

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council
Tuesday, June 16, 2020 | 10:00am
Virtual Skype Meeting

Council Members Present: Fred Strathmeyer, Kris Abell, Piper Sherburne, Ruth Welliver, Donald Eggan, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Felicia Lamphere, Gary Walters, Joseph Demko, Andrew Ernst, Chris Urban, Scott Bearer, Gregg Robertson, Daniel Zimmerman, Kimberly Bohn, Julie Urban, Mary Beth Ruth, Lisa Murphy, Jeffrey Wagner, Amy Jewitt

Other Participants Present: Trilby Libhart, Brenda Shambaugh, Victoria Challingsworth, Shane Philipps, Wayne Bender, Mary Walsh, Stephen Rudman, Bryon Ruhl, Amy Freestone, Johnny Zook, Matt Helmus, Maddie Stanisch, Jody Groshek, Kevin Hess, Mariana Bonfim, Lauren Shaffer, Kierstin Carlson, Andrea Hille, Jocelyn Behm, Donna Marie Foster, Mary Cortese, Destiny Zeiders, Lamonte Garber, Jennifer Essler, Thomas Allgaier

Introductions, Minutes, and Announcements

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Roll call was done for Council members by Kris Abell (PDA), and all other meeting participants were asked to email Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) so their name could be noted as being in attendance at today's meeting. No changes were made to the March meeting minutes.

MOTION: Don Eggen (DCNR) moved to approve the March meeting minutes. Gary Walters (DEP) seconded. Motion approved.

Coordinator Report

New Recording Secretary

Kris Abell thanked Amy Jewitt for volunteering to be the official notetaker of today's PISC meeting, as well as future PISC meetings.

New Council Member

Kris Abell recognized Scott Bearer (PGC), Habitat Planning and Development Division Chief, as the newest member of the Council. Scott provided a brief introduction about himself to others present at today's meeting.

Resignation of Two Council Members

Kris Abell announced the resignation of two Council members, Keith Fisher of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Marci Mowery of PA Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). He mentioned their organizations no longer wish to participate in the Council. Discussion ensued on why these resignations occurred, and surprise especially since TNC is very active in other states' [PRISMs](#) (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management) and [CISMAs](#) (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas). Jeff Wagner

(WPC/PNHP) and Kris Abell clarified that both organizations do plan to take part in a PRISM program in PA moving forward – they just do not wish to participate in the Council any longer.

Regarding replacement of these two organizations as part of Council membership, Jeff Wagner suggested Wildlands Conservancy or Natural Lands - both cover a significant portion of the state and would replace the NGO function that the TNC and PPF provided. No matter what individuals/organizations are chosen, Fred Strathmeyer would like new people on board with the Council soon, ideally before the next PISC meeting (scheduled for September 15).

ACTION ITEM: Kris will reach out to Keith Fisher and Marci Mowery and ask why they resigned and why they do not wish to be involved in the Council any longer. (*Fred mentioned that perhaps Scott Bearer [formerly of TNC] could help Kris reach out to other people in TNC to learn more, if needed.*)

PACD's Involvement in a Future PA PRISM Program

Kris Abell mentioned that since the last PISC meeting in March, he gave a presentation about the Council and a future PA PRISM program at each regional conservation district in Pennsylvania (6 regions in total). Afterwards, the PA Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) passed a motion in all their regions encouraging the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA) and related agencies to develop a delegated agreement with the PA conservation districts to provide funding and authority to battle invasive species. Brenda Shambaugh (PACD) provided more details about the organization's voting process.

Biennial Report to Governor

In April, Kris Abell distributed to Council members the 2019 PISC Activities Report and the 2019 PISC Coordinator Activities Report. Kris mentioned that Ruth Welliver (PDA) recently pointed out in the Executive Order (pertaining to the Council) that the Council needs to send a biennial report to the Governor. Kris wanted to know if the 2019 Council Activities Report is an acceptable document that could be sent to the Governor.

Discussion ensued that the 2019 Council Activities Report is fine to send to the Governor, but should be accompanied by a one-page narrative. The narrative could include current and future initiatives and action items like activities of the various workgroups and committees, PRISM plans, etc.

ACTION ITEM: Kris Abell suggested that a group be formed to draft a narrative to the Governor (to accompany the 2019 Council Activities Report) and Kris is willing to write a first draft. However, Kris noted that input from other Council members will be needed.

Weed-Free Forage Program

During the March PISC meeting, a presentation was given on a Weed-Free Forage Program. Following that presentation, Kris Abell and Johnny Zook (PDA) have been collaborating on bringing this program to Pennsylvania and hope to start a pilot program. They are talking with Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) to potentially require weed-free forage in state parks and ROW contracts. Johnny put together a flow chart of how this program could work on Pennsylvania (Appendix 1).

Johnny expressed concern that PA inspectors are already busy, and adding a Weed-Free Forage Program to their to-do list will really saturate their work load. To remedy this, Johnny/Kris mentioned DCNR or PGC as agencies that might be able to provide additional inspectors, or at least be part of the pilot program. Johnny also discussed a “chicken and egg” problem wherein there is a need for both a market

and a producer at the same time. (Put another way, currently there isn't a Weed-Free Forage Program in PA, so therefore, no market exists for a weed-free forage product. However, in order to get more farmers on board to create a weed-free forage product, a market needs to exist.) Johnny is currently in touch with two farms that are already producing high quality forage and straw, and plans to work with them to start demonstrating the program's usefulness.

Johnny mentioned that \$30-60/ton for a weed-free forage product would need to be achieved to make a weed-free forage program in PA worthwhile to farmers. Kris sees this program as being an important way to prevent the future spread of invasive species in Pennsylvania.

Website Workgroup Update

Members: Gary Walters, Felicia Lamphere, Amy Jewitt, Sara Stahlman

PISC Survey

Kris Abell discussed a survey recently sent out to all PISC members by the Website Workgroup. The goal of the survey was to know what each Council agency/organization is working on regarding invasive species projects. A total of 21 responses were received. The results of the survey will be reported in the form of an ArcGIS story map that will be created by Amy Jewitt and hosted by the WPC.

ACTION ITEM: Kris mentioned that a survey response was not received from PFBC and requested Chris Urban (PFBC) or another PFPB representative respond to the survey ASAP.

PISC Website

Kris Abell mentioned recent developments for the website including a new mission statement (related to the purpose of the website) to help guide future generated content. The mission statement is as follows: *“Inform and engage the public about past accomplishments and current plans and activities the council is engaged in to address the threat of invasive species in PA.”*

The website was updated yesterday (June 15) by the PDA Communications office and now has four main buttons at the top of the main page to help guide website visitors to: 1) [The PA Invasive Species Management Plan](#), 2) [Members and Meetings](#), 3) [Goals and Initiatives](#), and 4) [Resources](#).



Jeff Wagner inquired about maintenance and updates to the website, and who will take care of that. Fred Strathmeyer said Kris Abell will be the point person for the PISC website's maintenance and updates, and in turn, Kris will work with the Website Workgroup to make updates as necessary.

Kris mentioned one change that's needed on the website - to list the names of PISC alternates (since right now, only PISC members' names are mentioned).

Legislative Workgroup Update

Members: Mike Nerozzi, Sarah Whitney, Brian Pilarcik, Don Eggen, Gregg Robertson, Jeff Wagner, Amy Jewitt, Julie Urban, Mary Walsh, Stephen Rudman, Brenda Shambaugh, Eryn Spangler

Economic Analysis

Kris Abell mentioned the Legislative Workgroup's plans to conduct an economic analysis by the firm [Burns & McDonnell](#) that would highlight the costs associated with invasive species issues in Pennsylvania. This analysis would help articulate to legislators why funding is needed to deal with invasive species at a local level in PA (which is what a PRISM program would accomplish).

Kris cited a [previous economic analysis](#) conducted by Burns & McDonnell (which was associated with the cost of litter and illegal dumping in PA), noting the thoroughness of their work. Kris reached out to Burns & McDonnell already, saying they are willing to conduct a PA invasive species economic analysis and quoted \$45,000-60,000 as their price. Their analysis would cover both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species at local, state and federal levels, as well as future funding requirements if invasive species are not managed, or undermanaged. The big question now is: How do we fund this study?

Fred Strathmeyer suggests that with all the various agencies and Council members, we should be able to find a way to fund the study. Amy Jewitt suggests that each Council member's organization pitches in to cover the cost. Jeff Wagner suggests looking into potential grant opportunities. Andrew Rohrbaugh mentioned that his organization feels the study is worthwhile, but will find it hard to provide funding this year. Brenda Shambaugh mentioned her organization would not be able to contribute funding either.

Piper Sherburne (PACD) inquired how Burns & McDonnell would gather the information needed for the economic analysis – would they be starting with a blank slate and contacting folks individually to learn about impacts at a local level? Piper was interested in lowering the quoted cost (\$45-60K), saying she thought this price was high, and hoped that Council members could instead provide the needed info to Burns & McDonnell rather than paying the firm to do this task (thus potentially lowering the quoted cost).

Kris Abell responded to Piper's question, saying the firm would identify the organizations and agencies in the state that work with invasive species. The firm would then conduct surveys and polls in-person and over the phone and make requests for budgets. Amy Jewitt followed up by saying that the Council would be paying the firm for their time to do the work of creating an analysis. It would require much time and coordination on part of Council members to know what information to provide to the firm for this type of economic analysis, and hence why the Council would pay Burns & McDonnell to this work instead.

Ruth Welliver mentioned that the Center for Rural PA (CFRP) funded a study done by Shippensburg University, and also a spotted lanternfly-specific study. She wondered if the CFRP would offer an RFP for an invasive species economic analysis, and if the group has been approached already with this idea.

Ruth estimated that CFRP could offer up to \$50K in funding. Fred Strathmeyer wasn't sure if Kris Abel had met with this group yet or not, but thought 2-3 people from the Legislative Workgroup could present to the CFRP a proposed project that would encompass the Council's plan for an invasive species economic analysis. In turn, the CFRP could put out an RFP. Fred thought the quoted cost from Burns and McDonnell was reasonable.

Fred also mentioned about possibly getting quotes from other firms/organizations that could conduct a similar economic analysis to ensure we're "getting the best bang for our buck".

Draft PRISM Budget

Don Eggen compiled a draft budget for funding a future Pennsylvania PRISM program that would consist of six regions. He utilized budgets from NY state's PRISMs in order to make his budget fairly accurate (*though he was asked by NY PRISM representatives not to share these budgets with others for privacy reasons*). Don's budget totaled roughly \$6M, with \$1M being allocated to each PRISM. By creating this budget, it is the hope of the Council acquire funds for a Pennsylvania PRISM program that would ultimately be funded from a newly created line item in PA's state budget.

Fred Strathmeyer inquired what agency or organization in Pennsylvania would oversee the administration and allocation of funds that would be distributed to PA's PRISMs. Don responded with information about NY's PRISM model – NY has one state agency that oversees their PRISMs (i.e., NY Department of Environmental Conservation), and agencies/organizations apply to NY DEC to be a PRISM host. In NY, there are 8 PRISMs, each with a separate host organization. Don suggested that PDA and the Council could be the PRISM overseers in Pennsylvania - also perhaps DEP, DCNR, etc. - and money could be distributed through cooperative agreements in each PA PRISM.

Stephen Rudman (PDA) provided his thoughts on Don's PA PRISM budget, saying it will need some minor adjustments, but overall is exactly what he feels is necessary to present to PA legislators. He commented that \$6M is realistic for a statewide program such as this. Stephen also emphasized the necessity of having an economic analysis in combination with a PRISM budget as it will help convince legislators to ultimately fund a PRISM program in PA (though the economic analysis is not needed in order to submit the budget). Essentially, the economic analysis will prove that the costs incurred from invasive species in PA far outweighs the estimated \$6M being asked for to fund a PRISM program.

Amy Jewitt inquired if it is still the goal of the Legislative Workgroup to have a finalized and submitted budget by the end of August 2020 in order to be ready for consideration by legislators for the 2021-2022 state budget cycle. Stephen replied that if submitted this August, the budget might have been ready for the 2020-2021 state budget cycle, but the COVID-19 pandemic certainly changed that. The goal is to have a few more people review the details of the PA PRISM budget, have the Council approve it, and submit it this August for consideration in the 2021-2022 state budget.

PRISM Workgroup Update

Members: Andrew Rohrbaugh, Don Eggen, Brian Pilarcik, Amy Jewitt, Jeff Wagner, Piper Sherburne, Tom Cermak, Kimberly Bohn, Erin Copeland, Sarah Johnson

Kris Abell reported that the primary project of the PRISM Workgroup has been the creation of a 15-question PRISM interest survey (Appendix 2). The survey was developed and sent out in May to many

different stakeholders in the networks of people in the PRISM Workgroup, and a total of 136 responses were received!

Additionally, Andrew Rohrbaugh created a draft scaffolding document that will serve as model for how a future PRISM program will operate in Pennsylvania (Appendix 3). This document will eventually be incorporated into “*Invaders in the Commonwealth*” (Pennsylvania’s [5-Year] Invasive Species Management Plan), and will be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governor, and legislators for their consideration.

This workgroup needs to meet again and discuss the next steps of how best to disseminate the information gleaned from the survey with a goal of inviting interested persons to regional meetings to further the development of a PRISM program in Pennsylvania. Also, Andrew’s scaffolding document needs to be further developed and refined.

Invasive Species List Workgroup Update

Members: Andrew Rohrbaugh, Andy Ernst, Chris Urban, Gregg Robertson, James Grazio, Joseph Demko, Mary Beth Ruh

Kris Abell reported that the Invasive Species List Workgroup is in the process of compiling a list of species considered to be invasive in Pennsylvania. This list will be determined by running each species through an assessment tool/calculator that assigns a species an invasiveness score/ranking. For plant species, the workgroup plans to adopt (for Pennsylvania) an [assessment tool currently utilized by New York state and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#).

For all other taxa, the group is evaluating two additional tools – the [Generic Impact Scoring System](#) (GISS) and [Washington state’s assessment tool](#). The workgroup ran three species through both the GISS and Washington state’s tool (i.e., northern snakehead, silver carp, and emerald ash borer) in order to get a feel for how both worked. After doing so, the workgroup liked and disliked parts of each tool and plans to create a hybrid tool instead by pulling various parts from the GISS and Washington state’s tool and combining them into one.

ACTION ITEM: Kris mentioned that experts will be needed to run these assessment tools as they require a fair amount of knowledge and expertise in order to answer the questions being asked.

ACTION ITEM: Kris mentioned that the workgroup still needs to discuss how the list of invasive species (yet to be compiled) and assessment protocols are going to integrate with other Pennsylvania state agencies and their current protocols. Also, the workgroup needs to figure out how these protocols will align with protocols already in place for regulated vs. non-regulated species.

Jeff Wagner inquired if every single invasive species on this workgroup’s list (likely hundreds) will be run through the tool(s) so that each can receive an invasiveness ranking. Kris clarified that yes, that is the intention, and it will likely be a slow process. Jeff Wagner thought it would be a good idea to obtain a grant that would pay for a few people to dedicate their time to this task (at least for the initial list).

Andrew Rohrbaugh pointed out that most invasive plants under consideration have already been evaluated by NY DEC or WPC and those evaluations should apply to Pennsylvania with little or no modification (which will save time and money).

Special Presentation

Spotted Lanternfly Detection Research at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center

Presentation given by Jenny Essler, UPenn School of Veterinary Medicine

Jenny's presentation focused on a research project she is taking part in at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center; the project is related to spotted lanternfly (SLF). The goal of the project is to train three dogs (Toby [small Munsterlander], Pacy [Labrador Retriever], and Grizzly [German Shepherd]) to smell/detect spotted lanternfly eggs and egg masses so the dogs can later be used in real world situations to detect SLF infestations. The dogs were trained on dead and live SLF eggs, scraped eggs and egg masses still on bark, and were trained indoors and outdoors.

As the project continues, researchers plan to train the dogs to find eggs/egg masses on trees and flat surfaces since they seemed to look only for things that were hidden during the first part of the project. The researchers also plan to test the dogs in known SLF infestation areas.

Fred Strathmeyer congratulated Jenny and her team on the fantastic work they are doing. He also inquired about the cost of purchasing a SLF sniffer dog for use in searching for SLF in practical situations once a dog has been fully trained (such as on vehicles, in warehouses, and on trains). Jenny said the cost would likely be \$7-8K to purchase one of the dogs. She added that this price includes two weeks of training with the new dog handler. All expenses related to care and maintenance for the dog will need to be covered by the buyer.

Matthew Helmus (Temple University) inquired if Jenny and her team have thought about training the dogs on SLF honeydew. Jenny said that is their next step; however, it might be more difficult than it's worth since there's less of a need for the dogs to search for the honeydew since it's easily seen by people. But there's no reason the dogs couldn't be trained on both the SLF egg/egg masses and SLF honeydew.

Shane Philipps (PDA) commented that he/PDA has money to purchase a SLF sniffer dog from UPenn and plan to use the dog in a regulatory-type setting (such as at businesses that are shipping products, on vehicles, in nurseries, log yards, etc.)





Left to right, beginning at the top: 1) Toby, Pacy, and Grizzly were three dogs being trained to detect SLF eggs/egg masses; 2) Toby searches for SLF egg/egg masses on a vehicle during a training session; 3) The wheel was a tool utilized for training the dogs; 4) The dogs were tested on both scraped SLF eggs and SLF egg masses still attached to bark

Special Presentation

Riparian Buffers and the Challenge of Invasive Plants: Insights from Research and Practice

Presentation given by Lamonte Garber, Stroud Water Research Center

Lamonte's presentation focused on lessons learned related to the challenges and strategies of ensuring the survival of young native trees and shrubs planted as riparian buffers. Of the challenges faced related to buffer success, ensuring the establishment of planted trees and shrubs was a major component of the process. Problems faced related to buffer success included deer, voles, mice, tree shelter and stake problems, gaps in maintenance, and flooded/saturated soils. Lamonte stressed that one of the biggest challenges related to buffer success was dealing with invasive species.

Some of the strategies implemented to ensure the establishment and survival of riparian buffer plantings included maintenance of tree shelters and stakes, good herbicide control of vegetation around planted trees, regular mowing within a buffer, and spot-spraying of invasive species near planted trees. The goal of vegetation control around each tree was to have weed-free zones that is 3-4 feet wide.

Invasive species that are problematic in Stroud's riparian buffer plantings include reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), mile-a-minute (*Persicaria perfoliata*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Japanese hops (*Humulus japonicus*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and many others! Lamonte showed examples of how land once overwhelmed with invasive species (such as multiflora rose and reed canary grass) was eventually reclaimed by strategically implementing appropriate control strategies.

Other research trials being conducted at Stroud (in relation to the success of riparian buffer plantings) include 1) the use of gravel to deter vole and mice from burrowing into tree shelters, and 2) the use of a pre-emergent herbicide inside tree shelters to control invasive plants (and eliminate the labor-intensive

job of a contractor needing to lift each tree shelter and remove any invasive plants growing inside). The pre-emergent herbicide research has so far proven safe for a tree growing inside a tree shelter.

Jocelyn Behm (Temple University) inquired about the longest length of treatment/maintenance for Stroud's riparian buffers, and if they ever get to a point (once the riparian buffer's tree canopy is big enough) to stop control measures in the understory. Lamonte responded that getting young trees to grow in these types of plant-competitive environments is a challenge; however, less time is focused on what happens after year 10 or year 15 in the life of the planted trees. At Stroud, several well-established riparian buffers are thriving, and the next task is to find a way to allow the next generation of trees and shrubs to grow in a shaded environment.



Left to right, beginning at the top: 1) Vegetation control is implemented in a 3-4 ft wide circle around each planted tree; 2) Stroud purchases young seedlings to use in their riparian buffer plantings to keep costs down; 3) Invasive Oriental bittersweet grows from inside a tree tube, likely from birds depositing (pooping) the fruits inside; 4) Invasive Japanese hops overwhelm young trees inside their tree shelters

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Andrew Rohrbaugh commented that he will push the idea of a weed-free forage program to his supervisors at DCNR.

Fred Strathmeyer reiterated several of the action items that came out of today's meeting.

MOTION: Gregg Robertson (PLNA) moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary Walters seconded. Motion approved and meeting adjourned.

Next PISC Meeting:

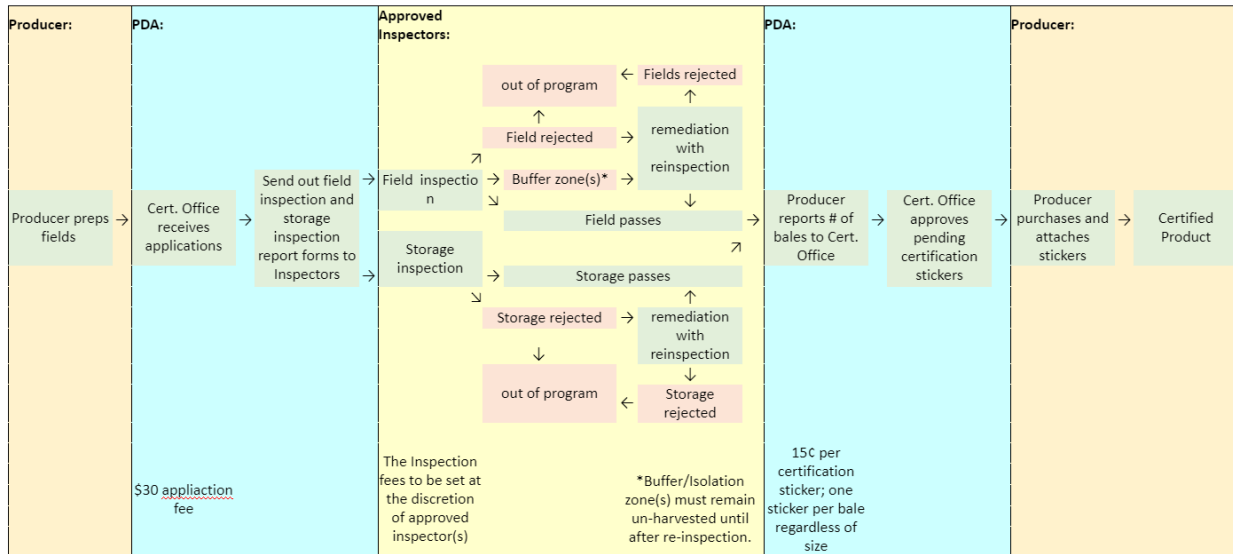
Tuesday, September 15, 10:00am-2:00pm at PDA

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Jewitt, WPC/PNHP

Appendix 1

1. Flow chart of how a Weed-Free Forage Program could work in Pennsylvania. Created by Johnny Zook, PDA Seed Certification Program.

Weed Free Forage Certification Program



Appendix 2.

Copy of PRISM-interest survey created and send out by the PRISM Workgroup. From this survey, a total of 136 responses were received.

PRISM Interest Survey

* Required

Please answer the following essential questions about you or your organization

For more information on what PRISMs are and what they do, please refer to the email you received, or visit the New York State PRISM website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/47433.html>

1. What is your name (first and last)? *

Enter your answer

2. What is your email address? *

Enter your answer

3. What organization do you work for or represent? *

Enter your answer

4. What is your phone number?

Enter your answer

5. What county are you engaged in invasive species efforts? *

Enter your answer

6. When established, would you or your organization have interest in partnering/participating in a regional PRISM? *

No

Yes

Other

7. Do you believe that your organization has the capacity to serve as the host organization for the PRISM in your region by providing the necessary leadership, organization and logistical support? *

Yes

No

Other

8. The Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council would like to convene one or more meetings to discuss forming regional partnerships and participating in a PRISM program. Would you or your organization like to participate in these meetings? *

Yes

No

Maybe

Help us to better understand your invasive species issues

9. What areas or sites do you currently manage for invasive species (e.g., state forests, state parks, Natural Heritage Areas, private property etc.)?

10. What invasive species are you currently working to manage?

11. What invasive species are currently unmanaged in your area?

12. Are you or your organization already a member of an existing CWMA or other local invasive species management organization? If so, which one?

13. What other organizations do you currently cooperate with to manage invasive species?

14. What are the major impediments to managing invasive species in your area?

15. Do you think the proposed PRISM program would help overcome these impediments?

- Yes
- No
- Other

Back

Submit

Appendix 3

Copy of Andrew Rohrbaugh's scaffolding document that will serve as model for how a future PRISM program will operate in Pennsylvania.

PISC PRISM/CISMA Support Plan

Last updated 4/17/20 with comments from Pilarcik and Rohrbaugh (thoughts from meeting 4/16)

6 PRISMs would be created, based on political boundaries. A 5 year RFP would be run by a PISC subcommittee, using funds from a line item requested by a lead agency, allowing any **qualified** local organization to run a PRISM. Each PRISM coordinator would be tasked with:

- Supporting existing CISMA's
- organizing **Supporting the organization of** new CISMA's
- coordination of quarterly information exchange meetings of CISMA members within the PRISM**
- reaching out to local stakeholders (large landholders, public lands, parks, local government, PennDOT)
- educating public, provide information on novel species/treatment, implement prevention programs
- surveillance and mapping
- helping to prioritize invasive species treatment
- conducting EDRR treatments
- training volunteers
- ecological restoration work
- seeking out federal grant money for their PRISM

In this model, CISMA's would be the smaller-scale, more community/watershed/ecosystem driven organization. They may split the political boundaries of the PRISM units, but would have to decide which PRISM they want to be associated with. The PRISM coordinator funnels their needs back to Harrisburg; doesn't have direct control over the CISMA's, but controls a major source of their funding.

Funding needs to be enough to support:

- 6 positions
- Enough money to provide for treatments, supplies, support for CISMA's, etc

Three items needing discussion:

1. We would need a clearinghouse for the data. I would suggest we use iMap, since it handles all taxa and is run in-state by a cooperating organization
2. How do we propose to pay for it? Line item in the budget?
3. Suggest more seasonal positions for agencies to help in control efforts