

Western Regional Panel All Member Conference Call

Thursday March 21, 2013; 2pm MDT

Minutes

- A) Welcome from Chair Elizabeth Brown; attendees announce name and affiliation (10 minutes)
Elizabeth Brown, Leah Elwell, John Wullshleger, Beth Bear, Diana Wiegman, Stephen Phillips, Bob McMahon, Karen McDowell, Susan Ellis, Bob Wiltshire, Allison Begley, Linnae Schroeer, Joe Baner, Dave Britton, Jessica Howell, Fred Rychman, Steve Lonhart, James Dominguez, Robyn Draheim, Cynthia Tait, Joanne Grady, Toni Pennington, Larry Dalton, Rick Boatner, Lloyd Knight, Mark Systma, Jeff Adams, Kevin Anderson and Toney Ott,
- B) WRP Working Group Updates (10 minutes each – 1 hour)
 - a. Annual Meeting 2013– Robyn Draheim – The meeting is scheduled for September 11-13 in Portland on at PSU’s University Place Hotel. The theme of the meeting is “Success Stories” and the committee has roughed out sessions on aquatic plants, coastal issues, inland issues, dreissenids, education and outreach, as well as the Panel business meeting and tentative panel discussion on regional partnerships/efforts. The 13th will be the field trip which has not yet be finalized. For those that might be unaware as well the State and Federal groups typically hold separate half day meeting prior to the start of the WRP meeting.
 - b. AG Workshop Follow-Up – Joanne Grady – A core group of folks that remain from the Phoenix meeting working on an action plan; there are products and ongoing work. Several products include: a) three papers have been published and another two are in production in the AZ Environmental Law Journal; b) crafting model state law that addresses mussels in the west. A location and indentifying specific folks to work on that issue will occur this spring; c) A follow up workshop that was scheduled for NISAW (and subsequently canceled) was re-scheduled May 16th in DC. Participation will be possible via webinar; d) one specific action item from the workshop was to develop a list of definitions, terms. These are currently being solicited – Leah will include this in the WRP monthly update. Currently this working group is seeking a new name for this group moving forward.
 - c. Recreational Ballast Tank Project – Stephen Phillips – Two years ago Ted Thayer with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was having conversations with boat manufacturers, regarding the long lines for boaters at Lake Tahoe to decontaminate their boats. A concept was suggested that could help alleviate the issues with decontaminating motorized boats. A MasterCraft employee developed a filtration system for ballast tanks. It was decided to test the prototypes at Lake Mead with financial support from a variety of state, federal and private partners. University of Reno (Dr. Chandra) is leading the research. The tests will determine the efficacy for the system to remove dreissenid veligers. Preliminary results from the study could possibly be ready by September 2013.

Eventually it is hoped that this ballast filtration system will be built into new design boats. The idea being a “green” boat would be built for to reduce the spread of AIS.

- d. Coastal Committee – Kevin Anderson – The Coastal Committee has been around for about 3 years after being reinvigorated in Oakland where the committee discussed how to collectively respond in a consistent way to invaders on the coast. The purpose of this group is to share operational, program and policy information, and to coordinate and align strategies across states and provincial boundaries. The Committee does not deal with biofouling or ballast water. There are representatives from all coastal states including Hawaii and BC, who meet every other month by phone. In fall 2012, the Committee provided a recommendation to the ANS Task Force to support and build capacity of the state to respond to invasive species associated with Tsunami debris in Alaska. Additionally, committee members played a central role in supporting NOAA’s work to coordinate and develop protocols for responding to Japanese tsunami debris contaminated with AIS. There have been discussions about developing a common list of marine invasive species, finding ways for the WRP and coastal committee to more effectively link and build relationships with other west coast efforts, developing a common west coast reporting system, identifying unmanaged and novel pathways that spread marine invaders and ways to close these gaps, and discussions on funding gaps and needs. Another issue that the committee has worked collectively on is the response to the breeding population European Green Crab on the west coast. There is a proposal circulating to strengthen program to address in WA, and working with Canadian entities. If anyone has any contributions to the Committee they would like to share or want to revisit any of the above topics, please contact Kevin Anderson.
- e. Lab Protocols and Standards – Stephen Phillips – PCR technology is great for identifying DNA in the environment, despite some issue with false positives and false negatives (that trigger management actions). As the technology continues to progress and develop, it is apparent that a validation or accreditation for DNA results would be helpful. However, it is very expensive to set up this type of lab and the technology is constantly evolving/improving. At the spring 2012 Invasive Species Advisory Committee meeting, the council members put together a white paper on PCR validation and accreditation and other considerations for consideration for the National Invasive Species Council members and partners. It has been suggested an entity such as the National Academy of Sciences should undertake the accreditation of PCR methodology. Unfortunately the December and Spring ISAC meetings were cancelled hindering plans to discuss ways to move this effort forward, as at this time this is the current vehicle to address. There has been discussion presenting this “issue” to the press via scientific editorials etc. that would allow a broader group of people to consider it. Largely the federal government has the ability to step in now to address this issue however, there would be no budget to address. At the next ANSTF meeting there will be a session on e-DNA. One scenario should be to work with the Mid-west on Carp e-DNA, and other species where needs for e-DNA protocol standards could be addressed together.

- f. Membership – Leah Elwell – At the 2012 meeting, a membership committee was formed. If you are interested can still join and help. The actions that the committee is currently addressing are 1) review of the membership portions of the revised Bylaws, 2) development of membership application process, and 3) review of the membership categories. The next call is April 2 at 10am MDT. Constantly updating membership contact list so please refer to this on the WRP website.
- C) Discussion on ANSTF Recommendations for Spring Meeting (15 minutes) – Discussion on what if any additional to continued funding for implementation of QZAP. Suggestions of the following:
 - a) continuing funding to the panels for the minimum, and b) coastal monitoring program related to marine invasive species specific to marine debris from federal agencies with jurisdiction.
- D) Update from “Federally Managed High-Risk Water bodies” meeting, Proposed Western USA Shared Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Database, and QZAP funding for 2013 – Dave Britton (10 minutes) –
 - a. On February 20th in SLC, we discussed FY2013. At this time it is uncertain whether or not funding will be available; details are still emerging on funding availability. If the funds do become available, then we anticipate the focus on quagga/zebra mussels in the western states and lower Colorado River, with an emphasis on protecting northwestern states. During the February meeting discussed priority concerns and realities, and tried to create a list of ideas, figure out which ideas should be funded and what could be done in the near and far future. The group created a list of prioritized recommendations. The summary from that meeting is being finalized and will be available soon. The next steps in the process are to provide the group’s recommendations to USFWS leadership to assist in their decision process. Ultimately the Director of USFWS, will make the final decision. We anticipate that a decision will be made in early April. The next step will be to request specific proposals. The items were prioritized into short term and long term action items. Short term actions that were high on the list were a boat notification system and expansion of law enforcement actions in west. Additional items discussed included paying for a decontamination station at Lake Havasu, expanding WCTII training to other infested waters (particularly Lake Pleasant), increase outreach (although some western partners argued that outreach was not intended for funding), and increase road side inspections leading out of infested water bodies in the long term. If funding is made possible it will be distributed via an RFP process.
 - b. Notification Database – There has been an identified need of a better communication system at contaminated waters for boats moving to another state. There have been issues with how best to alert others of this boat, privacy act issues, paper shuffling etc. Company called MobileSolutions is developing a database system that allows for instantaneous notification on decontamination and other pertinent data. Database may eventually also contain data on moored boats in known contaminated waters. The prototype is ready to roll– Callville Marina has agreed to be the first to input into the system. To function users will need a mobile device (iPhone, iPad, tablets, android phone) and can then also retrieve information inputted from other computers/phones etc, which will result in overall better communication. State coordinators – if you are

willing to work with the notification system on a trial basis contact Dave Britton. This should be ready in April.

- E) NISAW Update – Stephen Phillips (10 minutes)- Sequester and snow storm halted almost all planned activities. However Capitol Hill visits still happened to 25 offices with Ted Thayer, Elizabeth Brown, Karen Vargas, Stephen Phillips, and Tom McMahon. Message to legislators or staff was primarily on 1) Sec 2014 grants that administer for state grants fund for implementation of state AIS management plans be authorized for the full \$4M, 2) listing of Quagga mussels legislatively under the Lacey Act live or dead; where the hope is that a legislative vehicle could be found to get this through much like bighead carp listing was done through the Great Lakes Restoration Act, this task is ongoing, 3) Dept of Interior AIS strategy. The hope is that the strategy will provide guidance to federal agencies that manage federal waters with AIS issues. There is also a USDA strategy that is in process and being worked through the system. During hill visits this year it was noted that staffers were more aware of the quagga issue than last year.

- F) Update on panel funding – Joanne Grady (10 minutes) – Checked in with Craig Martin and Susan Mangin earlier today. The Fisheries Program does not have numbers yet. The Continuing Resolution goes through the end of this month. The House is anticipating further cuts to Interior; 5-7% reduction is what is anticipated. They are still fighting for state and panel funding. They still hope and expect to have funds available, but it is not clear how much. Some regions in USFWS are handling cuts differently. Waiting for other numbers to come out. Last year Joanne in anticipation of potential decreases in agency funding did put a decreasing amount of funds toward the WRP. Also as a reminder March 31 is the deadline to submit to USFWS for money to implement approved state plans, when submitting please CC the regional USFWS coordinator.

- G) Other topics for discussion – Toney Ott with EPA stated that grants and contracts are going to be deeply cut out of the EPA. Cynthia Tait– informed that USGS Adam Sepulbeda is working on e-DNA markers for several plants and wondered if there might be possible overlap and could promote information sharing. Bob McMahon replied that there are many labs are developing e-DNA protocols across the country. It would be helpful to bring together the people working on this to create a plan.