

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council
Tuesday, December 7, 2021 | 10:00am
(Held 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 Jewitt, Andrew Ernst, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Bradley Cardinale, Brian Harris, Cliff Lane, Donald Eggen, Felicia Lamphere, Fred Strathmeyer, Gary Walters, Gregg Robertson, Jim Grazio, Jeffrey Wagner, Jocelyn Behm, John J. Bell, Joseph Demko, Julie Urban, Kate Harms, Lisa Murphy, Maddie Stanisch, Mary Beth Ruh, Piper Sherburne, Ruth Welliver, Sara Stahlman, Scott Bearer, Sean Hartzell, Sean Mahoney

Other Participants Present: Anni Li, Anya Held, Becca Manning, Brant Portner, Brenda Shambaugh, Bryon Ruhl, Cara Laudenslager, Christopher Wright, Deb Klenotic, Emilee Boyer Euker, Eryn Spangler, Eve Adrian, Greg Podniesinski, Heather Smith, Jeniffer Schwartz, John Navarro, Jonathan Geyer, Kaylan Hubbard, Kevin Hess, Kierstin Carlson, Kris Abell, Kristen Frentzel, Kyle Schutt, Larissa (*no last name provided*), Lilliana Hapke (*and nine of Lilliana's students from Northeastern High School, Environmental Issues class*), Linda Lohner, Mary Walsh, Melissa Harrison, Michael Hutchinson, Nathan Irwin, Nick Decker, Nick Trivelli, Norris Muth, Rachel Reese, Roger Anderson, Scott George, Shea Zwerver, Tim Haydt, Tim Wertz, Tom Edwards, Trilby Libhart, Vicki Muller

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Fred Strathmeyer (PA Department of Agriculture - PDA) welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave opening remarks and thanked Kris Abell and all PA Invasive Species Council (PISC) subcommittees for the continued work they do in between PISC meetings.

Announcements, New Members, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes

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

MOTION: Gregg Robertson (PA Landscape & Nursery Association - PLNA) moved to approve the September 7th, 2021 meeting minutes. Andy Ernst (PA Farm Bureau) seconded the motion.

Motion approved.

Fred mentioned that four new members were recently appointed to the Council. They include Betsy Schroeder (PA Department of Health), Cliff Lane (County Governments), Brian Harris (PA Association of Township Supervisors), and Bradley Cardinale (The Pennsylvania State University).

Invasive Species Listing Committee

Spokesperson: Andrew Rohrbaugh, Botanist, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Forestry, Ecological Services Section

Andrew continues to work on completing invasive plant risk assessments and economic assessments. A DCNR technician was helping with this task, but took a different job, so could not finish. The group is looking to some educational institutions that may be able to help provide information and assistance in getting more assessments done (for plants especially).

A group will need to be identified to review assessments when they are completed. In the past, an invasive plant list was compiled and sent out to all PISC members. In particular, a list of “Top 25 invasive species” was sent to the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee (CP&NWC) for their consideration in listing as new noxious weeds in PA. Trilby Libhart (PDA), Gregg Robertson (PLNA), and Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) will be taking a closer look at the Top 25 list soon, as all three individuals are members of the CP&NWC.

Andrew mentioned that Amy Jewitt (Western PA Conservancy - WPC) helped investigate which species on the Top 25 list might be considered “Early Detection Rapid Response” (EDRR) (i.e., those species with a limited range in Pennsylvania).

The DCNR Bureau of Forestry is currently sharing plant data on an annual basis with iMapInvasives and EDDMapS. There are also efforts underway by Don Eggen (DCNR) and others from DCNR Forest Health to set up a data agreement (*with iMapInvasives*) to share data for insects.

Other taxa are also being reviewed by this committee. DCNR Forest Health is working on tree insects and diseases. Sean Hartzell (PFBC) is working on aquatic species assessments. Kris Abell (PDA) will compile a master list of non-plant taxa. That list will be put on Microsoft Teams for access by PISC members. Once reviewed by others, additional species may be added for consideration by this committee.

This committee will also reach out to the [PA Biological Survey](#) (PABS) for their assistance in building a species list and conducting assessments.

Gregg Robertson (PLNA) clarified that the “Top 25” list includes 25 genera with a total of 44 species on the list. Andrew agreed, giving the example of bush honeysuckle being listed as one genera on the list, but multiple species of invasive honeysuckle being referred to from it.

Kris Abell (PDA) looks forward to getting information compiled by this group on the PISC website as a reference for all of Pennsylvania.

PRISM Program Committee

Spokesperson: Kris Abell, Governor’s Invasive Species Council Coordinator, Bureau of Plant Industry, PA Department of Agriculture (PDA)

For a while, this committee has been trying to develop a “Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management” (PRISM) program in Pennsylvania.

A subset group of individuals from this committee is very close to having a fully developed Request for Proposals (RFP) completed in regard to a proposed PA PRISM program. When completed (and when a PRISM program is implemented in PA), we will have an RFP to release to interested organizations that wish to be a host organization for particular PRISM regions. When this committee is ready, the RFP will be sent to the full PRISM program committee for review and approval, and then to PISC for review. The RFP will then be given to the PA Department of Agriculture for various approvals (since PDA will be the entity releasing the RFP).

Another subcommittee (of the PRISM program committee) is drafting a comprehensive implementation plan to roll out the PRISM program in PA. They are closely analyzing all steps and components of this plan to ensure the PA PRISM program will be successful. An outline for this has been developed and the various components are being developed. They include 5-year strategic plan guidelines, review committee guidelines, etc. The group plans to have this task finished soon. When the full plan is completed by this subcommittee, the same approval process as mentioned above will be used.

When a PA PRISM program is ready to be launched, it will (hopefully) be administered by the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA). Therefore, PDA needs to be able to offer grant applications and grant agreements. Kris Abell has begun working with the grants administrator at PDA to work out these logistics and will continue to do so until the whole process has been finalized.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) mentioned receiving an email this morning from PDA’s budget office regarding a set of questions about an agriculture and Program Revision Request (PRR) proposal. Fred commented that the PA PRISM budget compiled by Don Eggen (DCNR) was used for this

proposal as a starting point. Several questions were brought up in the email that originated from the Governor's budget office. Fred commented that "it appears we've rattled the cage" and there is an opportunity to move this process in a forward direction (*regarding the PA PRISM program*). A good sign!

Legislative Committee

Spokesperson: Shea Zwerver, Executive Policy Specialist, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that Shea Zwerver (DCNR) will be taking over as chair of this group and Mike Nerozzi (PFBC) will be a co-chair, due to added responsibilities he has taken on at the PA Fish and Boat Commission.

Shea introduced herself, saying she's been in the policy office at DCNR for about two years. Prior to that, she worked on DCNR's urban forestry team for about four years.

Most recently, this committee has focused on finding sustainable funding for PA PRISMs and is working to establish a PA PRISM program legislatively.

Currently, Pennsylvania's funding streams for addressing outbreaks of invasive species is done by various departments that receive general fund monies. They also receive federal government grants.

Two recommendations that came from a hearing in August 2021 by the Center for Rural PA included: 1) Finding dedicated funding for PRISMs which is essential to address control and management of invasive species, and 2) Consider implementing a PRISM model in PA which is a public/private partnership that minimizes the harm caused by invasive species.

Agencies represented on the PISC legislative committee (e.g., PFBC, DCNR, PDA) met to discuss potential avenues moving forward to legislatively establish PA PRISMs and the need to fund them. Current bills were reviewed including [Senate Bill 525](#) (Growing Greener III) and [Senate Bill 832](#) (Clean Streams Fund for PA); both have been re-referred to the Appropriations Committee as of November 10, 2021. Note: Growing Greener III would be federal stimulus funding and not a sustainable source of money (not ideal for PRISMs).

For both of these funding sources, the committee was thinking about including amendment language, but has not pursued that. However, a Program Revision Request (PRR) was submitted by PDA in relation to a PA PRISM program. (Note: PRR proposals can be used for programs that need additional funding, new staff positions, etc., and is submitted to the Governor's office ahead of budget season.) If this PRR is not successful, the committee discussed drafting stand-

alone legislation, which has already begun. Language from that would be inserted as a chapter in PDA's Title III as a line item. This new legislation would hopefully to be introduced in Spring 2022. New York State's (*PRISM*) legislation was used as a model, and the draft language is currently with the PDA's policy and legislation office for review.

There is a potential for funding from the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA). Joe Demko (PennDOT) will talk more about one of the sections in this Act (*during today's meeting*). In the IIJA, there is the invasive plant elimination program; invasive species management is also mentioned. A protect program is being established which will be administered through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This includes vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-ways to improve roadway safety and prevent against invasive species. The total funding amount would be about \$980 million, specifically for resilient improvement.

In the section on ecosystem restoration, there's about \$200 million for invasive species detection, prevention, and eradication which includes conducting research and providing resources to facilitate the detection of invasive species. From this, \$100 million will be given to the Department of Interior and \$100 million to the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA).

John J. Bell (PA Farm Bureau) asked (*in the Chat box*), "How will establishing an appropriation line for PRISMs in PDA's budget affect other agricultural program appropriations? How will the other agricultural line items be affected by inclusion of a PRISM line?"

Shea responded, saying this should not affect other appropriations; it is simply additional funding. However, it is possible that funds could be taken from another PDA program. Either way, money will be paid for work related to invasive species one way or another, so we can start paying for it now or put more funding towards it in the future (to do more management and eradication).

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) offered a few clarifying remarks to John's question. Under the category heading of invasive species funding, the Act says "PRISM model or properly funding PDA's rapid response line item in the budget." Fred commented that this is where the conversation begins; then it moves up the chain to others.

Eryn Spangler (PDA) wrote down John Bell's question as a follow-up for [Stephen Rudman](#), Legislative Liaison at PDA. Stephen can provide a more in-depth explanation of how an appropriation line for PRISMs will (or will not) affect PDA's budget. However, Eryn agrees with Shea and feels it will not be taking funds from other programs at PDA.

Communications Committee

Spokesperson: Deborah Klenotic, Deputy Communications Director, Department of Environmental Protection

Folks from this committee are working with Ruth Welliver (PDA) and her team on content to display at the PISC booth during the PA Farm Show. The plan is to educate visitors on 12 featured invasive species (“dirty dozen”) and getting the public’s votes on the species they “love to hate” the most.

This committee is also preparing the next issue of the PISC e-newsletter. This will be the second issue and will go out in January.

Efforts are underway to reorganize and add additional content to the PISC website. This effort was driven by the desire to communicate more about PRISMs, the comprehensive PA invasive species list, and the PISC e-newsletter. All of this content needs to be linked to the PISC website.

Deb asked the Council if there was a continued interest and need to drive stakeholder support for the PRISM model.

Shea Zwerver (DCNR) responded yes, saying if legislation will be introduced on PRISMs, that kind of outreach will help drum up the interest needed and keep PRISMs in the forefront of everyone’s minds.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) responded too, saying he’s been dealing with other legislation recently, and from his experience, it’s going to be very important that the messaging is the same, no matter what agency is speaking (either from legislative offices or stakeholders). A well-thought-out and strategic communications plan will be needed that sticks to facts, not fiction. The needs should be well spelled-out and the duties, responsibilities, and accountability are all taken into consideration. This information will need to be articulated when it comes time to present this information to legislators.

Deb mentioned that one of the suggestions (*to drive stakeholder support*) is a coordinated op-ed campaign that would include specific talking points. An estimated 10-12 leaders among various stakeholder groups would need to be identified from groups such as agriculture, conservation, outdoor recreation, the gardening industry, etc. Perhaps folks from PISC could be participants also.

Once a commitment is provided by each stakeholder group, a schedule would be compiled and carried out over 3-6 months (perhaps longer). Regarding timing, it might make sense to aim for spring 2022 when the proposed PRISM legislation will be introduced. The aim could be having one op-ed done every two weeks in a pre-identified list of media outlets, targeted either by market, region, or industry niche. Participants would be provided a set of talking points if they want to write their own op-ed; however, everyone would use the same talking points.

Alternatively, this committee could provide 1-2 pre-written op-eds for people to use that do not have the time to write their own. From there, stakeholders could customize as they see fit. That information would be provided in a plan along with the names of the opinion editors, contact information, and a link to the guidelines for submitting op-eds (which every media outlet has, generally on their website).

Shea Zwerver (DCNR) mentioned that the Legislative subcommittee started a spreadsheet identifying different geographical regions and who the local officials and legislative representatives are in each. That document also includes info on what invasive species have been “hot” in those areas. This information could be shared with the Communications subcommittee for use in targeted outreach.

Deb commented to Shea’s response, saying the committee would first want to “bullet out” key points (since op-eds aren’t very long; generally 500-750 words) and determine what to discuss in them, whether that be the need for (and benefits of) a PRISM program, or how such an approach could help manage particular invasive species. This information would need to be identified first. However, if the goal is to get dedicated funding for a PRISM program, a key message is the value of taking a PRISM approach and explaining why it is so important, why it is much needed, and how it’s going to help Pennsylvania.

Deb reiterated to the whole Council her inquiry of whether or not this op-ed campaign is something that can be done, keeping in mind limited resources within the Communications workgroup. Deb is optimistic it can be done if the proposed timeline of 3-6 months is utilized, but was looking for feedback from others.

Shea Zwerver (DCNR) commented (*in the Chat box*) that the [written testimonies](#) from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania’s invasive species hearing held in August 2021 will be helpful in drafting the talking points Deb was referring to.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) remarked that some of the “obvious” entities to participate in an op-ed campaign will be the state agencies, though private stakeholders also need to be identified. We need to ensure this campaign isn’t driven entirely by the agencies. Many others will benefit from having this type of program (*PRISMs*) throughout the state. Even those individuals not directly part of PISC that are on today’s meeting should feel free to talk with Deb and offer your participation in this op-ed campaign. Because of a PRISM program’s regional nature, such an approach will affect many legislators and many different communities, both urban and rural. It’s important to take a “broad brush” look to this (in the form of our communications) and ensure we are being as inclusive as possible; there are definitely connections in every community in this state when it comes to invasive species.

Deb agreed with Fred that the call for a PRISM approach cannot come only from the state agencies. The media perspective also wants to hear from leaders and influencers from fields that are part of people’s lives (e.g., outdoor recreation, farming industry, gardening industry, etc.).

It'll be very important to get a balance of voices, and Deb defers to the Council as a whole on who those leaders and voices are.

Gregg Robertson (PLNA) commented (*in the Chat box*) that he would like to participate in the op-ed campaign.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented (*in the Chat box*) that this op-ed campaign sounds perfect, especially if it can be tied to legislative action.

Piper Sherburne (PA Association of Conservation Districts – PACD) supports the idea for an op-ed campaign and is interested in participating. Conservation districts could help in different parts of the state and provide guidance on what species to target.

Deb thought the next step for conducting an op-ed campaign would be to brainstorm the range of leadership voices that would be best to express support for a PRISM approach and make a call for action. We'd also need to ensure a variety of areas/sectors are covered.

Kris Abell (PDA) suggested others could step up or suggest organizations to take part in this op-ed campaign. Deb reiterated that we cannot proceed with doing an op-ed campaign until we have a commitment of 10-12 people (or whatever number is best to cover the range of voices we need). Perhaps a deadline in January could be set to identify these individuals.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented (*in the Chat box*) that the State Beekeepers Association might be interested in taking part in the op-ed campaign.

Lisa Murphy (PennVet, University of Pennsylvania) commented (*in the Chat box*) that she would be happy to take this request regarding the op-ed campaign to Penn Vet leadership.

Deb wrapped up by saying she'll put all of this information in an email which will be sent to Council members. A firm deadline will be included in the email for when 10-12 people need to be selected by.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Rapid Response Workgroup Update and Best Management Practices Proposal

Spokesperson: Sara Stahlman, Extension Leader, Pennsylvania Sea Grant

This committee would like to introduce a new proposal to PISC to create an aquatic invasive species (AIS) control and best management practices (BMP) database for Pennsylvania. Kris Abell will follow-up with Council members after today's meeting with a formal proposal document to review and provide comments on.

Background:

The PA AIS Rapid Response Plan provides an outline and structure for agencies and organizations to follow when responding to new AIS infestations. Mock exercises test the process and identify gaps and needs in the existing rapid response structure. A reoccurring need is to provide BMP guidance for controlling and managing invasive species in Pennsylvania.

The Need:

Currently, there is no formal guidance on BMPs for managing and controlling AIS. Existing resources include Texas A&M Aquaplant database, North Carolina State Extension Aquatic Weed Control website, and individual plans and guidance. However, there is no cohesive central repository of guidance.

Subcommittee Request:

- Develop a central library of existing BMP guidance to be housed on the PISC website.
- Reference this library as a formal step in the rapid response process.
- The repository would not be a “link farm” that requires regular maintenance, but rather would include collated and PISC-approved guidance options.
- The repository would prevent “reinventing the wheel” and expedite the decision-making process.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) requested clarification on what is meant by a “database”? Would this be an excel spreadsheet or a software program?

Sara explained this repository of information could look like a website or list that has guidance for certain species. Ultimately, it’s final form will depend on how this committee chooses to develop it. Sara does not see this repository as being a program or an excel spreadsheet, but something that can easily be accessed and used by folks involved with rapid response efforts as well as anyone else looking for guidance on AIS BMPs.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) also inquired about maintenance for this database of information. Who would be responsible for adding new information and keeping existing information up-to-date?

Sara responded that the goal of this committee is to minimize the amount of maintenance needed and avoiding a “link farm” scenario. Instead, this information would be accessible directly from the PISC website. Most of the work involved for this project will be on this committee to compile the information; however, Sara felt the info wouldn’t change very frequently, thus eliminating a large maintenance burden. If BMPs have been used and vetted by others for use with certain taxa or species (e.g., herbicide applications, benthic barriers, etc.), that is the type of information this committee plans to hone in on.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) remarked that Sara and others are doing a fantastic job moving this project ahead and putting this information on the PISC website.

Farm Show

Spokesperson: Ruth Welliver, Director, Bureau of Plant Industry, PA Department of Agriculture

The Pennsylvania Farm Show is one of the premier events that the PA Department of Agriculture hosts. For many years, the Council has a space (booth) at this event, associated with the Hardwoods Development Council (which has a major education program in forest pests and invasive organisms in the forest).

Kris Abell (PDA) recently spoke with Ruth about the PISC booth at the Farm Show and inquired if we still should have this space. Now that PISC has a Communications team in place (and this team has taken a closer look at the principal audiences for PISC messaging), it doesn't tend to be the general public; rather, leaders and influencers are PISC's primary targets.

To help answer the question of whether or not a PISC booth is still warranted at the Farm Show, a survey was compiled and sent out to Council members. Twelve members responded. Several questions were asked on the survey including:

- Does your agency/organization have a booth at the 2022 Farm Show?
 - Yes (9)
 - No (3)

- If you answered Yes to the above question, will your agency/organization have information on invasive species?
 - Yes (2)
 - No (8)

- Would your agency/organization be interested in using the PISC Farm Show booth for your own invasive species messaging?
 - Yes, this year (2)
 - Yes, in future years (2)
 - No (3)
 - Maybe (6)

For this year, instead of having a PISC message telling people about the Council and our mission, we will focus on what is most important to the general public by providing information on the mission of the individual PISC organizations and what they are doing, specifically geared towards particular invasive species.

It is the hope that an individual Council member can take charge of the PISC booth each year. This year, PDA took charge and are planning to cover two topics: 1) Native vs. invasive plants

for gardening and landscaping, and 2) Asking for people to vote for the noxious weeds they love to hate (which will later be featured in outreach in 2022).

Moving forward into 2023 and beyond, how does the Council see the PISC booth being utilized? Does it make sense to use the booth to highlight one Council member's work, or should it be used in another way? What is most effective? Should PISC be present at Farm Show, or should that space be given to another entity? Any thoughts are welcome from Council members during today's meeting.

Deb Klenotic (DEP) commented to Ruth (*in the Chat box*) to please let Deb know what time slots need to be filled for the booth; she may be able to help.

Brenda Shambaugh (PACD) inquired if templates or brochures would be distributed by PDA to other PISC members that could be given away at their booths. Ruth asked what kind of information would be desired since paper materials are being minimized this year. PDA plans to have one handout about noxious weeds and will also share DCNR's "[Landscaping with Native Plants](#)" brochure (and maybe a second brochure from DCNR) at the PISC booth. (These will be the only paper materials distributed at the PISC booth this year.)

Brenda clarified that it would be fine to use these materials (rather than reinvent the wheel), but if something could be created that talks about what PISC is, its mission, and why we need the help of others, that could also be utilized.

Deb Klenotic (DEP) mentioned that if the one-page handout being used for the PISC booth could be posted online as a PDF, it could be printed by Brenda and others for their usage. Brenda agreed; having a template would be helpful.

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned a PISC rack card was created for the 2019 Farm Show. It provided details on what the Council is and why invasive species are important (highlighting a few species in particular). The invasive species hotline was also mentioned. If this resource would be useful to PACD and others, there are still copies available. Deb Klenotic (DEP) asked if many of the PISC rack cards were picked up by visitors at the Farm Show, to which Kris responded, "not many".

Kris also mentioned there will be a sign-up sheet distributed to Council members to help with staffing the PISC booth.

Phillip Stober (PDA) mentioned (*in the Chat box*), "If this group has any generic invasive species material you'd like distributed to our constituents via our "So You Want to Be a Farmer" exhibit at Farm Show, please email me at pstober@pa.gov and I will arrange to have this material picked up and available for distribution during the Show."

Roger Anderson (PDA) mentioned (*in the Chat box*) that when he managed the WoodMobile in the past, over half of the questions received were about invasive species. The top information distributed was on threats to the forest.

Pennsylvania Invasive Species Central Database

Spokesperson: Kris Abell, Governor's Invasive Species Council Coordinator, Bureau of Plant Industry, PA Department of Agriculture

During the last PISC meeting (*in September*), several motions were passed. They included:

- Motion #1. The Council recommends that iMapInvasives be designated as the central clearinghouse database for invasive species data in Pennsylvania pending identification of a sustainable funding and administrative mechanism to support database maintenance and development.
- Motion #2. The Council recommends that agencies and organizations begin working to incorporate steps in their existing data collection/management procedures to include regular submission of invasive species data (presence, absence, location, treatment, and control efforts) to iMapInvasives, and provide updates on progress towards this goal at PISC meetings.

What progress have Council members made at this point on creating internal procedures to facilitate this type of invasive species data sharing?

Ruth Welliver (PDA) commented that PDA has made a small step forward. They met with staff from PA iMapInvasives and determined some preliminary data that would be useful to share and how to format it. A meeting is set up with PDA's legal team regarding establishing a data sharing agreement. Terms and conditions will be discussed that are needed for such an agreement.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) commented that plant data from DCNR is shared with PA iMapInvasives annually. He has time set aside to discuss next year's update and ways to make DCNR's data sharing protocol more seamless for invasive plant data tracked by the Bureau of Forestry.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) mentioned that a signed data sharing agreement is now in place between PA iMapInvasives and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, specifically for insect pest information. Moving forward, iMapInvasives staff will work at getting this information incorporated into the database.

Tim Haydt (PGC) commented that PGC representatives have met with staff from PA iMapInvasives a few times. The PGC currently faces internal challenges related to putting together a formal policy to collect invasive species data. However, PGC is working towards contributing data and an internal meeting is set up at the end of December to begin discussing invasive species data collection policies. PGC staff are also looking to have an iMapInvasives training for their staff in Spring 2022.

Joe Demko (PennDOT) said that he is planning to share the use of iMapInvasives with PennDOT's district roadside staff in January 2022. PennDOT is also looking at an internal mapping app that can be used by the agency. PennDOT wants to encourage its staff to start mapping invasive species locations. Amy Jewitt (WPC) remarked that she is planning to present information on the iMapInvasives mobile apps at the PennDOT Roadside Vegetation Management seminar on January 19, 2022.

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) remarked that PFBC has a data sharing agreement set up with PA iMapInvasives and has been sending data being collected by their agency. Most recently, Sean shared data with iMapInvasives for northern snakehead (*Channa argus*) locations. Amy Jewitt (WPC) mentioned that Sean provided data to iMapInvasives from the [PA Amphibian and Reptile Survey](#) (PARS) database which is slowly being incorporated into the iMapInvasives database. Most of the data from PARS is for locations of invasive turtles (i.e., red-eared sliders [*Trachemys scripta elegans*] and yellow-bellied sliders [*Trachemys scripta scripta*]).

Jeff Wagner (WPC) mentioned that though the data agreements being mentioned today are primarily between iMapInvasives and state agencies, data from (*non-governmental*) organizations can also be shared with iMapInvasives by signing off on the standard data sharing agreement provided by iMapInvasives. Individuals can also submit data directly into iMapInvasives, as desired.

Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee

Spokesperson: Trilby Libhart, Botanist, Bureau of Plant Industry, PA Department of Agriculture

Trilby provided an update on what happened with the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee (CP&NWC) in 2021.

In July, three plants were added as noxious weeds including Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). All three were categorized as Class B noxious weeds.

Japanese barberry was given a two-year grace period for enforcement, meaning nurseries, greenhouses, and other plant sellers will have two years to sell down their stock of this plant. After October 2023, “stop sales” will be issued and destruction orders will follow. This information was recently sent out in a press release, post cards with similar information were distributed to stakeholders, and it is also posted on the CP&NWC website.

In November, a special meeting of the CP&NWC was held where two additional plants were added as noxious weeds. They included Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). Both were categorized as Class B noxious weeds. Callery pear will have a two-year grace period for enforcement. This information has not yet been published in the [PA Bulletin](#), but will be published at the end of this week.

For both Japanese barberry and Callery pear, information is available online (for people with plant breeding rights) to submit an application for sterile cultivars to be exempted from the CP&NW law. All applications would be reviewed by the PA Department of Agriculture. Scientific evidence and research would need to be provided that show submissions are truly sterile.

In total, five new plants were added as PA noxious weeds in 2021.

The next CP&NWC meeting will be held on January 20, 2022. Three plants will be presented on as possible new additions to the CP&NW law including common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), and ravenna grass (*Tripidium ravennae*).

Kris Abell (PDA) asked if Trilby could talk to the Council about the Top 25 (genera) list for the CP&NWC to consider as new noxious weeds. Many individuals from PISC are probably curious how this information was received.

Trilby commented that the Top 25 list was received and distributed to the CP&NWC members. It will be used as an advisory list (since it came from PISC, and PISC is an advisory council). Trilby also has a list of plants she would like to bring to the CP&NWC for discussion as well. Both lists will be worked on as committee members determine what meets their criteria to be added as new noxious weeds. Trilby commented that she is not certain how long it will take to cover all the species on both lists. A meeting will be held in January to determine the Committee’s next steps in 2022.

New Reporting Option on PA iMapInvasives

Spokesperson: Amy Jewitt, Invasive Species Coordinator, Western PA Conservancy

Amy gave an overview on a new public reporting option for invasive species found anywhere in Pennsylvania, available from the [Pennsylvania iMapInvasives](#) program.

Previously, the only way people could report invasive species findings via iMapInvasives was to have a registered login account. This has now changed to allow more flexibility for individuals without an account or for those who do not want to sign up for an account.

A link to this new public reporting option is available at www.paimapinvasives.org. In the top banner on the website's homepage, there is a line stating, "Found an invasive species? Register for a free login account, or submit a public report." By clicking on "public report", individuals will be transferred to an online form (set up with Survey123) that takes about 1-2 minutes to complete.

Fields to complete in the form include an individual's contact information as well as general information about their invasive species sighting (e.g., observation date, county where found, etc.). A dynamic map is included in the online form which easily allows reporters to indicate the exact location where their finding was made. Latitude and longitude information can also be entered if GPS coordinates are known.

Species categories are provided that filter the species name list in the online form (when indicating what species was observed). There's also an "Unsure" category and a comments area where a species description can be listed if a reporter does not know the exact species ID up front when making their report.

Up to five images can be included in the online form with each invasive species sighting. Experts then review these photos (prior to records being confirmed in iMapInvasives) to validate a species ID. In some cases, a specimen may be needed to make an ID, so the form does include an area asking if a specimen was collected.

Near the end of the form, comment boxes are available asking for information about the habitat type, important landmarks, impacts to native species, etc., as well as a question asking how individuals heard about the iMapInvasives program. This final question (about iMapInvasives) is important to ask in order to better understand how people are learning about the PA iMapInvasives program. This information can be used later to boost continued education and outreach efforts for the program.

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) commented that he is very excited about this new online reporting tool from iMapInvasives and inquired if it's received much use since being posted online. Amy responded that the tool has not received much usage yet, simply because it's so new and many people don't know about it. However, the PA iMapInvasives program plans to do continued outreach on this new invasive species reporting option.

PA Invasive Species Management Plan

Spokesperson: Kris Abell, Governor’s Invasive Species Council Coordinator, Bureau of Plant Industry, PA Department of Agriculture

The Executive Order that created PISC instructs the Council to make a statewide invasive species management plan and update it every five years. That update is due in 2022. Kris put together a workgroup that will be responsible for completing this task. Members of this new workgroup include Bradley Cardinale (Penn State University), Mary Walsh (Western PA Conservancy), Jocelyn Behm (Temple University), Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR), Sara Stahlman (PA Sea Grant), and April Moore (USDA Allegheny National Forest).

This group has met a few times already and an outline is already in place that will likely inform (and become) the new plan. Kris feels a complete “overhaul” of the old plan will likely take place based on this outline. At some point, a draft update will be available for review by Council members.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked if there is a specific date in 2022 that this workgroup plans to complete the management plan update? Also, is there a deadline for Council members to submit their review and comments when a draft update is available?

Kris responded that no firm deadlines are in place, but the group is trying to coincide with Council meetings (*to provide updates to Council members regarding the Plan*). Kris hopes to have a draft update completed in time for the June 7th, 2022 PISC meeting, though that may be somewhat optimistic. However, if done by June, that would give Council members time to review and discuss the draft update during the September PISC meeting. Final changes and approval could be done at the December PISC meeting.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) commented (*in the Chat box*) that the most recent drafts/emails for the PA Invasive Species Management Plan update are the very next item on his to-do list this afternoon.

John J. Bell (PA Farm Bureau) asked (*in the Chat box*) if meeting minutes are produced relative to the meetings of the Management Plan Update Workgroup, and are they available? Kris responded, saying that the workgroup’s meetings are recorded, and all Council members have access to the Microsoft Teams channel where they are housed (as well as other Teams channels that have been set up for use by PISC and its various subcommittees).

Updates, Activities, and Events

Just before today's meeting began, Kris Abell (PDA) sent an email to Council members with information that Joe Demko provided regarding the new federal transportation bill, which includes a new grant program that may become available to tackle invasive plants.

Joe Demko (PennDOT) elaborated, saying that the preliminary language in the new federal transportation bill puts priority on locations where native vegetation and wildflowers have been established, following invasive plant removal. Additionally, these federal monies should be able to cover 75% of costs associated with areas where reestablishment is done, and 50% of costs in areas where invasive weed control occurs. Funding from this new bill could be utilized when PA PRISMs are implemented. Additional questions concerning this new bill should be directed to Shea Zwerver and others on the PISC Legislative committee.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) asked Joe if he thought PennDOT would be able to provide the 25-50% of required match time (as mentioned in the new federal transportation bill)? Andrew clarified his question, saying that when DCNR receives federal grants for invasive species projects, meeting the requirements for staff match (i.e., having enough staff to use the money) is typically an issue.

Joe responded, saying PennDOT likely has the same issue as DCNR and does not have an answer to Andrew's question at this time. However, it may be something that could be worked on in the future.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) also asked Joe about the work PennDOT is doing on updating the native seed mixes PennDOT uses for planting along roadways and asked if that would play a role with this new transportation bill (i.e., regarding areas considered to be priority)?

Joe responded, saying that the PennDOT group putting together the native species list is trying to figure out what plant species can be established along a very disturbed area of roadway that also creates a sustainable groundcover. PennDOT and consultants are currently reviewing various seed mixes in this regard. At this time, Joe does not know when PennDOT will updating its internal specifications for native seed mixes, but when this information becomes available, he will share it with the Council.

Andrew concurred with Joe that it is difficult to find the right mix of plants that will do well in highly disturbed environments such as along roadways. A 100% mix of native plants is not always the best option in this scenario (*as they may not be hardy enough*).

Bryon Ruhl (PennDOT) commented (*in the Chat box*) that PennDOT's new formulas (*for native seed mixes*) will probably be updated in 2022. Also, PennDOT has started to revise their invasive species manual.

Shea Zwerver (DCNR) asked what seed is used currently along roadsides? Native seeds? A mixture of natives and other types of seeds? Joe responded that standard seed mixes are being

used that are listed in PennDOT's [PUB 408](#), section 800 (Construction Manual Specifications). This includes a variety of grasses (e.g., tall fescues, fine fescues, and a cover crop like annual rye). Since the area(s) being worked in are highly disturbed, PennDOT needs its seed mixes to establish a groundcover quickly, but also to evolve into a sustainable groundcover that can last beyond a year or two and prevent invasive weeds from establishing in these open areas.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) mentioned about a new grant funding opportunity from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The grant seeks projects that are wanting funds for natural resource projects through the [Allegheny Resource Advisory Committee](#). Proposals will be accepted by the Allegheny National Forest through January 21, 2022. Approximately \$200,000 of funds are available for new projects, specifically in Forest County, PA. Funding is being provided through Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 which was reauthorized by Congress in 2020. Part of this funding opportunity includes control of noxious weeds. Kris Abell will send out more details about this funding opportunity to Council members after today's meeting.

Amy Jewitt (WPC) also mentioned that she and Kris Abell had an opportunity to attend the New York State Invasive Species Summit (a 2-day event) in Albany, NY just before Thanksgiving. The event brought together everyone in New York State who is doing work related to invasive species, and a big part of the Summit was a focus on New York State's PRISM program. Amy commented that it was encouraging to hear from other attendees at the Summit how a variety of people are working successfully together as part of their state's PRISM program.

Amy also mentioned that in New York State, iMapInvasives is used as the state's central invasive species clearinghouse, and during one of the sessions she attended, all four of the presenters mentioned how they are using iMapInvasives in one way or another, solidifying how NY's PRISM program is working successfully in cooperation with iMapInvasives by everyone across the state. As efforts are underway here in PA to move in a very similar direction, it was encouraging to see and hear stories of how the PRISM model is working well in NY.

Kris Abell concurred with Amy's comments, mentioning that it is helpful to have New York State as our neighbor to the north and to look to their state as an example in our own steps to bring about a PRISM program here in PA and model some of our improvements on. Their dedication and enthusiasm in recognition of the importance of invasive species in their state is inspiring.

Public Comment Period

Christopher Wright (member of the public) commented (*in the Chat box*): "Hi. I'm attending today because I think jumping worms (*Agrestis* sp. *Metaphire* sp.) need immediate attention in PA. I work in the nursery and landscaping industry and have witnessed our "green" businesses

harboring and spreading them. I have spent many hours this year trying to control them. I think the state (not sure which department) needs to be inspecting nurseries, mulch yards, etc. for jumping worms when they do their inspections. Businesses who are spreading them need to be identified so they can be given the education and perhaps the tools to manage and eliminate their spread.”

Ruth Welliver (PDA) responded to Christopher’s comment, saying “Thank you for bringing up this important issue.”

Kaylan Hubbard (Delaware Highlands Conservancy) commented (*in the Chat box*) “If anyone is interested, there is a free jumping worm webinar tonight:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2016373430921/WN_-f199c5rRXacYpUf58N6eA.

Concluding Remarks

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) provided concluding remarks. He also mentioned that at one point, 72 participants were present during today’s meeting, which speaks volumes to the continued outreach Council members are doing with many different groups across Pennsylvania.

Fred encouraged folks to attend the 2022 PA Farm Show and meet folks there who are manning the PISC booth.

Fred thanked Amy Jewitt (WPC) and Kris Abell (PDA) for their comments concerning the New York PRISM program and the success the program is having there.

MOTION: Jeff Wagner (WPC) moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary Walters (DEP) seconded the motion. **Meeting adjourned.**

Next PISC Meeting

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 10am on Microsoft Teams

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

Questions concerning 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 PISC meeting, please contact Kris for more information.
