

Western Regional Panel Executive Committee

April Conference Call

April 28, 2025, at 1:00 pm mountain time

Minutes

Attended by: Vanessa Salazar, Robert Walters, Stephen Phillips, Tom Woolf, Dennis Zabaglio, Barak Shemai, Josh Leonard, and Leah Elwell.

- A) Approval of March minutes. Stephen moves to approve. Josh seconded. Minutes approved.
- B) Panel Business
 - Tracking research needs (Golden mussel or otherwise). Dennis is requesting information on researchers who conducted projects to determine dreissenid lethal temperatures. Dennis will follow up to see what is occurring and share. Leah will provide names to Dennis to contact for study design of lethal temp studies.
 - Updates on EDRR Framework – Not much activity, however National EDRR Framework coordinator Mark Frey has expressed interest in presenting at the WRP-MRBP meeting this fall.
 - EDRR Funds Discussion – The RFP was launched on April 15. There have been a couple questions regarding the fund; would Caulerpa qualify as a species to eradicate, indirect costs vs administrative rate, and do goldfish apply. Leah will doodle Ex Comm for May preproposal discussion.
 - Coordination Contract (deadline June 20) – Susan Pasko shared information on submitting agreement paperwork for panels. There will be additional layers of review and submitting WRP paperwork by June 20 is the target. Tom motioned to continue to have Leah Elwell, Conservation Collaborations submit to continue coordination and Barak seconded. All in favor. Leah will prepare the materials starting next week and share. Allocations of funding to salary, travel and materials will be unchanged from previous submission.
- C) Legislative update – Stephen Phillips
 - Stefanik (NY), Stamp Out Invasives bill has been introduced again for the 4th time. If passed, the Postal Service would issue an invasive species postal stamp with proceeds going to DOI.
 - Appropriation work has begun, and the president's budget will be coming out soon. Preliminary figures from the president's budget do not look good for federal agencies, and there is no information in the budget yet mentioning invasives. Clean energy items will be likely slashed. Sea Grant is zeroed out on the president's budget. The reconciliation process in Congress is moving forward to help reinstate funding to different areas.
 - FWS budget funding amounts (including for AIS) will not occur until a USFWS director is confirmed which might be early May. Government has added 4 layers of approval for funding announcements which will slow down processes (Director – DOI Ast. Sec. – DOI Director – OMB). 80% of funding proposals are getting blanket rejections. Golden mussels will not be able to be included under QZAP. Internal entities are suggesting that merit review would need to be dual to address golden mussels plus there is no plan

associated with golden mussels for prioritization. Funding approval process will affect the state management plan grants as well.

- Reclamation is being directed to pause any agreements associated with Colorado River. Currently not applied to the USFWS.

D) WRP Standing Committee – Roundtable for Chairs/Liaisons

- Annual Meeting Committee - Leah Elwell –The planning team has met twice, and the abstract submission period is open until mid-May. Leah clarified that the hotel contract has no penalty for cancellation. Notification to the hotel as soon as possible if there are any changes. No deposit was required. If there is a cancellation that hotel would prefer to reschedule. The week of the meeting the hotel will put a hold on the credit card provided for the fees that week. Ex Comm agreed to continue all planning for an in-person meeting. Re-confirm and discuss next month as well.
- Awards Committee – Chair Tom Woolf. Evaluation criteria should include categories. GSARP just distributed awards and there may be some process information to request from them. Leah will reach out. Ex Comm agreed that the method to select awardees will be to have each pick top 5 and discuss. A specific criterion will not be used. One method could be to break out review into 2 groups. June 1 release of nominations. Continue to explore the physical award that will be given is it a 3-D printed mussel, a patch?
- Coastal Committee – Chair Amanda Newsom, WDFW; Stephen Phillips/Leah liaisons. Amanda has been very active since she began as chair last month. The committee is conducting a survey to determine which topics will be focused on in the near term. Stephen is hosting the Pacific Ballast Water group meeting this week in California.
- Decontamination Think Tank Committee – Co-Chair Chris Killian and Josh Wright; Robert Walters liaison. Will not meeting until fall
- Field Sampling and Monitoring Committee – Chair Kate Dukette; Tom Woolf liaison. Draft is imminent. Tom will reach out to determine when it will be available.
- Membership and Communication Committee – Chair John Wullschleger. The bylaw revision is underway with a focus on mostly improving tribal membership requirements and aligning with federal/state membership requirements. Membership update – Jonas Grundman is now the alternate voting member for USACE.
- Outreach Committee – Chair Sara Ricklefs, ISAN; Barak Shemai Liaison. Met 2 weeks ago. Elizabeth gave a webinar on the social media toolkit. The committee will be exploring next steps and activities for the near term.
 - Barak suggested the Ex Comm update to the QZAP progress completion document. Leah will circulate to the Ex Comm for feedback, and she may attempt to update for the next call. Annual DOI update has been done regarding federal progress and contributions. Leah will reach out to Hilary Smith for the document.
 - A discussion on what would be needed to update to QZAP 2.0 itself. This was last completed in September 2020. Including golden mussels would allow for funding to address this species as well. On the next Ex Comm call discuss what the capacity is to do this, and timing.

E) ANSTF

- ANSTF Activities
 - May 13-15 – Virtual – Now to be rescheduled because of the Federal Register delay. New date has not yet been selected.

- Recommendations for May – submitted Golden mussel federal leadership, panel and state plan support. Leah suggested adding a recommendation for all federal agencies to adopt HACCP. Barak mentioned USFWS and NPS are fully engaged. However other federal agencies could be encouraged to train and utilize. HACCP is also an action item in QZAP. On the next Ex Comm call discuss again, it may be that the timing to encourage federal agency action on this is not good.
 - Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Participation Discussion
 - Prevention - Chair Joseph Kreiger, NOAA; Barak Shemai Liaison. Will meet May 1.
 - Early Detection and Rapid Response - Chair Wes Daniels, USGS; John Wullschleger Liaison. Meeting May 1.
 - Control and Restoration - Chair Kim Bogenschutz, Iowa; Dennis Zabaglo Liaison. Control plan guidance and NZMS are going through preparations for completion.
 - Research - Chair Susan Pasko, USFWS; John Wullschleger Liaison.
 - Education and Outreach – Chair Tim Campbell, Wisconsin Sea Grant; Monica McGarrity Liaison. No news.
- F) Coordinating the Coordination Update (including tribal activities)
- WID database – Robert reported that CPW has not gotten the QZAP funds typically used to support it operation. CPW is covering those costs to make sure the database is operational. USACE has agreed to support 50% of costs into the summer. Barak mentioned he has received final notice that the NPS component has come through and that will be processed within 45 days.
 - Robert gave a presentation to the CA golden mussel task force steering committee on Friday. There are 19 different user groups from CA in the WID system. An entity in CA is needed to help standardize the input into the database.
 - WISCE – Elizabeth gave update on comparisons of WID protocols across the states. Sudeep U of NV to discuss research ideas and needs on the next call. State fact sheets that compile FTE, budgets etc., are being completed now. Elizabeth may help provide a survey to collect that information for sharing in the fall.
- G) Announcements – ALL
- PSMFC office has moved to new location in Portland.
 - May 19th next Ex Comm call