

AISWG Minutes May 2006 to December 2006

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Minutes were recorded by Deena Jallen (UAF-CES).

Teleconferences were hosted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Tuesday May 23rd, 9am to 10 am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Anne Jourdan- Alaska Intertribal Council, Anchorage
Michael Shephard- USDA Forest Service, Anchorage
Gino Graziano-AK Association of Conservation Districts, Wasilla
Linda Shaw- National Marine Fisheries Service, Juneau
Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage
Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau
Gene Schock- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Palmer
Paul Andron-US Coast Guard, Juneau
Rachel Petro-AK Dept. of Natural Resource, Anchorage
Larry Johnson-AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks
Steve Seefeldt- USDA Agricultural Research Service, Fairbanks
Alberto Pantoja- USDA Agricultural Research Service, Fairbanks
Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage
Rosemarie Lombardi- AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Wasilla
Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks
Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Accomplishments since meeting in April
- Marine Group
- Draft MOU
- Summer activities
- Set next meeting time

Accomplishments since meeting in April

- Meeting minutes summarized and sent out over listserv
- Mission and Goals outlined
- Set date for October Meeting
- Education subcommittee results
 - Communication Network
 - newsletter
 - listserv

Comments on above items: limited

Comments on listserv: when responding to a post from the list serve, the response goes out to the entire listserv. To respond to a single person, you must select their email address.

Marine Group

The plan for the Marine Subcommittee is to meet monthly via teleconference. The first months meeting will be to:

- Plan group direction
- Identify holes and overlap between Marine and the other subcommittees
- Formulate a document of what the marine subcommittee wants to accomplish
- Discuss the top 10 worst Marine Species list

The meeting will be an audio conference held Tuesday May 30th at 9 am via NMFS bridge number.

Linda Shaw will send D. Jallen a general agenda, which will be distributed over the listserv by D. Jallen with meeting announcement. In preparation for the marine meeting, Bob Piorkowski will send L. Shaw a draft list of the top 10 priority marine species.

Draft MOU

Michael Shephard will send current draft of the MOU along with current changes from the federal agencies to Michele Hebert, UAF. M. Hebert and D. Jallen will reconcile changes, and send the MOU to Larry Johnson and B. Piorkowski for edits, and then submit the MOU over the listserv for further review. All comments and edits to the MOU should be completed by the next audio conference meeting at the end of June.

Discussion of Subcommittee goals and Activities for the summer

- **Website**
UAF-CES will create and maintain a temporary website for the AISWG through the Cooperative Extension service. The goal of the website is to compile and present information being gathered by the AISWG and to have an accessible point of contact. This website will be subject to review by the AISWG while it is under construction. Technical aspects such as limited access and access while under construction need to be addressed by D. Jallen and UAF information technology resources.
- **Draft critical species lists**
Discussion will be continued about how many species, how groups are broken down (marine, terrestrial, plant, disease, scientific, public, etc). Lists intended to raise public awareness may differ from more scientifically determined lists. Public lists should include species the public can respond to, and that will increase awareness of other invasive species and their issues. It is proposed that a session of the AISWG October meeting be devoted to discussing issues of list research, formation, scientific viability and public effectiveness. M. Shephard will forward to the listserv notes from a speech about addressing audience concerns in invasive species awareness.
In the near future, we should have a list with the top 10 or Dirty Dozen that represent a variety of taxa of public concern, and that can be distributed via fliers and used in public awareness campaigns.
- **Critical Response Plans**
One of the outcomes from the April meeting was a goal to compile Rapid Response Plans and contact lists in Alaska. L. Shaw and M. Shephard will work on combining Marine and Terrestrial aspects of Rapid Response Plans. L. Shaw viewed a talk in Miami comparing RRP's to oil spill responses, the author of the talk would be an interesting guest to have at a future AISWG meeting. Larry Johnson brought up that as a state, Alaska is not well prepared, and we don't know who is in charge. Research should be done into background on how plans are formed in other states, and how plans would apply to Alaska. RRP's research and Alaska resources should be a topic of discussion at the October AISWG meeting

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Thursday June 29th, 1 pm. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Additional Items:

Naming: Group consensus accepts Alaska Invasive Species Working Group. This name will not interfere or be confused with the formation of the Alaska Invasive Species Council.

Gino Graziano will send out via listserv the AK Association of Conservation Districts May newsletter with AIS-WG article.

Michael Shephard will send out via listserv an article on addressing invasive species materials to the public.

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Thursday June 29th, 1pm to 2 pm

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Larry DeVilbiss- AK Dept. of Natural Resource, Palmer

Gino Graziano-AK Association of Conservation Districts, Wasilla

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson-AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks

Lisa Ka'aihue- Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, Anchorage

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Rachel Petro-AK Dept. of Natural Resource, Anchorage

Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau

Linda Robinson- Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Linda Shaw- National Marine Fisheries Service, Juneau

Agenda: Items to discuss

- AISWG Strategic Plan
- Critical Species lists and criteria
- MOU Progress
- Next meeting for the AISWG
- Additional Resources

AISWG Strategic Plan

The Marine Group of the AISWG evaluated strategic plans from several organizations, and recommended plans from Virginia and the National Park Service (see Additional Resources for links). These have strong organizational structures and were good examples of strategic plans. Bob Piorkowski has volunteered to draft an outline for a strategic plan by October. It was suggested that Bob work with the CNIPM board in the development of an outline.

Before writing the Alaska Invasive Species Strategic plan, it was agreed upon that an assessment is needed. The state of Idaho completed a well structured assessment of its invasive species programs. An assessment would serve to identify gaps in invasive species programs, jurisdictional conflicts, and available resources. This information would be valuable in highlighting areas of need for agency leaders and legislators.

So far, assessment information can be gathered from the Alaska Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan, CNIPM documents, ADF&G Rodent Management plans, USDA Forestry Forest Health Reports, Alaska Natural Heritage Program, and other documents.

The goal for the Assessment document is to have a skeleton available for review by the October AISWG Meeting. Bob Piorkowski will head the effort to assemble the assessment, and may receive help from the CNIPM board and other individuals. It was also suggested that the plan include grading of efforts, as a quick way to assess coverage (ie. Triffid Management Plan gets an A, Martian import regulations get a C).

Critical Species lists and criteria

Bob Piorkowski has sent out draft criteria for evaluating critical species to the Marine Group. In addition to the tentative top ten invasive marine species, the Alaska Heritage program is working on a top 100 worst species list. See Additional Resources for draft version of the criteria.

MOU Progress

The MOU has been reviewed by the participating organizations. Changes were incorporated, and approved. One concern is that the MOU is vague, but the group agreed that it works as a draft, and that it

should proceed forward in the approval process. Issues with FACA (Federal Advisory Committee Act) have been brought up, but as the state will be leading the AISWG effort, FACA will not be a problem.

Rachael Petro will now take the MOU to the next meeting of the Natural Resources Commissioners Cabinet. After they have the chance to make suggestions, the MOU will come back to the AISWG for approval. Once approved, Michael Shephard from USDA Forest Service will lead the effort to get signatures from the participating agencies. If anyone has questions for the Commissioners, they should email them to Rachael Petro at, rachael_petro@dnr.state.ak.us

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Tuesday August 1st, 1 pm. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Additional Items:

- Union of Concerned Scientists
<http://www.ucsusa.org/>
- UCS Alaska assessment
http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/invasive_species/Alaska_invasives_1.pdf
http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/invasive_species/Ak_naisa_1.pdf
- Alaska Natural Heritage Project
<http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/>
- CNIPM (Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management) strategic plan
<http://www.cnipm.org/strategic.pdf>
- Forestry information about Invasive exotic insects and plants. For SE plants - see the 2004 condition report.

The 2005 Conditions Report focused on Invasive Plants in SC Alaska.

http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/spf/fhp/cond_rept_links.htm

- Idaho Invasive species home page <http://www.idahoag.us/index.php>
- Idaho state invasive species assessment Executive Summary
<http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/InvasiveSpeciesCounsel/documents/Idaho%20Assessment%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>
- Idaho invasive species assessment
<http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/InvasiveSpeciesCounsel/documents/Idaho%20Assessment.pdf>
- Virginia invasive species management plan
http://http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dnh/vaisc/documents/VISMP_final.pdf
- National Park Service Plan
http://www.nature.nps.gov/biology/invasivespecies/strat_pl.cfm

Invasive species worst list criteria

DRAFT A--Criteria for Invasive Species Designation/Ranking in Alaska
(by rjpiorkowski adapted from MA invasive species program)

Must meet these four base criteria to be considered for designation/ranking

1. Non-indigenous to an area of Alaska but broadly distributed elsewhere (can adapt to a wide range of conditions and or exists under similar conditions found in Alaska)
2. Has the biologic potential for rapid and widespread dispersion and establishment in minimally managed habitats. (out-competes and replaces native biota, free from predators/diseases)
3. Have the biologic potential for dispersing over spatial gaps away from site of introduction (closely associated with human activities)
4. Have the biologic potential for existing in high numbers in either disturbed habitats or undisturbed habitats (self compatible, short juvenile periods, high reproductive potential, several reproductive stages).

Potential Invasive- meet criteria #1 thru #5

5. Established in Alaska (persists without additional introductions)

Invasive- meets criteria #1 thru #5 and at least one of #6 thru #9

6. Widespread in the Pacific Northwest or the Yukon, or at least be common in habitat type(s) found in Alaska.
7. Have many occurrences of numerous individuals in localized areas of Alaska; high numbers of individuals in minimally managed habitats
8. Out-compete other species in the same natural biotic community.
9. Demonstrates rapid growth, high production and dissemination, and establishment in natural biotic communities.

Likely invasive- meets criteria #1-5 and at least one of #10 thru #12

10. Have at least one occurrence in Massachusetts that has high numbers of individuals forming dense stands in minimally managed habitats
11. Have the potential, based on its biology and its colonization history in the northeast or elsewhere, to become invasive in Massachusetts.
12. Be acknowledged to be invasive in nearby states but its status in Massachusetts is unknown or unclear. This may result from lack of field experience with the species or from difficulty in species determination or taxonomy.

POTENTIAL INVASIVE—meets criteria #1 thru #4 and #13 thru 15

13. The species, if it becomes established in Alaska, based on its biology and biological potential, would pose an imminent threat to the biodiversity of Alaska **and**
14. Its establishment is possible, **and**
15. The species has a documented history of invasiveness in other areas with climates ecosystems similar to Alaska.

An addition to the previous list. There are two other criteria that should be incorporated into the scheme at a future date.

1. Are other invasive species present that would facilitate this species establishment (positively correlates with invasiveness)
2. Are there native species present of the same genera that occupy similar niches (negatively correlate with invasiveness)

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Tuesday August 1, 1pm to 2 pm
Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks
Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks
Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage
Rose Lombardi- Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Wasilla
Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau
Jeanne Standley- Bureau of Land Management, BLM
Calvin Steele- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Palmer

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Discussion of the AISWG website
- AISWG Newsletter
- Update from Marine subcommittee
- Invasive Species Assessment
- MOU Progress
- October Anchorage meeting
- Project briefings
- Next teleconference for the AISWG
- Additional Resources

Discussion of the AISWG website

The AISWG website is ready to debut. The site will stress that the AISWG does not have a signed MOU, and is not yet working in an official capacity. Logos from participating agencies are noted as being 'Logos for agencies concerned with invasive species in Alaska.' The website will be registered by UAF and paid for by the Cooperative Extension EPA grant. The address is proposed to be: www.alaskainvasives.org At some later date, if the website is hosted by another agency, the name and address can remain the same so as to reduce confusion. Those wishing to review the site and make corrections and suggestions can view the work-in-progress draft at www.uaf.edu/ces/michele/tests Please email the webmaster with feedback.

AISWG Newsletter

The AISWG newsletter is being produced on a quarterly basis. The August issue will focus on invasive species research activities throughout the state. Brief research summaries should be sent to Deena Jallen at fdmj@uaf.edu. Accompanying photos would also be helpful. The deadline for these submissions is August 11. Subsequent issues of the newsletter will provide updates on AISWG progress, and may focus on outreach or management activities among AISWG participants. Finished versions of the newsletter will be available via the listserv and website.

Update from Marine Subcommittee

The Marine subcommittee of the AISWG continues to hold monthly teleconference meeting. The last meeting was held on July 25. The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00am August 31. Details will be announced over the listserv and website.

During the July meeting, the Marine subcommittee provided updates on ongoing projects. For more details, please see the Marine subcommittee minutes. It was agreed to not pursue formal criteria and ranking for a critical invasive species list for the website. The list will be based off of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council list, with a few additions to reflect more plant species, and

important invasive species outside of the Prince William Sound area. See Additional Resources for the link to PWSRCAC invasive species page.

Invasive Species Assessment

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is working with the Alaska Natural Heritage project. They have received a \$10,000 grant to produce a ranking system for aquatic invasives. This project is in the beginning stage, a deadline for completion has not yet been set. As previously mentioned under the Marine section, it has been decided that efforts would be better focused on producing a needs assessment, rather than setting and applying invasive species ranking criteria. An assessment would be very helpful in convincing state leaders that we need support for the AISWG.

MOU Progress

The MOU has not yet been reviewed by the Natural Resources Commissioners Cabinet. The Alaska state legislature is in the middle of a special session. Rachael Petro has not yet given an update on the MOU progress to the AISWG. Progress is expected to be slow in an election year.

Michele Hebert will contact Rachael Petro, and Bob Piorkowski will contact his commissioner for an update on the MOU progress.

Once the MOU has approval from the Commissioners, Michael Shephard from USDA Forest Service will lead the effort to get signatures from the participating agencies. If anyone has questions for the Commissioners, they should email them to Rachael Petro at, rachael_petro@dnr.state.ak.us

October Anchorage meeting

On October 24, the AISWG will meet in Anchorage. Much of the agenda and scheduling for that meeting will be determined by the progress of the MOU. The meeting should start after 10:30 am, to allow people to travel to Anchorage that morning, and save money on an additional night of lodging before the meeting. It is not yet decided to end the meeting at 4:30 pm. An earlier end time could be possible if not much is on the agenda. The USFWS building will not be available for this meeting.

Meeting times, location and agenda will be updated via the listserv and website. Bob Piorkowski will try to have a draft of the Alaska needs assessment ready to discuss at the October meeting. The AISWG may also adopt a more formal structure during the meeting. Further teleconferences will review the goals from the initial AISWG meeting in April, and determine the October agenda.

The day after the AISWG meeting, CNIPM (Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management) will have a meeting at the Anchorage Coast International Inn. National speakers are scheduled for the CNIPM meeting. There is also a talk planned for the evening of October 24 about invasive plants that is open to the public. The time and location of this talk has not yet been set, and will be updated via listserv and website.

Project Briefings

Michele Hebert from UAF Cooperative Extensive Service has coordinated with WPDN; Western Plant Diagnostics Network. Twelve people statewide are working on a database of plants, plant pests and diseases that is part of the western region and national database. Training took place in June in Fairbanks, and covered techniques for taking good digital photos using microscope cameras, data forms, and collecting sample information. Forest Service is also connected to this network, and participates in diagnosing samples. The WPDN is predominantly utilized in Cooperative Extension, and is concerned with agricultural crops and homeland security. The DDDI (Distance Diagnostics through Digital Imaging) can also be used to record and identify invasive plants and insects. See Additional Resources for websites.

Jeanne Standley from Bureau of Land Management activities gave a brief overview. BLM has contracted with the Alaska Natural Heritage Program to do weed surveys along Alaska highways. Results from the Steese and Elliot highways will soon be on the AKEPIC site (Alaska Exotic Plant Information Clearinghouse). Surveys are conducted up to a mile from the road. This project is connected to monitoring

for weeds after fire activity. In areas with less severe fire damage, weeds may move in slowly, in areas with severe fires, weeds can move in more rapidly. BLM conducts continuous surveys of weeds on its lands. Additional tasks in the contract include hand pulling small outlier infestations and establishing monitoring plots on BLM managed lands. This work was prescribed by Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams in the form of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) Plans for 20 fires. The goal of this work is to prevent weeds from moving into the burned areas. The data from these surveys will be entered into AKEPIC this fall or winter and final reports on the surveys are due this winter.

Denny Lassuy noted that the USFWS had supported similar survey activities in response to the extensive fires of 2004 and 2005. Preliminary results of those surveys were presented by AKNHP personnel at the 2005 CNIPM meeting in Fairbanks and copies of the final report are available upon request. USFWS is currently working on a technical guide for the treatment of invasive plants on fire-affected National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska, with completion expected in the Fall of 2006.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Tuesday August 29, 1 pm. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Additional Resources:

PWSRCAC Non Indigenous Species and Technology Fact Sheets

<http://www.pwsrcac.org/projects/NIS/factsheets.html>

AISWG temporary address for review

www.uaf.edu/ces/michele/tests

Alaska Natural Heritage Program

http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/ecology/Ecology_Monitoring_Projects.htm

Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management

www.cnipm.org

University of Alaska Distance Diagnostics through Digital Imaging; has information about the system. You must have an account to submit samples. For more information on training and getting an account, contact Michel Hebert, ffmah@uaf.edu

<http://www.dddi.org/AKU/index.cfm>

Western Plant Diagnostics Network

<https://www.wpdn.org/>

AKEPIC (Alaska Exotic Plant Information Clearinghouse)

<http://akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/>

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Tuesday August 29, 1pm to 2 pm
Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Helen Dennison-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Palmer
Larry DeVilbiss-AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Palmer
Gino Graziano- Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), Wasilla
Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks
Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage
Caitlin Higgins-Alaska Conservation Alliance, Anchorage
Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks
Larry Johnson-AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks
Anne Jourdan- Alaska Intertribal Council (AITC), Anchorage
Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage
Rose Lombardi- AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Wasilla
Sharry Miller- Prince William Soundkeeper, Valdez
Shelly Morgan- The Nature Conservancy, Anchorage
Rachael Petro-AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Anchorage
Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau
Linda Shaw- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Juneau
Michael Shepherd-US Forestry Service, Anchorage
Jeanne Standley-US Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Discussion of the AISWG website
- CNIPM directory update
- Strategic Plan
- Invasive Species Assessment
- MOU Progress
- October Anchorage meeting
- Next teleconference for the AISWG
- Additional Resources

Discussion of the AISWG website

The AISWG website is still at its temporary address. Once up and running, it can keep the name of alaskainvasives.com on whatever server it goes to, if it ends up getting hosted by the state or another agency. Those wishing to review the site and make corrections and suggestions can view the work-in-progress draft at www.uaf.edu/ces/michele/tests Please email the webmaster with feedback.

CNIPM directory update

Group discussion about adding the CNIPM directory to the website; Michael Shephard will bring up the issue with the CNIPM board at the next meeting. The directory needs to be updated, and CNIPM is considering adding more categories of interests and a flagging system to make the directory more comprehensive and user friendly. Michele Hebert will send her more updated version to Jeff Heys.

Strategic Plan/Invasive Species Assessment

One of the outcomes discussed at the AISWG meeting in April was to have the Strategic Plan process underway. During the July monthly meeting of the AISWG, the orderly development of a Strategic plan was discussed. It was decided by meeting attendees that efforts would be better focused on producing a

needs assessment. Bob Piorkowski from ADF&G is leading this process. He will be holding a teleconference for interested parties at 2pm, Wednesday September 6. More details, including example documents from Idaho, will be provided via the listserv. Michael Shepherd recommended looking at the Assessment of Invasive Species in Alaska and its National Forests, although forest centric, it is a good example.

A first draft of a needs assessment may be ready for distribution by early October, so that it can be discussed at the AISWG meeting and further steps charted.

The schedule for the needs assessment includes:

First meeting, 9/6 2pm: Coordinate with volunteers to divide tasks. Bob Piorkowski will supply example documents, rough draft.

Late September, have a draft ready for polishing.

Early October, (2-3 weeks before October 24): supply draft to the AISWG for review and comments.

Volunteers are needed to help out. Linda Shaw will help. Michele Hebert will assist, but does not want to be the sole representative from CNIPM, Larry DeVilbiss will try to have someone from the Division of Agriculture participate, Michael Shephard, and Jeff Heys would be good to tap for ideas on forestry issues. Deena Jallen will assist with administrative support.

MOU Progress

Rachael Petro provided an update on the progress of the MOU. The Natural Resources Commissioners sub-Cabinet has been unable to meet. She talked to the Governors office, and they have agreed to individually move the MOU through the State of Alaska departments, and Commissioners. Changes from the commissioners are expected by Friday, September 8, and the MOU with their changes will be sent to the listserv. The process of collecting signatures will begin the following week. Michael Shepherd will coordinate getting signatures from federal agencies, Rachael Petro will get signatures from state agencies, and Michele Hebert will coordinate getting signatures from Non-Governmental Organizations.

Rose Lombardi suggested that a press release should be made. Rachael Petro said the Governors office would not release one, and that the AISWG should generate it. Denny Lassuy will help with press releases, and may work with Bruce Wood. Michele Hebert will work with the Cooperative Extensions media contacts in TV, radio, and press.

Denny Lassuy would expect that the MOU would be open to more signatures as time goes on. Whether the MOU will be open-ended, or have to be renewed each year is not known.

For further PR venues, Anne Jourdan suggested upcoming conferences this fall, and recommended that AISWG members have advertising at those venues (Alaska Forum on the Environment, Alaska Intertribal Annual Conference, etc). Additionally, the Alaska Forum on the Environment may include a session on invasive species (Jamie Snyder, Denny Lassuy and Bob Piorkowski have been requested to help with organization). USFWS will be displaying information and outreach material on rats, and Denny Lassuy will try to add an update on the AISWG to the agenda.

Bob Piorkowski would like to thank Rachael and the Governors office for making a command decision to move ahead with the MOU signatory process.

October Anchorage meeting

On October 24, the AISWG will meet in Anchorage, and the Fish and Game Hunter Safety and Education training facility near Potter marsh. Space is limited to 40-50 people. Food and water will need to be supplied by participants or by an agreement to be developed the morning of the meeting. That evening, Randy Wesbrooks will give an invasives related talk at the Loussac Library at 7:00 or 7:30.

The next teleconference (September 25) will be used to start planning the October meeting goals and agenda.

Project Briefings

Denny Lassuy will be traveling to Adak to conduct a trial rat eradication project, and will also begin producing a newsletter for the USFWS. This newsletter will be available on the website, produced every other month, provide project overviews, and highlight 2 invasive species in Alaska.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Monday September 25, 1 pm. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Additional Resources:

Assessment of Invasive Species in Alaska and its National Forests

August 30, 2005, Compiled by Barbara Schrader and Paul Hennon

http://akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/pdfs/literature/R10_Inv_Spp_Assessmt.pdf

AISWG temporary address for review

www.uaf.edu/ces/michele/tests

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Thursday September 28, 1:15 pm to 2 pm

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Larry DeVilbiss- AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Palmer

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

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson- AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Rose Lombardi- AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Wasilla

Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau

Michael Shepherd- US Forestry Service, Anchorage

Calvin Steele- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Palmer

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Discussion of the AISWG MOU signatory progress
- Review summary and accomplishments from April meeting
- Discuss bringing posters to the AISWG meeting
- Discuss AISWG October meeting objectives
- AISWG October meeting agenda
- AISWG October meeting registration fee
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional topics:

- Issue of State lead representative
- Possibility of joint AISWG/CNIPM meeting

Additional Resources

- Accomplishments and priorities identified at the April meeting of the Working Group.

Discussion of the AISWG MOU signatory progress

To date, the MOU has been signed by Michael Menge (Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources), Steve Jones (UAF chancellor) and Sharry Miller (Executive Director of the Prince William Soundkeeper). UAF-CES has sent out emails with the MOU and Exhibits attached to primary organization contacts. The agency contact was asked to present their MOU to their agency head for signature, and then mail the form back to Michele Hebert at UAF.

Steve Jones, the chancellor from UAF has signed the MOU. Michael Shephard brought up the need to see if that signature will work for the UA system. Michele Hebert will check to see if she can either get a signature from the UA President, or from the individual campus chancellors.

Rachael Petro did not attend the teleconference, but has given a memo to state agency representatives regarding MOU signatory progress.

After all the signatures have been collected, M. Hebert at UAF-CES will scan them in, and compile signatures on to one document. This method will save a lot of time over the method of physically moving one document between all agencies. Original signature pages will be kept on file.

Review summary and accomplishments from April meeting

Michele Hebert reviewed the list of accomplishments (see Additional Resources) for the first 6 months of the AISWG. M. Hebert also reviewed items identified as highest priority for action before October (see Additional Resources). Of these, the legislative brief has not been acted on. M. Hebert of UAF-CES will put together a draft legislative brief for review at the October meeting, with the intent of presenting it to the legislature in January for the next legislative session after the November elections.

Discuss bringing posters to the AISWG meeting

AISWG members are encouraged to bring posters related to invasive species projects to the October meeting.

Discuss AISWG October meeting objectives

Review top ten invasive species list from Larry DeVilbiss. Gino Graziano recommended talking about identifying and prioritizing invasive species threats. M. Hebert will bring material on drafting legislative briefs, and provide a draft AISWG brief for discussion.

Top items for action in 2006-07 are to create an action plan, a Needs Assessment document, discuss the timeline for a strategic plan, and to pursue official designation for the council. In order to keep the AISWG moving, funding will be needed after December 2006. One of the goals in the MOU is to pursue official designation; the AISWG should endeavor to fulfill the conditions in the MOU.

Michael Shepherd advised that the AISWG should work towards becoming relevant as an organization (creating plans, assessments) before seeking more formal designation from the political side of things. An impediment to drafting significant documents is time and funding. Bob Piorkowski may be able to find funding to support the Invasive Species Program Assistant position until the end of the fiscal year, with the goal of creating a Needs Assessment document. M. Hebert will provide funding estimates to B. Piorkowski for 6 months funding. Funds should also include monies for printing and meetings; a meeting may need to be held in April or May to hold a workshop, and then go forward with editing. B. Piorkowski will give a 20 minute presentation on a Needs Assessment document, and have a rough outline/draft to use as a strawman at the October meeting.

AISWG Meeting Agenda

Not all attendees of the October meeting may have been present in April, so the meeting will open with a brief overview of accomplishments and goals. Forest Service

will give a presentation on their projects. The meeting group will spend about 1.5 hours reviewing accomplishments.

After an on site lunch, the meeting will move into break out sessions on Needs Assessment, (possibly) legislative briefings, and Development of Lists (B. Piorkowski has \$10,000 from NISA (National Invasive Species Act) to work with the Alaska Natural Heritage Project to come up with a method for ranking and listing non-plant invasive species.). Afterwards, the whole group will meet to discuss the action plan for the AISWG moving into 2007.

Michele Hebert will create a draft Agenda to be reviewed at the 10/5/06 teleconference.

Discuss AISWG October meeting registration fee

D. Jallen of UAF-CES will create a registration form with a fee of \$20.00, to be used for snacks and beverages at the meeting. This registration form will be sent out over the listserv, and available at the www.alaskainvasives.org website.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Thursday October 5, 1:30 pm. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Topics: Meeting Agenda

Issue of State lead representative

Representatives from the State agencies, (Bob Piorkowski, Larry DeVilbiss, Larry Johnson, Rose Lombardi) will contact and meet with Rachael Petro to discuss who should be the lead for the State of Alaska with AISWG related issues, and to form a strategy to work with agencies on funding, etc. Whether there will be alternating leads, or joint leads will be worked out among State agency representatives.

Possibility of joint AISWG/CNIPM meeting

Michael Shephard proposed planning an all-taxa joint meeting with CNIPM and AISWG possibly in 2007 or 2008, and will bring this up at the next CNIPM meeting. M. Hebert liked the idea, but would like to see the AISWG invited, so as not to step on toes. Denny Lassuy has seen joint meetings work well in other places, as long as the groups are given adequate time to address their own issues.

Additional Resources: Accomplishments and priorities identified at the April meeting of the Working Group.

2006 AISWG Accomplishments since April '06 Meeting

- The preliminary meeting of the Alaska Invasive Species Working Group was held April 26th and 27th at the US Fish and Wildlife Service Building in Anchorage. In attendance were over 38 representatives from state, federal, citizen, tribal, and conservation organizations.

- Formation of the working group
- Development of mission statement, goals and draft MOU
- Established Marine subcommittee
 - a. Foster communication and information sharing among members
 - b. Discussion of Needs assessment vs. Strategic Plan
 - c. Draft list of top ten marine invasive species
- Communication Network established
 - ie. Listserv, monthly teleconferences
- Website developed and launched
 - ie. Educational materials, Communication, Data storage
- Quarterly Newsletter published highlighting AISWG activities and invasive species issues
- MOU moved forward by Governors office, being used to garner support and foster collaboration (in progress), signatory process underway
- Second meeting planned for October 24

Highest priority for action before October:

- MOU accepted and signed
 - Rachael Petro getting state signatures
 - Michael Shepherd collecting Federal signatures
 - Michele Hebert/Deena Jallen collecting NGO signatures
- Legislative brief
 - Potential item
- Review accomplishments
- Species list from Larry DeVilbiss
 - Available for discussion at meeting
- Develop a system to identify & prioritize potential & existing invasive species threats in Alaska

Highest priority for action at Meeting:

- Develop action plan for 2007
- Needs Assessment
- Process for Strategic Plan
- Annual report to Governor and lawmakers
 - Discuss contents
- Process for official designation of AISWG
 - Council?

Goals and Mission of the AISWG as drafted in April 2006

The mission of Alaska Invasive Species Council (AISC) is to minimize invasive impacts in Alaska by facilitating collaboration, cooperation and communication.

GOALS (non-prioritized, as restated in the MOU):

1. Clarify the jurisdictional authorities of signatory parties as they relate to invasive species management.
2. Share the scientific and technical expertise of the parties related to invasive species management.
3. Encourage and enable signatory party employees or members to work collaboratively to optimize their respective capabilities to minimize invasive species impacts.
4. Collaborate in the development of a needs assessment and drafting of a statewide strategic plan for the management of invasive species.
5. Consider the formation by the State of Alaska, in collaboration with the other signatory parties, a formal structure for continued collaboration, cooperation and communication to minimize invasive species impacts in Alaska.

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Thursday October 5, 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Larry DeVilbiss- AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Palmer

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

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson- AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Bob Piorkowski- AK Dept. of Fish and Game, Juneau

Shelly Morgan- The Nature Conservancy, Anchorage

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Discussion of the AISWG MOU signatory progress
- AISWG October meeting agenda and objectives
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- Updated Agenda

Discussion of the AISWG MOU signatory progress

To date, the MOU has been signed by Michael Menge (Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources), Steve Jones (UAF Chancellor), Sharry Miller (Executive Director of the Prince William Soundkeeper), Niles Cesar (Bureau of Indian Affairs), John Devens (Prince William Sound RCAC), and Michael Menger (Commissioner of Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources). The MOU is in route to AK DEC, and still under consideration by the other federal and NGO organizations.

AISWG Meeting Agenda and Objectives

Some changes were proposed to the Agenda (see new version in Additional Resources). It was suggested by Bob Piorkowski that there could be upwards of 20 agencies represented, and that 1 minute each would not be enough time to provide updates. Michele Hebert and Larry Johnson proposed and supported moving the Agency Updates to take place after the Needs Assessment presentation by Bob Piorkowski. This would allow people to get up and get refreshments while the informal updates were being given. Larry DeVilbiss recommended that an update/summary of the AK Dept. of Agriculture invasive species list be given during the updates by Charlie Knight.

The other change was to switch the order of the Breakout Sessions. If it is decided not to do a Needs Assessment, then more time could be given to the discussion of Invasive Species Lists. Several guest speakers were suggested for this session: Tracey Gotthardt

(Alaska Natural Heritage), Bob Gerlack (State Veterinarian), Gino Graziano, Doug Warner, Ann Ferguson (APHIS Director), and Charlie Knight.

B. Piorkowski suggested that generalized outlines be prepared to make good use of time at the meeting, M. Hebert and Deena Jallen of UAF-CES will draft outlines for the breakout sessions to be reviewed at subsequent teleconferences before the meeting.

In particular, it was discussed in April that human diseases not be part of the scope of the AISWG. L. DeVilbiss cautioned against the possibility of spending a whole hour discussing the details of including diseases into the consideration of the AISWG. The addition of human diseases would necessitate the adding of the Centers for Disease Control and other organizations to the working group. Additional teleconferences will be needed to define the scope and focus of the Breakout sessions.

Items to include on the outline for the Invasive species list session: general philosophy of list generated, flip charts with Marine group and AK Division of Agriculture lists, discussion of G. Graziano's email regarding how to rank invasive species, delineating which species/issues the AISWG will not focus on (whirling disease, avian flu, human diseases, etc), and whether a line should be drawn between those diseases that affect agriculture, natural resources, and human health. So far, none of the signing agencies have brought up concerns with including diseases within the scope of the AISWG.

L. DeVilbiss inquired as to whether the AISWG meeting has gotten any interest from politicians, and if it would be a good idea to invite the candidates for governor. B. Piorkowski mentioned that Senator Fred Dyson was interested in the AISWG and that he would keep him apprised of AISWG meetings. M. Hebert's feeling was that the October AISWG meeting will be more of a work session, and not the best venue for politicians to drop in on. The CNIPM meeting would be a better venue for them to attend, and that in any case, state employees are not allowed to invite political candidates to attend.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

Friday October 13, 10:00 am. NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

Topics: Meeting Agenda

Additional Resources: Agenda with recent changes

10:00 am - 10:20 am Opening Remarks: Review of the AISWG and accomplishments since April: Michele Hebert

10:20 am - 10:40 am Review of Forest Service projects: Michael Shepherd

10:40 am - 11:00 am Needs Assessment: What is it and why do we need one: Bob Piorkowski

11:00 am - 11:20 am Organizational updates on Invasive Species activities

On site – Working Lunch and poster review: snacking during organization updates.

11:20 am - 1:30 pm Where are we headed in 2006-2007? Brainstorming and ranking of priorities

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Breakout session 1: Drafting a Needs Assessment

3:00 pm - 4:15 pm Breakout Session 2: Invasive species lists

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm Summary of Outcomes and closing comments

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Thursday November 21, 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Anchorage

Larry DeVilbiss-AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Palmer

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson-AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Rosemarie Lombardi- AK DEC, Anchorage

Shelly Morgan- The Nature Conservancy, Anchorage

Steve Seefeldt- USDA/ARS/SARU, Fairbanks

Linda Shaw- NOAA-NMFS, Juneau

Michael Shephard- Forest Service, Anchorage

Jeanne Standley- BLM, Anchorage

Agenda: Items to discuss

- AISWG MOU update
- Discussion of the AISWG Needs Assessment
 - Appendices
 - Highlighted Species List
- Draft Assessment Table of Contents
- Outline for Agency Summaries
- AISWG Communications (website and Newsletter) and general info
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- Schedule of Deadlines
- Needs Assessment Table of Contents (Draft)
- Agency Information draft (Questions for agencies)
- Agency Information Example from US Forest Service
- MOU Signatories as of 11/28/06

AISWG MOU update

19 Signed MOU's present in Fairbanks, as of 11/28/06. See Additional Resources for list of signatories.

Discussion of the AISWG Needs Assessment

The AISWG plans to create a Needs Assessment for Alaska within the next 6 months. The size should be limited to 10-20 pages, and targeted towards decision makers,

landowners, and general public. It will serve as an information piece to identify what Alaska needs to do to effectively address invasive species concerns.

Part of the plan will be used to highlight the 'sexiest' invasive species; those that have the most impact, and are the most attention getting. The 7 species categories are: Fish and Aquatic Invertebrates, Reptiles and Amphibians, Mammals, Birds, Terrestrial Arthropods (Primarily insects), Plants, and, Animal & Plant Microorganisms/Diseases. These categories are based on the Federal funding categories for Invasive Species (found in the Union of Concerned Scientists Invasive Species Alaska publication).

Members of the AISWG will identify which species should be highlighted

Fish and Aquatic Invertebrates: Denny Lassuy, USFWS

Birds, Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians: Tammy Davis, ADF&G

Terrestrial Arthropods: Michele Hebert, UAF-CES, and Michael Shepherd, US-FS

Animal and Plant Microorganisms/Diseases: Michele Hebert, UAF-CES and IPM program

Plants: Jeff Heys, US-NPS

The species will focus on efforts in Alaska in the areas of Control, Early Detection, and Prevention. There is overlap in these categories, and people entering species in the excel table were asked to highlight 'Prevention' species.

Select species can also be used as case studies to show how invasive species affect Alaska economically. Holes in management, and data gaps can also be addressed. Needs assessment documents from other states (Idaho, Florida) have used a similar approach in writing their plans, using highlighted species as a way to focus interest on invasive species issues.

Draft Assessment Table of Contents

Michele Hebert and Deena Jallen from UAF-CES have drafted a Table of Contents for the Needs Assessment. Interspersed throughout the document will be text blocks with photos for the highlighted invasive species.

An important part of the introduction will be to explain what invasive species are, and to stress that not all non-indigenous species are invasive. There should also be explanations for the terms 'noxious', 'invasive', 'non-indigenous', 'introduction', etc.

The audience will be the general public, and decision makers. In addition to stressing economic impacts (Green crab would compete with native Dungeness crab, and impact shellfish populations), some of the species can highlight the potential for invasive species to change the ecosystem (example: Spartina would change the species composition of mudflats and salt marshes, impacting a wide array of species).

It will also be very important to stress the impact invasive species can have on subsistence. Sudden Oak Death may not sound like much of a problem in Alaska, until you know that it can infect blueberries, cranberries, salmonberries, etc.

In addition to including appendices with the plan, additional information can be included on the website. There also needs to be a section for listing preparers, and acknowledgements.

Outline for Agency Summaries

Jeff Heys from the National Park Service drafted an agency summary form with information filled in for the NPS. We would like to have agency summaries from all the AISWG MOU signatory agencies to put in the Needs Assessment to inventory what invasive species activities are underway, and where gaps exist in research, management, prevention, etc. An effort needs to be made to include Native Alaskan landowners and private landowners.

The target date for the forms to be filled out and returned is January 1, 2007.

Depending on the size of the needs assessment, the Agency Summaries may be presented in appendices, or further summarized. Florida presented its information from all Federal sources in an overview, with additional information in the appendix. Concerns exist with the separation of state and federal entities. The Federal agencies would be uncomfortable with giving recommendations to the State. However, given that the Federal agencies control a large part of Alaskan land, their summaries may take up a larger prominence in the plan, in contrast to plans from states with less federal land ownership. Federal agencies should be able to help with outlining 'Needs and Options' for invasive species management.

The goal of the agency summaries will be to outline what needs to be done in terms of improving state response to invasive species issues, getting state funding for a more formal council, changing/adding laws, and increasing/improving cooperative efforts with non-state organizations. Information from other states can be included as examples of how they are getting funded, and how coordinated efforts are being used.

AISWG Communications (website and Newsletter) and General info

The next edition of the newsletter will be coming out for November. This issue will highlight management efforts. Organizations are encouraged to submit a paragraph and photos of recent management programs highlighting what is being done in Alaska to control invasive species. The newsletter will also introduce a section for Highlighted Invasive Species, and Highlighted Publication.

ALASKAINVASIVES.ORG continues to be updated with more information and resources. Suggestions for links, calendar items, corrections, etc. should be sent to fndmj@uaf.edu.

The ADF&G representative on the AISWG Marine Group is no longer available; we would like to find another person from ADF&G to be involved.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

NRCS Bridge number 907-271-1405.

9 am, Friday December 1

Species List, length estimates for plans

10 am, Monday December 11

Topics: Needs Assessment

Additional Resources:

Schedule of Deadlines

Needs Assessment Table of Contents (Draft)

Agency Information draft (Questions for agencies)
Agency Information Example from US NPS
MOU Signatories as of 11/28/06

Schedule of Deadlines

- 12/1/06 9am Teleconference: Highlighted invasive species table discussion
- 12/11/06 10 am Teleconference: Needs Assessment drafting, schedule next teleconference
- 1/1/07: Deadline for agency summaries. Submit by email to fndmj@uaf.edu or ffmah@uaf.edu

Needs Assessment Table of Contents (Draft)

Executive Summary – one page

Introduction (The problem)

What is an invasive species?

Not all non-indigenous species are invasive and harmful.

How do we bring invasive species into Alaska (pathways)

Why be concerned i.e. environmental, economic, health

Industries affected.

Highlighted species (two page spread)

Rat- control

Northern Pike - control

Atlantic salmon – early detection

Gypsy moth – early detection

Purple loosestrife – prevention

Potato blight – early detection

Green crab - prevention

Current efforts to manage and control invasive species in Alaska

Summary

State agency effort overviews (ADFG, ADEC, ADOT, ADNR)

CNIPM

AISWG

CWMAAs

Private groups

Federal agencies

Recommendations (What is needed)

Stable funding

Early detection and rapid response

Educational programs

Coordinate efforts

Set priorities for action

Enact Changes in state law

Identify research needs

Strategic plan development

Appendices:

Governor's letter
Taxa/Species list and ranking
Species profiles
Agency questionnaires and summaries
Legal references/statutes
Map of land ownership
CWMA map
Reference and resources list
Contact directory
Funding and management cost global, national, local

Agency Information draft (Questions for agencies)

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group
Agency Report

Your Agency Here

Please refer to National Park Service report for general idea as to length/detail

Role and Mandate

Scope of work

Funding, Staffing, and Organization

Activities and Accomplishments

Prevention
Detection
Control
Monitoring
Restoration
Education
Research
Planning
Collaboration
Information Management

Agency Information Example from US NPS

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group
Agency Report
National Park Service (NPS), Alaska Region

Role and Mandate

The mission statement of the NPS is "...to promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

This means that our primary role with regard to invasive species in Alaska is to protect the 16 NPS units from threats to resources and values, as articulated by ANILCA, Executive Order 13112, and NPS Management Policies. We are also directed to work with partners on invasive species research, information-sharing, and education.

Scope of work

The 16 NPS units in the Alaska Region encompass about 54 million acres of land and some marine areas, spanning much of the state (see map below). While we must manage any invasive species found, our focus has been on plants thus far, because of our funding source (see next section) and due to their substantial documentation on NPS lands.

Funding, Staffing, and Organization

The main source of funding for our invasive species management activities is the national Exotic Plant Management Team program, initiated for the Alaska Region in 2003. The program's focus is invasive plant control, to help parks deal with problems beyond their management capacities. Currently, the program provides a little less than \$160,000 per year to the Alaska Region. This amount covers:

- Program Manager (Liaison) salary
- Data Manager salary
- partial payroll for 5-10 seasonal technicians each year
- travel, supplies, and printing of publications

Beyond this funding source, an additional \$125,000 was contributed toward Alaska invasive plant management in 2006 by the NPS units, the Regional Office, and internal funding sources. The equivalent of \$75,000 was contributed in the form of in-kind volunteer services. Finally, our Regional Wildlife Biologist would provide the technical expertise to address invasive animal populations as needed.

Activities and Accomplishments

Prevention

In terms of on-the-ground prevention practices, Denali NP&Pr has taken the greatest steps towards appropriate measures during construction projects, including washing heavy equipment before it arrives on-site, writing into contracts that new projects must not bring in new weeds, and rejecting hay bales for bank stabilization. In addition, buses that travel out the park road are washed daily. In Wrangell-St. Elias NP&Pr, it was recently written into regulation that any forage brought into the park must be certified weed-free. And in Sitka NHP, native plantings have recently been used for landscaping where non-native species had previously been planted.

Detection

Detection is an ongoing priority for all 16 NPS units in Alaska. We use Trimble GPS units to precisely map infestations and uninfested areas to provide baseline data for monitoring, ensure relocation, and promote planning. With a couple of exceptions, non-native plant surveys began five years ago. Currently, all but the most remote parks have been surveyed, with annual surveys of the areas at greatest risk of invasion (refer to map). The data from these surveys are entered into AKEPIC (the statewide exotic plant database) as well as internal GIS and Access databases, with multiple data fields that provide detail on infestation characteristics. We have been assisted with species identification by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program and have made collections for documenting new species and range expansions.

Control

To date, we have only used manual and mechanical means to control invasive plants, although we are currently in the midst of exploring other options (see planning below). In 2006, our field employees controlled 1200 infestations by hand, most of which are very small in size. For the larger infestations, we bring in volunteer crews to provide the labor needed. We control the species of highest priority and feasibility by park, such that in a park with 25 species of non-native plants, we might manage 15, while in a park with less than 10 species, we are likely to manage all of them.

Monitoring

The use of GPS units with sub-meter accuracy enables us to evaluate population changes each year, to gauge control effectiveness and rates of spread. The control effectiveness monitoring in particular is valuable to invasive plant management in Alaska because we are determining where manual and mechanical methods work and where they fail. Our monitoring efforts also document new species in many parks each year to complement our baseline surveys, and park employees are trained in reporting as well.

Restoration

Our restoration efforts are most advanced at Denali NP&Pr, where native plant seeds are collected each summer for revegetation of disturbed lands. In Dyea, Klondike Gold Rush NHP, a degraded slough has been the focus of both exotic plant control and restoration efforts.

Education

Over the past few years, we have made over 50 presentations to internal and external audiences about invasive plants in Alaska and developed a website, kiosk display, and brochure specific to the NPS. In addition, we have cooperated with other agencies in the production of the Invasive Plants of Alaska spiral-bound book and several smaller publications. We are always working to raise awareness within the NPS.

Research

We have served on the review panel for the invasive plant ranking project coordinated by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program. A current project is underway with NASA to model the spread of white sweetclover, bird vetch, and narrowleaf hawksbeard across burned lands in Interior Alaska.

Planning

We are in the midst of developing an Invasive Plant Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for all 16 Alaska NPS units. The plan will consider the use of herbicides where other methods fail or are unlikely to control aggressive plants. The process includes public involvement, impact analysis, and strategic planning, all of which should prove valuable to other land managers in Alaska.

Collaboration

We are working with several Cooperative Weed Management Areas around the state to promote proactive management beyond park boundaries. Each summer we work on cooperative weed pulls with adjacent landowners for species of mutual concern. We also assisted in the development of the AKEPIC database as a statewide tracking mechanism for exotic plants and have contributed to interagency training sessions and the annual Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management workshops.

Information Management

Over the last year, we have developed a geodatabase for the central storage and analysis of GPS-collected data from the parks. This database houses nearly 5,000 precise spatial records of inventory, control, and monitoring efforts and is serving as a nationwide model for NPS invasive plant data management as well as for Alaska.

MOU Signatories as of 11/28/06

Kurt Fredriksson, Commissioner, AK DEC

McKie Campbell, Commissioner, ADF&G

Michael Menge, Commissioner, AK DNR

Mike Barton, Commissioner, AK DOT

Steve Jones, Chancellor, UAF

Paul K. Brewster (for Dennis E. Bschor), USDA Forest Service

Robert N. Jones, State Conservationist, USDA National Resource Conservation Service

Arthur E. Brooks, Rear Admiral, USDHS Coast Guard

Niles Cesar, Regional Director, USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs

Debbie A. Hollen (for Julia Dougan, Acting State Director), USDI Bureau of Land Management

Thomas O. Melius, Regional Director, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service

Leslie Holland-Bartels, Director, USDI Geological Survey

John Goll, Regional Director, USDI Minerals Management Service

Marcia Blaszak, Regional Director, USDI National Park Service

Sharry Miller, Executive Director, Prince William Soundkeeper

David Banks, State Director, The Nature Conservancy in Alaska

John S. Devens, PhD., Executive Director, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Steven Sumida, Executive Director (Acting), Alaska Inter-Tribal Council

Al Poindexter, Executive Director, Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Friday December 1, 9:00 am to 10:00 am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Bruce Bush- Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), Wasilla

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Juneau

Larry DeVilbiss-AK Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Palmer

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

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson-AK Dept. of Transportation, Fairbanks

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Rosemarie Lombardi- AK DEC, Wasilla

Barbara Schrader- US Forest Service, Juneau

Steve Seefeldt- USDA/ARS/SARU, Fairbanks

Jeanne Standley- BLM, Anchorage

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Discussion of the Highlighted Species List
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- Schedule of Deadlines

Discussion of the Highlighted Species List

The Needs Assessment will feature species of widespread concern to increase public awareness/buy-in. One possible option is to have the species in a 2 page color layout with species from each category.

Started with Fishes and Invertebrates. Denny Lassuy of USFWS recommended Atlantic salmon, Northern pike, tunicates, Green Crab, and New Zealand Mudsail. Of these, Atlantic salmon and Green Crab were chosen. Atlantic salmon has the potential to colonize in Alaska and affect native fishes. It is unknown how many are in the state, and if they have successfully established in Alaskan waters. No one wants to see it get established here. The main efforts regarding Atlantic salmon will be early detection.

Green Crab was chosen as the other species to highlight. They are already found in British Columbia. They may compete with native crab stocks. Control and monitoring could be effective, whereas a species like New Zealand Mudsail would focus almost entirely on Prevention, due to the difficulty of control methods.

The other species are also very important, and may be highlighted in other areas of the plan (example, use New Zealand Mudsail on the importance of prevention). Northern Pike are also a good poster child species, but their approach would have to be more nuanced. Pike are native north of the Alaska Range, and are not an issue. They have

been introduced south of the Alaska Range, and are causing significant and widely publicized damage in the Mat-Su valley and Kenai Peninsula.

Tammy Davis from ADF&G will look into the amount of money the Department spends on pike management and Atlantic salmon monitoring. The ADF&G also has a Pike Plan, which should be done in early 2007, and could be used as an example of aquatic species Control efforts. The group feels that while pike are an extremely important invasive, in terms of money and effort expended, public attention, etc. Atlantic salmon will have more of an impact throughout the state.

The second category of invasives is amphibians. Tammy Davis from ADF&G provided a list of invasive amphibians of concern to Alaska; Leopard frog, bull frog, Pacific forest frogs, red legged frog. None of the amphibian species has caused significant impact. Red Legged frogs are being found in greater numbers when studies are done to look for them, and their population boundaries continue to expand. However, amphibians pose more of an ongoing monitoring issue than a control or management issue. It will be a better use of space to focus on more destructive invasive species in the profile, but information on amphibians will continue to be listed in the appendices.

The third category reviewed was Plant and Animal Microorganisms, by Charles Knight, and Larry DeVilbiss. In their opinion, Chronic Wasting Disease would be the first choice. CWD can be spread among moose, deer, and elk. through sniffing, licking, etc. It is very easy to spread, as opposed to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), which is spread by eating the infected animals' tissues. The second choice would be Late Blight, which has been found in the Mat-Su valley. It infects tomatoes and potato crops. Other microorganisms to consider would be Sudden Oak Death; it can be spread by nursery stock (lilac, and rhododendron), and infect salmonberries and other berry species. Spruce rust, soybean rust are also of concern. Soybean rust could wipe out vetch, white sweetclover, and native pea species. Spruce rust can be spread via wind, and would be impossible to contain its spread.

An additional pathogen to consider would be whirling disease; it affects salmonid species. The USFWS is currently doing a risk assessment for whirling disease, which should be out in late January of 2007. At that point, adding it to the highlighted invasives list should be revisited.

Other important pathogens are bird flu and West Nile Virus. Public health resources are doing the survey work for these pathogens. These pose an issue; they are primarily human diseases, but could have impacts on Alaskan ecosystems. If AISWG takes a greater role in considering human pathogens, it should also get more participation from the agencies involved (human health, Centers for Disease Control, etc.). It may be more difficult to bring them in at a later date. The issues of invasive human diseases is also a national issue, with huge bureaucratic entanglements. Focusing on human diseases could shift the attention away from the other species of concern to the AISWG. These pathogens should at least be included in the index, with the agencies most responsible highlighted, and the issue of primarily human diseases should be addressed in the introduction to the Assessment.

The fourth species category is terrestrial arthropods (insects). Michele Hebert took this category, and listed Asian Gypsy Moth, Birch Leafminer, Asian Longhorn Beetle, and Western Tent Caterpillar.

Asian Gypsy moth is a defoliator, and would affect forestry and agriculture. There are no established breeding populations in Alaska, but there are large populations in the Lower 48. There are strong trapping programs in place to detect AGM. Birch Leafminer are being studied for parasitics and biocontrol methods. They are becoming more widespread in Alaska, and are also a defoliator. As yet, there have been no sightings of Asian Longhorn Beetles in Alaska. Western Tent Caterpillars were found in the Anchorage area, but have been controlled by rapid response measures.

There are two leafminer species of concern, Birch leafminer, and Amber Marked Birch Leafminer, of these, the Forest Service ranked the Amber Marked as being very destructive.

The top two arthropod species selected will be Asian Gypsy Moth, and Amber Marked Birch Leafminer.

The remaining categories are Mammals & Birds, and Plants. Tammy Davis from ADF&G listed Norway rats and fox. Also of concern are European Starling, Rock Doves, and Elk, although ADF&G does not have a strong stance on these. By far, Norway rat has gotten the most funding and attention. ADF&G would not consider elk as a high priority, and the status of elk is highly political.

For mammals, the top two species will be Norway rat and fox. Foxes eradications on islands will be a good example of successful control of invasive species. Norway rats are very damaging to potentially endangered sea bird populations, and efforts are ongoing to eliminate rats from islands where they have invaded. ADF&G has almost completed its Rodent Plan.

Plant species of high concern include; Japanese knotweed, canary reedgrass, Canada thistle, bird vetch, white sweetclover, Orange hawkweed, Spotted knapweed, spartina, and purple loosestrife. (At the CNIPM teleconference on 12/6/06, Purple loosestrife and Bird Vetch were chosen as the top two plant species).

Some of the issues considered during the plant discussion; using a species tied to the AK-DNR noxious species listing, species of concern to AK-DOT, AK-EPIC high ranking species, and level of control/prevention. Purple loosestrife is ranked very high on AK-EPIC, and raises the issue of invasive species introduced by gardeners/nurseries. Bird Vetch is very visible, is found in a large part of the state, and is of concern to DOT. It readily climbs trees, fences, signs, etc. and impacts visibility and safety. Bird Vetch is also a nitrogen fixing species, and affects the surrounding environment.

Two other plant species are also of very high concern; Japanese knotweed, and Spartina. Knotweed is found in southeast Alaska. It spreads along roadways and riparian corridors. It is ranked highest on the AK-EPIC invasiveness ranking. Spartina is not yet found in Alaska, but drift card studies indicate it could spread from the Pacific Northwest to Alaska. This species drastically alters tidal mudflat habitats, changing their elevation, waterflow, and species composition.

Other species of concern; European black slug; these slugs have been found in Soldotna and Fairbanks. They are large, and can affect gardens, and possibly estuary habitats. No assessment has been done on their damage and extent.

The top rated invasive species discussion will continue at the next AISWG teleconference.

Next Meeting for the AISWG:

10 am, Monday December 11

Topics: Needs Assessment Species to highlight

Additional Resources:

Schedule of Deadlines

- 1/1/07: Deadline for agency summaries. Submit by email to fndmj@uaf.edu or ffmah@uaf.edu

List of species

Species Category Common name

Terrestrial arthropods (primarily insects):

Asian gypsy moth

Amber Marked Birch leafminer

Plants:

Purple Loosestrife

Bird Vetch

Additional species to consider:

Japanese Knotweed

Spartina

Mammals and birds:

Norway rat

Fox

Animal and Plant Micro-organisms/ Disease:

Chronic Wasting Disease

Late Blight

Additional species to revisit:

Whirling Disease

Fish and Aquatic Invertebrates:

Atlantic salmon

European green crab

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

Friday December 11, 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Juneau

Helen Denniston- NRCS, Palmer

Larry DeVilbiss-AK DNR, Division of Agriculture, Palmer

Steve Ebbert- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS

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

Michele Hebert- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Larry Johnson- AK DOT, Fairbanks

Denny Lassuy- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage

Rosemarie Lombardi- AK DEC, Wasilla

Dan Proulx- AK DNR, Division of Agriculture, Fairbanks

Linda Shaw- NOAA, NMFS, Juneau

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Top 12 Invasive Species
- Needs Assessment Introduction
- Agency Summaries
- Meeting in April
- Upcoming Alaska Forum on the Environment Meeting
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- Schedule of Deadlines
- Websites
- Example species summary
- Draft Needs Assessment Introduction

Top 12 Invasive Species

Steve Ebbert from the USFWS Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge joined the teleconference and gave a brief account of AMNWR activities regarding invasives. The USFWS invasive species eradications have focused on introduced Arctic foxes and its scope also extends to invasive ungulates (cattle, caribou, reindeer), hares, and rats.

Since 1949, the USFWS has eliminated foxes on 41 islands, averaging 1-2 islands a year. Currently, only 2 islands in the AMNWR still have fox populations. Several other islands jointly owned by native corporations or private owners still have some fox populations. In all, the AMNWR contains 2500 islands, 200 of which are named. Arctic foxes were introduced to about 70 islands. They were eradicated from 40, died off on some others, and still persist on a few islands of mixed ownership.

Over the course of the last couple teleconferences, and with input from AISWG participants, a list of the top 12 invasive species in Alaska was drafted.

Asian Gypsy Moth (Charlie Knight)
Amber marked Birch leafminer (Michele Hebert)
Purple loosestrife (Gino Graziano)
Bird Vetch (Larry Johnson)
Spartina (Linda Shaw)
Japanese knotweed (Denny Lassuy or Barbara Schrader)
Norway rat (Denny Lassuy or Ellen Fritts)
Arctic Fox (Steve Ebbert)
Chronic Wasting Disease (Rose Lombardi)
Late Blight (Charlie Knight)
Atlantic salmon (Denny Lassuy)
European Green crab (Linda Shaw)

By January 12, 2007, we would like to have 150-300 word summaries and pictures of the top 12 species. Volunteers names are in parenthesis. The Union of Concerned Scientists has good examples of summaries in their Invasive Species Alaska Publication (link in Additional Info. Section).

Some additional species and concerns: pike (in-state introductions, management costs, salmon impacts), New Zealand Mudsnail (prevention more feasible than management, ecosystem changes), generating rapid response plans for Spartina, public reaction to listing purple loosestrife on the weed list by DNR.

Needs Assessment Introduction

So far, we have received comments from Jeff Heys. As comments come in, the introduction will be updated and re-sent.

Agency Summaries

We have received summaries from National Park Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Agency summaries are due the first week of January 2007.

Meeting in April

The AISWG would like to have another face to face meeting on April 24th. In February, the State agencies will be discussing the chairing of the AISWG, and should have a new chairing structure worked out in time for the April meeting. Meeting times and locations will be discussed in upcoming teleconferences.

Upcoming Alaska Forum on the Environment Meeting

The meeting will be held February 12-16 in Anchorage at the Egan Convention Center. Denny Lassuy of USFWS will be helping head up a session on invasive species. The AK Forum on the Environment is a huge annual gathering, focusing on numerous health and environmental issues. Doug Mutter (sp?) from the Department of Interior was instrumental in getting an invasive species 'track' on the agenda. The invasive species sessions will take place on the 14th. Among the moderators and presenters; Douglas Vincent-Lang, ADF&G (moderating Northern pike session), Jamie Nielsen, UAF-CES/CNIPM (moderating plant session), Matt Carlson, Alaska Natural Heritage, Jeff Heys, National Park Service (presenting), Ellen Fritts, ADF&G (rat plan), Poppy Benson, USFWS AMNWR (outreach and prevention), Denny Lassuy (moderating), Deena Jallen, UAF-CES (AISWG formation, progress). Following the presentations will be a panel discussion.

Update on the Alaska DNR Changes to Weeds List

Comment period for the list ends on December 22, 2006. So far, DNR has received a lot of feedback from nursery groups, and from CNIPM members. Most of the attention is focused on purple loosestrife. There is also a lot of interest in the process of making changes to the list, and streamlining the process of adding species.

Next teleconference for the AISWG

January 22, 10am. 907-271-1405, allow line to ring until another party picks up, long distance charges apply.

Additional Resources

Deadlines:

First week of January: Agency Summaries
1/12/07: brief species profile

Websites

Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
<http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/akmar/index.htm>

Alaska Forum
<http://www.akforum.com/>

Alaska Forum on the Environment 2007 Agenda
<http://www.akforum.com/agenda.htm>

Union of Concerned Scientists Invasive Species: Alaska report
http://www.ucsusa.org/invasive_species/state-invasion-portfolios.html
Alaska report under 'Related Links'

Example species summary



(Photo by Brit Slattery, USFWS)

(Denny Lassuy, USFWS. 223 words)

Japanese knotweed is ranked as the most invasive plant species currently in Alaska (Alaska Natural Heritage Program, <http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu>).

Introduced to the U.S. in the late 1800s, it has been used as an ornamental, as a fodder plant, and for landscape screening and erosion control. In Alaska, invasions are currently known in the Tongass National Forest, along roads in Southeast Alaska, and in Anchorage where it may have escaped from gardens (see map at AKNHP website noted above).

This invader threatens native plants and wildlife, particularly in river bank habitats, where it forms dense stands and shades out all other plants, alters the quality and quantity of food that enters a stream from its banks, restricts access for native animals, and even blocks angler access – a very unhappy circumstance indeed!

It can spread by cuttings or pieces of rhizome, whether as cultivated plants or garden discards, or spread downstream after floods. Road work or redevelopment (e.g., in contaminated fill dirt) can also spread this highly invasive plant.

Japanese knotweed is difficult to eradicate. Hand pulling can work in some situations, but any portion not removed may resprout. Double bag and landfill any pulled plants. Because it often occurs near water, herbicidal treatments must be done with caution. However, some success is being achieved in the Northwest using a labor intensive “cut stem application” method.

Draft Needs Assessment Introduction

Invasive species threaten our subsistence, our fisheries, our forests, our agriculture, our native ecosystems, and our unique status as the one state that is still different from all the rest.

What is an “Invasive Species?”

As legally defined in the Executive Order, an invasive species is “An alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health...’Alien species’ means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, any species...that is not native to that ecosystem.” Alien species are also known as exotic,

non-native, introduced or non-indigenous species, and the term noxious or nuisance is sometimes used instead of “invasive” when these organisms cause harm. Since invasive species are only apparent to those few people who know their foreign origins, and because their spread can be slow, over years or even decades, we have tended to underestimate their impacts. Invasive species cause a range of problems. They can:

- threaten the survival of native plants and animals
- interfere with ecosystem functions
- hybridize with native species, resulting in negative genetic impacts
- spread easily in today’s era of global commerce
- be difficult and costly to control
- impede industries and threaten agriculture
- be a significant drain on the economy
- endanger human health

Not all introduced exotic species are invasive and harmful”

When an animal, plant, fungus, bacterium or virus ends up in a new ecosystem, it is said that the organism has been “introduced” to that new ecosystem. Humans are responsible for introducing the vast majority of non-native species. We deliberately transport some organisms; others end up in a new ecosystem unintentionally.

Examples of deliberate introductions are plants that we import for gardens, fish that we keep as pets or put in pens for aquaculture, animals for hunting, fish we stock in lakes, and animals and insects introduced into new ecosystems to control other organisms.

Examples of unintentional introductions are insects that cling to or burrow into wooden packing material used to protect imported goods, or insects and their eggs “hitchhiking” on imported plants, in soil or on fresh produce. We accidentally take in huge numbers of small and microscopic organisms in ships’ ballast water, and we transport them to new ports of call.

Why be concerned?

The vast majority of species transported to a place other than their native ecosystem—whether intentionally or accidentally—do not survive. Of those that do survive, scientists estimate that approximately 15 percent go on to become very harmful. Plants and animals may escape from confined areas, or carry a wide variety of parasites or diseases that themselves may escape, to devastating effects. People may dump no-longer-wanted fish or aquarium plants into a nearby pond or river, or discard yard waste or garden clippings in a nearby park. The species that become invasive do succeed, in part, because the new ecosystems in which they find themselves offer favorable environmental conditions and lack the natural predators, competitors and diseases that would normally keep their populations in check.

With increased global commerce and human exploration, rates of introduction and numbers of invasive species continue to rise. For example, ships only began to use water as ballast in the mid-1800s; now transport in ships’ ballast water and ballast sediments is

the leading means of unintentionally moving a broad range of aquatic species throughout the world.

How Do We Bring Invasive Species to Alaska, pathways?

Fortunately, Alaska's historically low population and geographic isolation have kept introductions of new invasive species relatively low. However, increased commercial traffic (both from the continental United States and abroad) and further development increase the risk of new introductions.

Shipping: The large amount and diversity of ship traffic in Alaska—oil tankers, commercial freighters, military vessels, fishing vessels, and chip, pulp and timber barges—bring invasive species in ballast water, bilge water or live wells.

Port Valdez, in Prince William Sound, receives the third largest volume of tanker ballast water of U.S. ports. About one-half of this ballast water is oily and is processed at a treatment facility. The rest is discharged into the port's waters, releasing many non-native species. One study of organisms in ballast water of oil tankers arriving at Valdez found 13 species of non-native crustaceans and one fish species, as well as enormous numbers of potentially damaging smaller organisms. Ships' hulls may also carry a variety of organisms along with rats, mice, other mammals and insects arriving in cargo.

Aquaculture: Fish farming can result in severe damage to native ecosystems and fisheries when fish or hitchhiking organisms escape. Of current concern are escaped Atlantic salmon arriving in Alaska waters from British Columbia and Washington state fish farms.

Agriculture and Horticulture: Only a very small percentage of Alaska's acreage is agricultural, but farms, nurseries and state agencies import plants, seeds and other products, which can either be invasive themselves or carry damaging hitchhikers. An example is Canada thistle, found in Fairbanks and Southcentral Alaska, which is thought to have arrived as seed within root balls of tree-planting stock. Other invasive plants, such as perennial sowthistle, are thought to have arrived as contaminants in seed mixtures. Nurseries, in most cases, are not prohibited from selling invasive plants.

Recreation and Tourism: There have been intentional efforts to import species such as European grouse as game birds. Pack animals, dogs, vehicles and people can all transport seeds to backcountry areas unintentionally. In addition, hay brought in to feed horses or to use as sled dog bedding can be contaminated with weed seeds. Invasive plants have affected ostensibly pristine areas such as Denali National Park, Tongass and Chugach National Forests, and numerous other sites in Southern Alaska. Many weeds are found around roadsides, trailheads, campgrounds, parking lots and other disturbed recreation-related areas. While cruise ships do not usually transfer ballast water in Alaska, ships coming directly from Far East Asia or Japan do. Like other ships, all can carry invaders on their hulls, in their holds or on their decks.

Construction, Mining and Restoration: These activities transport weed seeds as well as other organisms, when equipment and machinery are moved without cleaning.

Aquarium and Pet Trades: Aquarium fish and plants, as well as other pets, have occasionally turned up in the wild and could become a problem, especially if they carry diseases.