

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PGISC)
Thursday, March 16, 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.*

Council Members Present: Amy Freestone, Amy Jewitt, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Betsy Schroeder, Brian Harris, Cliff Lane, Donald Eggen, Emily Shosh, Fred Strathmeyer, Gregg Robertson, James Grazio, Jeffrey Wagner, Jocelyn Behm, Joseph Demko, Julie Urban, Kate Harms, Lisa Murphy, Mary Beth Ruh, Piper Sherburne, Rosa Yoo, Ruth Welliver, Sara Stahlman, Sarah Whitney, Scott Bearer, Sean Hartzell, Victoria Challingsworth

Other Participants Present: Ali Bowling, Amber Rose Stilwell, April Moore, Brant Portner, Brenda Shambaugh, Brenda R. Wasler, Brian Daggs, Brian Koehler, Bryon Ruhl, Cara Gibson, Deb Klenotic, Ekaterina Nikolaeva, Erica Tramuta-Drobnis, Eve Adrian, Heather Fowler, Houping Liu, Jesse Sabistky, Jessica Lenker, Jill Rose, Johnny Zook, Jonathan Geyer, Jordan King, Justin M. Kozak, Kaylan Hubbard, Kierstin Carlson, Kris Abell, Kristen Frentzel, Kyle Schutt, Lisa Candelore, Marianna Quartararo, Marie Maiuro, Marie North, Michael Hutchinson, Michelle Stevens, Morgan Sheffield, Norris Muth, Rachael Marques, Rachel Reese, Susan Marie Boser, Tara Ramsey, Tim Campbell, Trilby Libhart

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Fred Strathmeyer (Deputy Secretary for Plant Industry and Consumer Protection, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – PDA) provided opening remarks. Fred thanked all the various PGISC committees for the work they are doing.

Announcements, Roll Call, Approve December 2022 Meeting Minutes

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) conducted the roll call. A quorum is present.

Fred mentioned that Don Eggen (Forest Health Manager, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – DCNR) will be retiring soon from DCNR and thanked Don for all his contributions to the Council as well as to DCNR and citizens of the state.

MOTION: Cliff Lane (McKean County Commissioner) moved to approve the December 6, 2022 PGISC meeting minutes. Piper Sherburne (South East Region Director, PA Association of Conservation Districts – PACD) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

As a reminder, the 2023 proposed meeting schedule for the Council is as follows:

Thursday, June 8: Tentative site visit with virtual option

Tuesday, September 5: In-person option

Tuesday, December 5: Virtual only

Also, a reminder that all primary members of the Council (not alternates) are required to submit a Statement of Financial Interest Form to the State Ethics Commission by May 1.

Presentation: Inclusive Language and Naming Conventions for Invasion Biology

Guest Speaker: Tim Campbell, National Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Liaison and AIS Program Manager, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant (tim@aqua.wisc.edu)



Tim Campbell, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant

Tim's role is to design, implement, and evaluate outreach and prevention programs. These programs are meant to reduce the impacts of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and limit their spread. He strives to address high risk issues to have the maximum impact possible. Tim feels that inclusive (and effective) language fits very neatly into many aspects of his role.

Messaging related to invasive species can have unintended consequences. Often, communications about invasive species are trying to convince people that invasives have undesirable impacts to ecology and the environment and that action should be taken to prevent their spread. However, the ways we talk about invasive species can make people feel different ways.

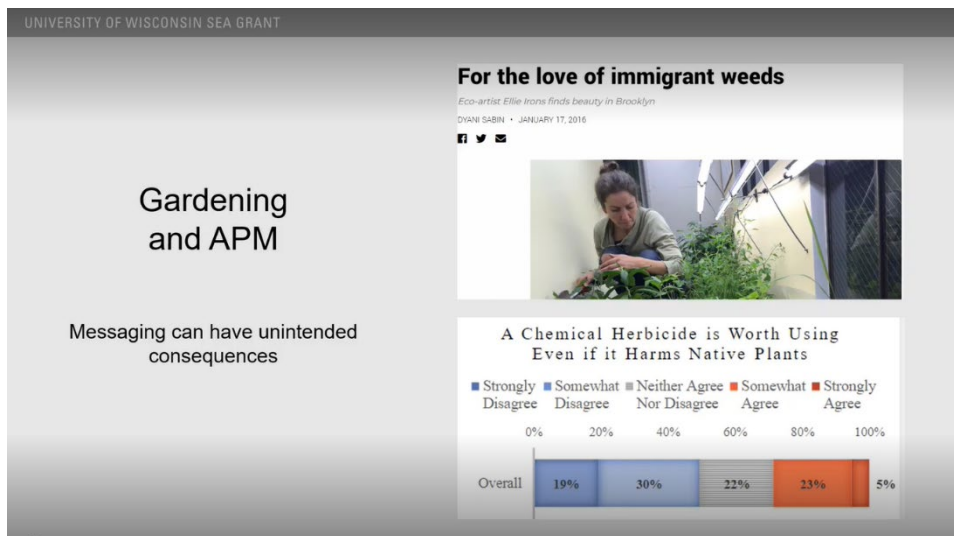
On one end of the messaging spectrum, some people view these messages about plants and animals (that shouldn't be here) as an underdog story. Or, for people that live in urban environments, such as New York City, there's not a lot of native ecosystems left and everything, depending on your frame of reference, is non-native.

Some people welcome non-native species in certain habitats because they view these plants and animals as part of the community, just like them.

There's a published study on urban gardens where they talked to people about the composition of gardens (native vs. non-native species). In many diverse neighborhoods where this study occurred, people really liked the diversity of plants, including the non-native species, because they felt the plants were reflective of the neighborhood they were in.

Tim felt that how we talk about invasives can sometimes make people relate to non-native species. Depending on someone's life situation, they may also relate to non-native species. This can then create difficulties in invasive species management programs that try to make sure these species do not spread outside of those locations.

At the other end of the spectrum, sometimes our communications make people feel very strongly about non-native invasive species.



In relation to work done by Tim and others to survey lakeshore property owners, these property owners believe that using a chemical herbicide to (hopefully) eradicate invasive species is worth it, even if it harms native plants. This shows that people are willing to take drastic actions to control invasive species, even if it harms the ecosystem as a whole.

In a lot of situations with aquatic plant management and an early discovery of an invasive species, it might not be that big of a population and may not warrant a whole lake herbicide treatment. In many cases, it is a "monitor and wait to see it" approach. By observing how the population is spreading, this gives a better idea of what the optimal control strategy is. However, even if a best practice approach is understood, many people still want to take drastic action (about 1/4 of people, according to the study) that would harm their overall ecosystem just to take

care of the invasive species. If that is the case, we're not sure we want people to feel "that strongly" about invasive species.

All in all, it is important to remember that our messaging on invasive species can have unintended consequences.

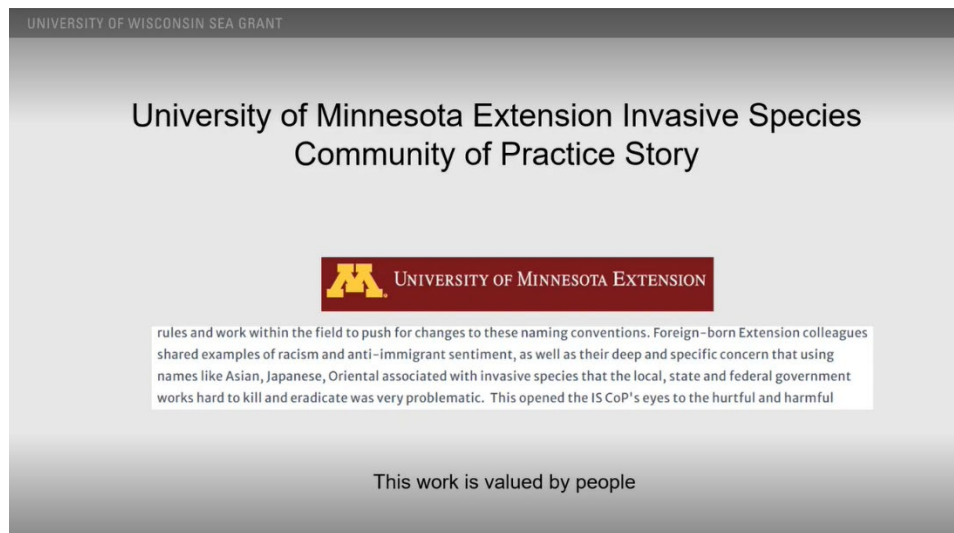


For a while, there were posters with a campaign focused on "Wanted, Dead or Alive" that featured different invasive species. While these posters were kind of fun, they also had some problematic comparisons with Asian carp (which most people now refer to as "invasive carp" or a specific type of invasive carp).

An example from 10-15 years ago at Minnesota's Twin Cities Airport involved a large campaign to raise awareness about the harm caused by Asian carp which included hanging up many of these "Wanted, Dead or Alive" posters at the airport. It just so happened that a Chinese business delegation was flying into the airport and saw the posters. (Keep in mind; silver and bighead carp are very common and respected fish in Asia.) The posters made the people of the Chinese delegation feel offended and concerned; they didn't know what was going on because on their positive feelings towards these fish. Ultimately, the harsh language and bad portrayal of the fish in the posters was being associated with them as people from Asia. These posters derailed the trip for the Chinese delegation and they had to spend a lot of time trying to manage why people were allowing the word "Asian" to be used that way along with the "Wanted, Dead or Alive" language.

This story has stuck with Tim because even though it is just the name of a species, we know it could have a lot of impact to our waters. How we present information on invasive species can be very problematic and depending on someone's frame of reference, it could really turn you away from the work many people trying to do (*in relation to invasive species education/outreach, management, research, etc.*).

We are all on board with trying to manage invasive species and ensuring they do not have undesirable impacts to our waters, but how we frame it sometimes turns people away from those efforts.

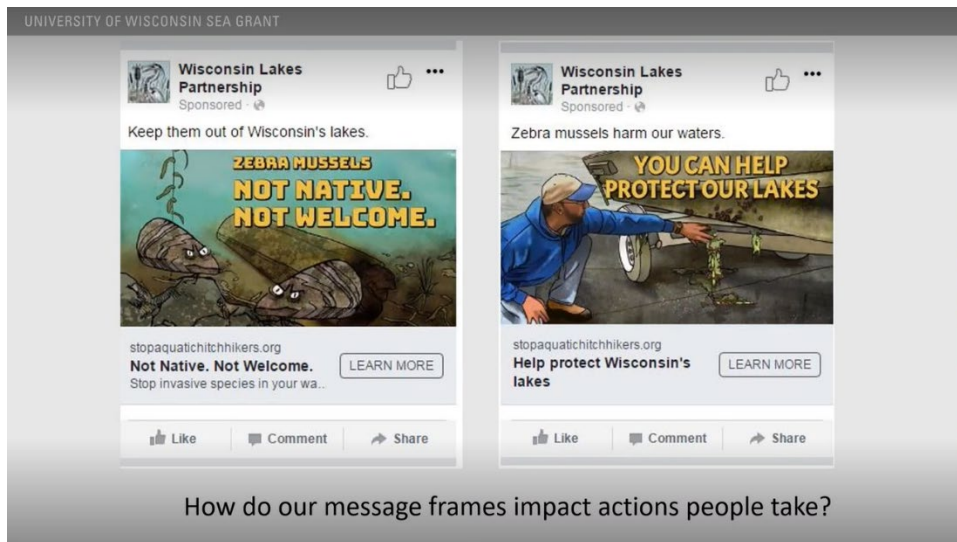


Another story from the University of Minnesota Extension involved people working on invasive species issues, specifically invasive species names. They had been hearing that this was something that could be problematic and people on the community didn't like the use of some names. So, they compiled some guidelines, even though they were not hearing a lot of feedback from stakeholders; they were trying to be proactive and address some of these issues.

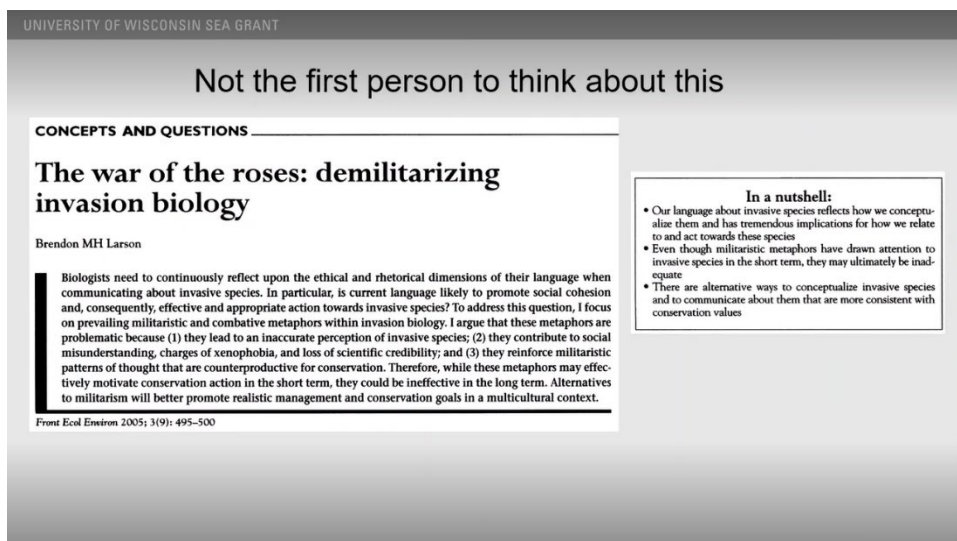
Within the University of Minnesota Extension, there is a foreign-born Extension colleagues group. These guidelines (on trying to change invasive species names) were given to the group and they were asked for their feedback. It was not until then some of the stories of racism and anti-immigrant sentiment that these people have experienced were heard.

When people from this group were working with others on different invasive species that had names like Asian, Japanese, Oriental, and some of the language we use for control and management, they felt that language was very hurtful and had negative experiences associated with it. They were grateful for the opportunity to discuss this invasive species community practice since this language was always something they were concerned about (but never had the time to really discuss and deal with because of life and jobs).

Tim feels this work is appreciated by many people, and even if we're not hearing the need for it a lot, if we go out into the community and talk to people about it, we're going to find people that really value this.



These stories along with other experiences Tim has had in his work make him think a lot about how our message frames impact the actions people take.



Tim, along with many other people, are thinking about these issues and doing work related to them. For example, work done by Brendon Larson in 2005 from the University of Toronto has helped lay the groundwork for people to consider these issues. Brendon summarized things very well, that even though militaristic metaphors can draw attention to invasive species in the short term, they may ultimately be inadequate (i.e., they may excite people and initially build some momentum behind messaging, but in the long term, these messages will have unintended consequences or will not result in a desired action).

Brendon Larson has been promoting alternative ways to conceptualize invasive species and communicate about them that are more consistent with our conservation values (which is something many others have tried to pick up on since Brendon has done his work).

Metaphors in Invasion Biology: Implications for Risk Assessment and Management of Non-Native Species

Laura N. H. Verbrugge¹, Rob S. E. W. Leuven¹ and Hub. A. E. Zwart²

¹Institute for Science, Innovation and Society, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands; ²Department of Environmental Science, Institute for Water and Wetland Research, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

- Ecologists often have the tendency to overlook the value-dimension of the terms they use
- Rather than trying to rid ecology of metaphors and value-laden language, we should become more aware of this dimension, so we can make responsible metaphoric choices
- Rather than opting for one particular (allegedly 'neutral') interpretation, we should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses or relative value of the various terminologies available, and be open to alternative narratives that might be more effective in articulating concerns about non-native species in the policy or public realm
- **Both scientists and policy-makers have to become consciously involved in how conceptual and linguistic disputes affect the way we study and manage invasive species, and whether we can live with its assumptions, implications, and consequences**

Recent work from researchers in the Netherlands and Sweden have investigated biases within managers and scientists on how we communicate about invasive species. As scientists and managers, we often think we are neutral people in this realm. But like other people, we often overlook the value and dimensions of the terms we use and do not realize that there might be connotations of our language that we aren't picking up on. These researchers suggest that instead of ignoring the issue, we should instead be more consciously aware of how our language affects how people interpret our communications and how we study and manage invasive species.

We also need to be more explicit in deciding if we can live with the assumptions and implications that come from consequences resulting from language. For example, if an issue is important and militaristic language will increase engagement on the topic, it might be worth it to use those message frames to get that engagement (if we think the ends justify the means). However, we also have new research that shows some of these loaded frames do not actually do a better job.

Understanding how message frames are used

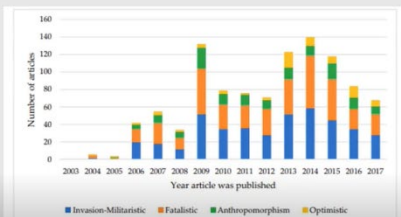
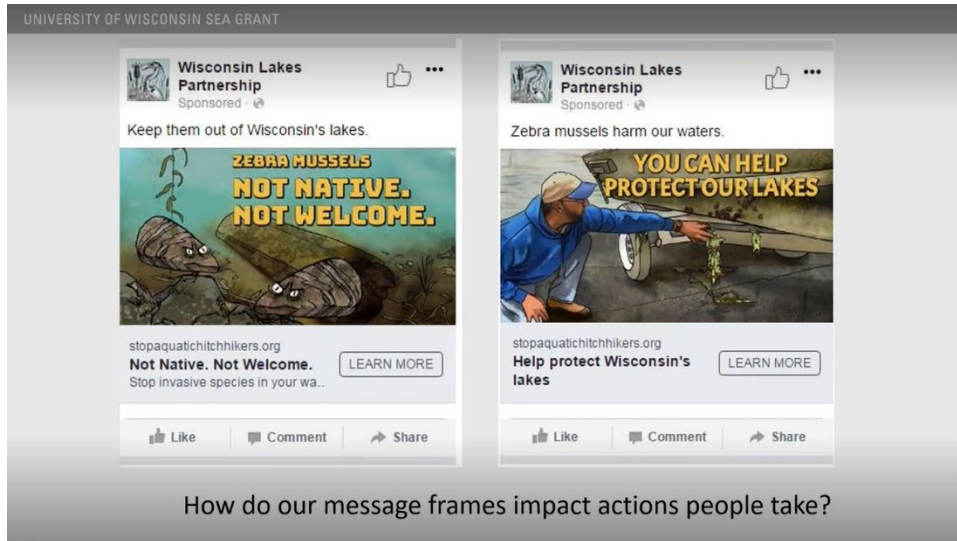


Figure 2. Framing trends overtime based on year articles were published.

Table 2. Most common framings expressed in the news articles.

Framing	Representative Quotes
Invasion-militaristic 1. Representing EAB as the enemy and using combat language like "front lines", "weapons", "war against the enemy" [45] 2. Representation of native species as "victims" or needing protection. Representation of EAB as "the villain" [45,56]	"Unveiled its a new weapon in the fight against the invasive emerald ash borer" "You have to get on the problem before battle lines are fully drawn" "... Emerald ash borer's march across Michigan to the front lines of a losing battle"
Fatalistic 1. Hopelessness about how to manage the species 2. Lack of preparation to address the issue	"It pretty much goes from tree to tree unstoppable." "There's nothing we can do to eliminate it" "It's only a matter of time ... The chances are very high for us to lose all our ash trees. A complete wipeout"
Anthropomorphic 1. Applying human attributes to EAB, usually as a villain or antagonist 2. Applying human attributes to ash trees, usually as a victim or species that need protecting	"Many trees recently have been falling victim to the emerald ash borer" "A tiny, shiny green insect that's invaded the United States from Asia has become more than just an increased nuisance. It's become a methodical killer--of ash trees" "Southeastern North Carolina will likely be spared the wrath of the emerald ash borer"
Optimistic 1. This represents some positive benefits of EAB or 2. Some hope that is attributed to EAB 3. Some benefits of EAB include their role as 'teachers' [45]	"After the devastation [caused by EAB] comes regrowth ... This is a moment for us to pause in our planning for the future while we remember and honor those [loss of ash trees] who came before us and brought us to this place" "Finally, there's a glimmer of good news in Minnesota's battle to save its ash trees. Tiny wasps released in 2011 to fight the destructive emerald ash borer have successfully reproduced, spread geographically and are attacking the pest" "Since 2008, about 800 trees have been planted at the fairgrounds, an effort that only became more important after the discovery in Boulder County of the beetle called the emerald ash borer"


This has led to people starting work on trying to understand how we are using different message frames (i.e., looking within peer-reviewed literature, news articles, how we are using militaristic frames, or fatalistic frames - “It’s inevitable – why should we do anything?”). As people start to understand how we are using these message frames, it can be better to try and improve how we are communicating.



Outcomes for each message frame with Science as Reference Point

<u>Least Effective CPC</u>	<u>Same CPC</u>	<u>More Effective CPC</u>
Hitchhiker Protective	Nativist Militaristic	
<u>Less sharing</u>	<u>Same Sharing</u> Nativist Militaristic Protective	<u>More sharing</u> Hitchhiker
<u>Fewer comments</u>	<u>Same Comments</u> All performed same	<u>More comments</u>

Results



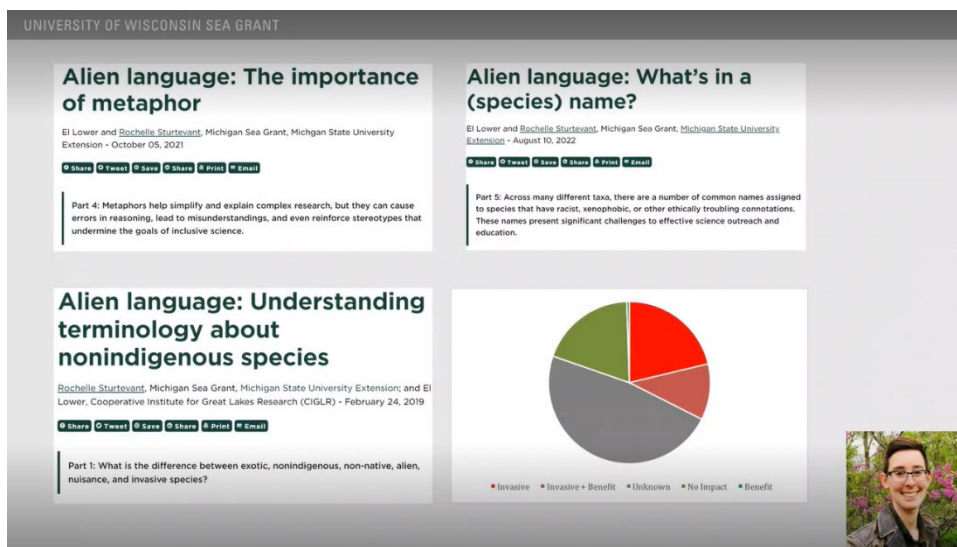
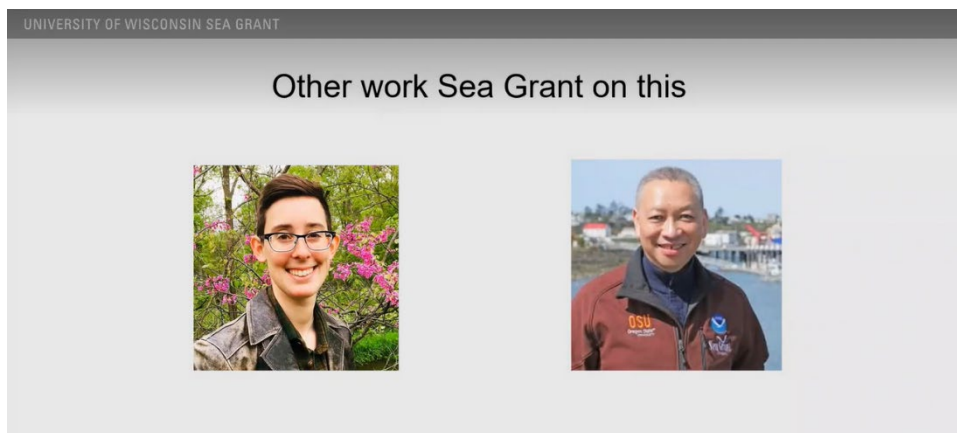
Nativist and militaristic frames never outcompeted science, and in most cases, hitchhiker or protective.

More neutral frames can be used to achieve communication goals

This all leads back to Tim’s work on how message frames impact the actions people take. For a study Tim and others did, they operationalized some messages they knew were commonly used in invasive species communication. They ran some ads on Facebook and collected some data. They had a science frame, a hitchhiker frame (like “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers,” but they didn’t use that exact brand – more like, “You can protect our lakes” frame), a nativist frame, and a militaristic frame. They looked at cost per click on advertisements, how often the ads were shared, and how many comments people made on them. The take-home message was that native and militaristic frames never outcompeted a science frame and, in most cases, the hitchhiker and protective frame. The science frame is provided is the screen capture above (“Zebra Mussels

Impact Fisheries and Recreation”). In general, more neutral frames can be used to achieve our communication goals.

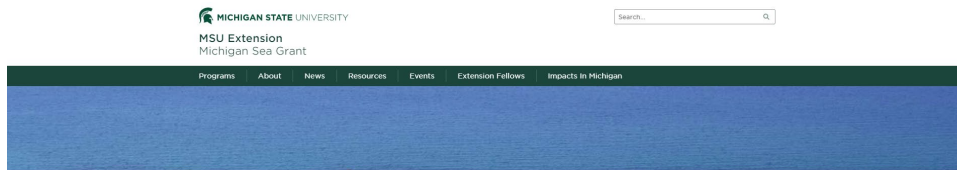
Tim and others feel people are using a lot of these loaded frames because they think it increases engagement in other communication metrics. However, even a simple, back-to-basics science frame can meet a lot of our online communication goals.



As Tim has been communicating some of this work and sharing it with people, he’s become more engaged with [El Lower](#) (Michigan Sea Grant) and [Sam Chan](#) (Oregon Sea Grant) who have been doing a lot of this work within the National Sea Grant organization. (*Tim shared some of their work during his presentation*).

El Lower has done a great job of synthesizing much of the information that is currently available. Tim encouraged everyone to read El’s blog posts (*listed below*) and to share with other stakeholders. Each of El’s blog posts does a good job of pulling out information like the importance of how we use metaphors – such as how militaristic and nativist frames are problematic, but also how we might use more medical framing or sports analogies to do some of the same things that our militaristic and nativist frames are doing.

- [“Alien language: The importance of metaphor”](#)
- [“Alien language: What’s in a \(species\) name?”](#)
- [“Alien language: Understanding terminology about nonindigenous species”](#)



Alien language: The importance of metaphor

Ei Lower and Rochelle Sturtevant, Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan State University
Extension • October 05, 2021

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Part 4: Metaphors help simplify and explain complex research, but they can cause errors in reasoning, lead to misunderstandings, and even reinforce stereotypes that undermine the goals of inclusive science.

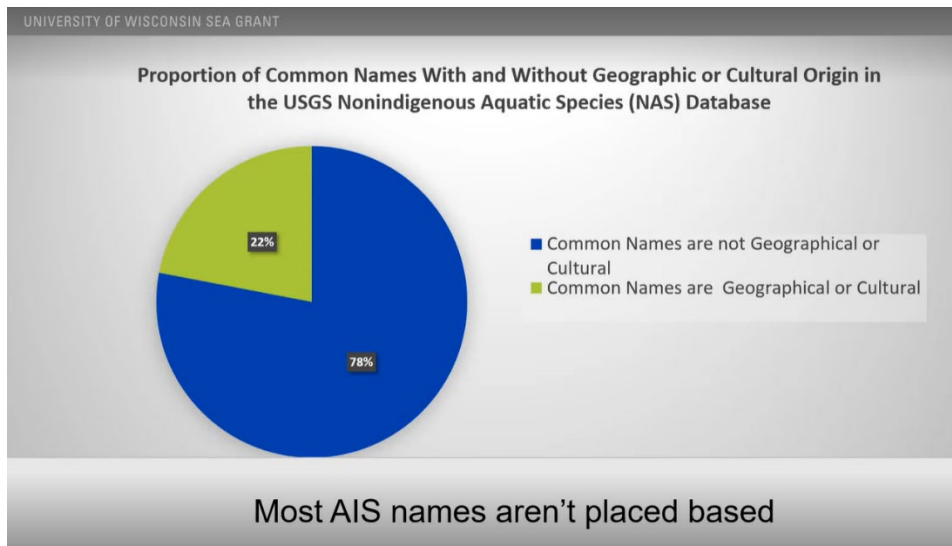


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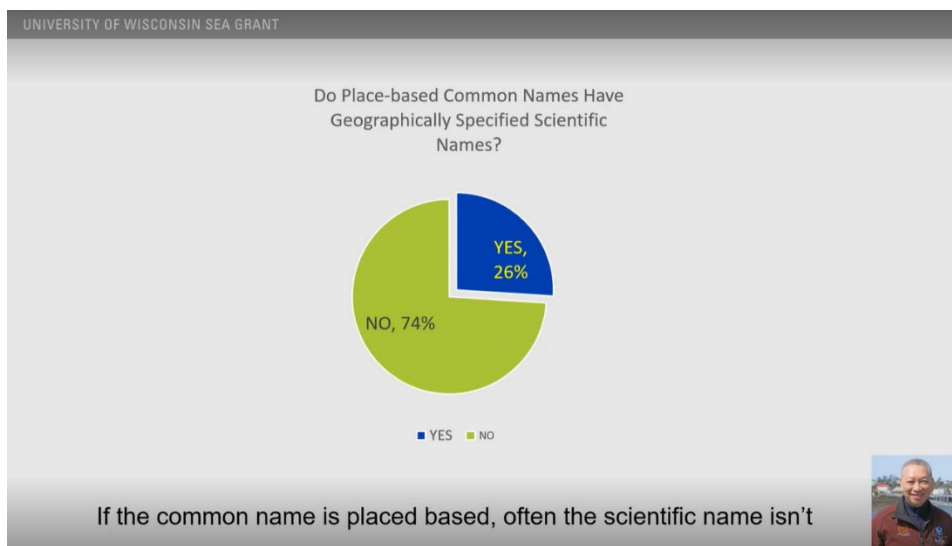
- There are problems with place-based names
- Many of them aren't accurate
- We can have better names that align with management goals

Sam’s work focuses on invasive species names and highlighting the problems associated with place-based names, many of which are not accurate. He and many others believe we can have names that are better aligned with management goals.

Tim feels that one of the biggest problems with place-based names is that when they get tied in with additional communications and different message frames (such as with horror movies or the “Wanted, Dead or Alive” slogan, essentially relating invasive species with things that are evil), it’s easy to connect the place aspect of a name with the bad/evil connotations on the signage (*as shown in the screen capture above*). This has led to discrimination and non-ideal circumstances for many people.



Sam Chan and his colleagues are interested in reviewing patterns of invasive species names and studying what the data says. They dove into the [U.S. Geological Survey Non-Indigenous Aquatic Species Database](#) (USGS NAS) to look at what the patterns are related to invasive species names. They found that most of the common names in the USGS NAS database are not placed-based, or in other words, not named according to a geographical or cultural context (i.e., 78% of names are not placed-based compared to 22% that are placed-based).



When Sam and others reviewed place-based common names, they wanted to know how many of these names have geographically-specific scientific names. Just as before, the same pattern held true; 74% of scientific names did not have geographically-specific scientific names as compared to 26% of scientific names that did.

Overall, if the common name of an invasive species is placed-based, often the scientific name isn't. With this information in mind, there is not a great pattern currently happening invasive

species naming conventions, at least with aquatic invasive species; however, placed-based names are in the minority compared to other names of invasive species.



When Sam and his colleagues looked at the proportion of the common names identified with the ethnic or placed-based identifiers, something they found that was problematic was that the placed-based names weren't evenly distributed. Many of the placed-based names reference Asia; however, the researchers acknowledge that they might need to do some more overlapping with climate and habitat suitability. Overall, this shows that people are more likely to give a place-based name to a species from Asia as compared to other geographic areas.



Sometimes place-based names are not very accurate. For example, the [North American signal crayfish](#) (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) is native only to the Columbia River Basin in the Pacific Northwest of North America, but nowhere else in the United States. So why does the common name for this species include “North America”? (Perhaps instead it should be named the “Columbia River signal crayfish to be more specific about where it is from, if the intention was to use a place-based identifier.)

- *Apis mellifera scutellata* Lepeletier
- ("African honeybee", "Africanized Bees", "Africanized Honey Bee", "Killer Bee", "African Killer Bee")



- *Vespa mandarinia*
- "Giant Hornet" "Asian Giant Hornet", "Japanese Giant Hornet", "Murder Hornet", "Asian Murder Hornet"



Sometimes place-based names aren't all that accurate



Other examples of invasive species with place-based names that are not very accurate include the African honeybee and the Giant hornet. In these cases, a name that may explain a characteristic about a species can be good for management because it is explaining a behavior, etc.

What was known as the African killer bee is a honeybee that was developed in Arizona that was hybridized with an African bee, and over time the name became the African killer bee (and in this case, the bee was not from Africa and not a killer bee). The same improper naming convention held true for the Asian murder hornet which is now called the Northern giant hornet.

Because there are not great guidelines in place (historically) for naming species, these improper naming conventions do happen.

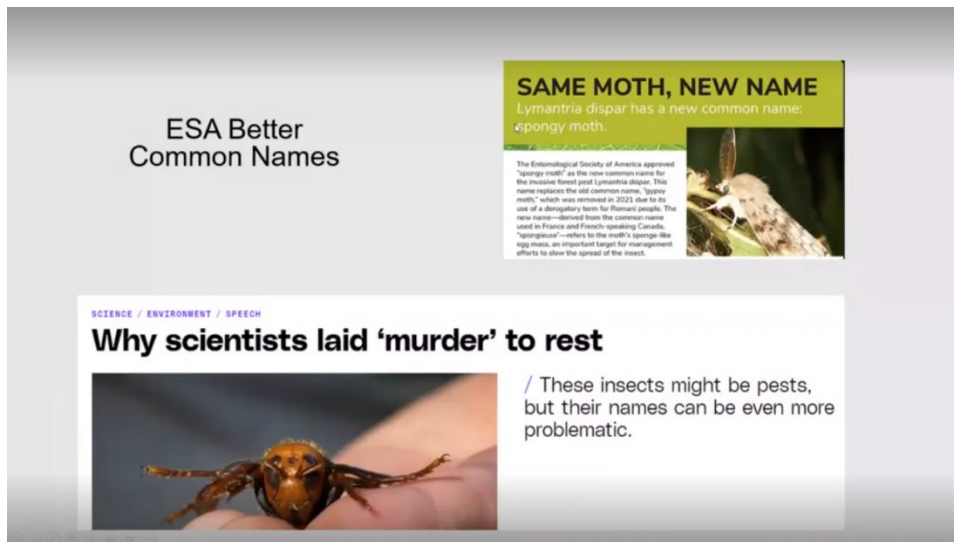


Case Study: Challenges in re-naming European Green Crab -EGC (*Carinus maenus*)

- European is not typically thought to be a place-based name that would cause offense
- Managers and professional societies typically do not have authority to change a name listed in government statute or regulations
- Agencies need resources and *the will* to make name changes
- Some argue that problematic names, being rather uncommon are a dilemma not worth the investment and tradeoffs.
- Changing names can confuse the public
- There is outreach value in describing a species origin
- Removing European causes backlash as being "politically correct" and may slow progress for changing more inflammatory names
- Western Regional Panel –currently using scientific name pending proposal for ANSTF network discussion and action
- Have clear agreed-upon guidance for common names

An issue being worked on by the [Western Regional Aquatic Nuisance Species \(ANS\) Panel](#) is related to the European green crab. The term "European" is not usually a place-based name that people would think would cause offense, but European green crab is not a particularly descriptive name. The crab is also not really green. (Sometimes it is green, but it is usually more of a brown color.) The term "green" does not help people to identify the crab, and in fact, people from the western U.S. who call in to make a report, thinking they found this crab, instead have found a different crab that just appears green.

The European green crab does, however, have five spines on it, so if people called it the "Five-spined shore crab", it would be a more descriptive name and wouldn't have the place-based aspect to it, ultimately being very helpful for the identification of this species.



Much of this work is based from the Entomological Society of America's "[Better Common Names Project](#)". There is a paper on this work that has some of the guidelines for better common names. For example, the spongy moth is a high-profile example where these guidelines were applied to renaming an insect. The same was true for the Asian murder hornet.

Sea Grant is trying to be neutral brokers of scientific information. As people are interested in these things, Sea Grant is trying to curate the literature and understand what has been done on this topic. Sea Grant is also encouraging research in this area, whether that's people understanding the impacts of language on invasive species management, or trying to come up with better guidelines. Sea Grant can also bring together information for users to help direct action (which is something Sea Grant is really good at – convening people and helping them work through issues like these to find common ground). Tim related this to work Sea Grant has done to develop the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Recreational Activities guidelines.

Sea Grant does a lot of work in problems where there is a lot of "organized irresponsibility" - a tough aspect of trying to work on these issues. No one has a lot of authority in specific aspects. Professional societies might keep track of commonly used names (but not necessarily approve the names); however, we all might have some influence.

Collectively, we can better understand our own sphere of influence, such as being better at the language we use or being more thoughtful about the outreach materials we design or manage. We can also understand who can be influential elsewhere. For example, if an insect needs a better name, interested individuals could work with the Entomological Society of America (ESA), an entity that has a process for this.

Specifically for state agencies, it's important to be mindful of language and names that are within code or law. In Tim's case, he and others are talking with the National Sea Grant Law Center about this.

Inappropriate names or problematic language can get put into code or law well before we are thinking about some of these issues. Once these names are included in code or law, they can be really difficult to change. For example, for plants and animals, perhaps a better practice is to use the species (*scientific*) name as opposed to a common name that might change.

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What can we do?

- Understand your sphere of influence
- Understand who can be influential elsewhere
- For state agencies, be mindful of language and names within code or law
 - More use of scientific names?

A BILL
To provide for the issuance of a semipostal to benefit programs that combat invasive species.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the "Stamp Out Invasive Species Act".

SEC. 2. COMBATING INVASIVE SPECIES SEMIPOSTAL.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that invasive species pose a serious threat to our natural ecosystems, significantly harm native plant and animal populations, and cause detrimental economic damage to local communities.

(b) **SEMIPOSTAL.**—In order to afford a convenient way for members of the public to contribute to programs at the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture that combat invasive species, the United States Postal Service shall issue a semipostal stamp in accordance with the provisions of this section. Such semipostal stamp shall be known as the "Combating Invasive Species Semipostal Stamp".

Another example is from the “Stamp Out Invasive Species Act” bill that was introduced (and has been introduced a few times) to the Invasive Species Caucus. Included in it is some militaristic language like “**Combating** Invasive Species” (which is mentioned in a few places of the bill). This could easily be tweaked so as not to make this militaristic language permanent in a bill or law.

Tim ended his presentation with the position statement that the Great Lakes Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel is putting together as they are working to promote more inclusive language and naming conventions in invasion biology:

“...we can be more inclusive of the diverse communities we serve, invite more people into conversation and engagement about aquatic invasive species (AIS) issues, and ultimately make our AIS management efforts more effective.”

Don Eggen (DCNR) commented about spongy moth and the work done by the Entomological Society of America (ESA) to change its name from “gypsy moth”. He mentioned there has been some confusion over the changing of this insect’s common name (from his experience) in relation to law/code and communication among scientists. Tim said likely people have learned a lot from this experience (with changing the name to spongy moth) and how the process can be improved in the future.

Eve Adrian (Executive Policy Specialist 2, PDA) commented on problems that can come from place-based naming conventions and how they can be internalized in negative ways on behalf of the public. For example, information from the recently released PA Invasive Species Impact Survey garnered a response from a particular individual that said she feels all invasive species are coming from Asia and soon there will not be any native species left (*here*). Her response was interpreted by Eve as including feelings of disdain/displeasure, perhaps towards people of Asian descent (*as if they were responsible for “all” the invasive species we currently have in PA*). Eve also felt that with the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the xenophobia many people have felt towards individuals of Asian/Chinese descent, perhaps there was a linkage there in relation to this woman’s response.

In response to Eve’s comment, Tim said that in trying to manage and prevent the spread of invasive species, it is important to focus on how we can change people’s behaviors or implement better management programs. He reiterated how the nativist and militaristic message frames resulted in negative remarks from the public, but the science and protectionist messages resulted in positive remarks from people who talked about what they are doing related to managing invasives and the people they are working with.

Eve asked Tim to pass along any behavior change literature and examples as these will be incredibly helpful resources for the Council’s continued work in this area. Tim commented that the best resources he can provide are the blog posts written by El Lower (*which are listed above in these meeting minutes*).

Deb Klenotic (Deputy Director of Communications at the PA Department of Environmental Protection – DEP and Chair of the Council Communications Committee) commented that the Council has been trying to promote messaging related to protection of biodiversity. Deb asked if any of the testing Tim/others have done has incorporated messaging related to biodiversity. Tim responded that he has not done biodiversity message testing yet. He commented that there is a social science lab at the University of Illinois and Texas A&M that have done some different message frame testing on values and social norms, but he is not aware if anything with a biodiversity focus. Tim commented that biodiversity seems like an interesting message frame that he has not yet considered, but would be interested in seeing how it would impact people.

Deb followed up by saying that we seem to lack the data (numbers, statistics, and facts) for costs and losses related to invasive species damage, such as emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, or spotted lanternfly. This data is necessary to conduct effective storytelling that describes the importance of protecting biodiversity. Deb asked if Tim has this information, and if so, could he share it? Tim said he doesn’t have this information *per se*, but will send along

resources/work done by others along this same line. Tim also mentioned that if we cannot find the resources we need (like what Deb is asking for), then perhaps there is an opportunity to create a research project.

Deb concluded her comments by saying that the underlying message of why it's important to manage invasive species comes down to the importance of having (*and protecting*) biodiversity.

Norris Muth (Associate Professor of Biology at Juniata College) agreed with Deb's thoughts, saying that he feels it is important to express goals for management projects in terms of positive values of what we want to see happen. This cannot be understated. It helps get around many of the language problems because sometimes a problematic species may be native (*Norris referred here to people's disdain for poison ivy, a PA-native plant*). Norris concluded that none of us are motivated by a hatred for these invasive species; rather, we are motivated by some other value (which is not always communicated well). Tim followed up on Norris' comments, saying he is constantly reminded to talk less about what we do for our jobs and more about the outcomes of what we do and what we hope they might be. This is more motivating to people and more interesting.

In relation to Norris' comments, Deb Klenotic (DEP) commented that she feels it is challenging and complex to get across an effective social message related to the positive aspects of biodiversity. In comparison, it is often easier to get out a message like, "Wipe out a species" (*though certainly the message framing concerning biodiversity is the better language to utilize*).

Communications Committee

Chairperson: Deb Klenotic, Deputy Director of Communications at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; Chair of the PGISC Communications Committee

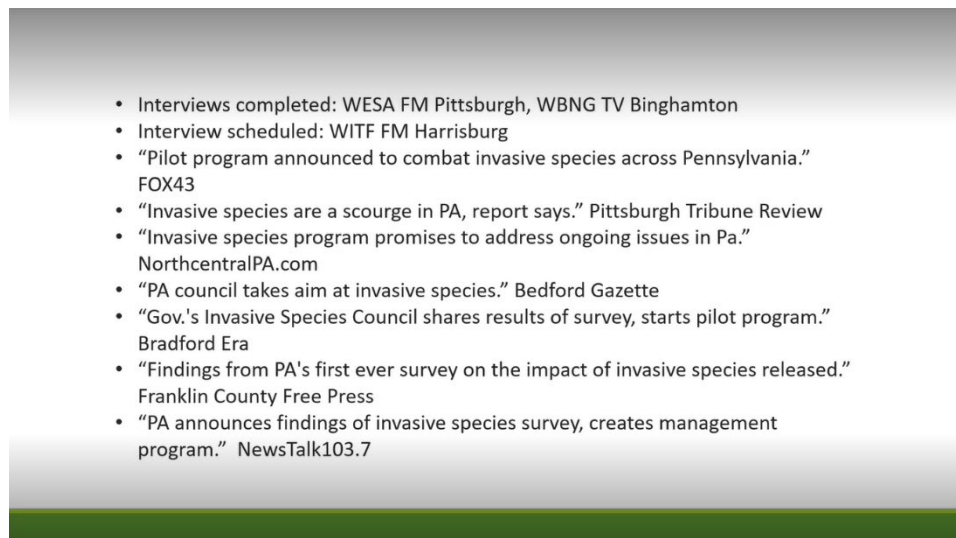
A press release was recently published on March 13 announcing results of the first ever Pennsylvania Invasive Species Impacts Survey (*see* "[Governor's Invasive Species Council Shares Results of First Statewide Invasive Impacts Survey, Announces Pilot Management Program](#)"). These survey results detail first-hand experiences of Pennsylvanians in relation to invasive species, their interest in a statewide Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) program, and the upcoming launch this summer of a pilot PRISM program in PA's northwest counties.

The press release linked to a webpage on the Council website that presents highlights of the survey (*see* "[Pennsylvania Invasive Species Impacts Survey 2022](#)"). It includes information on who responded to the survey, the settings where people are contending with invasive species, open-ended comments on species people are working on, the funds/efforts they are spending, etc. Over 600 people filled out open-ended comments, a small portion of which are available on the website (with identifying info removed). Reading through these results is an impactful experience because it is people's own words in relation to what they are dealing with.

Deb commented she was surprised to see the huge number of different species that people are dealing with (perhaps this is no surprise to others) such as hydrilla, zebra mussels, and emerald ash borer, along with many other insects, pathogens, and plants.

Over 350 people said they felt a PRISM program would help them, and 380 people were interested in partnering with the PRISM program if it could be established in PA. One nursery owner in Washington County shared fantastic comments on his experiences with invasives, so we have got that on the webpage too. Deb encouraged Council members and stakeholders to check out the survey results on the webpage and send along any questions to Kris Abell (PGISC Coordinator, PDA) (krabell@pa.gov) and/or Deb (dklenotic@pa.gov).

There was good media engagement in the survey results (*see list below in screen capture*):



The Communications Committee has also been working on the second annual Pennsylvania Native Species Day scheduled to be held this year on May 18. The tagline is "Celebrating and Protecting Our Biodiverse Native Ecosystem" which encapsulates the dual message of this event: celebrating native species and protecting them via management of invasive species. A webpage describing the event and more details can be accessed at www.NativeSpeciesDay.pa.gov.

Deb encouraged folks to consider how their own organization, partners, and the Pennsylvanians we serve could team up on activities for that day. The PDA Acting Communications Director is looking into options for a Council press event for that day, hopefully highlighting how the landscape, nursery, and gardening industries are responding to recent additions to the PA-banned plants list as well as embracing and transitioning to natives.

Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council

Celebrating and protecting our biodiverse native ecosystem

www.NativeSpeciesDay.pa.gov

Encourage your organizations, partners, constituents, and friends to join in with activities



PA NATIVE SPECIES DAY
MAY 18

Deb wrapped up by mentioning that the Communications Team is frequently in need of photos, specifically ones showing damage, risk, hazard, scale, or negative impact from an invasive species. (Less so a close-up image of a spotted lanternfly, and more so images showing an infestation or the ravages of invasives.) If anyone is out and is taking photos, please keep this need of the Council in mind and send any relevant images to Deb Klenotic (dklenotic@pa.gov).

Need photos that show impacts

- Damage, loss, hazard
- Scale

Email: dklenotic@pa.gov



Eve Adrian (PDA) asked if there are any special considerations or limitations to be aware of for state agencies regarding providing photos (*as described above*). Deb felt that for state agencies in particular, any photos taken need to be from a site where a state agency is working or is somehow involved in. Don Eggen (DCNR) mentioned that anything related to forest pests, the DCNR already has lots of photos for.

Legislative Committee

Chairperson: Eve Adrian, Executive Policy Specialist 2 at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Eve introduced work the Legislative Committee is doing on the 2023 Biennial Report to the Governor. The last report we sent to the Governor's office was in 2020. The goal is to inform the administration and get their feedback on the work of the Council. Our Governor's policy office contact is interested in learning more about PGISC. He will help provide feedback/answer questions we have in the report and will shepherd us through the process of getting the report to the right folks in the administration.

Kris Abell (PDA) followed up by saying that the Council is due to send another report to the Governor, as stipulated in the Executive Order that formed the Council. Jeff Wagner and Amy Jewitt, both of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), have offered to write a first draft, using the last letter sent to the Governor as a starting point.

Jeff Wagner (Director of Heritage, Western PA Conservancy - WPC) mentioned that the last letter to the Governor contained content focused mainly on PRISMs along with 11 bulleted points of the Council's activities and accomplishments for that period. In some ways, including content and emphasis again on PRISMs for the 2023 letter to the Governor seems quite appropriate for where we are right now; however, Jeff felt unsure about including the 11 activities and accomplishments again. Some of them are still applicable (if updated with new numbers, etc.), but Jeff wonders if there is alternate information we should provide instead. It should be less about "tooting our horn" about all the Council has done, and instead something more informational to the Governor's office about what we're trying to do legislatively. For example, it could discuss pilot projects in NW PA and other key points that help push along the PRISM concept with folks from the Governor's office (relevant happenings that they may or may not already know about) and the efforts we've undertaken to make PRISM work/function. We should also consider what communication has already come from Secretary Redding at the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA) to the Governor's office to emphasize the desire of the PDA to push the PRISM program forward, along with all the other agencies that are involved.

Jeff is open to suggestions from Kris and others for what content should be included in this next update letter to the Governor, including any potential new content not previously mentioned in previous updates.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) remarked that during the Governor's inauguration, he made remarks to the legislature in regards to the budget, specifically about the rural areas of Pennsylvania. Fred felt that we should put some thought into how and what PRISM can do (and what Conservation Districts are already doing) in the rural communities to help businesses thrive and survive for the present needs. The Governor has made it very clear that he has concerns and wants to help the rural areas of Pennsylvania, and certainly what this Council is trying to accomplish through interaction on a regional basis (*i.e. PRISM*) is certainly something that plays into a strong conversation with the Governor's office as well as with the legislature of what the Council can do, and what we're already doing, specifically in regards to shortfalls in rural communities.

When we're talking about trying to accommodate a PRISM program, it's going to take a lot of knowledge and education on what the benefits are – it's the idea that if we're proactive, then it will keep business running as usual. For instance, in the hardwoods industry, impacts are felt by the expansion of spotted lanternfly, but this industry has best management practices (BMPs) in place to deal with this. Also, their ability to cross state lines and work with Canada on keeping commerce moving is important. Those are the things that Fred feels should be incorporated as we are composing this letter to the Governor (how we can affect commerce) and how we're affecting the landscape of the rural communities. It demonstrates the crossover between public and private entities, and how this will be (and has been) a key factor, but it needs to stay front and center because we need to be able to work together collaboratively. What collaboratives exist today, and how do we expand on those collaboratives?

Cliff Lane (McKean County Commissioner) agreed with Fred's comments, reiterating that Commissioners are excited about having this rural and local control.

Fred referenced the Allegheny Collaborative (*in northern PA*) and the work this entity has done to expand itself, and how pertinent the conversations are now in the community as well as conversations with the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) which has increased its harvest. ANF harvest dollars are going back to the community because they do not have much of a tax base in that region. This is just one example of how a collaboration will go a long way in rural communities.

Jeff thanked Fred for his comments and mentioned the idea of including economic statistics in the letter to the Governor (if they are available). Jeff was anxious to receive additional feedback/comments from other Council members and stakeholders on what information would be relevant to include, perhaps reinforcing some of the previous points that were made, or new points.

April Moore (U.S. Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) commented in the meeting Chat: "One of the things that PRISMs can assist with is building contractor numbers and capacity to treat invasives – in rural communities; workshops on what treatments entail with pesticide licensing, manual treatments = loggers, etc."

Amy Jewitt (Pennsylvania iMapInvasives Program Coordinator, WPC) mentioned that it would be great to use this letter to not only provide information, but also to ask the Governor if he has any comments, suggestions, or feedback about the Council, and specifically about the proposed PRISM program.

Eve Adrian (PDA) wondered if we could use the survey data to help demonstrate points we are trying to make. Jeff asked if there were any specific parts of the survey we should focus on; Eve said yes and said she would get back to Jeff on what specific parts of the survey would be good to include.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (Section Chief, Program Services & Support Section, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – DCNR) mentioned that likely the easiest argument to make in relation to support of rural communities is information related to the timber industry.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) added onto Andrew's comment, saying that the recreation and tourism industry is another strong argument to make in the letter to the Governor regarding how it can economically benefit rural communities. He also mentioned that this new administration likes the crossover between agencies, and so with PGISC representing seven different agencies and all the non-agencies also, the Council is essentially a microcosm of a bigger picture that brings everything together in one Council. That is the importance of this Council; the sense of inclusiveness and diversity. Showing that unity is something that will resonate with the Governor's office.

Eve Adrian (PDA) added that highlighting impacts to townships, local governments, and small municipalities and how much money they spend managing impacts on their street trees and physical infrastructure would be good to include also.

Piper Sherburne (South East Region Director, PA Association of Conservation Districts – PACD) commented that the PRISM program (*concept*) has brought everyone on the Council together and we are all focusing on the same thing, something that hasn't happened for a long time in the history of the Council. (When Piper first joined the Council, a lot of the agencies were talking about their work, but it was not a collective task that people were working on.) Communication opened between agencies via subcommittee groups, something we didn't have before.

Something to point out to the Governor is how the body of the Council is working together collectively, with the PRISM program being that motivation. If the PRISM program goes into effect, the footprint of the entire state of Pennsylvania, rural and otherwise, will be participating and trying to work on invasive species in Pennsylvania for the first time ever – the most unique thing about this process; we are all going to be working together for the first time to deal with invasive species.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked how soon this letter to the Governor will be worked on, finalized, and sent. Kris Abell (PDA) said he hopes to get it sent as soon as possible; hopefully within a month. Fred asked if Jeff Wagner and Amy Jewitt could compile a draft letter by the end of March (two weeks from now), send to Kris, and circulate it. Folks at PDA can then figure out a timeframe to get it into a finalized version. If the letter can be done by the beginning of May, perhaps it could be a nice segway into PA Native Species Day on May 18.

Eve also mentioned the PGISC Outreach Guiding Principles – Strategic Timing and Approach. That information is as follows:

What are all the different paths this could go down? What are the different possibilities? How could a change in committee members/leadership change how we do outreach? The approach and timing of our outreach/coalition-building process is key.

1. We want to do concurrent planning and prepare for multiple different possible outcomes so that when we do know what will happen, we don't have to backtrack.

2. Wait to talk to legislators until we know who committee members, chairs, and leadership will be. We can prep our messaging around a variety of possible priorities, which we're already doing.
3. Don't burn out stakeholders with too many "asks" to support the legislation and funding. We want to wait until we know what the Shapiro administration will do with it and see how the draft gets negotiated in the legislature.
4. Don't show all your cards at once – Instead, talk about all the different avenues we can take to get PRISM, and mention that we're looking into legislation as an avenue, but don't provide too much detail about our current draft.
5. Lay the groundwork now by making connections with stakeholders and educating them about invasives and all the different ways that PRISM/PGISC could solve the wide array of problems invasives cause (i.e., **their** problems).
6. We might not need stakeholders to advocate if the administration just gives us money, in which case we can reach out to stakeholders with funding to help them manage their aforementioned problems.

Eve also brought up the 2023 Federal Farm Bill. The deadline to send priorities to the Senate Ag Committee is March 17 (tomorrow). Advocate individually and collectively for PRISM models (not just in Pennsylvania, but nationwide!). Agencies and organizational partners are working on their priority items – there's opportunity to leverage and amplify each other's voices. There are numerous ways the 2023 Federal Farm Bill could help with invasive species management.

Regarding the draft legislation, all the suggestions are in the new draft. The edits did not change anything substantially. We're currently in a holding pattern with PDA's legal counsel, so more news to come.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked how many stakeholders outside of the Council have been included in the legislation drafting process (that may be impacted by the legislation). Eve responded that part of the outreach guiding principles that were put together includes guidance for how we approach organizations, other entities, and members of the public who may be affected by the legislation. Fred felt that the Legislative committee has done a good job so far of involving outside stakeholders, but he wants to make sure that before the legislation is passed, all relevant stakeholders agree with the content of it. It is also important to discern what the priorities are of the Shapiro administration; is the basis of the legislation going to be a priority for them?

Don Eggen (DCNR) commented that he created the original proposed budget for the PA PRISM program back in 2020, which at the time was set at \$7.8 million. Now in 2023, the total proposed PRISM budget likely needs to increase since prices have gone up. Don suggested that the current proposed PRISM budget needs to be \$8 million (*annually*). This will be needed in order to run the program and supply funds needed by PDA to add staff for PGISC coordination (an estimated \$700,000). Don concluded by saying that in order to run a successful PRISM program in the Commonwealth, you can't run it on \$3 million; you need \$8 million.

Eve commented that in Governor Shapiro’s current budget, there is no funding dedicated for PRISM. Agency budget hearings are coming up in the following weeks. Below are some relevant pieces of information from the full budget document. Note: Where “no change” is mentioned, this refers to no changes since the previous fiscal year.

Ruth Welliver (Director, Bureau of Plant Industry, PDA) noted that the numbers shown below are not actual dollars given, but rather spending authority notices.

- General Fund (pdf page 282)
 - Spotted lanternfly - \$12 million (no change)
 - Emerald ash borer - \$800,000 (no change)
 - Invasive plant suppression (EA) - \$0 (no change)
 - Integrated pest management - \$250,000
- Plant pest detection system - \$1.3 million (no change)

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) mentioned that \$3 million was the spending authority given for Spongy moth work. Don Eggen (DCNR) clarified that a requested increase of \$1.5 million (resulting in a total of \$4.5 million) for Spongy moth will be discussed during upcoming budget hearings.

Invasive Species Listing Committee

Spokesperson: Sean Hartzell, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator and Fisheries Biologist II at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

This committee met last month. Moving forward, a typical focus for these meetings will be to look at the lists this committee has generated, review them, and decide if there are any needed changes that should be made by staff with taxonomic expertise. There are a couple minor updates that were made. They are as follows:

It was decided to remove [Greenside darter](#) (*Etheostoma blennioides*) from the list of highest concern invasive aquatic animals. This decision was made after Sean ran a GISS assessment for this species. The assessment had a very low score and no data/evidence of ecological or economic impacts. Note: This species is native to western Pennsylvania, but was introduced into the Susquehanna basin many decades ago and is widespread there.

The committee suggested adding [White pine blister rust](#) (*Cronartium ribicola*) to the plant pathogen list. (This species will be added.)

Other changes to the aquatic animal list included GISS assessment scores for seven species:

- [Chinese pond mussel](#) (*Sinanodonta woodiana*)
- [Fishhook waterflea](#) (*Cercopagis pengoi*)
- [Goldfish](#) (*Carassius auratus*)
- [Bloody red shrimp](#) (*Hemimysis anomala*)
- [Mud bithynia/faucet snail](#) (*Bithynia tentaculata*)

- [Pond loach/Oriental weatherfish](#) (*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*) (Note: “Pond loach” is the more accepted name, referring to Tim’s presentation earlier in the meeting.)
- [Rainbow smelt](#) (*Osmerus mordax*)

Continued focus is on changes to the Threat Category in the various species’ lists. Current Threat Categories are:

- Potential: Not yet found in Pennsylvania, but considered a potential threat.
- Emerging: Has been detected in some locations, with risk of spreading.
- Established: Widely established in Pennsylvania.

Changes to occur:

- Issue: Current threat categories reflect geographic distribution rather than potential impacts.
- We propose focusing on the GISS/Invasive Plant assessment scores as a measure of threat; we will also work on listing general threat categories for each species.
- Geographic data can be looked up elsewhere (e.g., [PA iMapInvasives](#)); instead, we are thinking of categorizing whether or not a species is an “early detection” priority.

Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee (CP&NWC)

Spokesperson: Trilby Libhart, Botany and Weed Specialist, Bureau of Plant Industry, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

The last CP&NWC meeting was held on January 19, 2023 and the committee voted on the addition of six species to the noxious weed list, all of which were approved. They included:

- [Amur honeysuckle](#) (*Lonicera maackii*) - Class B
- [Morrow's honeysuckle](#) (*Lonicera morrowii*) - Class B
- [Standish's honeysuckle](#) (*Lonicera standishii*) - Class B
- [Tatarian honeysuckle](#) (*Lonicera tatarica*) - Class B
- [Bell's honeysuckle](#) (*Lonicera x bella*) - Class B
- [Starry stonewort](#) (*Nitellopsis obtusa*) - Class A (*Editor’s Note: This species was not mentioned by Trilby during PGISC meeting update, but **was** also voted on and approved to be added to the PA noxious weed list by the CP&NWC in January 2023.)

Additionally, the Committee voted to move [Parrot feather](#) (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) from a Class B to a Class A noxious weed based on its low distribution in the state (which better aligns with the definition of a Class A noxious weed).

At the next CP&NWC meeting in April, Trilby will send new noxious weed criteria for discussion/review by the committee. There will not be any new species voted on during the April meeting.

Updates, Activities, and Events

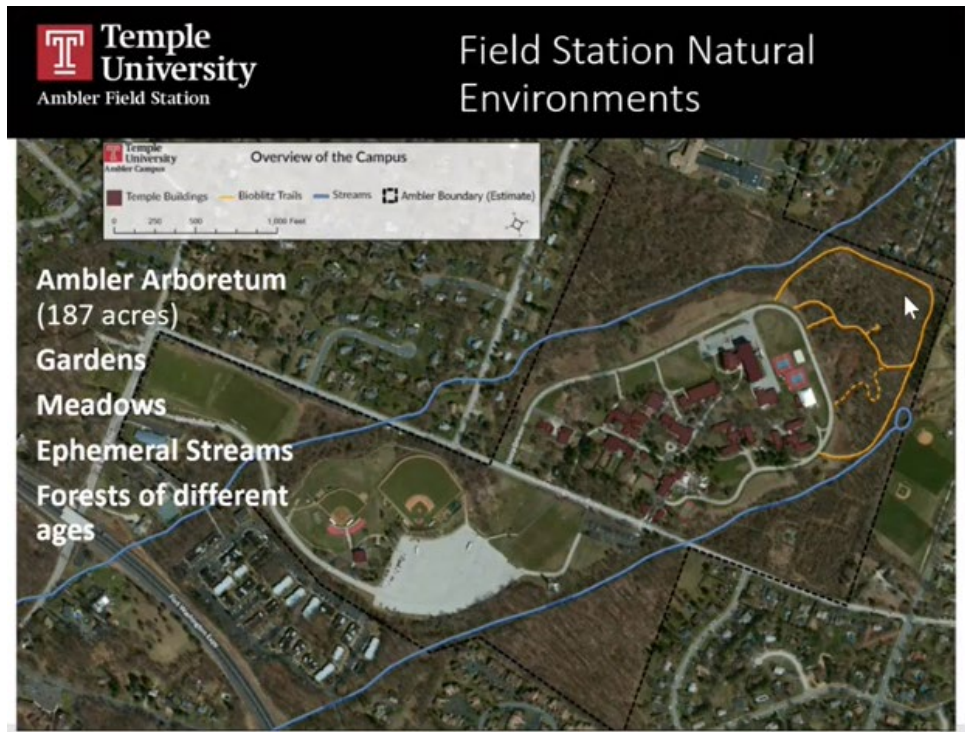
Kris Abell (PDA) brought up the next PGISC meeting, scheduled to occur in June, and the meeting's potential site visit. Members of the Council from Temple University have offered the use of the [Ambler Field Station](#) for the site visit. Amy Freestone (Director of the Temple Ambler Field Station) provided a brief overview of the Field Station.



Amy Freestone, Temple Ambler Field Station

Most people may think of Temple University as an urban university in north Philadelphia, which is true – that is where the main campus is located. However, there is also an urban campus in Ambler, PA located about 50 minutes from the main Temple campus (out of the Philadelphia region). The Ambler Field Station is an academic campus as well as an arboretum and field station (187 acres in size).

The map below outlines the Ambler Field Station which includes a lot of forested areas as well as a few creeks. There is also a trail system. Designed gardens are in the central part of the campus and a ring of maintained meadows are found around the academic campus.



One of the main activities promoted at the Field Station is the Temple Forest Observatory which is a forest research plot that Temple developed in collaboration with the Smithsonian (which has a [Forest Global Earth Observatory](#) (ForestGEO) program). Folks at the Ambler Field Station have worked with ForestGEO for several years to set up a four-hectare forest research site, a gridded-out area of the forest. Research began there in 2020.

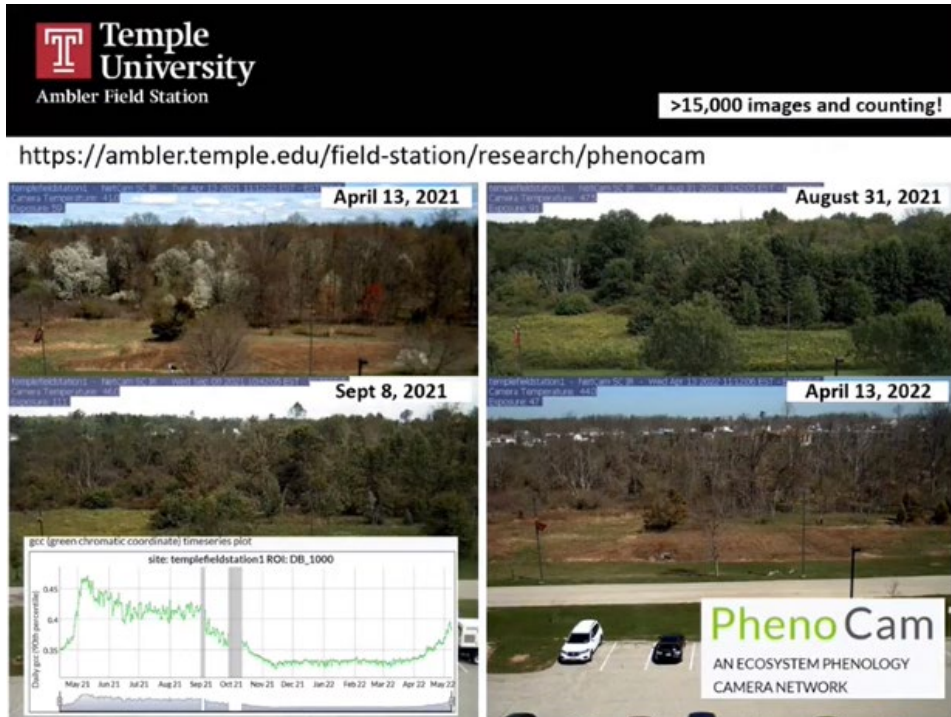
In September 2021, an EF2 tornado hit the area which largely leveled the site. The damage caused by the tornado can be seen in the image below. This was an older growth patch of forest that had tall trees that researchers had started collecting very detailed data from (tagging, mapping, measuring, and identifying all woody plants). After the storm hit, researchers went back and collected additional data which has resulted in a very powerful before-and-after dataset to look at forest regeneration (pre and post tornado), which included a lot of invasive species data. What was once an older growth forest (without records of when it was cut) is now a completely open habitat. Researchers at the Field Station are now expecting some interesting dynamics related to invasive species in this area.



There are environmental sensors hooked up, dendrometer bands to measure tree growth, and PhenoCams used to monitor the forest as well as the abundance and richness of the invasive plants present in this forest plot. See image above taken with the Ambler Field Station’s PhenoCam. Temple is part of the [PhenoCam Network](#) which is a global network of these time lapsed cameras. In other words, every 30 minutes, an image is taken of the Ambler Field Station

forest that's then uploaded real-time to the network webpage. Interested individuals can access this imagery and watch the forest recovery.

Another PhenoCam set up at the Field Station has views of another part of the forest. In the images below, August 31, 2021 was the day before the tornado hit, then about a week later after the tornado (September 8, 2021), and then afterwards as data is collected on forest recovery (April 13, 2022).



Research is supported across disciplines at the Field Station, much of which focuses on the environment and sustainability, a big part of which is invasive species. For example, research is conducted on spotted lanternfly (SLF) at the Field Station, both at field sites as well as at a mesocosm facility which consists of 10x10 foot mesocosm cages that are stocked with SLFs in the summer to look at the impacts of SLF on native plants.



There are a variety of facilities and active research projects occurring at the Ambler Field Station that support questions on ecology and environmental science as well as invasive species in particular.

The Field Station is also a training facility. Year-round internships are offered there. Field modules are supported for different courses both internally for Temple as well as external courses and high schools that visit the site and learn how to collect research data, etc. A course is offered at the Field Station with a focus on invasive species because, like many suburban areas, the Field Station is an invaded plot.

Educational Programming



Credit-Bearing Internships offered every semester



Field Modules:

Environmental Hazards and Disasters, CLA
GenEd Sustainable Environments, CLA
Disease Prevention and Control, CPH
Plant Ecology, Tyler
Architectural Design Studio / Design-Build Summer Institute, Tyler
Biological Impacts of Climate Change, CST
Geology Field Camp, CST
AP Environmental Science, UDHS

Field-Based Courses through Biology:

Disturbance Ecology, Spring 2022
Field Research in Community Ecology Summer I, 2022
Ecology of Invasive Species, Fall 2022

Outreach partnerships with EarthFest and Arboretum



For more information visit us online or reach out!

 fieldstation@temple.edu

 @TUfieldstation



 **Temple University**
Ambler Field Station
ambler.temple.edu/FieldStation

There have been discussions related to hosting the PGISC for the June meeting, and Amy said the Field Station would be happy to accommodate this request. Depending on how large the PGISC group is, anything from a small conference room to an auditorium that fits 300 is available for use. Ample free parking is also available.

The Field Station is fairly easy to get to; accessible from major highways. If PGISC members and stakeholders are interested, this would be a nice opportunity to learn about their field sites, research being conducted, and ways to collaborate and support each other.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that the Council will discuss the feasibility of hosting the upcoming PGISC meeting/site visit at the Temple Ambler Field Station. Kris will be in touch with Amy Freestone with follow-up information.

In relation to Amy's remarks, Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that he, Ruth Welliver (PDA), and Kris Abell (PDA) discussed the June PGISC earlier, saying that if the intention is to use the meeting as an event to bring legislators to and educate/promote work related to invasive species, June is not an ideal month to do so because of state budget-related activities happening at that time (and many legislators will be busy). It was suggested by several Council members that September may be a better month to host this special meeting of the Council.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) commented that showing the impacts to an area damaged by a tornado could be a good case to show how invasives are now a main threat to valuable timber crops and their future regeneration (i.e., making the economic/financial case to legislators for why invasive species are a problem). He feels that hosting a site visit at the Temple Ambler Field Station is a good idea for these reasons.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that not only is the legislature filled with a lot of new people, but when preliminary conversations were had previously on the topic of PRISM, there was a huge disconnect in the legislature. They had no idea what PRISM was. Likely for this reason, our ask of \$8 million to fund a PA PRISM program was unsuccessful. Fred said there is a learning curve involved with members of the legislature and their ability to fully understand and support PRISM, but given time and working through agency legislative directors should help bridge this disconnect. It is also not just about work happening in a region, but about the science behind the work and what's going to contribute to success. There will always be a need for research related to the topic of invasive species.

Cliff Lane (McKean County Commissioner) commented further on the importance of educating legislators on invasive species. He mentioned that last year, the Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative showed legislators [glossy buckthorn](#) (*Frangula alnus*), a species many of them had never even heard of, invading areas near Ridgway, PA. However, now legislators are talking about this species (*based on this site visit interaction*). This shows the benefits education and outreach can have for members of the legislature.

Marie North (a member of the public) commented that she was invited to this meeting by Kris Abell (PDA). She lives within the William Penn State Forest District and has a small stewardship forest in Lehigh County. She learned about PGISC and the work the Council does through a newspaper article. She and her husband are constantly dealing with invasive species on their property.

Regarding the legislative comments that Council was mentioning (*earlier in the meeting*), she commented having invited her new state representative, [Mike Scholssberg](#), to visit their property,

something he was very excited to do. She provided educational literature to him and provided a tour of her small stewardship forest. She and her husband spoke to Rep. Scholssberg about invasive species and told him about some of the work they were doing on their property. A few of his comments included:

- **“I am so excited to find out that this is in my district. I had no idea.”**
- **“This is an incredible amount of work.” (To which Marie responded, “Yes, it is, and there are many like us.”)**

She felt that having an opportunity to invite legislators to outdoor site visits is important to promote their understanding about the harm caused by invasive species, a topic many legislators know little to nothing about. So, for example, to be able to see what Temple University was doing related to work with invasive species, and then what happened because of the tornado that hit the area, seeing firsthand the resulting onslaught of invasive species would be a very eye-opening experience for legislators.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) wrapped up the conversation by saying that Kris should follow-up with Amy Freestone and see if the Temple Ambler Field Station can accommodate hosting the September PGISC Council meeting at their facility.

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) provided an update on an emerging situation with aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania. He commented that Pennsylvania is now one of four states in the U.S. that have noticed receiving shipments of non-native crayfish species in feeder goldfish that have been shipped to various pet stores. The PA Fish and Boat Commission just became aware of this issue last week via a report from a concerned member of the public who found that several Petco and PetSmart stores in southeastern PA had crayfish in their tanks. Independently, PFBC received another similar report (around the same time) from an individual in the Pittsburgh area. Conservation officers at the PFBC are currently investigating this issue statewide. This is an ongoing investigation and is new. Officers have reported finding several crayfish in various districts throughout the state. These crayfish are hitchhiking in shipments of feeder goldfish to pet stores.

For background purposes, all species of crayfish were banned in 2015 for live possession in most cases in Pennsylvania due to them being highly invasive. And even if native crayfish are taken slightly out of their native range and introduced elsewhere, they can cause major ecological damage. It is unlawful to possess crayfish in Pennsylvania as pets or sell them in a pet store (although the pet stores are not having them for sale, they are just inadvertently receiving them in shipments of feeder goldfish).

Sean reiterated that this is an ongoing investigation by the PFBC. Officers continue to search and confiscate crayfish. Likely more information will be available to report on at the next PGISC meeting. They are conversations among states and at the state coordination level, both with federal entities as well as the American Federation of Wildlife Associations (who have taken a lead on this issue), about working with industry and producers to try and mitigate this risk.

Information from the crayfish confiscation so far is pointing to a few sellers in the southern U.S., particularly in Arkansas, that seem to have crayfish that are stowing away in shipments of feeder goldfish.

Amber Stilwell (Coastal Outreach Specialist, PA Sea Grant) presented a proposal to the Council (which Kris will also circulate after today's meeting).

Amber's proposal is to create an invasive species education and outreach partnership across Pennsylvania by forming a subcommittee through PGISC. Education and outreach is a key component to preventing the introduction of new invasive species and spreading existing infestations. Many dedicated organizations, such as representatives that comprise the Council and beyond, are working toward education and outreach-focused goals in aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention messaging.

In recent months, Pennsylvania Sea Grant and the Penn State Extension Water Resources team have identified (just in their organizations alone) many areas of crossover within their outreach activities. Similarly, across Pennsylvania, a few new initiatives in the organisms-in-trade component of AIS have been targeting native plant replacement and landscaping industries. To prevent duplication of efforts and provide opportunities for project partnerships, Amber feels that a statewide subcommittee focused on education and outreach in Pennsylvania is necessary. This subcommittee could provide a platform for steady communication about outreach projects, enhance opportunities for partnerships across the Commonwealth, and provide opportunities to leverage the resources that we have and create projects of greater impact and magnitude across Pennsylvania. Amber's request to the Council is to form a new PGISC subcommittee composed of interested Council members and relevant stakeholders. By doing so, this would enhance current and future AIS education efforts throughout Pennsylvania.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked Amber if her proposal is something that will involve/include the school/education system also. Amber replied that if there are stakeholders that work in educational system, then yes, including them could be a component. Fred followed up by saying that in general, there is a need for agricultural educators and to add this as a piece of curriculum might be very helpful in getting the message out early on in a youth's life (to understand the dynamics of the many effects of invasive species). Getting that message into the educational system is what gives an opportunity for exposure. Amber replied that through Penn State Extension, 4-H could be a partner to do that type of work. Some of Amber's outreach work does involve working with youth and she has incorporated a lot of the components Tim Campbell (Wisconsin Sea Grant) presented on earlier, such as talking about invasive species in a different manner.

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) felt Amber's proposal was a good idea, but wondered if it would be more beneficial to the Council if this subcommittee put its focus on all invasive species rather than just aquatics. Sean sees this approach of including both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species as being a broader benefit to the Council. Amber agreed with Sean's remarks.

Kris Abell (PDA) said the next steps are to distribute Amber’s proposal to Council members for review and approval (or disapproval) on whether to form this new subcommittee and to express interest in the committee moving forward.

Public Comment Period

(Jennifer Senchak, Certified Arborist, Gargiulo Landscaping) was excited about Amber’s proposal, saying she grew up being involved in 4-H, was a camp counselor, etc. She values opportunities to introduce children to the environment at a young age.

Grant Gulibon (Regulatory Affairs Specialist, PA Farm Bureau) commented that he thought he was an alternate member representing the PA Farm Bureau on the Council, though apparently, he is not yet. He remarked that the PA Farm Bureau will be having a meeting (which he spoke to Kris Abell about already) to do outreach for their Natural Environmental Resources Committee and discuss more ways the PA Farm Bureau can partner with the Council on their work. Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that the Council will be a supporter of this.

Concluding Remarks

The next quarterly PGISC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 10:00am, regardless of whether it will also include a site visit (*as discussed earlier in the meeting*). This meeting in June will have both in-person and virtual (*Microsoft Teams*) attendance options. Contact Kris Abell (krabell@pa.gov) with any questions or comments.

Adjourn

Fred Strathmeyer thanked those who traveled in for the meeting.

MOTION: Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) moved to adjourn the meeting. Gregg Robertson (PA Landscape and Nursery Association - PLNA) seconded the motion. **Meeting adjourned.**

Next PGISC Meeting

Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 10:00am

Attendance options include both in-person and via Microsoft Teams. (Location TBD.)

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

Questions or comments regarding these minutes should be submitted to Kris Abell (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.