

Western Regional Panel Monthly Executive Committee Conference Call

March 25, 2024, at 2:00 pm mountain time

Attended by: John Wullschleger, Robert Walters, Stephen Phillips, Vanessa Salazar, Dennis Zabaglo, Josh Leonard, Barak Shemai, and Leah Elwell

Minutes

- A) Approval of February minutes. Stephen motioned to approve, and John seconded. All in favor. minutes approved.
- B) Panel Business
 - QZAP 2.0 – Leah created a progress update document of all the strategies. This document will be public facing. The document could be circulated to specific DOI individuals, posted online and available for the upcoming All Member webinar. This is a due diligence demonstration of the WRP is adhering to the plan and could help promote QZAP proposals that WRP sees as priorities. Ex Comm will provide all comments by April 8 to Leah for incorporation.
 - Discuss project prioritization for QZAP –April 15 QZAP proposals are due. In general, a proposal may be considered for funding if it addresses a QZAP 2.0 strategy and addresses identified priorities emphasized in the NOFO. Letters of support for grant proposals from WRP are not possible as per WRP Operating Procedures.
 - Mid-Year Webinar agenda review – The Webinar is April 23. There were suggested additional short presentations including plans on the Snake River from Idaho and status of NZMS Plan revision from Martha. Leah will finalize those possible presentations, share a final agenda with Ex Comm and target the first week of April for circulating on the list serv.
- C) Legislative update – Stephen Phillips
 - Appropriation bills for 2024 have been determined. DOI was flat funded and looks to be the same as last fiscal year. European Green Crab appears multiple times under different agencies and with funding allocated to the Metlakatla Indian Community. APC WID Funds cost share got slashed by 50%. Recovering America’s Wildlife Act S.1148) for \$1.4 billion fund to go to fish and wildlife agencies, and tribes. The American Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act (some have dubbed as RAWA light) it does have some ESA elements to it and not likely to pass.
- D) WRP Standing Committee – Roundtable for Chairs/Liaisons
 - Annual Meeting Committee - Leah Elwell. The planning team has met multiple times, and an initial skeleton agenda has been formulated. The abstract submission period will remain open until mid-May. Multiple sponsors have already pledged to support the meeting. Leah will continue to seek support for the meeting operations.
 - Coastal Committee – Co-Chairs Chris Scianni and Christine Moffitt; Stephen Phillips/Leah liaisons. Stephen and Chris have been discussing ways to fund an offshore energy whitepaper as a product of the committee. The paper is the primary priority of the committee and may be a good graduate research project.
 - Decontamination Think Tank Committee – Chair Robert Walters. One call since last Ex Comm. The topic of developing procedures for decontaminating Construction Equipment has been discussed as a next effort. However, BOR has a good document that addresses this, and safety standards are covered well by OSHA as well. These

factors have let the committee to now focus on procedures and specs for the dip tank. They are waiting from UT to get procedures to start from. The multiple procedures for the various decontamination types are still out for review via the other regional panels. Those are due by 3/31.

- Field Sampling and Monitoring Committee – Chair Kate Dukette; Tom Woolf liaison. Did not meet this month. However, they are trying to wrap up the full document review and targeting July for completion.
- Membership and Communication Committee – Chair John Wullschleger. John and Leah will talk this week and identify some milestones for the year. Tribal participation a priority. It has been difficult to secure meeting attendance for the committee.
- Outreach Committee – Chair Monica McGarrity; Barak Shemai Liaison. Provided via email by Monica:
 - Progress is being made on the social media strategy development project (QZAP funded; Elizabeth Brown). Preliminary interviews are underway to inform this effort and a draft survey instrument has been developed.
 - Progress is being made on expanding the online Protect the West WID map info website into a nationwide tool (QZAP funded; Wildlife Forever/Zach Burnside). The tool will include information on state laws/regulations/website links as well as maps of WID stations with other relevant info where data is provided. Following the first email request, information has been obtained from 40% of states. Follow-up requests to obtain information from states will be made via regional panels soon. Target website release date is in June.
 - The Education and Outreach Committee did not identify any ANSTF recommendations to bring forward.

E) ANSTF

- Recommendations – Spring submissions due May 1.
 - Panel funding, Leah will ping Michele and see if all panels want to support.
 - From the Think Tank: Encourage the Dept of Transportation to include a clause or acknowledgement regarding AIS in interstate transport. Clarify who is the appropriate federal entity DOT. Leah will discuss it with Lisa.
 - Susan has drafted a table to track recommendation response and status. Hopefully this will provide some transparency and better information on recommendation results.
- Next meeting attendance – May 8-9, in New York. Attendance from the WRP may only be from Dennis Zabaglo. Tom, Robert and Leah will attend virtually.
- Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Participation Discussion
 - Prevention - Chair Joseph Kreiger, NOAA; Barak Shemai Liaison. No news. There was correspondence this week regarding the role of the committee in encouraging adoption of the Wildland Firefighting Decontamination Protocol by contractors. Any next steps will be shared at a future meeting by Dennis.
 - Early Detection and Rapid Response - Chair Wes Daniels, USGS; John Wullschleger Liaison. Rapid Response plan template is targeted to be presented at the ANSTF meeting in May.
 - Control and Restoration - Chair Kim Bogenschutz, Iowa; Dennis Zabaglo Liaison. Martha has a draft of the NZMS plan that will be ready to review soon.
 - Research - Chair Susan Pasko, USFWS; John Wullschleger Liaison. They have not met in 2024.

- Education and Outreach – Chair Tim Campbell, Wisconsin Sea Grant; Monica McGarrity Liaison. They have not met in 2024.
- F) Coordinating the Coordination Update (including tribal activities)
- CRB Team meeting in Missoula 4-5 June.
 - MRBP meeting is in April.
 - WISCE meeting in March discussed the proposed rule change proposal for YNP for complex watercraft have been sealed and 30-day dry time prior to launch. The proposed rule will also only honor MT, ID, WY, YELL, GTNP seals.
 - WAFA Meeting is in June. Josh will be presenting the WISCE AIS Hatchery BMPs.
 - NPS Amistad is infested with dreissenids. Detections have been sporadic for several years. NPS will be supporting Amistad with additional funds this year for prevention.
- G) Announcements – ALL
- State of WY is meeting with State of SD and Garrison Fish Hatchery. Lake Oahe, ND is of concern for dreissenid risk and how to manage hatchery operations. Could affect fisheries stocking and ability to provide “clean” stocks to other states like WY.