

Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council

Control and Management Working Group

Thursday, November 15, 2007 Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Dr. John Brock – Co-lead (ASU Polytechnic)

Joanne Roberts – Co-lead (AZ State Parks)

Alix Rogstad (Sonora Desert Museum)

Brian McGrew (ADA)

Brian Moorhead (SRP)

Cindy Copping (AZ Cattle Growers Assoc.)

Dan Shein (State Parks)

Genevieve Johnson (State Parks)

Marilyn Hanson (Sonora Desert Weedwackers)

Larry Riley (AGFD)

Marianne Meding (AGFD)

Pamela Nagler (USGS) – via teleconference

Steve Yool (U of A) – Instructor for seminar on invasive species

Meeting Minutes:

Work group Co-lead John Brock called into session the Control and Management work group meeting at the University of Arizona, 1103 E. 2nd St. Harvill Building, Room 435d Tucson, AZ 85721 at 1:40p.m.

A quick progress report was given by John Brock. We have three major objectives; we worked through the first objective describing Early Detection and Rapid Response. At the last meeting we started to address objective 2 which states “*Identify and recommend uniform invasive species eradication processes for control and management agencies and other stakeholders*”. We have been working through the items and developing specific recommendation that would become action items. We worked through 2b and now we are on 2c.

Introductions-

Via teleconference, Pamela Nagler (of USGS) spoke about the release of the tamarisk leaf eating beetles and how the defoliation of tamarisk, which is viewed as an invasive species, might effect management as well as erosion, tamarisk was initially introduced to reduce bank erosion. Since the release of the beetle on private land in Utah, speculation would suggest that its movement on the Colorado River will bring the beetle into Arizona and potentially all the way down to Mexico. Looking at some of those issues of repercussions that may result from its introduction looking at landscape dynamics and how carbon cycling is going to be effected as defoliation of the tamarisk occurs. Looking at the rate that tamarisk takes in water, tamarisk is a high water user, so clearing programs have been set in place. In this program sensors have been put on branches of to measure how much water is being taken up by these plants and looking at

some of the native counterparts like cottonwoods and willows. Measuring how much water is being taken in on the ground and also using scaling techniques like satellite imagery to give more river reach estimates for longer wider areas and vaster areas that are inaccessible. We are finding that tamarisk is actually using less water than the native plants and that these clearing programs are possibly in vain. Although there is some Invasive Species component to it. So just getting estimate for actual water so if you replace what is cleared you are going to get maybe higher water consumption rates but if you don't replace you get erosion problems and sediment problems contaminate run off into tributaries. Dan Shein asked the question: "Is there any variation you found between mature versus seedling in water consumption?" There is, the younger they the more water they use. In the old big standing tamarisk the sap wood is only going to be taking up the water, as a plant is developing the younger plants have more of the sap wood the more energetic use and productivity. The older stands are more heartwood and bark that is not taking up water. Old growth stands are really good for wildlife for nesting and breeding for bird species. Also the key is percent cover; if you have a higher canopy you will also see higher water consumption. Ms. Nagler offered to supply papers for those interested in obtaining a copy. Mr. Shein posed one last question: On satellite imagery, "Is the imaging fairly accurate in distinguishing between species, can you get that level of separation in remote sensing?" It is more related spatial resolution of the imagery; we can digitize specific vegetation communities using high resolution photography. The Bureau of Reclamation flew the Colorado River and we were able to digitize the different communities of riparian vegetation. Of course spectrally it is very difficult to separate different species. One of the worries is that once the clearing program for tamarisk has been in effect what is going to happen when other invasives move in.

Pamela was thanked for her time.

The group began discussing charter objective 2c "*Review and provide recommendation as to whether a mechanism can be created that allows agencies to share staff time and resources for emergency response or as a service response.*" It was discussed that the MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) that was proposed at the general AISAC meeting may provide an avenue for including a recommendation that may be applicable to this objective. Joanne Roberts made mention that wording in an MOU would have to do more than just state what an agency is already responsible for and identify the right language to fit all of our unique requirements in the MOU. Marianne Meding stated that the group working on the MOU was going to try and have a draft MOU by January 1st.

Ms. Nagler no longer on teleconference-

The charter, with the drafted recommendations, was projected on the screen for live edits. It was asked if the MOU would be sufficient enough to this recommendation. An MOU is the least binding of agreements. Other agreements could be used to create agreements that could be more binding if needed. We need to identify the kinds of standing agreements that need to be executed. We also need to identify a series of agreement tools that may be used by State agencies to convey services or resources to specific landowners or organizations to accomplish specific tasks. It was recommended that we make the agreements inclusive. Partnership agreements can be developed whereby monies, materials, or matching funds can be transferred between state

agencies and non governmental organizations/private entities. Cooperative Agreements can also be created to fulfill contractual agreements. There needs to be an individual or corporate entity that can be responsible for conveyance of resources/funding. E.g. Cooperative range management agreements between NRC's and individual property owners; SRP weed control in canal systems addressing giant salvinia and the application of matching dollars; Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit (CESU's) which are set up to allow for funding for research, education, etc.. Cross-cut budgets were also identified as a possible resource. Although there is no way of tracking expenditures but there is reporting requirements. Ms. Roberts mentioned that there would probably have to be more than one variety of agreements in place to meet all of the recommendations effectively. It was suggested that some case studies be obtained to include in the management plan. Ms. Roberts mentioned that if there is any other recommendations that are thought of later that they can be forwarded to her and then put into the document.

The group moved on to 2d *“Recommend incentives to promote and encourage State agency staff to be trained in invasive species management.”* Budget issues were discussed as being a hurdle to overcome. There is a need to demonstrate benefits to the employees that are expected to address the IS issues. Another discussion made mention that job descriptions need to encompass special training needs. It was identified that professional growth and development are possible incentives. Creation of job shadowing among agencies may prove helpful. Larry Riley made the comment that there are two things identified as concepts to be aware of are: “What’s in it for me as an employee” and “How does it [specific training] link to my position”. The idea is that professional development plans that identify employee training needs to be fully competent and also for meeting professional goals was discussed. Brian McGrew stated that current incentives in ADA are limited to tuition reimbursement. Mr. McGrew also made the comment that what training you do obtain, through what ever means, may increase your promotion appeal. If a promotion opportunity comes available, the employee that is better trained is more apt to be considered for the position. A training curriculum may be able to incorporate training needs in the MOU that identifies the importance of training to the function of the positions. Also, community college certification programs, there is a need to identify opportunities that are available at the local community colleges. Mr. Riley mentioned that the development of training curriculum(s) and incorporate them into AZGU (Arizona Government University) so that the training becomes part of the employees training record. The BLM national training center in Phoenix was identified as a possible training source; as well as interactive training classes for weeds out of one of the universities. It was suggested that reduced training costs could be incorporated in the MOU. There would be need to identify areas of specialty (strike teams / hot shot teams) that recognizes expertise and increases an employees chance for promotion.

Other suggestions made were that AGFD and ADA could team on creating low cost training opportunities. Also BLM and Department of Health Services should also be involved in identifying. Raise awareness and level of training of relevant employees in job classifications that address management of invasive species. Review minimum number of staff assigned to invasive species issues. Ms. Roberts stated that there are a lot of mechanisms out there that could be utilized but it all goes back to the PDQ (Position Description and Questionnaire) and that benefit to that employee. After discussion the following recommendations were made and put into the working document:

Recommendation: Utilize the above mechanisms, agencies need to recognize availability and make training a priority within agencies. Tie into the MOU and enhance PDQ's.

Recommendation: State Agencies should review relevant PDQ's to determine if there are specific KSA's (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) and examples of primary job duties that need to be included that will make certain that appropriate training will be provided and ensure that job descriptions adequately cover expertise needs. This training need can be met by creating no or low cost training opportunities.

The group continued on to 2 e. *“Recommend a process for training relevant staff and volunteers on detection and dispersal of invasive species to increase data collection, reporting, early detection power, eradication, and restoration efforts.”*

Marilyn Hanson gave a description to the processes that the Sonora Desert Weedwackers go through. When volunteers show up a briefing is given to describe the importance of their program. The group is then taken to their control site and new volunteers are guided by seasoned volunteers. Volunteer centers have not been the best sources for volunteers. Volunteers that are coming out for school and service credits have been better sources. This group would collect data as to how many bags of pulled weeds that are collected and GPS coordinates taken of weed sights; some circumstances prevent that data to be collected dependant upon terrain. Data has been collected for Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation since 2004. The only data collected is number of volunteer hours.

Ms. Roberts made the comment that data collection we are looking for on reporting statistics for early detection, tracking and on being successful in control efforts and whether or not allocating funding makes sense.

A statement was made that one of the biggest problems is that there is no comprehensive approach to identify gaps in control. Out of this discussion it was identified that part of the process needs to include recruitment of staff and volunteers. For recruitment processes: Listserv, volunteer coordination programs at agencies and organizations, extra credit opportunities at schools and universities, existing volunteer groups e.g. invaders program, Sonoran Desert Weedwackers etc. Also training needs will have to be specific and may not be applicable across the board, but there may be some key training, especially with regards to data collection (standardized data collection training). There may also be some specific permitting requirements. There will be a need to identify existing groups and review to see if they can meet training needs, identify relevant partners, and whether they are included in MOUs, and identify training mechanisms via workshops (school + field) and mentoring programs. Other areas of concern are tracking and responsibilities. Where will the data go and how will it be put to use to further control. There may be a need for training related to emergency response – e.g. small communities training. The identification of staff and partners involved should be included in the MOU, the next step is to identify implementation. There needs to be a central party responsible for central management of information to identify effectiveness of treatment and mapping control location data; disclosure is an important issue. Another process identified is for follow-

up and post-treatment monitoring for agencies and organizations that don't already do that. It was suggested that incentives be built in for cooperation. It was recognized that cooperation with private land owners and disclosure will have to be addressed. Cindy Coping stated that if a land owner feels as though their rights are being protect they would likely be willing to cooperate. Dr. Brock made mention of the importance of visual display of data, he made the proposal that the council visit the "Decision Theater" at ASU. Ms. Roberts made the suggestion that there be generalities for data collection

The following recommendations were developed out of the above processes.

Recommendation: State employee staff training processes and alternative processes needs to be identified.

Recommendation: For volunteers, identify general concepts and opportunities for implementation of training.

The group continued onto Recommendation 2.f. *"Enlist commitment from State agencies and other stakeholders to support and contribute in data collection, eradication, restoration, and mapping and database management efforts."* Genevieve Johnson made the comment that there are several barriers in trying to implement a mapping database (GIS). Problems may be lack of personnel, lack of software, lack of expertise, metadata may not work together. Mr. Shein Also made the comment of the possible lack of willingness to contribute data by agencies. Data quality was also identified as a potential problem. Alix Rogstad suggested the proposed MOU may alleviate that problem.

The following recommendation was made out of the above discussion:

Recommendation: MOU is a mechanism to support data contribution and sharing among state agencies and other stakeholders.

The group began discussing recommendation 2.g. *"Review existing agency policies and protocols for invasive species and make recommendations towards adopting uniform policies statewide."* Mr. Riley stated there is a need to identify recommended elements of policy that state agencies may incorporate e.g. policies that limit movement of invasive species on equipment, equipment decontamination and there will be a need to incorporate this process into the MOU.

Joanne Roberts adjourned the meeting at 3:50 P.M.

Future Meeting date:

November 20th, 1:00 P.M. @ the U of A Cooperative Extension, Palo Verde Room, 4341 E. Broadway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85040

December 11th, 1:00 P.M. @ the U of A Cooperative Extension, Palo Verde Room, 4341 E. Broadway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85040

Action Items:

No action items were identified