

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group audio Conference

September 27, 2007, 10am

Hosted via NRCS bridge number

Participants:

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Juneau

Joy Geiselman- USGS

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

Jeff Heys- National Park Service, Anchorage

Deena Jallen- UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks

Franci Havemeister- AK DNR, Palmer

Denny Lassuy- USFWS, Anchorage

Rose Lombardi- AK DEC Pesticides, Wasilla

Jeanne Ostnes- Staff for Rep. Craig Johnson

Calvin Steele- NRCS, Palmer

Heidi Veach- UAF-CES, Glenallen

Stoney Wright- AK DNR, Palmer

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Update on Activities
- Recap/comments on the September 20th meeting with Representative Craig Johnson, etc.
- Poster Session at AISWG November Meeting
- Next teleconference for the AISWG

Additional Resources

- CNIPM poster session info
- Link to AISWG calendar page with 9/20 meeting supporting documents
- Rat regulation press release

Update on Activities

Deena Jallen has been maintaining the AISWG websites, listserv, and online Blackboard course for Invasive Species of Coastal Alaska.

Gino Graziano estimated that he has sent out over 100 pocket weed guides during the summer. Radio PSA's and website links got the word out to the public about these free guides. AACD is preparing for their annual meeting on October 11 to 13. In August, Sue Galadovish from the University of Minnesota St. Paul (reed canarygrass infestation restoration), and Tim Miller, Washington State University, Seattle, (reed canarygrass control), Caleb Slemmons and several others from the Kenai SWCD toured reed canarygrass patches in Kenai. Also participating were local residents, researchers, Kenai Watershed Forum members, and APHIS employees. The out of state experts have written two draft reports that will be available later this year. Their opinion was that a lot

of the grass is present on Kenai, but infestations are manageable if priority areas (streams, waterways, wetlands) are attacked first. Gino also addressed the Kenai borough and assembly about reed canarygrass.

Stoney Wright said that they have been killing a lot of weeds on farms, and working on bringing in collections of reed canarygrass seeds to look at viability. This will be an important component of a management plan. He will also be giving a speech at the CNIPM meeting at revealing the new revegetation manual

Rose Lombardi reported that the new state pesticide regulations are coming out on the 30th of September. There have been some changes made, including regulations for notification of pesticide application in public areas. Applicators will need to review the new rules, and the DEC will be doing outreach to get word out on the new standards.

Denny Lassuy will be teaching a trial run of an invasive species prevention planning class in Homer on October 16th and 17th. An instructor will be coming up from out of state to teach hazard analysis and critical control processes as adapted for uses in natural resource management. Denny will hopefully be able to teach the class in other venues, including next years Alaska Forum on the Environment.

Jeff Heys has been summarizing activities conducted throughout the summer, and working with CNIPM to finalize their agenda for the Annual Meeting on November 14th and 15th. On the evening of the 13th, Michael Lutz will give a presentation about invasive plants, and John Randall (The Nature Conservancy) will speak about their global invasive species activities at the Noel Wien Library. Rose Lombardi and Matt Carlson are in charge of the CNIPM poster session. (info and contact details under Additional Resources).

Heidi Veach reported that the Copper River Weed Work Group is working to get funding for next summer. Their area includes Ahtna Native Corporation, State and BLM lands, each of which are acting on weeds. The Copper River group will be working towards forming rapid response plans.

Tammy Davis recently attended the Western Regional Panel meeting of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. The 40 attendees including representatives from the Washington state department of aquatic resources, The Nature Conservancy invasive algae folks, Hawaii invasive species council, and Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Mark Sytsma was unable to attend, but has put together a educational database. The meeting was a good opportunity to see how Alaska compares to other states. Currently Alaska has fewer invasive species to deal with, and is focused more on prevention than eradication.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has also implemented new regulations regarding rats. See Additional Resources for the ADF&G press release text. Denny Lassuy said that Ron Parks from ADF&G did an excellent job on an interview about the regulations the day they came out. The TV coverage was extensive and highlighted the risks and pathways for rat invasions, but did not heavily stress the illegality of rats.

Tracey Gotthardt from ADF&G is also working on the first phase proposal for data acquisition and analysis of an animal ranking project, similar to the invasive plant ranking project (akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/akweeds_ranking_page.htm). The project will be expensive, and require partners on-board to get started. The list will be a valuable tool to help alert people statewide about what invasive species to focus on.

Recap/comments on the September 20th meeting with Representative Craig Johnson, etc.

Jeanne Ostnes said that the minutes from the meeting are not yet available yet. The legislative law person is drafting wording to include a weed board in Chapter 10 (soil and water conservation) of Title 41 (public resources) of the Alaska statutes. The legislative person said that it would be easy to add wording regarding all-taxa to the board description at a later date. (draft legislation will be distributed over the listserv once it becomes available).

Jeanne felt that it might be advisable to seek out an additional person within the legislature to spearhead issues relating to marine or all-taxa issues. Rep. Johnson does not wish to take on invasive species topics in addition to weeds.

Denny Lassuy thought that the meeting was very well thought out and run. Rep. Johnson had a good grasp on what was going on, and what options were doable. Michele Hebert spoke about the AISWG, and Rep. Johnson was reluctant to deal with all-taxa issues during that meeting. Michele made the point that it would be helpful if the bill dealing with plants also mentioned the need to be concerned with all invasive species, and for the state to retain focus.

Jeanne said that the legislative lawyer did use the AISWG two page brief Priority list while composing the draft legislation. Some portions of the draft discussed funding, and the possibility of DEC raising rates and using those funds for the basic workings of an invasive species effort. However, actual funding will come into play further down the road. Once support for the bill is in place, then the agencies can respond to it via the departments and commissioners setting their budget priorities and bringing them before the governor.

Documents presented at the meeting also included excel files compiled by Jodi McLory listing the worst of the worst invasive species outside of plants, the CNIPM and AISWG briefing papers (<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/aiswg/calendar.html>)

Gino would also like to see the draft legislation, and said that is seemed to be headed in a good direction, and that there will be a good way for the Working Group to get added in when appropriate.

Jeff Heys has thought a lot about the two board concept, with two potential functions: 1. Coordination, and 2. Listing. He has concerns about one group deciding which species to list, when there are so many people and constituencies involved. It may be necessary to have a coordinating body at the state level with sub-committees. Denny said that he likes the approach of having a coordinated body that does not have to deal with all taxa (like a weed board). It may be difficult for a small body to fill that function. In his experience, he doesn't know of any state that has one body making decisions for all taxonomic groups. Oregon has a statewide council, but has a weed board that handles weeds, a department in Fish & Game that makes decisions on animals, another group for

diseases, etc. He likes the idea of having a coordinated body, with multiple boards dealing with focused areas.

Jeanne asked if ADF&G had the authority to list and act upon marine species, and aquatic plants. Tammy said that they do under their management plans. The regulations do not state whether it includes aquatic plants, but under the guidelines for the commissioner, aquatic plants are included under management of fish and wildlife in the state. ADF&G would have the authority to make management decisions about aquatic plants, and include the ability to manage plants in clear-water (lakes and streams).

Jeanne added that Alaska is also working on joining a wildlife compact. This agreement amongst 36 states would allow each member state to deny activities related to hunting and fishing if an individual has violated such regulations in other states (i.e. denying a shooting farm license to someone with a poaching violation in another member state).

Poster Session at AISWG November Meeting

We would like to have posters at the AISWG for people to look over during the breaks and lunch. As long as space is not limited, they can also be put up at the CNIPM meeting the following two days. Anyone interested in solely putting up a poster at CNIPM should contact Rose Lombardi or Matt Carlson (see Additional Resources).

Next teleconference for the AISWG

9 am, Wednesday, October 24th

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

Marine Subcommittee

October 11, 9 am

Call in to: **907-586-7977***, allow line to ring until another party picks up.

Long distance charges apply. ***Please note the new phone number**

Additional Resources

Poster Session Info email from Matt Carlson

A poster session will be held at the 8th Annual CNIPM Conference on the 14-15 November at the Princess Riverside Lodge in Fairbanks. We encourage poster submissions related to non-native plant research, policy, public outreach, and education. Please send abstracts of your posters to Rosemarie Lombardi (rosemarie.lombardi@alaska.gov) or me (Matt Carlson -afmlc2@uaa.alaska.edu) by 1 November. Any questions or comments can be directed to us, as well.

Thanks,

Matt Carlson

Supporting documents for the 9/20 meeting on the AISWG Calendar page

Calendar page: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/aiswg/calendar.html>

Invasive species excel file lists: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/aiswg/excel-documents/Nonnative_animals_AK.xls

Rat Regulation Press release

http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/news/2007/9-13-07_nr.php

Press Release: No. 07-21, September 13, 2007

Contact: Ron Clarke, Division of Wildlife Conservation, (907) 465-4114

Alaska Steps Up Efforts to Eradicate Rats: Regulations Go Into Effect Today

(Juneau) - New state regulations aimed at increasing awareness of the dangers posed to Alaska by rats, and at helping eradicate rats from the state, become effective today. The regulations, passed by the Alaska Board of Game in March, will give state and federal agencies needed tools to address a significant threat to Alaska's wildlife, said Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Commissioner Denby Lloyd. "Rats have already done terrible damage to wild birds and other species on islands in the state," he said. "For example, hundreds of dead auklets have been found in rat dens on Kiska Island in the western Aleutians, which used to be rat-free."

As the state with the most coastline in the United States, Alaska is particularly vulnerable to this invasive species coming in to our ports and harbors, according to Ron Clarke, Assistant Director of Wildlife Conservation at ADF&G. "More than 100 species of ground-nesting birds used for subsistence in Alaska may be vulnerable to rats, if rats colonize their areas," Clarke said. "Norway rats have been found on 21 large islands in Alaska; and a dozen communities in the state, from Ketchikan to Nome, are known to have breeding colonies. Without control and prevention actions, rats in these areas can be easily spread to other parts of the state."

The regulations that become effective today essentially require boaters, shippers, and others moving containers that may contain rats to be vigilant in checking for rats and in taking action to control or eradicate rats when they are found. Enforcement will focus largely on prevention of rat spills (releases), assistance to shippers and others, and voluntary compliance.

ADF&G staff has been working with other state and federal agencies on steps to stop invasive rodents from entering Alaska and spreading around the state, to clean up rat spills, and to restore and protect Alaska's native species and habitats. "Taking these steps will require significant multi-agency coordination, and help from both Alaskans and those traveling to Alaska, particularly vessel operators, fishermen, and cargo shippers," said Clarke.

In October, ADF&G will issue its rat control plan, and convene a new interagency group, the Alaska Rodent Action Team (AKRAT), to assist in necessary cross-agency efforts to address rat prevention and control in Alaska. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and other organizations will hold training for 'rat spill responders.' Meanwhile, under contract with ADF&G, the University of Alaska's Sea Grant program is developing training materials

to assist harbormasters and other waterfront facility managers in preventing rat infestations and their spread.

More information and rat eradication kits are available to the public on a website sponsored by an informal multi-partner cooperative group, the Rat Outreach Group, at www.stoprats.org, and on the ADF&G Invasive Species Website, at <http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/special/invasive/invasive.php>.