

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

January 11, 2007, 9:30 am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number. Minutes taken by Deena Jallen

Participants:

Kris Benson- AK DOT, Juneau

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Juneau

Gino Graziano- Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), Wasilla

Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Dan Proulx- AK DNR, Division of Agriculture, Fairbanks

Linda Shaw- NOAA, NMFS, Juneau

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Update on Activities
- Funding
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- Oregon Spartina Response plan
- Coastal and Ocean Resources Inc. info

Update on Activities

Deena Jallen will be out of funding at the end of the month, and will likely no longer be available for minutes and website updates for the AISWG. Deena is also working on a green crab poster. Current print cost estimate are about \$3 for each laminated poster, but Dan Proulx said that DNR may be able to print larger posters on their plotter for less than commercial printing costs.

Dan Proulx is working on the new invasive and noxious weed list. It is currently circulating DNR internally for comments. He expects to have a version for public comment available soon. The draft list has 50 species, including restricted weeds and weed seeds as agricultural products. Noxious weeds would be completely prohibited, restricted weeds would be limited to a certain amount per pound of seeds (agricultural seeds/seed mixes are allowed to have certain percentages of weed seeds). Deena Jallen mentioned that she picked up a seed packet from Usibelli Coal Mine at the fair which contained 'Reed Canary' seeds. Gino Graziano said that some people are growing reed canarygrass as a pasture crop, or for biofuel. It has a hardy root system and grows fast. It produces a reasonable forage if cut early. However, there are plants that would be good alternatives, and would not pose the threat of invasiveness.

As part of the list, there are also new regulatory sections added for weeds. The current regulations are geared towards commercial production and seeds. The list is being done separately, so it can at least get done while the new regulatory sections are being worked on. Dan Proulx said that it would be possible later to amend the regulations to add the

seed list, and that he would like to see the noxious weed list in a separate section. That way at least the seed list can get done while the new chapter is being considered.

Gino Graziano has sent in a proposal to the USFWS for a 'Pulling Together' initiative. The project covers increased citizen involvement, pamphlets, identification materials, and plans for mobile rapid response crews. The Homer District is getting ready to open the position being vacated by Caleb Slemmons. Plans are also underway for projects in the summer season.

Linda Shaw questioned if the rapid response plans would include educating citizen scientists in identification, have mechanisms for reporting sightings, and what sort of plans are in place if spartina was discovered. Gino replied that Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other weed management groups would be the first ones contacted. Personnel from those organizations would then go out to confirm the sighting, and start implementing containment and eradication based on what they see fit, available resources, protocols, and permitting considerations. In South East and Kodiak, it would be relatively easy to get out and identify spartina, whereas in Prince William Sound or other areas it would be harder. Gino would like to have Linda Shaw in on the subcommittee to help advise and hash out issues regarding EDRR (Early Detection and Rapid Response) for spartina. Linda recommended looking at the Oregon Spartina Response Plan, which often deals with infestations along road systems, and has good information on methodology and logistics. Gino said that the next step is to start making an informational pamphlet, advertise, work on reporting instructions, and start on rapid response plans.

Jeff Heys reminded the AISWG about the Invasive Species Advisory Committee meeting coming up in May in Anchorage. He encouraged the group to come up with items that need national attention.

The AISWG was planning on having an in-person meeting during the week of the ISAC meeting, but the schedule will be very busy. The AIWSG and Michele Hebert will need to discuss an in-person spring meeting at future teleconference calls.

Kris Benson called into the Marine Subcommittee call on 1/10. She has spoken to the ferry terminal operations manager (Cheri Murphy), and has the go-ahead to do tunicate monitoring at ferry terminals throughout the state.

Linda Shaw said that Cheri Murphy was very enthusiastic about the project. Linda has emailed Greg Ruiz and Chela Zabin from the Smithsonian institute (Chela is the west coast coordinator for Smithsonian tunicate monitoring). They are planning to hold a conference call in February to set up and discuss monitoring sites around the state. Linda is also working with Tammy Davis on green crab monitoring. They will have a teleconference on January 29th with people from last years green crab training session to discuss needs for the coming year.

Linda has also contacted the Juneau Watershed Program (Beverly Anderson) to see about getting them involved in green crab monitoring.

Tammy Davis updated from the Marine teleconference that Lance Lerum mentioned he might be able to do green crab monitoring from Forestry Service vessels. These boats travel to more remote areas. Jeff Heys mentioned that many of the Forest Service employees are also crab catchers, and would be interested in looking for green crab.

Tammy is also hoping to set up an RSA (reimbursable services agreement) with Commercial Fisheries to do a scientific research permit similar to the one with Sport Fisheries. Green crab permits are with Commercial Fisheries. Sarah from ADF&G permitting is hoping to get all scientific-educational permit holders to get baseline data at all sampling areas, and tie in invasive species observations in near shore areas.

Tammy has been getting funding together to contract with Jodi Harney (Coastal and Oceans Resources Inc. in Canada). Jodi will be putting together a spartina habitat suitability model (similar to the green crab habitat suitability model) that is expected to be done by June 2008. ADF&G also has the first draft of the Alaska Natural Heritage final report for the non-native animal data acquisition, and some of the species info pages. This project is a precursor to an invasiveness ranking for animal species similar to the plant ranking. Although an animal ranking would be a worthy project, the funding for the full ranking is not available. 117 non-native species (amphibians, birds, fishes, invertebrates, mammals, parasites, pathogens and reptiles) have been documented in Alaska of this list; of this list 41 are considered invasive according to ANHP. Seventeen species of the 41 considered invasive are examined more closely and have status reports describing biology, distribution and abundance (with maps), and potential ecological impact. Tammy is working on a proposal for annual NOAA funding..

AISWG/Invasive species Funding

Tammy Davis and Dan Proulx both expressed apologies for lack of funding and leadership from state Commissioners and Directors. So far there has been no decision from AK DNR or ADF&G about chairing the AISWG or sharing chair duties. No funding has been identified to fund personnel to continue AISWG meetings, minutes or website updates. Tammy and Dan are planning to speak later to work on unified statements. In speaking with USFWS and NOAA grant administrators, both funding agencies have stressed the importance of collaboration, and some of those quotes may be helpful in approaching state agency leaders and encouraging agency directors to meet and discuss the importance of addressing invasive species issues.

Jeff Heys pointed out that although the state agencies are used to working with federal agencies, they are not as accustomed to working with each other. Each agency has a single vision, and has a hard time justifying spending funds on projects outside of their focus. Dan Proulx pointed out that AKDNR does not have jurisdiction over intertidal weeds, and it is this kind of issue that would benefit from agency collaboration. Unfortunately, for DNR, oil and gas issues are currently at the forefront. Jeff Heys mentioned that citizen involvement has been very helpful with weed issues, and that if fishery interests were to raise a similar outcry, aquatic and other invasive species concerns may get more attention.

Next teleconference for the AISWG

Marine Subcommittee and Green Crab citizen monitors teleconference

January 29th

Contact Linda Shaw for more information (Linda.Shaw@noaa.gov)

Tunicate Monitoring teleconference

Call in number and time/date To Be Announced

Contact Linda Shaw for more information (Linda.Shaw@noaa.gov)

Marine Subcommittee

February 28, 9:30 am

To attend, call into 907-586-7977. Allow line to ring until another party picks up, long distance charges apply.

AISWG

February 28, 11:00 am

To attend, call into 907-271-1405. Allow line to ring until another party picks up, long distance charges apply.

Additional Resources

Oregon Spartina Response Plan

www.clr.pdx.edu/docs/SpartinaPlan5-8.pdf

Jodi Harney and Coastal and Ocean Resources Inc.

<http://www.coastalandoceans.com/index.html>

http://www.coastalandoceans.com/personnel_harney.html