

MEETING MINUTES

These abbreviated summary minutes will become the official adopted minutes at the next Montana Invasive Species Council meeting when they will be approved. Until then, they are considered a draft.

Meeting/ Project Name:	Montana Invasive Species Council		
Date of Meeting:	December 13 th , 2022	Time:	9:00 AM
Minutes Prepared By:	Anna Connerton	Location:	Montana Capitol, Room 137 and virtual via Zoom
Attendees			
<p>MISC Voting Members: Bryce Christiaens (Chair), Tom Woolf (Vice-Chair), Steve Wanderaas (Vice-Chair), Steve Tyrrel, Martin Charlo, Jan Stoddard, Amy Gannon, Mike Bias, Dennis Longknife, Andy Welch, Jasmine Chaffee, Jason Allen</p> <p>Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton, Mindy Wilkinson</p> <p>Other Attendees: Amy Seaman (Montana Audubon), Brent Smith (CEMIST), Jill Allen (Jefferson County Weed District), Karen Laitala (Powell County), Kelsey Miller (Executive Director of Weed MT), Pam Schwend (Carbon County), Cassidy Bender (UC3), Michelle Cox, Wendy Velman, Jacob Bradford, Sue Mills, Michelle Cox.</p>			
Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome & Roll call	Bryce opened the meeting at 9:00 am, conducted roll call and confirmed quorum.		
Administrative Business	Action Item: Approval of September 7th, 2022, Meeting Minutes Motion: Steve Wanderaas to approve the September 7th, meeting minutes. Second: Jasmine Chaffee Discussion:		

	<p>Steve Wanderaas: A change on page one at the very bottom. Where it says Steve attended the PNWER conference in 2019 – this is incorrect, he attended the Feral Hog Symposium at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.</p> <p>Public comment: None</p> <p>Action on motion: Motion passed unanimously.</p>
Summit Review	<p>Liz Lodman – Council Administrator</p> <p>Trivia: What record-breaking invader nicknamed “Carrot” was recently captured in France? Answer: A goldfish in a pond in France.</p> <p>Who participated in the Summit? Attendance = 106</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 Counties - 6 State Agencies (Ag, DNRC, FWP, Livestock, MDT & MNHP) - 7 Federal Agencies (APHIS, BLM, BOR, FS, NPS & NRCS) - 2 Tribal Nations (Blackfeet and Salish Kootenai) - 3 College/Universities (U of M, MSU & Salish Kootenai College) - 6 Industry - 15 NGO’s - 6 Neighbors (Alberta, British Columbia, Colorado, Idaho, North Dakota & Wyoming) - 1 Retired Teacher - 5 Legislators <p>The program, the attendees, and the PowerPoints on the MISC website under News + Events → Summit</p> <p>Discussion: None</p>
MISC Work Plan	<p>Mindy Wilkinson</p> <p>Top 10: These are the 10 species that highlight the pathways and impacts of invasive species in Montana.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Mindy Wilkinson: Do you all feel like this reflects the species you want to use to reflect the above statement? Are there any that are left out? Any that are problematic that you would like to consider removing?</p> <p>Steve Wanderaas: Saltcedar: There are some other species that fall in the same</p>

category. Maybe where Saltcedar is it should be Woody Invasives.

Wendy Velman: Agreed.

Steve Tyrrel: Agreed as well. The idea of adding the riparian aspect to it as well, I don't know if that's the right classification.

Bryce Christiaens: I don't know about necessary adding it into the name but within the statement underneath it which were talking about the impacts to water availability and access to Montana's waters.

Mike Bias: What is the purpose of this list? If you mention Saltcedar or Annual Grasses that could lead you into Woody Invasive Riparian. For example, Walleye, that catches your attention but there are different Aquatic Invasive Fish that are important also. Saltcedar gets your attention, gets you going through the list. Point being: How do you get on this list, why is the list here, and what is the purpose of it?

Bryce Christiaens: That is an excellent point going back to your original question. Promoting the work that they do and raising awareness around an individual species, what you're saying makes sense as far as having an ambassador within each of those groups that is more eye catching and then the statement below that incorporates something like all woody invasives or all annual grasses, but potentially rather than annual grasses its Ventenata.

Mindy Wilkinson: So, what I'm hearing is all except for annual grasses, try to pick one of the species that might be more well known but then pick a spoke species.

Wendy Velman: I was kind of going the opposite direction but now I understand what he is saying. I also think that we need to have good explanation, if we use a showcase species that it is a representation for a group of species. Like the annual grasses, right now were only dealing with two but who knows what we will be dealing with later. Were trying to figure out if there are similar ways to treat these and suggest management for them. I do agree that using a showcase species will be better when talking to the non-professional groups.

Bryce Christiaens: Agreed. Along those same lines, going back to the purpose, its not necessarily to provide the most up to date management recommendations but to raise awareness for visitors of Montana and the people of Montana. For the purpose of this conversation, its what is the species that's going to garner the most attention or that we want to bring the most attention to.

Tom Woolf: Agreed. Focusing on one species but also each category would have more within the statement since it is an educational document. My other question is, is Walleye be the appropriate one for that section and who would be prepared to explain that to a legislative committee?

Andy Welch: Obviously the grasshoppers are problematic and a nuisance, but they are a native species. Do they fit on the invasive species top?

Steve Wanderaas: As far as grasshoppers, the amount of damage they do is devastating. It makes me wonder if we have done enough about them in general and I think therefore they made the list.

Bryce Christiaens: I don't think we can discount the environmental impact of the grasshoppers, but I do think Andy is correct in the definition that we have for invasive species in Montana, grasshoppers being a native species don't fit. This could be something we look at later with native species and their impacts.

Jasmine: Are we going to keep this as 10? We could keep the ones at the bottom that get knocked out as "also species of concern" or something to that degree to keep them there but not on the top 10.

Bryce Christiaens: Agreed.

Mindy Wilkinson: As you move through the list I would like to identify one or more council members to call or email to help with the description under each of the section.

Top 10 Invasive Species to Watch *and why?*

- Zebra Mussels **[Tom W.]**
These species will have major impacts on the ecology of Montana's waters, damage infrastructure, and are a top regional priority.
- Ventenata **[Jasmine C., Jane M.]**
These species will have major impacts on the ecology of Montana's rangelands and grasslands.
- Emerald Ash Borer **[Amy G., Leigh G.]**
Firewood transport creates a pathway, and this species will impose heavy costs on urban areas.
- Feral Hogs **[Liz L., Tahnee S.]**
This species will impact livestock producers through predation and as a disease reservoir.
- Eastern Heath Snail **[Gary A.]**

While this is a pest of agriculture, it highlights how programs targeting plant insect pests and diseases have made it difficult to make other species national priorities.

- Saltcedar [**Steve W., Jasmine C.**]

The impacts of this species to water availability and access to Montana's rivers creates an ongoing impact.

- Flowering rush [**Tom W.**]

The spread of aquatic invasive plants highlights the need to protect shoreline areas and improve detection programs across waterways.

- Northern pike [**Mike B., Tom W.**]

The spread of gamefish is beneficial to a small group of advocates who promote this species but negatively impact biodiversity and other fisheries.

- Rush Skeleton weed [**Jasmine C., Jane M.**]

Persistent flower stems are so tough they can hamper harvest machinery and the weed causes lost production in wheat fields.

- Bullfrog [**Tom W., Kristina S.**]

While native to portions of North America they are not native in western Montana. Snapping turtles are also not native in western Montana but have been found and removed in waters west of the divide.

Quantifying the Impacts:

[Quantify the Impacts of Invasive Species](#)

Question: What invasive species issues would benefit from clearly quantifying the impacts?

- Analysis of the "Top 10 Invasive Species to Watch" list for the cumulative impacts to Montana's economy, natural resources, and public health.
 - Develop a 1-page review for each example species.
 - Use the literature review as an opportunity identify species and issues that would benefit from research on their biology, control, impacts, or pathways.
 - Update the numbers for the zebra mussel summary completed in 2016 and develop a 1 page summary of the Eastern Heath Snail work.
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Science Advisory Panel:

[Science Advisory Panels.](#)

Question: What topics would benefit from a Science Advisory Panel review?

- How should new invasive species be prioritized?

The future impacts of new invasive species are difficult to predict. For emerging issues, shifting management from current priorities to new targets requires quantifying their likely impacts. Increasing the capacity to quickly produce impact analyses for feral hogs, invasive praying mantises, fire regimes under new invasive annual grasses, and other emerging issues will improve response planning.

Other topics will be identified through a process of reviewing the priority invasive species list.

To do: Identify a Council member as lead.

Focused Efforts:

Focused Efforts to Improve Programs and Increase Capacity

Question: What invasive species issues or initiatives should the Council support with focused effort including trainings, jurisdictional review, workshops, tabletop exercises, or outreach?

Spring 2023

Woody Invasive Species: Meeting and planning

Co-host a joint meeting on woody invasive species. Highlight regional lessons learned about salt cedar control, Russian olive, and other woody invasive plants that are impacting riparian areas. Support coordinated efforts and messages.

Fall 2023

Education and Communication: Workshop

[Council sub-committee: Jan B., Cassidy B., CEMIST]

- Targeted communication
 - Audiences: targeted efforts for specific groups including landowners
 - Focus: use the tools we have in-state to improve contact with the right audience.
- Community-based social marketing
 - Messages that are positive give people a reason to get involved.
 - Develop modules for youth groups like scouts and 4-H
- Tools that change with the times
 - Social media's role in communication
 - Break the scientific language barrier
- Constant messaging
 - Promote consistent language
 - Share pre-packaged presentations across agencies

Spring 2024

Compliance: Workshop

- Why are the current laws not fully enforced?
- Is there an opportunity to modernize reporting?
- What is the best approach to achieve invasive species control goals?
- Work with county attorneys

Fall 2024

Climate change: Workshop or MISC Summit special focus

- Current invasive species will change their behavior and native species' distributions may change. How do we plan for control and revegetation in a changing environment?

Legislative Outlook	<p>Whole Council:</p> <p>Bryce Christiaens: This is an opportunity to touch base on priorities and see if there is any discussion around that.</p> <p>Steve Wanderaas: There could be something related to woody invasives coming from the Saltcedar team.</p> <p>Liz Lodman: Removing the requirement to do an EA on grant submissions because it's redundant in many ways.</p> <p>Jasmine Chaffee: We are through the red tape initiative; we are doing away with our forge council and putting those responsibilities on our management council that we already have. Were putting a certified materials person on our trust fund voting council and probably two advisory members. Our AIS act was asking for it to be moved out of Department 80 (Dept. Ag) and moved to FWP or DNRC. The working group decided last Friday that they would like to take the cap off the noxious weed trust fund and put some of the state surplus funding into that to raise what we get off interest to give out to counties and projects which would help fund all those river projects.</p> <p>Tom Woolf: There is a bill to combine the Flathead Basin Commission and the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission.</p> <p>Bryce Christiaens: The only other two that I was aware of is, the exempting lifetime fishing licenses for blind folks from the AIS prevention pass. This popped up in the current list of bills. There is some work to increase support for Department of Ags pesticide waste disposal and pesticide containers. This may impact a lot of weed districts or mosquito districts.</p>
Legislative Events	<p>Important Dates / Events around the upcoming Legislative Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 24th, 2023: Montana Association of Conservation Districts meet and greet and rotunda day. • February 6th – 9th, 2023: MWCA is doing Capitol tours and is trying to get rotunda during the week of their annual meeting. • February 22nd, 2023: Rotunda Invasive Species Day • March 10th, 2023: Flathead Basin Commission is doing a water quality rotunda event.
2023 Council Meeting Planning	<p>Rough Meeting Schedule for the upcoming year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helena: February/March – plan to do a hydro tour with Andy Welch at Hauser Dam. • Sidney: June • Fort Belknap/Havre: September – maybe do a weed tour while there. • Missoula: December, the new butterfly house at the fairgrounds.
Wrap-up Adjourn	<p>Location for next meeting will be at Hauser Dam in Helena, MT on April 12, 2023</p>

Discussion/ Final Discussion:

Steve Wanderaas: Just a follow up on the TTX that we did. How are we coming on our tasks that came out of that?

Liz Lodman: We haven't made any progress on that. The latest feral swine thing was attending the Stockgrowers meeting. The other thing that has come up is we've had a county extension agent in Plentywood offer to help with feral swine public meetings.

Steve Wanderaas: Maybe we can get together with Tahnee and start outreach along our northern counties.

Public Comment: None

Motion: Steve Wanderaas

Second: Martin Charlo

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Action on motion: Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned: 1:51 pm