

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE GOVERNOR'S INVASIVE SPECIES
COUNCIL

STATUS REPORT TO THE
GOVERNOR

DECEMBER 2006

12/14/2006

GOVERNOR'S INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Governor's Invasive Species Council (Council) was created by Governor Rendell in 2004 to advise the Governor on invasive species of concern and to direct the development and implementation of a state invasive species management plan. The Council is chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and includes agency heads of this Commonwealth responsible for the conservation of agriculture and natural resources and the protection of public health as well as public members representing agriculture and natural resource organizations and educational institutions conducting invasive species research and outreach.

Composition of the Governor's Invasive Species Council

The Secretary of Agriculture serves as Chairperson of the Council. The membership also includes agency heads of this Commonwealth or their designees responsible for the conservation of agricultural and natural resources and the protection of public health, each of whom shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor, including the:

- Executive Director of the Fish and Boat Commission
- Executive Director of the Game Commission
- Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Secretary of Environmental Protection
- Secretary of Health
- Secretary of Transportation

In addition, the Council can have up to 10 members of the public representing agriculture and natural resource organizations and educational institutions conducting invasive species research and outreach. The members of the public are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The 2005-2007 term members are:

- Farm Bureau
- Penn Ag Industries
- Penn State University
- Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
- Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association
- Pennsylvania Sea Grant
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of Pennsylvania
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

WHY DOES PENNSYLVANIA NEED AN INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Nonnative invasive species are a national problem that pose significant environmental and economic threats to the Commonwealth's natural resources and resource-based industries, and can be detrimental to public health and safety. Invasive species pose a significant threat to biodiversity which is essential for the Commonwealth's economic, environmental, and social well-being. Preventing new introductions of invasive species and limiting the spread of established populations into uninfested areas is both environmentally responsible and economically beneficial. The federal Executive Order 13112 acknowledges that nonnative invasive species fail to recognize jurisdictional boundaries, thus creating a need for enhanced coordination between local, state, regional, and federal entities.

WHAT ARE INVASIVE SPECIES?

The Federal Executive Order 13112 defines an invasive species as "an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. An "invasive species" is defined as a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive species can be plants, animals, and other organisms (e.g., microbes). Human actions are the primary means of invasive species introductions. The Council is developing its management plan around two ecosystems impacted by invasive species: Aquatic and Terrestrial.

Aquatic invasive species are a subset that impact aquatic ecosystems. Aquatic invasive species are defined in this document as non-native species that threaten the diversity or abundance of native species, the ecological stability of infested waters, human health and safety, or commercial, agriculture, aquaculture, or recreational activities dependent on such waters.

Terrestrial invasive species are defined in this document as a subset that impact primarily terrestrial ecosystems. Estimates of the number of non-native species that have been introduced into the United States vary widely (from 5,000 to as many as 50,000) (¹ Pimentel et al., 2000). Because of the sheer number of terrestrial non-native species these species are grouped by TAXA in this document with examples illustrating the impact of a particular species in the order Mammals, Birds, Amphibians and Reptiles, Animal and Human Pathogens, Plant Pathogens, Insects and Other Invertebrates and Vascular Plants. Because invasive species are broadly adaptive, there are also many examples of invasive species that impact both ecosystems.

¹ Pimentel, D., L. Lach, R. Zuniga, and D. Morrison. 2000. Environmental and economic costs of nonindigenous species in the United States. *BioScience* 50:53-65.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The first meeting of the Council was held on October 18, 2005. Each agency and public member provided a brief summary on current invasive species activities within their group. Members voiced their concerns regarding how the invasive species council will determine the definition of “invasive” and what organisms to include in the comprehensive plan. Discussion also occurred on creating sub-committees and working groups to reduce the time constraints on the Council. Many of the Council members and participant attended the Pennsylvania Sea Grant Workshop held at Penn State the following week on October 26-27 where participants identified short term and long term goals that should be considered by the Council in developing a Pennsylvania Invasive Species Management Plan. The November 2005 and January 2006 meetings focused on the *process* of developing the plan.

April 2006

Secretary Dennis C Wolff summarized the mission of the Council as an Advisory Council to the Governor. Its purpose is to advise the Governor on invasive species and create an invasive species management plan. On March 17, 2006 the Department of Agriculture asked each Council member to summarize their 1) concerns over invasive species in Pennsylvania 2) their concerns over the Council 3) their vision on how the Council should proceed and 4) their preferred definition of an invasive species. The majority of the Council members agreed with using the federal definition. The Council will focus on non-native invasive species and to use the federal definition in developing the process of creating a comprehensive plan. The Secretary also created two additional sub-committees the Aquatic Work Group and the Interagency Coordinating Committee.

July 2006

Proposed amendments to the Executive Order were discussed at the fifth meeting of the Council. Deputy Secretary Redding summarized the recent Interagency Coordinating Committee meeting. The committee made the following recommendations to the Secretary: 1) Dissolve the Management Plan Steering Committee and 2) create the Terrestrial Work Group; and 3) need for adopting Criteria. The Council agreed to dissolve the Management Plan Steering Committee and voted to create the Terrestrial Work Group.

October and December 2006

The aquatic invasive species management plan was approved by the Council at the October meeting. The approved plan was signed by the governor and sent to the ANS Task Force on November 3, 2006. Upon approval by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Pennsylvania will be eligible for federal dollars to implement the aquatic invasive species management plan. A working draft of the terrestrial component of the comprehensive state invasive species management plan was reviewed by the Council at the October and December meetings. The terrestrial component will go to the governor’s office as a status report from the Council after the December meeting.

THE GOAL FOR THE GOVERNOR'S INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

The goal of the Council is to minimize the harmful ecological, economic and human health impacts of invasive species through the prevention and management of their introduction, expansion and dispersal into, within and from Pennsylvania. The following objectives will be the guiding principles of the members of the Council as they work together to develop and implement the states invasive species management plan.

Objective: Leadership, Coordination and Policy (Aquatic Plan)

Provide leadership and coordination for invasive species issues in Pennsylvania among local, state and federal agencies and organizations, and ensure that state policy effectively promotes the prevention, early detection and control of invasive species in Pennsylvania.

Objective: Key Personnel and Funding (Terrestrial Component)

Identify key personnel and funding to coordinate terrestrial invasive species issues in Pennsylvania among local, state and federal agencies and organizations.

Objective: Education and Outreach

Educate the general public and people involved in the business, trade, research and government sectors about invasive species issues so that they do not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species.

Objective: Prevention

Identify vectors and mechanisms and minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species into and throughout Pennsylvania.

Objective: Early Detection

Detect new introductions of invasive species in Pennsylvania before they have a chance to become established in the ecosystem.

Objective: Rapid Response

Develop a system for early response to eradicate or contain target species before the species can become permanently established.

Objective: Monitoring and Inventory

Monitor and inventory existing infestations of high priority invasive species in Pennsylvania.

Objective: Control and Management

When feasible, control and eradicate established invasive species that have significant impacts in Pennsylvania. Reduce the harmful effects resulting from these infestations by managing those that cannot be eradicated.

Objective: Risk Assessment

Establish a comprehensive process to identify invasive species of greatest concern that are either not yet present, not established, or not yet widespread in Pennsylvania.

Objective: Research

Increase research efforts on invasive species, issues and impacts to support their management, control and eradication in Pennsylvania.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2007

Though all objectives, strategies and actions identified are considered important for the effective management of invasive species in Pennsylvania, the identification of priority actions is a key step to begin plan implementation. Based on subcommittee and Council input, a preliminary demarcation of priority objectives, strategies and actions needed to successfully develop and implement the Pennsylvania Invasive Species Management Plan is presented here.

OBJECTIVE: LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND POLICY

Provide leadership and coordination for invasive species issues in Pennsylvania among local, state and federal agencies and organizations, and ensure that state policy effectively promotes the prevention, early detection and control of invasive species in Pennsylvania.

Strategy: Create a Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator and Council Administrator Positions

Action. Hire a coordinator (1.0 FTE) for the Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Responsibilities of the Coordinator will include coordinating subcommittee and interagency activities and reporting progress on aquatic strategies and prioritized actions.

Action. Hire an administrator (1.0 FTE) for the Invasive Species Council. Responsibilities of the Administrator will include coordinating all Council subcommittee and interagency activities and reporting progress on implementing the comprehensive plan.

OBJECTIVE: KEY PERSONNEL AND FUNDING

Identify key personnel and funding to coordinate terrestrial invasive species issues in Pennsylvania among local, state and federal agencies and organizations.

Strategy: Funding

Action. Through the Council, work with the Governor's Office, Legislature, Council members and other partners, organizations and stakeholders to establish permanent funding for invasive species management activities.

Strategy: Key Personnel

Action. Identify existing key personnel in public and private organizations and their responsibilities and authorities as they pertain to invasive species management.

Action. Identify gaps in personnel in state agencies, and public and private organizations as they pertain to invasive species management and support the creation of permanent positions to fill these gaps.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this Report and corresponding Aquatic and Terrestrial components of the Comprehensive Plan will, for the first time, provide the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a blueprint for addressing invasive species. This milestone was made possible by the Council members and stakeholders collectively working to achieve this goal that at times required individuals and organizations to set aside their parochial concerns for the benefit of the Council. Further, the dedication of the Interim Coordinating Team (Melissa Bravo, Charlie Conklin, Melanie Wertz, Sarah Whitney and Karl Valley) and Jacquelyn Everitt (minutes and meeting announcements) is very much appreciated and speaks highly of their professionalism and dedication to achieving the goals expressed in the Executive Order.

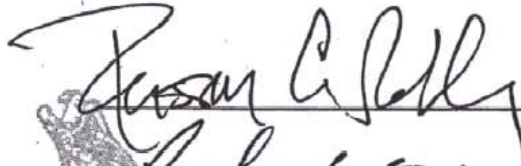
Thank you.

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DECEMBER 2006

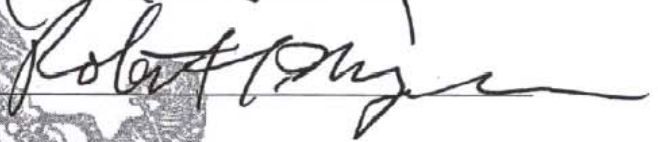
THE GOVERNOR'S INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

SIGNATORY PAGE STATE AGENCIES COUNCIL MEMBERS
DECEMBER 12, 2006

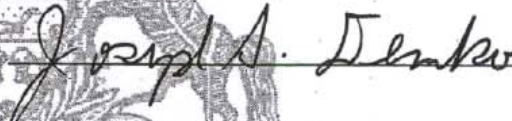
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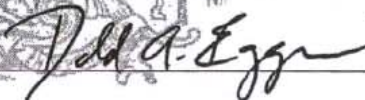
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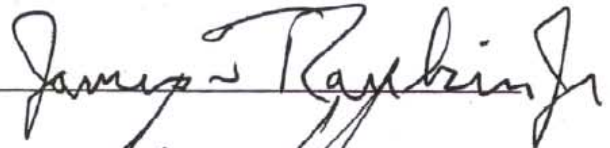
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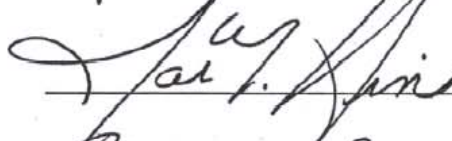
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



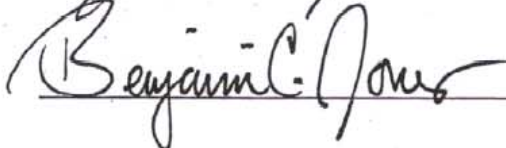
Pennsylvania Department of Health



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection



Pennsylvania Game Commission



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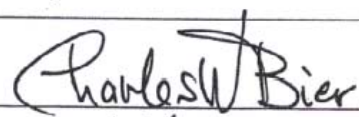


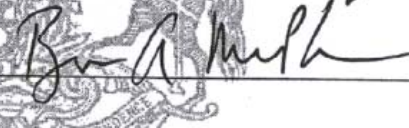
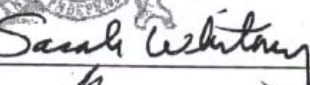
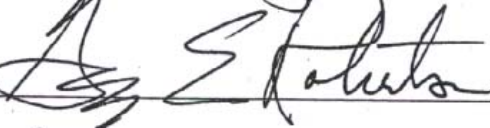
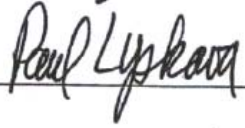
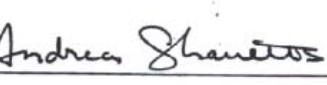
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THE GOVERNOR'S INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

SIGNATORY PAGE PUBLIC GROUPS COUNCIL MEMBERS

DECEMBER 12, 2006

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	
University of Pennsylvania	
The Nature Conservancy	
Pennsylvania State University	
Pennsylvania Sea Grant	
Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association	
Pennsylvania Forest Products Association	
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau	
Penn Ag Industries	