empress tree</a>	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>
Wisteria Group	11.	<a href="#">Japanese wisteria</a>	<i>Wisteria floribunda</i>
		<a href="#">Chinese wisteria</a>	<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>
Maple Group	12.	<a href="#">Norway maple</a>	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
		<a href="#">Amur maple</a>	<i>Acer ginnala</i>
		<a href="#">Japanese maple</a>	<i>Acer palmatum</i>
	13.	<a href="#">English ivy</a>	<i>Hedera helix</i>
	14.	<a href="#">Japanese spiraea</a>	<i>Spiraea japonica</i>
Knapweed Group	15.	<a href="#">Diffuse knapweed</a>	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>
		<a href="#">Spotted knapweed</a>	<i>Centaurea stoebe</i>
		<a href="#">Black knapweed</a>	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
		<a href="#">Brown knapweed</a>	<i>Centaurea jacea</i>
	16.	<a href="#">Yellow flag iris</a>	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
	17.	<a href="#">Giant reed</a>	<i>Arundo donax</i>
Cattail Group	18.	<a href="#">Narrow-leaved cattail</a>	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>

		<a href="#">Hybrid cattail</a>	<i>Typha x glauca</i>
	19.	<a href="#">Crown vetch</a>	<i>Securigera varia</i>
	20.	<a href="#">Butterfly bush</a>	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>
	21.	<a href="#">Chinese silvergrass</a>	<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>
	22.	<a href="#">Curly pondweed</a>	<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>
	23.	<a href="#">Flowering rush</a>	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>
	24.	<a href="#">Bristled knotweed</a>	<i>Persicaria longiseta</i>
	25.	<a href="#">Japanese clematis</a>	<i>Clematis terniflora</i>

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented that if this list was specific to recommendations for the CP&NWC, then absolutely the species that have been addressed should be removed from this list. Additionally, if there are new recommendations for the CP&NWC to review, then they should be listed. If there are other reasons that these species are included on this list for public information (i.e., these species are particularly bad), even if these species are on the CP&NW list, then the title of this list should be changed.

Jeff Wagner (WPC) asked what the term “addressed” means? Andrew responded, saying species that were addressed were brought to the CP&NWC and either voted on or are still being acted upon. Andrew clarified that several species on this list have not yet been addressed.

April Moore (U.S. Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) commented that in terms of this list, you might think about maintaining its original scope by highlighting or striking through the species that have been added to the CP&NW list. This will help to show where you started from and where you’re going. Additional (newly added species) could be listed in a different text.

Andrew posed several additional questions to the Council. They included:

- Beyond creating recommendations for the CP&NWC, what is PGISC’s next role? In other words, take species out of trade, but then what?
- Public education is a huge part of what we’re doing with these lists. The Council and its various subcommittees are currently tackling this task with a variety of efforts (e.g., PA Native Species Day, etc.), but could we select some individual species found on this list to produce more focused material?
- Can information provided on this list help with focusing on the bigger picture, such as efforts related to PRISM (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management), pushing for more support for the PA Department of Agriculture, and leveraging the 5-Year PGISC Plan to get more legislative support overall?
- Can these invasive species lists be used to standardize priorities across the state? For example, perhaps they could be used for educating stakeholders. Also, we could provide

a ‘Recommended Action’ column to replace the existing ‘Threat Category’ which was providing mixed messaging on how bad a species could be vs. geographic concern. The Recommended Action column could list things like No Action, Prevention, Monitoring, Management, and/or Restoration. These recommendations would not implicate entities or authorities, but rather present information to the public about these species. Also, Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) categories would probably still be based on geographic extent. This is something the Invasive Species Listing Committee can work on if the Council feels it would be necessary and/or helpful.

- Come up with plans for the highest priority species (i.e., species that have high impacts and are not yet widespread across the state)? For example, [wavyleaf basketgrass](#) is currently listed as a PA noxious weed. How can PGISC help PDA’s efforts in relation to wavyleaf basketgrass specifically? Perhaps things like more public education, surveys/inventory, treatment, and follow-up monitoring? Also, how can these lists be leveraged and promote action to try and coordinate some of these proposed efforts across the state? As this was discussed among the Invasive Species Listing Committee, the group felt this was not a Listing Committee issue, but perhaps the responsibility of a new PGISC committee/group (i.e., take a few of these priority species and work through some of the *(above)* proposed action steps). Does the Council support the creation of a new committee, and would there be any volunteers interested in participating?

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked Andrew what his ultimate goal is? The challenge is that the Council is an advisory group, so what kind of action is being proposed? Fred feels the Council is limited on what they can do outside of stronger conversations with folks who work in policy or with legislative groups within the agencies and/or beyond that, such as the research standpoint at Penn State.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) followed up on Fred’s comments, saying that this Council hasn’t asked for a committee that focused on a particular invasive species in a long time (to coordinate what is going on with that species statewide). For example, how does PGC know that PDA is working on wavyleaf basketgrass? Should the Listing Committee identify one, two, or three priority species, and if one of them is an aquatic species, you pull together the right group? Is every stakeholder and agency within the Council that can contribute to this problem contributing? If not, is there a reason why not? And can we leverage available resources? Ruth feels we could have ad hoc committees coming and going as needed. That might be an action.

In response to Fred and Ruth’s comments, Andrew said that in regard to some of these highest priority species, the Council can play a role, maybe not action-oriented, but more of an advisory role of making sure we are helping ensure actions are taking place such as inventory, surveys, management, follow-up monitoring, coordinating education efforts in key areas, etc. Also, making sure these actions are occurring with the appropriate agencies, public groups, regional areas, and other contributors.

Jeff Wagner (WPC) commented that in thinking of early detection species (that are part of the high priority species list), back to the PRISMs and prioritization, it would be great that when PRISMs formed, we could guide them in terms of how they prioritize species. In other words, what are some of the key species to think about when planning work? Therefore, honing these lists down to be applicable to PRISM regions would be very valuable.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that these conversations play right into the pilot PRISM programing occurring in NW PA. How can PGISC help conservation districts build off of what Andrew is proposing? Jeff Wagner (WPC) agreed with Fred, saying that PRISMs are the obvious place where advice and guidance flows into and that one of the big goals of this Council will be support of the PRISMs.

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### **Updates, Activities, and Events**

Amber Stilwell (Coastal Outreach Specialist in Lake Erie Office, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, and Master Watershed Steward Coordinator for Erie, Crawford, and Warren Counties, Penn State Extension) provided an update about the Council's Aquatic Invasive Species Education and Outreach subcommittee. Their meeting was held last week. A list serv is being formed for all individuals in the subcommittee for communications purposes. Kris Abell (PDA) created a space on Microsoft Teams for use by this committee to store files, communications, and meeting minutes, all in one place. The group discussed the various outreach projects everyone is working on which resulted in lots of good questions and collaborations. Amber foresees the future of this group being good and they always are accepting other interested folks that may want to join.

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that another new group, the Invasive Plant "Buyback" Program Workgroup, was recently formed in partnership with the PA Native Plant Society and some other groups. This group has met twice so far; focused on brainstorming ideas related to the structure and function of a potential buy-back program. It was good to hear different perspectives from various entities including the PA Landscape and Nursery Association (PLNA), conservationists, and educators on how we can all work together on an outcome that would be positive for everyone. We are starting to zero in on certain ideas. The next time this group meets, we'd like to come up with a written proposal and do so in time to share at the next PGISC meeting (assuming there is time to do so since the September 8 meeting agenda is starting to fill up).

Kris Abell (PDA) also commented that a workgroup needs to be formed that will help plan the September 8 field tour at Temple. There are a lot of important details that need to be addressed. It will be good to have several Council members serve on this ad hoc committee. Kris will send out an email following today's meeting asking folks to participate.

Kris Abell (PDA) reminded folks about the upcoming 2024 PA Farm Show and that we want to again have a Council booth present there. Kris would like a Council member to promote specific



invasive-species messaging and use the Council booth space to do so. If anyone has an idea for what messaging to promote and is interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact Kris directly ([krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)). As needed, Kris can help with planning and coordination for the booth as well as finding people to help staff it.

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### **Public Comment Period**

April Moore (ANF) asked where things currently stand with including data on federally listed noxious weed in the iMapInvasives database? Amy Jewitt (WPC) responded that data on noxious weeds is tracked in the PA iMapInvasives program, and this information is publicly available.

Lydia Martin (member of the public) asked if there is any current activity by PGISC to highlight an invasive species of the month? Lydia is on a lot of different public and private platforms where some of that education could be shared if existing content were available. Amy Jewitt (WPC) mentioned that the newsletter she creates for the PA iMapInvasives program (published three times per year) includes a section titled “Invasive Species Spotlight”. This information is sourced from existing field guides such as aquatic guides developed by fellow Council member Sara Stahlman (Extension Leader, PA Sea Grant), as well as guides which feature terrestrial invasive species.

Deb Klenotic (DEP) thanked Lydia for her question, saying it points to the need for PRISMs. Deb sees PRISMs highlighting information like an invasive species of the month. Based on limited capacity by Council members, something like Lydia’ idea would likely take more time and resources than what the Council currently has. Lydia thanked both Amy and Deb for their comments and also remarked that she feels there could be some creative content that could help stimulate greater conversations, at least with what she is seeing on platforms so far this year.

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### **Concluding Remarks**

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) provided closing remarks and thanked everyone for their participation in today’s meeting. He also thanked Ruth Welliver (PDA) once again for her time serving PDA’s Bureau of Plant Industry and remarked that she will be greatly missed.

Fred commented that he looks forward to seeing everyone at the next PGISC meeting to be held at the Temple Ambler Field Station. It will be good to engage with legislators and others that we typically don’t see at our meetings.

Meeting adjourned.

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**Next PGISC Meeting**

Friday, September 8, 2023 (time TBD).

To be held in-person at the Temple Ambler Field Station

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*Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Jewitt, Pennsylvania iMapInvasives Program Coordinator with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program.*

*Questions or concerns regarding these minutes should be submitted to Kris Abell ([krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)), Council Coordinator. If you are a member of the public and wish to attend the next PGISC meeting, please contact Kris for more information on the meeting's date, time, and location.*