

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council  
Tuesday, December 8, 2020 | 10:00am  
Virtual Skype Meeting

*\* All text in italics indicates additional information included by the minute taker.*

---

**Council Members Present:** Amy Jewitt, Andrew Ernst, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Brian Pilarcik, Chris Urban, Daniel Zimmerman, Dominic O'Brien, Donald Eggen, Felicia Lamphere, Fred Strathmeyer, Gary Walters, Gregg Robertson, James Grazio, Jeffrey Wagner, John Bell, Joseph Demko, Julie Urban, Kate Harms, Kimberly Bohn, Kris Abell, Lisa Murphy, Mary Beth Ruh, Ruth Welliver, Sara Stahlman, Sarah Whitney, Scott Bearer

**Other Participants Present:** April Moore, Becca Manning, Brant Portner, Brenda Shambaugh, Bryon Ruhl, Dave Jackson, Destiny Zeiders, Diana Day, Grant DeCosta, Greg Podniesinski, Heather Smith, Jason Zarnowski, Jessica Newbern, Jocelyn Behm, Johan Berger, Johnny Zook, Jonathan Geyer, Karl Brown, Kaylan Hubbard, Kerry Golden, Kevin Hess, Kyle Schutt, Linda Lohner, Lydia Martin, Maddie Stanisch, Matthew Helmus, Melissa Harrison, Nick Decker, Nicole Faraguna, Sean Hartzell, Shane Phillips, Shea Zwerver, Stephen Rudman, Tom Cermak, Trilby Libhart, Victoria Challingsworth

---

**Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Kris Abell (PDA) gave a brief overview of today's agenda.

Kris announced three new designees to the Council including Ayanna Williams and Dominic O'Brien representing the Port of Philadelphia, and John J. Bell representing the Farm Bureau.

---

**Announcements, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes**

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) applauded everyone for being flexible in continuing to use Skype to meet for PISC meetings and commended folks for doing good work in their respective organizations during this difficult time due to COVID-19.

Fred did the roll call.

Kris mentioned that Ruth Welliver (PDA) will monitor the chat box in Skype to ensure any important content entered there is discussed during today's meeting.

Kris received a number of emails from non-members planning to attend today's meeting. Kris asked the non-members present to announce themselves for the benefit of Council members. Those who spoke up included:

- Kaylan Hubbard (Delaware Highlands Conservancy)
- Lydia Martin (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
- Dominic O'Brien (Port of Philadelphia)
- Linda Lohner and students (Wallenpaupack Area High School)
- Melissa Harrison (DEP; Regional Permit Coordination Office)
- Destiny Zeiders (House Agriculture Committee)
- Eryn Spangler (PA Department of Agriculture)
- Jonathan Geyer (PA Hardwoods Development Council)
- April Moore (Allegheny National Forest)
- Kerry Golden (House Agriculture Committee)
- Jessica Newbern (National Park Service)
- Trilby Libhart (PA Department of Agriculture)
- Johan Berger (State Conservation Commission)
- Maddie Stanisch (McKean County Conservation District)
- Kyle Schutt (Schuylkill Conservation District)
- Stephen Rudman (PA Department of Agriculture)
- Becca Manning (Longwood Gardens)
- Dave Jackson (Penn State Extension)

Kris requested the meeting minutes from the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PISC) meeting be approved. *These minutes were posted on the PISC website and sent via email to all council members prior to today's meeting.*

**MOTION:** Donald Eggen (DCNR) moved to approve the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 PISC minutes. Gary Walters (DEP) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

Kris gave a quick announcement regarding the [final assessment and approval](#) for the biocontrol of invasive knotweed species by the USDA APHIS. A great development!

---

### **DEP Ch. 102 & 105 Permitting Regulations and Invasive Species**

Presentation by Felicia Lamphere, Aquatic Biologist, Regional Permit Coordination Office (RPCO), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)



Lititz Run riparian buffer project. Credit: [Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay](#)

The purpose of Felicia’s presentation was to inform Council members and stakeholders of the rules and regulations pertaining to the DEP regulatory chapters concerning invasive species and to share guidance documents developed by several programs within the DEP. **Note: Certain sections of Felicia’s presentation are highlighted yellow to draw attention to important aspects related to invasive species in PA DEP’s regulations.**

The main function of Felicia’s position is to 1) conduct environmental reviews of permit applications to ensure all proposed impacts to aquatic resources are accounted for, and 2) assess measures to protect these resources by ensuring their adequacy. The DEP’s [Regional Permit Coordination Office](#) (RPCO) deals with Chapter 105 concerning waterways and wetlands, and Chapter 102 concerning erosion and sediment control requirements.

### ***RPCO Overview and Mission***

The PA DEP created the RPCO to act as a centralized permitting office to assist with Ch. 105 and Ch. 102 permitting, and to provide statewide technical support and coordination. RPCO officially opened for business on January 7, 2019.

The mission of RPCO is to act as a centralized office that provides synchronized and consistent reviews and approvals for projects (both general and complex) that are regulated under Ch. 102 and Ch. 105.

### ***Permitting Overview***

RPCO provides the [DEP regions](#) with technical support on Ch. 102 and Ch. 105 permitting in conjunction with established bureau personnel. RPCO reviews and approves permit applications and their companion plans (Ch. 102, 105, and 401) for projects related to pipelines and transportation. This can include multi-county and/or multi-regional projects, [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) (FERC) regulated projects, and projects with complex engineering and/or geologic considerations. Note: Applications that RPCO reviews must cover at least two regions and/or three counties.

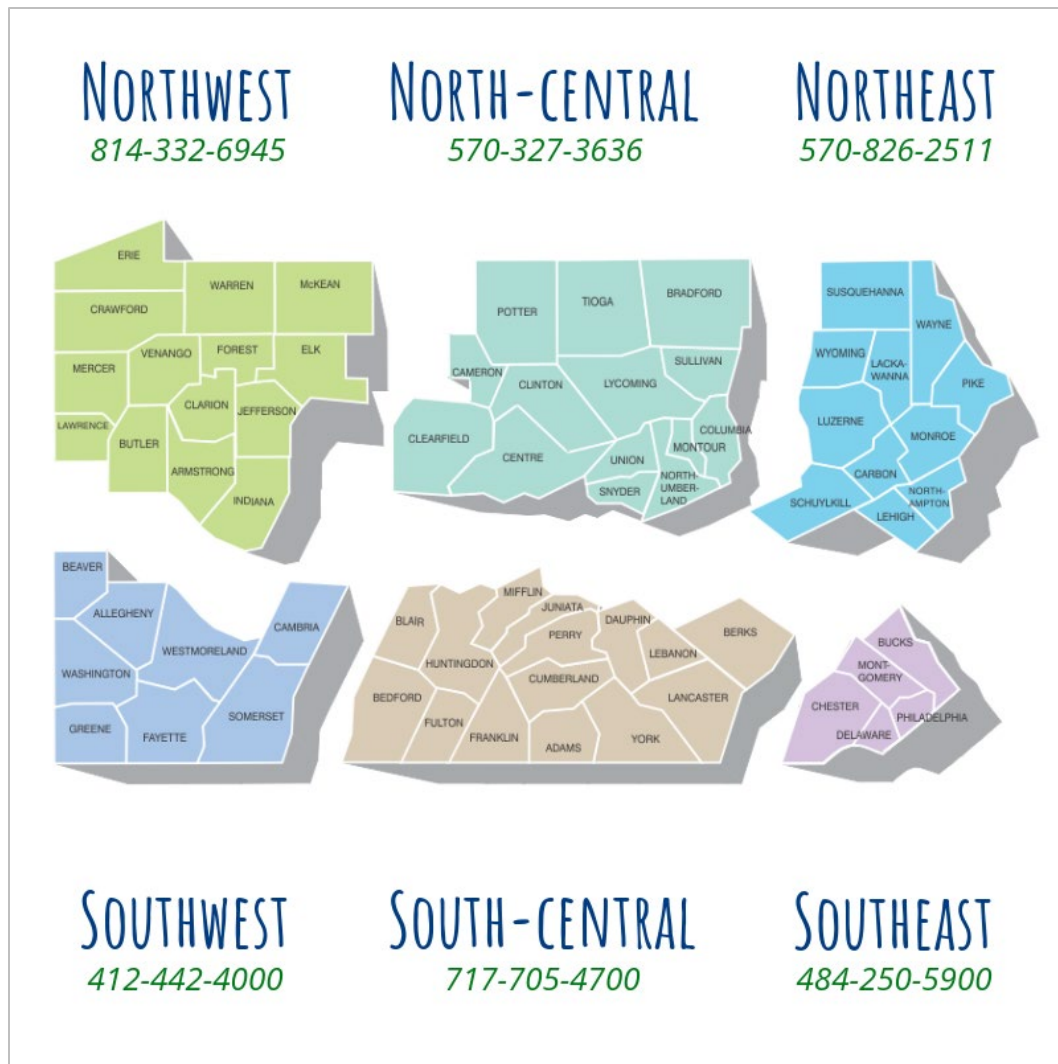
RPCO assists with cross-program coordination with the various departmental programs that have authority to process permits/authorizations under Ch. 102 and Ch. 105 (e.g., regional offices, oil and gas, dam safety, flood protection, mining, and conservation districts).



RPCO reviews and approves permit applications for pipeline construction among other project types.  
Copyright: [John Allan](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons License](#).

### ***PA DEP Regional Map***

There are six DEP regions in Pennsylvania, and RPCO covers all six regions. *See map on the following page.*



**Chapter 105 Dam Safety and Waterway Management**

The purpose of Chapter 105 is to regulate the construction, operation, and maintenance of dams, water obstructions, and encroachments which would include potential impacts to watercourses, floodways, waterbodies, and wetlands. *The following definitions help to further explain these terms:*

- Watercourse – A channel or conveyance of surface water having a defined bed and banks. Can be natural or artificial. Can flow continuously (perennial) or variable (intermittent).
- Floodway – The channel and portions of the adjoining floodplain which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the 100-year frequency flood. Boundary is indicated on maps and flood insurance studies provided by the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA). If FEMA maps or studies have not defined the floodway, it is assumed the floodway extends to 50 feet from the top of the bank of the stream.

- Wetlands – Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances, do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. There are three criteria that must be met for an area to be determined a wetland. They include: 1) hydric soils, 2) hydrology, and 3) hydrophytic vegetation. The method for delineation follows the [1987 Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual](#) and [Regional Supplements](#) (wetland fact sheets).
- Encroachment – A structure or activity which changes, expands, or diminishes the course, current, or cross section of a watercourse, floodway, or body of water.
- Water Obstruction – Structure of fill located in, along, across, or projecting into a watercourse, floodway, or body of water.



(Left): A pile of fill consisting of rock or stone is encroached into the stream channel. (Right): A pile of fill consisting of soil is located in the floodway and poses a water obstruction. In both cases, these activities may require a permit under Chapter 105 regulations. Credit (both): PA DEP

Chapter 105 permitting waivers can be found in PA Code Chapter 105.12. (There are quite a few waivers available.) An example of a waiver is Chapter 105.12 (a)(2) which states, “A water obstruction in a stream or a floodway with a drainage area of less than 100 acres could be waived a permit requirement.”

A waiver does not indicate deregulation. The DEP has the discretion to decide whether or not a waiver can be granted. In some cases, an applicant may still be required to apply for a permit. Some waivers require that an applicant have an environmental assessment approved by DEP.

There are 12 general permits the state can issue. For example, General Permit 7 (GP-7) addresses a small/minor stream crossing. In a permit application, the applicant must demonstrate they meet all the conditions of the permit in order for DEP to give the applicant the authority to build their intended structure. If an applicant cannot meet the conditions in any of the general permits, this

triggers the need for an individual permit (i.e., joint permit application). This is when the state works in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers.

PA DEP also has the ability to issue emergency permits. For example, if a township has a failing culvert that's causing a public safety threat and needs to be addressed immediately, that township could be issued an emergency permit. Emergency permits are useful in situations where a permit is needed quickly.



(Left): New construction or re-construction of a bridge over a stream channel. (Right): Structure being erected in the floodway of a stream. In both cases, these activities may require a permit under Chapter 105 regulations.  
Credit (both): PA DEP

### ***Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control Requirements (Pollution Control Program)***

The primary purpose of the erosion and sedimentation (E&S) pollution control program is to minimize accelerated erosion and sediment pollution from earth disturbance activities. Any activity which removes vegetation and disturbs soil has the potential to cause erosion. Along with carrying away soil particles, eroded soils also alter stream habitats and carry nutrients and pesticides which become soluble in water, increasing the amount of nonpoint source pollution.

Under this program, all earth disturbance activities must develop, implement, and maintain a plan to minimize accelerated erosion and sediment pollution. Additionally, earth disturbance activities in excess of one acre must obtain a [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System](#) (NPDES) permit for discharge of stormwater from construction activities.

Authority to administer the erosion and sediment pollution control program is delegated to the [PA conservation districts](#) by DEP. (For example, see information about Chapter 102 on the [Dauphin County Conservation District](#) website.)

### ***Chapter 102.2 Scope and Purpose***

This chapter requires persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement, and maintain best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation and to manage post-construction stormwater.

The BMPs shall be undertaken to protect, maintain, reclaim, and restore water quality and the existing and designated uses of waters of this Commonwealth.



Examples of erosion and sediment control BMPs being installed to protect waters of the Commonwealth.

### ***Invasive Species and Chapter 102 & 105 Regulations***

Chapter 105.14 (b)(4) regulations state: “(b) In reviewing a permit application under this chapter, the Department will use the following factors to make a determination of the impact: (4) The effect of the dam, water obstruction, or encroachment on **regimen and ecology of the watercourse or other body of water**, water quality, stream flow, fish and wildlife, aquatic habitat, instream and downstream uses, **and other significant environmental factors.**”

Chapter 105.16(a)(4) regulations state: “In reviewing permit applications, it will be the policy of the **Department to encourage activities that protect the natural condition of the watercourses or other body of water.**”

(Although the term “invasive species” is not mentioned in these regulations, this is part of the criteria looked at by Felicia and others at the PA DEP when reviewing permits.)

### ***Chapter 105 Regulations with Respect to Mitigation and Restoration Efforts***

Permit applications submitted to PA DEP for review should include post-construction restoration and/or mitigation plans. Mitigation plans are normally associated with an aquatic resource function lost as a result of the construction activities.



Written approval by DEP as part of the permit acknowledgment is required. The plan(s) should contain the following, but are not limited to:

- Planting plan design for wetlands and riparian buffers
- List of native or non-invasive trees, shrubs, and/or seed mixes proposed, etc.
- Monitoring plan (5 years to ensure 85% survival)
  - Maintenance plan
  - Invasive species management plan

#### ***Chapter 102.14 Riparian Buffer Requirements***

- (i) “Existing riparian buffer conversion to a riparian forest buffer. Riparian buffers that consist predominantly of native woody vegetation that do not satisfy the composition of this paragraph or the width requirements in paragraph (2) shall be enhanced or widened, or both, by additional plantings in open spaces around existing native trees and shrubs that provide at least 60% uniform canopy cover. An existing riparian forest buffer does not have to be altered to establish individual Zones 1 and 2 under subparagraph (iii). At a minimum, it must be a total aggregate width of the combined zones under paragraph (2). **Noxious weeds and invasive species shall be removed or controlled to the extent possible.**
- (ii) Riparian forest buffer establishment. On sites without native woody vegetation, a riparian forest buffer shall be established and be composed of zones in accordance with subparagraph (iii), and meet the width requirements in paragraph (2). **Noxious weeds and invasive species shall be removed or controlled to the extent possible.**

The [Bureau of Clean Water](#) has riparian buffer guidance as well (not related to Chapters 102 or 105). *It consists of the following:*

“A maintenance schedule and measures for converted or newly established riparian forest buffers to ensure survival and growth of plantings and **protection from competing plants and animals including noxious weeds and invasive species over a five (5) year establishment period** including activities or practices used to maintain the riparian forest buffer including the disturbance of existing vegetation, tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, mowing, burning, or spraying in accordance with long term operation and maintenance.”

The [Bureau of Waterways and Wetlands](#) also has new guidance (still in draft form). *An overview is as follows:*

When earth disturbances associated with land development and construction activities impact wetlands and floodways areas, it is important to properly plan for and execute a revegetation plan. Historically, revegetation efforts focused only on seed mixes and plants that would grow rapidly so that the site could quickly be stabilized to prevent accelerated erosion. **However, revegetation efforts have recently shifted to account for more than just rapid stabilization and most now include native or non-invasive seed mixes to account for more non-**

**traditional benefits such as increased biodiversity, the conservation of natural resources, and the value to pollinators and other wildlife.** More information can be found in the Wetland and Floodway Revegetation after Construction Fact Sheet (draft). This fact sheet should be available to the public in the near future.

Herbaceous Data										
Metric	Plot Number								Average	Performance Criteria Met?
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Percent Native	16.67	95.00	100.00	88.24	100.00	90.00	81.48	100.00	83.92	Yes
Percent Invasive <sup>1</sup>	83.33	5.00	0.00	11.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.51	Yes
Woody Data Totals										
Metric	Plot Number								Average	Performance Criteria Met?
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Percent Cover	7	10	6	15	15	3	6	4	8	N/A
Density/Acre	339	484	290	726	726	145	290	194	399	No
Percent Growth (Planted)	1.25	26.04	19.66	6.76	22.41	2.56	-1.81	N/A	10.98	Yes
Height (Planted)	4.05	1.94	5.33	2.21	2.61	4.00	1.59	2.94	3.08	N/A
Percent Mortality	46.15	37.50	42.86	25.00	28.57	66.67	37.50	33.33	39.70	-
Percent Browse	85.71	70.00	50.00	66.67	86.67	33.33	66.67	50.00	63.63	-
Condition	3.57	3.80	4.33	4.07	3.53	3.00	3.67	1.50	3.43	-

Notes:

1. Invasive species include those identified by the PADCNR Invasive Plant List.

Example of a monitoring report table as part of a 5-year maintenance plan.

Note: Invasive species include those identified by the [PA DCNR Invasive Plant List](#).

The table (*shown above*) represents monitoring done as part of a 5-year invasive species management plan by a permittee. At the end of five years, the DEP has discretion over whether or not additional monitoring needs to occur.

Most companies will conduct a pre-qualitative study of the invasive species in their work area. With this in mind, the DEP asks that whatever the percentage was of native/invasive species pre-construction, the company mimics post-construction.

Questions or comments regarding Felicia’s presentation may be sent to Felicia Lamphere, Aquatic Biologist via email at [flamphere@pa.gov](mailto:flamphere@pa.gov) or by phone at 717-772-5164.

- End of Presentation -

---

Don Eggen (DCNR) inquired if PA DEP works with the [DCNR Bureau of Geological Survey](#) in regards to permitting that would need geologic information? Felicia responded that PA DEP coordinates with many different agencies (e.g., PFBC, DCNR). *Don Eggen included in the Skype*

chat box that the [Bureau of Forestry](#) has some very good requirements regarding invasive plant management on gas drilling sites that Felicia may find useful.

John Bell (Farm Bureau) asked how invasive species are specifically considered in the context of determinations under Chapter 105, and what specific criteria are used by the DEP in those determinations? Has there been any specific guidance document developed by DEP in consideration of permit evaluation (relative weights) applied to conditions, factors, and determination? Felicia responded that the new guidance set forth in the document coming out soon by PA DEP (*i.e.*, *Wetland and Floodway Revegetation after Construction Fact Sheet*) provides information on this subject matter. Felicia reiterated that PA DEP biologists have discretion when reviewing permit applications and that details must be provided regarding an invasive species management plan. Also, information needs to be provided about the measures to be taken to ensure everything mimics pre-construction criteria.

April Moore (Allegheny National Forest) inquired if there is a timeline for finalizing the new plant guidance for species used? Felicia responded that this guidance is under final review right now, and she anticipates it coming out very soon. Felicia can let PISC members know when this guidance document is published and available to the public.

*Gary Walters (PA DEP) included in the Skype chat box that herbicide permits are typically issued through the Clean Water Program, not the Chapter 102 and 105 programs. If needed, a future presentation on the herbicide permit can be arranged.*

Brenda Shambaugh (PA Association of Conservation Districts [PACD]) reiterated that all PA conservation districts have a delegated agreement with PA DEP on Chapter 102 (*regarding implementation of this regulation in their respective county*). There are also a number of districts that have a delegated agreement with Chapter 105 (*regarding implementation of this regulation in their respective county*). Questions from landowners about Chapters 102 and 105 can also be directed to conservation districts regarding these matters.

---

## **Certified Weed Free Forage & Straw**

Presentation by [Johnny Zook](#), Seed Program Supervisor, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

### ***Benefits***

Certified weed free forage and straw (CWFFS) are value-added products for farmers and straw product producers. Use of “weed free” products aid in reducing the spread of propagules of unwanted/invasive species. This program in turn will (*hopefully*) increase participation in the certified seed program.

Farmers can expect ~\$20 more per ton (\$50 to \$60 more per acre) for certified weed free straw. This will more than offset inspection fees. Straw product producers can absorb extra cost because shipping cost is greatly reduced by sourcing locally.

Weed free = little to no weeds or weed seeds being dispersed through the certified products.

CWFFS field inspections can be combined with certified seed field inspections. Many seed certifying agencies also certify weed free forage and straw. Farmers benefit by producing two products from one field inspection. For example, if a farmer is producing certified wheat seed when doing a field inspection, the farmer could also do the certified weed free straw inspection at the same time.

### ***Road Blocks***

Hurdles to overcome with the formation of this program in PA currently include: 1) pulling together an inspection force, 2) administration of the program and 3) a “chicken and the egg” problem.

### ***Inspection Force***

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) agronomic product inspectors and plant inspectors are currently too busy and will be hard for them to take on more responsibility. Currently looking into the certified hemp sampling agent model. The hemp program has their own samplers that go out and perform inspections. Questions related to training/verification are necessary to discuss (*in relation to how this would translate into the CWFFS program model*). Johnny is looking into an independent inspection service. Again, questions arise related to training and verification to make sure things are done correctly. Perhaps the [North America Invasive Species Management Association](#) (NAISMA) could play a role.

### ***Program Administration***

If PDA administers a CWFFS program, it will be through a quality assurance (QA) weed free program. PDA cannot enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NAISMA because NAISMA is a non-governmental organization. Many seed-certifying agencies that are part of NAISMA are also non-governmental. In Pennsylvania, the seed certifying agency is also the PA Department of Agriculture. If someone else administers a CWFFS program, “they” could have a certified weed free program and may be able to enter into an MOU with NAISMA.

Two terms being used to describe a CWFFS program in PA are “quality assurance” and “certified”. Both terms are used as part of a certification program, and the term “quality assurance” is consistent with the PDA’s seed certification program. For instance, if a farmer produces certified seed and gets a field inspection done, but no laboratory analysis, the farmer could get quality assurance tags as part of the certification. However, without the laboratory analysis, the product will not be able to get certified. With straw and hay, there won’t be a laboratory analysis, so it makes more sense to call it “quality assurance”.

### ***Chicken and the Egg Problem***

Companies and governmental entities don't want to require CWFFS because PA farmers are not producing it. In other words, these entities don't want to require something that forces them to go out of state to buy. In turn, PA farmers don't want to produce the CWFFS because they don't have a buyer.

### ***Possibilities***

Two possibilities exist for next steps moving forward with a CWFFS program in PA. They include [MKB](#) located in Belleville, PA, and [East Coast Erosion Control](#) located in Bernville, PA. Both companies produce straw products and are the largest producers in the northeast U.S.

MKB has confirmed they are willing to participate and will purchase certified weed free straw produced locally.

Currently waiting to hear back from East Coast Erosion Control. They do sell certified weed free product to California, but they don't get too much of their straw here in Pennsylvania. Johnny asked East Coast Erosion Control if CWFFS was available to purchase locally, would they? Still waiting to hear their response.

MKB produces 400,000 two-cubic foot straw bales for box stores (like Lowe's and Home Depot) and is one of the largest producers of [straw erosion blankets](#) and [straw wattles](#) in the northeast. MKB estimates needing 10,000-12,000 acres of certified weed free forage and straw to meet demand (\$50-60/acre more for grower – a very significant payback for farmers when done at such a large scale!). This would build gradually over 3-4 years.

“Locally sourced” means eliminating shipping cost of bringing in CWFFS from other states. Eliminating the shipping cost would allow MKB to compete for the New England market for CWFFS products. Currently Ohio and Indiana companies ship through Pennsylvania into New England.

The “chicken and the egg” problem is now gone because we have identified one, perhaps two, purchasers of CWFFS products, and have farmers who are already interested in producing a CWFFS product. With a buyer identified (a huge step in getting this program off the ground!), it will now be easy to get farmers and other producers on board.

The question now remains - who will administer the CWFFS program and with what inspection force? At this point in time, it will either be the PDA with PDA inspectors or with contracted inspectors, OR, someone else using contracted inspectors.

Questions or comments regarding Johnny's presentation may be sent to Johnny Zook, Seed Program Supervisor via email at [jzook@pa.gov](mailto:jzook@pa.gov) or by phone at 717-787-4894.

*- End of Presentation -*

---

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) wondered if Johnny knows Phil Stover at PDA. Phil is the Division Chief for the [Department of Community & Economic Development](#) at PDA (DCED). Fred thought perhaps PDA could entice farmers to look at their business models to see if they could take on participation in a CWFFS program. Fred also asked Johnny if any additional thought has gone into the inspection process and if Johnny has a system in mind for this? Johnny responded that in 2020, the PDA seed certification program certified about 1,000 acres. The most the program has ever certified was 6,000 acres. If they ever hit the 12,000-acre mark, that would stretch them pretty thin. Johnny has reached out to Sarah Pickel with the hemp program and is looking into how they set up the inspection part of their program via sampling agents.

Kris Abell (PDA) asked if MKB might be willing to provide CWFFS program inspectors, or help pay for them, given their willingness to be part of this program in PA? Johnny responded that yes, MKB was willing to participate in any way to make this program work. A consultant for the company was willing to put something together regarding an inspection force; likely an independent contractor. Johnny reiterated that if using an independent contractor for this purpose, a verification process would be a crucial piece to ensuring the program was run properly.

Mary Beth Ruh (PennAg Industries Association) commented that straw erosion blankets are extremely price sensitive. If weed free blankets are specified, that would help erosion blanket companies justify the extra cost. Johnny responded that the New England market is already requiring certified weed free erosion blankets. Since MKB doesn't have access to local weed free straw, they have to ship CWFFS products in from somewhere else. This is the "chicken and the egg" problem. However, if weed free straw products started being required by DEP, Forest Service, etc. in Pennsylvania, then demand would jump pretty high and the price would be justified. Mary Beth Ruh agreed with Johnny's remarks.

April Moore (Allegheny National Forest) remarked that the Forest Service has a national MOU with NAISMA that may be leveraged with PDA to meet that requirement. State and private (S&P) sections of the Forest Service may be able to assist with training and certification of inspectors. April asked Johnny if he has been in touch with anyone from S&P? Johnny along with Kris Abell responded that there has been some contact with Andrew Rohrbaugh and Kelly Sitch from the DCNR Bureau of Forestry (BOF). April clarified that she was referring to the Forest Service, not state folks. Kris clarified that only April Moore (*the person asking this question*) has been part of CWFFS program discussions so far. April encouraged there to be future conversations with state and private folks with the Forest Service moving forward regarding assistance with the CWFFS certification process.

April Moore also asked if Johnny/others have looked at the (*invasive*) plant list for Pennsylvania (*as far as what species would be getting inspected for*). Johnny responded that if PDA administers the CWFFS program, through PDA's regulations, they are able to use standards from any other seed certifying agency. (Note: PDA is a member of the official seed certifying

agencies). For example, PA could use the invasive species list from NAISMA ([see page 3](#)), or our [PA noxious weed/seeds list](#), etc. The list chosen can be adapted however is seen fit. However, if the CWFFS program were administered independently by another organization, they would most likely use NAISMA's invasive species list, which would have to be reviewed to best suit Pennsylvania. But with PDA administering the program, there is a lot of flexibility.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) mentioned that when looking at NAISMA's invasive plant list, many of these weeds are unknown to him, and many of them are a concern out west in more arid environments (and are less of a threat here in the eastern U.S). If using NAISMA's list, it would need to be adapted to PA.

April Moore (ANF) commented that you can add to the NAISMA invasive plant list, but cannot subtract from it. With this in mind, she wondered if there was a way to notate western species vs. eastern species as a reference to contractors and inspectors. Currently the list is quite long. If edits to this list can be made, April would be happy to help.

Don Eggen (DCNR) clarified what April Moore was referring to previously about state and private (S&P) forestry. This is a branch of the U.S. Forest Service located in a Morgantown, WV field office and oversees the Mid-Atlantic states. The person in this office that handles invasive plants is Donna Marie Foster. She may be a resource to reach out to in regards to a PA CWFFS program. *Donna's email address is [donna.m.foster@usda.gov](mailto:donna.m.foster@usda.gov) and her work phone number is 304-285-1547.*

Ruth Welliver (PDA) inquired about leveraging seed certification inspection (one inspection for both the seed and the weed free forage and straw, something Johnny mentioned at the beginning of his presentation). Does this type of process automatically tie in PDA? In other words, is PDA the only approver of seed certification in PA? Johnny responded that yes, PDA is the only organization that does seed certifications, so if there was an independent group administering the CWFFS program, a farmer would need two inspections.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) asked if there is a requirement for how large an operation a farmer needs to have to be a grower for a weed free product? Or can farmers have both large and small operations? Johnny responded that if PDA administers a CWFFS program, they would allow both large and small farm operations to participate. PDA may impose a size minimum for the area growing the product - maybe at least 10 acres - to make it worthwhile for an inspector to travel there. If an independent company administers the program, they may change that size requirement to something else.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked if the 10,000-12,000 acres mentioned earlier in Johnny's presentation was the need for just the one company, or a need for the entire state? Johnny responded that this was a need by both MKB and the East Coast Erosion Control, but mainly for MKB, since East Coast Erosion control does not purchase much straw currently from PA producers, but that could change if CWFFS products were available locally.

Kris Abell (PDA) commented that progress is definitely being made as far as starting this kind of program in PA. Problems and challenges are being overcome. The more support we can get from PISC and associated stakeholders, the faster this program is going to grow. A CWFFS program in PA presents a tremendous opportunity for PA growers that are currently missing out on a market that already exists.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) believes this is an opportunity where PA state agencies need to work together to find a pathway to these marketplaces. By requiring particular state projects (*to utilize CWFFS products*) in the future, this would be an impetus to create and build this industry. Kris Abell (PDA) commented that in relation to this ultimate goal is the “chicken and egg” problem previously discussed by Johnny; however, the MKB company could be the bridge to combatting this problem. In other words, if MKB buys the product initially, then the market is being created. And with producers already identified in the state, then state agencies could begin to adjust their requirements.

On behalf of everyone on the Council, Kris stated that a CWFFS program is a major way to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species throughout the Commonwealth.

---

## **Coordinator Report**

### ***New Council Members***

Kris reminded folks that during the last PISC meeting in September, Council members voted to approve the [Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area](#) (APIPMA) to fill one of the empty (*member*) seats on the Council. That nomination is still with the Governor’s office. Still waiting to hear if the nomination has been accepted (and made official).

There now remains one member seat open on the Council. A nomination has been put forward for Temple University to fill this seat (by the PISC New Member Committee that was recently formed). Note: A number of potential candidates were reached out by the New Member Committee, and the Committee settled on Temple University as the strongest candidate for membership on the Council.

Don Eggen (DCNR) mentioned there were three people listed (*on the computer screen being shared with everyone on today’s meeting – Matt Helmus, Amy Freestone, and Jocelyn Behm*). Don mentioned that normally there is usually only one official PISC member and alternates from each member agency/organization. Kris Abell (PDA) clarified that the Council member (*being voted on today*) would be an entity (Temple University), not a specific person. Three individuals at Temple University have expressed interest in participating on the Council. It will be up to them to choose who would be the primary member and who would be the two designees (*alternates*).



**MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR) moved to accept the nomination for Temple University to fill the remaining seat on the Pennsylvania Governor’s Invasive Species Council. Gary Walters seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

With the passing of the motion, Kris welcomed Temple University as the newest member to the Council. The nomination will now be sent to the Governor’s office and made official sometime in 2021.

Matt Helmus (Temple University) thanked Council members for approving the nomination for Temple University to be a member on the Council. Both he and Jocelyn Behm have been attending PISC meetings for some time, and they look forward to working with the Council now in a more formal role.

Kris Abell (PDA) commented that as part of the New Member Committee’s efforts, several individuals were reached out and many excellent responses were received. Each individual was followed up with after making the decision about Temple University as a way to encourage their participation in current and future PISC workgroups (*rather than through official membership*).

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) followed up by agreeing with Kris’s remarks, but adding that there was a dilemma in figuring out which was the most appropriate entity to nominate to the Council. The committee asked questions like, where is the Council currently lacking? - *in regards to expertise/experience. After much discussion, the group ultimately decided to go with Temple University.*

Jeff Wagner went on to discuss [New York state’s invasive species council](#) and their affiliated [advisory committee](#). PISC does not have an advisory committee at present, but perhaps we could in the future. In the interim, maybe PISC could have additional workgroups that would focus on elements of the [PA Invasive Species Management Plan](#) that the Council hasn’t gotten to work on yet; priority items like obtaining funding and getting our message out to the Legislature. These workgroups would be comprised of folks with an interest in PISC activities (such as the candidates reviewed by the New Member Committee), and each workgroup could be chaired by a current PISC member. Jeff is open to talking more about what these workgroups would be and their assigned tasks.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) felt Jeff’s suggestion was a great idea it’s how PISC can encourage more involvement with the Council and expand our own horizons. There certainly are many areas (*of the Plan*) not being tended to at present. Fred would like to see the New Member Committee move forward with creating additional workgroups (*to work on various aspects of the PA Invasive Species Management Plan*), and report back to the Council at our next meeting in March 2021. For folks on the call today, Fred encouraged them to continue stepping forward and becoming more involved with the Council and these (new) workgroups. Fred thanked Jeff and others for this idea and taking it forward. *April Moore included in the Skype chat box that as a*

*non-member, she would be willing to work on one or more of these new workgroups being suggested by Jeff.*

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) commented that with these workgroups he's suggesting, items to be tackled should include tasks that are easily researchable and definable (low hanging fruit), rather than projects like what the PRISM committee is tackling where there are many unknowns and pieces to the puzzle (things beyond our immediate control). Jeff said he can pass around a list (*to Council members and stakeholders*) shortly after today's meeting (in a day or so) to comment on related to this overall idea. When the New Member Committee meets again, they can review comments from the Council and think more about what these workgroups would be.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris Abell (PDA) remarked that the Council will look for an email from Jeff Wagner regarding his suggested idea to form additional work groups, and Kris will schedule another meeting for the New Member Committee to gather and discuss comments once they are received.

---

## **Committee Updates**

### ***Grants and Funding Committee***

Members: Don Eggen (DCNR), Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant), Mary Walsh (WPC/PNHP), Felicia Lamphere (DEP), Trilby Libhart (PDA)

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned this is a new workgroup (recently formed). The group's initial objective was to compile a database of invasive species related grants that the Council may be able to utilize to address invasive species issues. Funding is often the biggest shortfall in pursuing projects that the Council and others want to engage in. Much of the "low hanging fruit" grant and funding opportunities have been pulled together already (e.g., big federal grants).

**ACTION ITEM:** The workgroup is now asking Council members and stakeholders to help in identifying other grant and funding opportunities such as those from foundations or other organizations. Please send any suggestions to Kris, and he will relay this information to the workgroup.

The other objective of this workgroup is to develop capacity for PISC to apply to these grants. In some cases, using the strength of the Council will be a benefit which would involve having multiple agencies work collaboratively to apply for one or more grants.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris asked Council members (and others in attendance on the meeting today) to send ideas for projects that this workgroup could start applying for grants to accomplish. An initial idea the group came up with is to fund a single PRISM (in relation to the larger state-wide PRISM program being discussed for PA) as a proof of concept and to get things jump-started for this initiative.

Don Eggen (DCNR) reiterated that the workgroup is very interested in learning about non-governmental grant opportunities (*as these are less known about by current members of this workgroup*). Once project ideas are compiled, this group can help facilitate obtaining funding for them. He mentioned that because PRISMs resemble the current PA Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) in function, applying for a Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant (i.e., a competitive grant offered by the U.S. Forest Service) might be something to look into since the USFS is involved in PA CWMAs.

Don Eggen also restated Kris' comments regarding the potential for this workgroup to try and fund one PRISM program in PA as a pilot program in case funding for all PA PRISMs cannot be obtained initially by the state legislature.

Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) mentioned that seeing ideas can often help spark other ideas too. Hopefully this (*database*) can be a tool for identifying projects, but then also creating cross connections as well.

*Chris Urban (PFBC) asked in the Skype chat box: Regarding applying for multi-partner grants, who would these grants be run through - PDA? Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) responded to Chris's question, also in the Skype chat box, saying that it would depend on the grant. Chris followed up in the chat box by clarifying that he felt it could get administratively messy with several partners involved, and it would be good for one entity to actually apply for the grant, but those details could get worked out later.*

*Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) asked in the Skype chat box if NRCS funds such as the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), etc. have been included in the workgroup's listing (grant database)? Kris Abell (PDA) responded that he will have to refer back to the database to know for sure.*

---

### ***Invasive Species Listing and Prioritization Committee***

Members: Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR), Gregg Robertson (PLNA), Mary Beth Ruh (Penn Ag), Joe Demko (PennDOT), Andy Ernst (Farm Bureau), Chris Urban (PFBC), Sean Hartzell (PFBC)

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that the Executive Order that created the Council charges PISC with creating and implementing the [PA Invasive Species Management Plan](#). Some of the goals in the plan state the following, which are goals and proposed actions for this workgroup. (*They are being stated here in the minutes as reference for discussion during today's meeting, and were shown on the screen being shared with all meeting participants.*)

Goal: Utilize risk assessments or conduct new evaluations to prioritize nonnative invasive species.

Goal: A risk assessment is a science-based process commonly used to predict the potential establishment, spread, and impacts of invasive species. Risk assessments can be used to aid in prioritizing prevention, early detection, control, and restoration efforts. Species-specific risk assessments already developed by experts elsewhere should be reviewed first. If unavailable, species-specific risk assessments should be developed to determine the threat level of an invasive species to the Commonwealth. If needed, species-specific task forces should be formed to facilitate this process.

Proposed Action: Utilize previously developed risk assessments from international, federal, state, and local sources to guide development of new risk assessments for invasive species and pathways in Pennsylvania.

Proposed Action: Once a short list of the most significant or harmful invasive species is created, use maps of known locations and treatments to prioritize and organize future treatments. The list of prioritized treatments, as well as all species risk assessments and evaluations, will be easily accessible through the PISC website.

Proposed Action: Establish and prioritize: 1) a list of invasive species not present in Pennsylvania and that should be prevented from entry, and 2) a list of invasive species with occurrences in Pennsylvania and for which the prevention of expansion is intended. List these species on the PISC website and communicate them to lawmakers, various program managers, and the public.

Proposed Action: Prioritize nonnative invasive species and populations on which to focus control efforts, and when feasible, control established nonnative invasive species that have significant impacts in Pennsylvania.

In referencing the last proposed action (above), Kris mentioned that having a prioritized list underpins many of the goals and objectives of the Council, and aids in the challenge we currently face of having limited man-power and resources available for utilization.

### ***Assessment Procedures***

Kris remarked that this committee has discussed several different processes for conducting invasive plant assessments (*for potential adoption by PISC*). They include protocols developed by New York State as well as by the Western PA Conservancy/PA Natural Heritage Program (WPC/PNHP). *Note: The WPC/PNHP protocol is a modified version of the New York State assessment tool.*

*The New York State non-native/invasive plant assessment tool is accessible [here](#).  
The WPC/PNHP non-native/invasive plant assessment tool is accessible [here](#).*

*If you do not have access to Google Drive to review the assessment tools hyperlinked above, please contact Kris Abell ([krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)). He can provide a PDF if necessary.*

Available on the [New York Invasive Species Information website](#) are many examples of [completed non-native plant assessments](#) (182 in total). NY State's assessments cover a wide array of terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic plant species.

In Appendix 3 of the following grant report compiled by the WPC/PNHP "[Prioritization of Invasive Species for a PA Plant Invader Watch List](#)" is an example of multiple invasive species risk assessments conducted by the WPC/PNHP (13 in total).

This assessment procedure (*in both cases – with WPC and NY State*) is comprised of 19 questions that result in an invasiveness score (0-100) that looks at impacts to ecology, community, species, reproduction, dispersal, competitiveness, growth rate, habitats, climate, difficulty to manage, and distribution.

Kris Abell (PDA) stated that this committee recommends that the WPC/New York State assessment protocol be used and ultimately adopted by PISC to continue ranking non-native plants species in Pennsylvania.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) remarked that most plant assessments already conducted in PA have been done by WPC staff, including Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP). The DCNR is currently conducting risk assessments for all species on [DCNR's invasive plant list](#) using the NY State protocol (which was modified by WPC to be used in Pennsylvania). DCNR is currently progressing through their backlog for this project for species that have not been assessed and looking at some southern species which may not have been assessed by New York State (i.e., watch list species).

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) commented that she would prefer Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) to speak to this topic rather than herself. Amy has not actually used the ranking tool herself up to this point. She remarked that it takes a certain level of knowledge in order to go through the tool and answer the questions accurately. Some of the botanists and other folks with botanical expertise at WPC/PNHP are the ones at who have utilized this tool thus far. Specifically, Mary Walsh (WPC/PNHP) has utilized the tool (*and would be a resource to tap into, if needed*).

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) remarked that as long as the tool fits in well with what is going on with the [PA Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee](#) in evaluating species to potentially be added to the noxious weed list, then it's a great tool to use. The Pennsylvania risk assessment tool is modified from the tool used in New York State to best suit the needs of our state. Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) commented that 33 plants from DCNR's Invasive Plant List have not yet been assessed, either by PA or NY. Andrew has so far completed 8-9 plant assessments. He plans to work on these other 33 species at some point in the future (though this is a low priority for him at present). Andrew also remarked that he feels this assessment process has been a help to the PA Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee; one more tool in the toolbox.

Helps in knowing if a species is really invasive, or simply a plant someone saw an abundance of in their backyard.

Based on a question asked by Don Eggen (DCNR), Kris clarified that the risk assessment tool being discussed thus far in the meeting is only for plants. There is another tool for use in ranking other taxa that Kris plans to discuss (next).

Andrew noted in the Skype chat box that the assessments he's completed so far are stored, but not available to the public. Ruth Welliver asked if these results could be made available for the public to view (on the PISC website), considering that New York State has a website where their information on this topic is made available. April Moore asked in the Skype chat box if the assessments could be posted on the PISC website? Andrew answered that anyone who would like to view his assessments (in the interim, prior to them being posted online) can reach out to him. (Andrew's email address is [anrohrbaug@pa.gov](mailto:anrohrbaug@pa.gov).)

Kris mentioned that because the WPC/NY State plant assessment tool isn't applicable for use in ranking other taxonomic groups, this workgroup did a careful review of other tools/procedures currently available, settling on two that seemed to be fairly strong. They include the [Generic Impact Scoring System](#) (GISS) comprised of 12 questions, and the [Washington State Invasive Species Council Assessment Tool](#) comprised of 19 questions.

The GISS was established in academia. One of the strengths of this system is the availability of literature that does a great job of explaining how to think about the system's assessment criteria. There's also a spreadsheet available for use when running the GISS tool. (See image below.)

### Generic Impact Scoring System

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with the following data:

impact category	weight	initial scores	final scores	confidence
2.1.1 On plants or vegetation	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.1.2 On animals	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.1.3 Competition	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.1.4 Disease transmission	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.1.5 Hybridization	1	Incomplete	0	2
2.1.6 Ecosystems	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.2.1 Agricultural production	1	Incomplete	0	0
1.1.2 Animal production	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.2.3 Forestry production	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.2.4 Human infrastructure	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.2.5 Human health	1	Incomplete	0	0
2.2.6 Human social life	1	Incomplete	0	0

The Washington State tool was similar, but slightly different from the GISS tool. The committee decided to take the parts of the Washington State tool and include them into the GISS tool. Those new components included in the GISS tool include 1) potential to disperse, 2) population growth rate if no management were to occur, 3) habitat specialization, and 4) difficulty to control.

The objective of this workgroup is to approve and vote to adopt these two assessment procedures for use by the state of Pennsylvania. The committee would like to see agencies and organizations utilize these two procedures as a way to compare “apples to apples” when communicating and coordinating management efforts.

Next steps are to assemble subject matter experts for different taxonomic groups that can effectively do these assessments, particularly agencies and organizations from PISC (whether that’s someone who is currently part of PISC, or another individual within a member organization). *Don Eggen (DCNR) commented in the Skype chat box that there are many subject matter experts in several of the state agencies that could work on these assessments.*

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) commented that he sees tremendous value in using these tools on a statewide scale, but also specifically for use by the PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in ranking/prioritizing greatest threats for aquatic invasive species. Some of the things Sean likes about the modified GISS tool being proposed is that peer review is incorporated into it. (An expert would go through the initial assessment, incorporate information from scientific literature, and then the assessment is reviewed by another entity).

Sean remarked that PFBC would be using the system(s) identified here today to rank aquatic animals, and the proposed plant system to rank aquatic plants, all in an effort to better prioritize these species within PFBC. Sean also sees these systems as being helpful for gathering information on other taxa to put on legislative lists, and prioritizing which species to focus on in terms of action and eradication efforts.

Chris Urban (PFBC) agreed with Sean’s remarks. He feels that the combination of these two methods is the way to go because they strengthen the model. Several species were run through the GISS at an earlier workgroup meeting as a test, and it seems to work well. The tool allows you to keep track of all your decisions as you go through the tool. The group (overall) is pretty happy with the tool.

Sean Hartzell (PFBC) added that he did some background investigation into the GISS and found that it has been widely used in Europe for multiple taxonomic groups with quite a bit of success. Numerous peer-reviewed papers and reports have utilized this system. (It is fairly well-established in other parts of the world.)

Kris Abell (PDA) followed up by saying that it’s important to communicate on and prioritize invasive species on a PISC list. Moving forward, perhaps each relevant agency/organization could conduct an initial assessment using these procedures (*as discussed during today’s meeting*), and share that assessment with council members. The assessment would then be taken to experts to review and comment on. Then a vote by PISC would occur where an assessment would be approved and accepted across the board and placed on relevant websites for everyone

to see. (*This would be the potential procedure utilized by PISC when running these assessment tools.*)

Kris asked if the Council was ready to take a vote today on adopting the modified New York State non-native plant assessment tool and the GISS tool, and also accepting the outlined procedure for conducting these assessments?

Jim Grazio (DEP) asked for clarification on whether Kris was asking the Council to adopt the GISS for its own use, or for individual PISC members to adopt it on behalf of their respective organization/agency? Kris responded that because the Council is an advisory group, he is hoping PISC will approve of these procedures and recommend they be accepted by other agencies/organizations on a statewide basis.

Don Eggen (DCNR) followed up on Jim's and Kris's comments by saying that it is a goal in the [PA Invasive Species Management Plan](#) to develop these procedures and/or adopt a methodology for conducting invasive species risk assessments in our state. Therefore, this is not only a recommendation, but also part of implementing the Plan.

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) commented that for folks who have ran these tools and feel they do a good job (as far as the results they provide), this is a good enough reason to move forward, keeping in mind that things can always be adjusted in the future, as needed.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) remarked on the positivity of creating a unified method for conducting invasive species risk assessments in PA. When PISC is making recommendations to the Controlled Plant & Noxious Weed Committee (CP&NWC), it will be good to have this as a foundation; it will give the CP&NWC more of a base to stand on when making decisions. Fred highly recommends that PISC come to a decision on this (keeping in mind that adjustments can be made as needed). Using "solid" science when making these sorts of decisions (*about prioritizing the invasiveness of particular species*) is a good place to be.

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) commented that it might be best to have a package of assessments for the Council to vote on and approve, rather than voting on one assessment at a time.

Jeff Wagner also remarked that once plant assessments are reviewed and accepted by the Council, they will go to the CP&NWC. But what about animal assessments? Will results from these assessments be sent to the jurisdictional agencies? Kris Abell (PDA) responded, saying he feels there are a number of ways these recommendations and lists can be utilized. Providing this info to the relevant agencies is one piece of the puzzle, but this info could also be used when speaking to legislators and educators as well. For example, when the McKean County Conservation District received grant money to manage goatsrue in their county, an issue that came up was: Where is goatsrue listed (*in an official document*) that it is a problem species? Since goatsrue is on the PA noxious weed list, this was a non-issue, but for non-plant invasive



species, it will be good to have an agreed-upon and standardized list with a prioritized score (something that will be useful in many contexts).

**MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR) moved to approve the New York State non-native invasive plant assessment tool (*modified for PA*) and the Generic Impact Scoring System (GISS) as the official recommendation by PISC for use in assessing invasive species in Pennsylvania. Scott Bearer (PGC) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that Council members may want to table the discussion on how to handle the procedural part of these assessments and how the Council approves of these (i.e., to be discussed at a future meeting). Ruth Welliver (PDA) agreed, saying she would prefer to see this procedure written down first (and talk about it at another time).

**ACTION ITEM:** An update on the proposed procedure to be used by PISC when running one of the (approved) assessment tools (*mentioned above*) will be provided and discussed at the next PISC meeting in March 2021.

---

### ***PRISM Program Committee***

Members: Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR), Don Eggen (DCNR), Ruth Welliver (PDA), Brian Pilarcik (PALMS), Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP), Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP), Piper Sherburne (PACD), Tom Cermak (PA Sea Grant), Kimberly Bohn (PSU), Erin Copeland (PPC), Sarah Johnson (DCNR), Trilby Libhart (PDA), Brenda Shambaugh (PACD), Maddie Stanisch (MCCD/APIPMA), Grant DeCosta (Brandywine Conservancy), Johan Berger (SCC), Mary Walsh (WPC/PNHP), Erin Frederick (PSU Master Watershed Stewards)

Kris Abell (PDA) commented that this committee has grown quite large, which is good in some respects, but a large group can also hamper progress. The group has developed a mission statement to help in staying focused and to include in any documentation related to the program plan:

PRISM Program Mission Statement: The PA PRISM program addresses the critical need to manage invasive species that threaten Pennsylvania's economy, environment, and human and animal health by developing strong stakeholder partnerships.

During the last PISC meeting, the Council approved the general structure of what a PRISM program will look like in PA. The next step in the process is to develop an implementation plan. To accomplish this, the PRISM committee is being divided up into a number of subcommittees to tackle the major elements of the implementation plan. A general outline for implementing a PRISM program in PA is as follows (*and includes the names of each respective subcommittee's members*):

1. Create an executive summary of the implementation plan

- a. Members: TBD
  - b. Note: This part of the plan will come last, after the plan has been fully developed.
2. Create a process to identify a host/lead organization for each regional PRISM
  - a. Members: Amy Jewitt, Mary Walsh, Johan Berger, Piper Sherburne
3. Define requirements and guidelines for each PRISM to develop a 5-year plan/proposal
  - a. Members: Erin Copeland, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Kimberly Bohn, Mary Walsh
4. Determine composition and responsibilities of a review committee for 5-year plans and reports
  - a. Members: Jeff Wagner, Piper Sherburne (more as needed)
  - b. Note: This review committee will likely be composed of staff from PDA and members of PISC, but could also include other individuals not yet identified.
5. Contract and statement of work; Quarterly and/or annual progress report guidelines
  - a. Members: Ruth Welliver, Don Eggen, Johan Berger
6. Information management, data clearinghouse, mapping and GIS
  - a. Members: Sarah Johnson, Amy Jewitt, and hopefully a representative from PDA
7. Resource development and outside funding
  - a. Members: TBD
8. Provide guidelines and expectations for first year of program
  - a. Members: TBD

Kris commented that each of these subcommittees should have a maximum of four members (*or close to it*). Each group should plan to meet monthly and discuss their assigned topic(s) in between PRISM subcommittee meetings.

**ACTION ITEM:** If there are others on PISC that want to participate in these subcommittees, please reach out to Kris.

Don Eggen (DCNR) mentioned that are overlaps between different parts of the implementation plan. In some cases, certain parts of the plan will need to be worked on before others, while in other cases, other sections can be worked on simultaneously.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) mentioned another item of conversation happening amongst these smaller subcommittees is that of choosing a leader/chairperson to guide their respective group and report back to the larger PRISM committee on progress being made. Kris Abell (PDA) commented that this will be important to do, and will be a big help to Kris.

---

### ***Legislative Committee***

Members: Mike Nerozzi (PFBC) (Chair), Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant), Brian Pilarcik (PALMS), Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR), Gregg Robertson (PLNA), Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP), Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP), Stephen Rudman (PDA), Nicole Faraguna (DCNR), Shea Zwerver (DCNR), Brenda Shambaugh (PACD), Eryn Spangler (PDA)

Kris Abell (PDA) commented that this workgroup continues to focus on trying to get an economic impact study of invasive species done as this is viewed as an important component of a proposal to the state legislature to fund a PA PRISM program. However, accomplishing this goal has been a challenge, given the broad scope of this type of study in terms of needed funding and the time it will take to complete. To help in overcoming this challenge, Kris formed a smaller subcommittee to refine the scope of the study. Members of this subcommittee concluded they would like to see the study be confined to impacts incurred on the top six industries in PA (i.e., forestry/timber, recreation and tourism, fishing and hunting, agriculture, landscape/nursery, and human health). The study would also include details about impacts related to emerging invaders (e.g., if Asian longhorned beetle were to arrive in Pennsylvania).

Kris Abell (PDA) and Mike Nerozzi (PFBC) met last week with the [Center for Rural Pennsylvania](#) with this modified PA invasive species economic impact proposal. Even with the proposed changes, the Center is still concerned that this modified study seems too large (for the Center) to fund and too broad in scope to attract a university faculty member to spearhead. The Center instead recommended helping to sponsor a legislative hearing to serve the same purpose as the study would. Nothing is set in stone at this time regarding next steps, and there is still a chance that an RFP will be released through the Center to have an invasive species economic impact study conducted.

The other task this committee is working on is the development of an RFP for the [PA Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account](#) that exists in the PA Farm Bill. With help from Ruth Welliver (PDA), an RFP has been developed and is ready to be used when a potential future grant program is implemented for the Rapid Response Account. This account was approved to be refunded at the level of \$3 million in 2021. (See “[Wolf Administration Secures \\$16 Million Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#)” for more details).

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris is unsure how much of the \$3 million from the Farm Bill (if any) can be utilized for an RFP for the PA Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Account. That is yet to be determined.

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned this committee would also like to start doing more work related to legislative outreach to support the PA PRISM program being developed.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) commented that even though things are not looking hopeful as far as funding from the Center for the economic impact study, she feels that are many instances that

have arisen over the years where PISC (and others) need solid numbers to point to in proving a point that the impacts of invasive species are significant in our state. For example, providing these data to legislators would be incredibly important to do. Amy mentioned she is very much in support of doing a legislative hearing, but still hopes there is a way to do this study. There is a big need for it, and once completed, would likely be utilized by a lot of people. Amy also remarked that funding is certainly the biggest hurdle for doing the study (and COVID isn't helping anything). Kris responded that the economic impact study is not completely off the table, and is something for the Legislative committee to have more discussion about. There is still a chance the study could be further refined to make a more effective RFP offered by the Center for Rural PA. There may also be an option is to pursue other funding sources (*other than just the Center for Rural PA*).

---

### ***Website Development Committee***

Members: Gary Walters (DEP), Felicia Lamphere (DEP), Kate Harms (PALMS), Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP), Sara Stahlman (PA Sea Grant)

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned this committee has developed a mission statement to help in defining the purpose of the [PISC website](#).

**Website Development Mission statement:** The purpose of the PISC website is to 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 Pennsylvania.

Since the last PISC meeting, all the designees (*PISC members*) and alternates are listed on the PISC website.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris asked Council representatives to visit the website and review this new information to ensure it is listed correctly.

Kris reminded Council members and stakeholders that meeting minutes, PDFs of presentations, and other documents and resources are posted to the website as quickly as possible.

This committee has also been hard at work on a PISC [ArcGIS StoryMap](#) that will highlight numerous projects being worked on by agencies and organizations represented on the Council. Once completed, information in this StoryMap will be useful to reference by PISC as well as members of the general public and will be posted on the PISC website.

Discussions around creating a PISC blog are also taking place by members of this committee. The purpose of a PISC blog would be to provide timely information and updates that PISC is involved in.

Gary Walters (DEP) thanked Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) for her time and effort spent on developing the StoryMap. The committee hopes to share a completed version of the StoryMap with the Council in the near future. Gary reiterated that several PISC member agencies/organizations are represented in the StoryMap, but not all. If your agency/organization is involved in (or recently completed) an activity that you would like to see included in the StoryMap, please reach out Gary Walters, Amy Jewitt, or Kris Abell. *(If an update cannot be included in this version of the StoryMap, perhaps it may be included if/when we do a future update.)*

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) thanked Gary for his compliments and mentioned that the StoryMap should be ready to share with PISC members and others in early 2021. At present, the StoryMap features 20-25 separate updates from various member agencies/organizations of PISC (with some of the updates being from the same entity). Amy also mentioned the StoryMap will be easy to share with others *(via a hyperlink)*, and is something that can be posted on others' websites *(and social media platforms)*.

---

### **Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

Meeting adjourned.

#### ***Next PISC Meeting***

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 10:00am via Skype

Contact Kristopher Abell at [krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov) with any questions or suggestions.

---

*Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Jewitt, WPC/PNHP*

**Thank you, Amy, for your hard work assembling these minutes! -Kris Abell**

---