Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PGISC)
Tuesday, September 9, 2025 | 10:00am (virtual)

Attendance

Council Members, Designees, & Alternates Present	
PA Department of Agriculture (PDA)	Chris Davis
PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (PA DCNR)	Rosa Yoo, Andrew Rohrbaugh
PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)	Jim Grazio
PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT)	Luke Crawford
PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC)	Sean Hartzell
County Governments	Jeff Thomas (Huntingdon Co.)
PA Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)	Piper Sherburne
PA Farm Bureau (PFB)	Grant Gulibon
PA Lake Management Society (PALMS)	Kate Harms
PA Landscape & Nursery Association (PLNA)	Gregg Robertson
PA Sea Grant (PASG)	Sarah Whitney
PA State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS)	Brian Harris
Penn State University (PSU)	Deah Lieurance
PennAg Industries Association (PennAg)	Harold Brecht
Temple University (TU)	Jocelyn Behm
Western PA Conservancy (WPC)	Jeff Wagner, Amy Jewitt
Total Members, Designees, & Alternates Present	18

Members/Designees/Alternates Not Present: Betsy Schroeder (PA DOH), Andrew Ernst (PFB), Scott Bearer (PGC), Brian Pilarcik (PALMS), Arden Pontasch (PLNA), Sara Stahlman (PASG), Sean Mahoney (PhilaPort), Lisa Murphy (UPenn)

Other Participants Present: (41) - Amber Stilwell, Ben Mummert, Beth Sassaman, Bryon Ruhl, Catherine Zeigler, Daniel Ludwig, Don Eggen, Emilee Boyer Euker, Emily Shosh, Eric Roper, Erin Lee Frederick, Eve Adrian, Frank Schneider, Heather Fowler, James Mutunga, Jennifer Schwartz, Jennifer Senchak, Jim Holt, Johnny Zook, Judith Harvey, Kierstin Carlson, Kris Abell, Lucas Green, Maggie Wallner, Marie Maiuro, Matthew Helmus, Meghan Phillips, Michael Hutchinson, Michael Panuschka, Michael Roth, Misty Matesig, Molly Burns, Nick Decker, Patricia Prade, Roy Gothie, Ryan Reed, Sarah Hammond, Sarah Shiflett, Shane Phillips, Shayna Seeley, Tim Byan

In total, 59 individuals are present for today's meeting.

Welcome/Introductory Remarks, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes

Chris Davis (Acting Deputy Secretary for Plant Industry and Consumer Protection, PA Department of Agriculture – PDA) welcomed everyone to today's meeting. This is Chris's first time chairing a PGISC meeting.

Today's meeting will focus on the idea of where the Council is headed and moving the PA Statewide Invasive Species Management Plan into an operational phase. Council members should consider what barriers we have to overcome, and where might some of the Plan's initiatives best fit – at PA Department of Agriculture, at a different state agency, or with an NGO? Also, how can we bridge gaps that we may have in the long run?

Chris conducted the roll call. A quorum is present for today's meeting.

MOTION: Gregg Robertson (PLNA) moved to approve the June 10, 2025 PGISC meeting minutes. Brian Harris (PennAg) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

Agency and Organization Updates, Activities, and Events

Kris Abell (PDA) remarked that one of the primary purposes of the Council is to facilitate communication and coordination between PA state agencies and non-governmental organizations. This portion of the meeting to discuss updates from Council members is typically scheduled near the end of our meetings; however, starting now and moving forward, Council member and stakeholder updates will occur at the beginning of PGISC meetings to help our group be in better communication with one another.

Agency/organization updates were provided by Kris Abell (PDA), Frank Schneider (PDA), Sean Hartzell (PFBC), Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR), Brian Harris (PSATS), Luke Crawford (PennDOT), and Amy Jewitt (WPC). Details from each update are provided below.

Summary: Kris Abell (PDA) invited Council members to represent PGISC at the 2026 PA Farm Show by exhibiting at the Council's booth. Some potential new invasive species themes for the booth were suggested. Kris will create a work group that will plan and exhibit the Council's booth at the upcoming event.

Each year, the Council hosts a booth at the PA Farm Show in Harrisburg. In 2025, the booth had an aquatic invasive species (AIS) theme and included an interactive activity that involved a kayak. Visitors to the booth removed props from the kayak, each representing invasive weeds, to help demonstrate how to properly clean a boat after exiting a waterbody to prevent the spread of invasive species. Other engaging display materials were also offered to booth visitors. A big thanks to Kate Harms (PALMS), Amber Stilwell (PASG/Penn State Extension), and others who helped design and set up the booth.

With the 2026 Farm Show quickly approaching (in January), it's time to think about what our booth theme will be. We could do a repeat of last year, or switch themes and do something different. **IMPORTANT NOTE: The PGISC booth space is open and available to any Council member(s) and/or stakeholders that have invasive or native species related themes they would like to highlight to attendees of the PA Farm Show.** Please contact Kris Abell with ideas or suggestions, or if you would like to exhibit at the PGISC booth. Contact Kris at krabell@pa.gov or 717-787-2227.

Deah Lieurance (PSU) suggested the PGISC booth could focus on preventing the spread of invasive species by showcasing a boot brush station and other items the public can use to clean their gear/equipment when they're outdoors.

Jocelyn Behm (Temple U) suggested the booth could provide a fun/interactive activity that would challenge booth visitors to determine ways they can best engage the public to

perform tasks that would limit or prevent the spread of invasive species. The activity would give booth visitors an allocation of hypothetical funding; participants would then need to decide how best to spend these funds to complete their assigned task.

In Meeting Chat: Jennifer Senchak commented, "I would love to contribute to the fun side of promoting biodiversity for the Farm Show."

ACTION: Kris will follow up with Council members on the ideas presented today and form a work group to plan and exhibit the Council's booth at the 2026 PA Farm Show.

Summary: Frank Schneider (PA Department of Agriculture) provided an update on box tree moth and spotted lanternfly.

Box tree moth (BTM) (*Cydalima perspectalis*) was first detected in Canada in 2018; it was brought in on infected plants. BTM is now found in surrounding areas including New York, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, Massachusetts, and Michigan. As of May 2021, the USDA prohibits the movement of boxwoods from Canada to prevent BTM's further spread. On a positive note, BTM can be controlled with chemical controls and systematics. Canada does not have that available to them, so they have some different issues to deal with. There are some large growers of boxwoods here in PA; Frank knows of at least one grower that gains over 30% of their revenue from sales of boxwood, making it a very important commodity in PA. The BTM can live up to two generations in a year. PDA recently found BTM in Erie County in June, and another BTM in a trap (also in Erie Co). By chance, PDA found an infected boxwood in Franklin County; samples from that infected plant were collected and later BTM-confirmed. BTM is currently in PA and a quarantine is in place for Erie County. PDA will continue monitoring that area this fall, and the location in Franklin County, and update the quarantine as needed.

Spotted lanternfly (SLF) (*Lycorma delicatula*) has been an issue in PA for over 10 years with PDA taking the lead on regulation via teams to conduct surveillance, control, and compliance. PDA dealt with federal budget issues this year which meant no seasonal surveillance staff could be hired. Therefore, existing PDA staff stepped up and took over some of the SLF surveillance activities. PDA staff take swift action on reports from non-quarantine counties but may not respond as quickly to reports coming from quarantine counties. Though SLF's range has expanded in PA, PDA feels it has done a good job of slowing SLF's continued movement and controlling it in many areas. Keep in mind that though the SLF quarantine map looks like the insect is in much of PA, a whole county is added to the map if (for example) one small township has a SLF infestation. PDA's threshold (to adding a new county to the quarantine map) is one SLF egg mass or 10+ living

nymphs or adults; therefore, it doesn't take much to get a county added to PA's SLF quarantine. In the impacted counties, PDA is not noticing harm to agriculture, not like we thought when SLF originally came to PA. However, PDA is worried about grape growers in Erie County. Thankfully, SLF is not in Erie County yet and we have done a good job of keeping it out of there, with continued efforts underway. A current initiative PDA is conducting with Penn State University and Temple University is a tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) reduction in Erie County. Other than tree-of-heaven, grape is the next most popular plant for SLF to feed on. Thankfully, there isn't an abundance of tree-of-heaven in Erie County now, so PDA feels it's a goal they can accomplish and hopefully get rid of SLF's preferred host. Additionally, Penn State and Temple are trying to obtain grant money to conduct a survey identifying all tree-of-heaven in Erie County.

Piper Sherburne (PACD) asked if online resources or other information could be shared regarding how to treat BTM so the PA Association of Conservation Districts can distribute that info to PA's conservation districts. **ACTION:** Frank said he would send this info to Kris Abell (PDA) to distribute to those interested.

Piper (PACD) also asked if the bill for $5M to support research for spotted lanternfly can be commented on prior to being passed? Piper felt the funding should be used instead for control methods since it seems PA is lacking in our ability to respond quickly to new infestations. Frank didn't know the answer to Piper's question, but said he and Kris would follow up with Piper after today's meeting.

In Meeting Chat: Amy Jewitt (WPC) commented that WPC will be contributing tree-of-heaven location information from iMapInvasives to the SLF project that Penn State Extension and Temple University are working on.

In Meeting Chat: Chris Davis (PDA) shared information on the $5M spotted lanternfly bill: H.R.4708 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): Spotted Lanternfly Research and Development Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress.

In Meeting Chat: Chris Davis (PDA) commented, "For context, the SLF bill that has been introduced (but not brought up for a vote) is bipartisan. It is an amendment to the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990. It specifically amends the section on high priority research. It explicitly contains language on development and dissemination of research-based "treatments". Thus, it is an amendment focused on research and not something that can be repurposed to have federal funding for the implementation of treatment. Instead, the goal is to put SLF research on par with other major agricultural issues by the federal government."

Summary: Sean Hartzell (PA Fish & Boat Commission) provided an update on a short film being made by PFBC that highlights the importance of cleaning boats; a new advisory group focused on listing prohibited aquatic invasive species; and the addition of an invasive species chapter in the PA Wildlife Action Plan.

Sean Hartzell along with other PFBC staff are creating a short educational video that will highlight how cleaning boats (both powered and unpowered) can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) hitchhikers. The video will be a few minutes in length and include clean, drain, and dry messaging and info on new legal requirements for boaters to self-inspect their boats and pull drain plugs (all for the purpose of preventing AIS spread). These legal requirements are similar to regulations other states have in place. The video is being filmed at Opossum Lake in Cumberland County which has hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), so the video will focus specifically on that specific invasive plant. Filming began a few weeks ago with an anticipated wrap-up date (for filming) on Friday, September 12. The PFBC is fortunate to have internal staff with the ability/capacity to make and edit these types of short films. The film will likely be available to view sometime in 2026.

The PFBC has been working with partners to create an advisory group to PFBC for listing prohibited aquatic invasive animals within 58 PA Code Chapter 71a 11. This list includes aquatic species that are so invasive, we want them to be prohibited from possession in Pennsylvania. The list has been in existence for a long time and is in PFBC's legal code; however, it pales in comparison to most other states (i.e., Pennsylvania has 11 species groups listed whereas many other states have much longer species lists.) Sean's predecessor, Bob Morgan, was involved in getting this initiative going in partnership with PA Sea Grant. Thus far, the committee has been formed and had a few meetings. The group identified 10 potential species for the PFBC to evaluate for listing. This will likely take a while due to the process involved.

The PFBC and PGC are currently helping to update the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan (2025-2035 version). This document is updated every 10 years. As part of the plan, there is associated federal funding to recover Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) (i.e., native species we are trying to protect in PA). Good news — this latest version of the plan will include an entire chapter focused on the potential impacts of invasive species, both aquatic and terrestrial, on SGCN species and their habitats! The previous edition of the plan only included a limited focus on invasive species (i.e., one page), so this effort is going to expand on that. Case studies will also be included, such as the need for PRISM in Pennsylvania (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management). This public document gains attention from various individuals. The document itself is massive with

many different parts. The plan is anticipated to be completion later in 2025. A draft of the invasive species chapter is currently written.

Summary: Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR Bureau of Forestry) provided an update on aerial survey flight findings; funding for and work with invasive plants; biocontrols and disease treatments; and a newly hired Forest Health Geneticist.

In terms of forest health, DCNR did an aerial survey across the state which shows damage to foliation and mortality of our forests. We had some native things like fall cankerworm and periodical cicadas. Regarding invasive species issues, beech leaf disease is starting to show defoliation that appears in aerial survey flights. Spongy moth continues to be a major foliator in Pennsylvania and also had some native issues that can be impacted by climate change like anthracnose disease. Spongy moth looks like it will continue to have an outbreak in 2026 in the Northeast, but certainly a decline from what its populations were just a few years ago.

The Bureau of Forestry is working to get funding for work with invasive plants. Fortunately, Ben Mummert (DCNR, BOF) is working through the logistics of that with staff and partners. This summer, we've done treatments for wavyleaf basketgrass (WLBG) on Bureau of Forestry and State Park lands. A new report for WLBG was reported in Rothrock State Forest (just a small patch); thankfully, DCNR quickly responded to and managed that population. Staff will conduct follow-up surveys in that area.

DCNR continues to work on hemlock woolly adelgid treatments and biocontrols. We don't have any new elm zigzag sawfly reports. We have some trials occurring for beech leaf disease treatments. And then there's work happening with DCNR's knotweed psyllid biocontrol release, which unfortunately that biocontrol release site was mowed by overzealous maintenance staff (not from DCNR) despite being asked not to mow there and despite having stakes in the ground. (The stakes got mowed too.) We are currently looking for more sites that have hybrid knotweed (to release additional knotweed psyllids at), for which Amy Jewitt (WPC) sent a couple of location suggestions from iMapInvasives.

In Meeting Chat: Lucas Crawford (PennDOT) commented, "Andrew, get me the info on hybrid knotweed and I'll get it to PennDOT personnel."

Finally, DCNR now has a Forest Health Geneticist, Amanda Penn, who is working on tree breeding for resistance against invasive species. She's looking specifically at species including butternuts, hemlock, beech, ash, and chestnut trees. So, if you see any "suspiciously healthy" trees in an area with a lot of mortality in those species, please reach

out to DCNR staff (Andrew Rohrbaugh, Amanda Penn) or enter your findings into the Tree Snap app.

Summary: Brian Harris (PSATS, Warwick Township) suggested writing an article for the monthly PSATS magazine about the newly updated PA Invasive Species Management Plan.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) publishes a monthly magazine that most townships (both first and second-class townships) subscribe to. If beneficial, Brian could spearhead the writing of an article in an upcoming edition highlighting the newly updated PA Invasives Species Management Plan as it relates to invasive species prevention, eradication, and long-term maintenance. It could also be tied into local ordinances that relate to native vs. non-native species. (**ACTION:** Kris Abell liked this idea and agreed to work with Brian on this offline.)

Summary: Luke Crawford (PennDOT) provided an update on PennDOT's 3-day roadside vegetation and management conference and an in-field drone demonstration for targeting unwanted plants in ROWs.

Every year, PennDOT takes its 11 roadside specialists and other individuals to a 3-day roadside vegetation and management conference. Lots of presentations are planned for the first and third days of the event, and the middle day is full of field activity. As part of the conference, we go outside and do invasive species identification. We usually have Trilby Libhart (PDA) come and give a presentation on what's new. In service to PGISC, the roadside specialists could help identify invasive species in the field and aid in eradicating some of those species. This year, we had a drone demonstration take place over one of our storm water control measures along I-99 located at the edge of Centre County. The use of a drone in the field is something we've considered for a long time for use on our own rights-of-way. However, they can be problematic when working in large, populated areas and overtop of roadways. The demonstration was very pertinent as far as the drone being able to target certain plants for herbicide application.

Summary: Amy Jewitt (WPC) provided an update on an upcoming project to create four short films focused on aquatic invasive species; and the newest edition of the PA iMapInvasives newsletter was recently published.

In Meeting Chat: Amy Jewitt (WPC) commented that the Western PA Conservancy received Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding to create four short films highlighting the threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS) to the Great Lakes watershed. Each of the films will feature one or more recreational activities such as fishing, waterfowl hunting, scuba diving, and boating. The films will highlight 4-8 invasive organisms that impact these and other recreational activities or are somehow related to them. This project will begin in 2026.

Also, the latest PA iMapInvasives newsletter was published this summer and highlights several stories including:

- An invasive species puzzle
- PA Invasive Replace-ive event recap
- Biological control of knotweed (knotweed psyllid)
- Temple students track invasives with iMapInvasives
- Goat browsing in Erie National Wildlife Refuge

Legislative Committee Report

Speaker: Eve Adrian, Executive Policy Specialist 2, PA Department of Agriculture (eadrian@pa.gov)

Legislative Committee Members	
Committee Chair	Eve Adrian (PDA)
PA Department of Agriculture	Stephen Rudman, Kris Abell, Sarah Hammond, Chris Davis, Frank Schneider
PA Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources	Andrew Rohrbaugh, Ben Mummert, Ali Bowling, Nicole Faraguna, Eric Nelson, Daniel Graci
PA Fish & Boat Commission	Robert Caccese, Kailee Glock
PA Game Commission	Krisinda Corbin, Koty McGowan
PA Department of Transportation	Jeff Young, David Lapadat, Sadie Trout, Roy Gothie, Blade Kline, Teresa Wagner
Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group	Amy Shields
Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture & American Bird Conservancy	Amanda Duren
Audubon Mid-Atlantic	Jim Brown, Scott Parkhill
Crawford County Conservation District	Brian Pilarcik
Governor's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation	Derek Eberly
PA Association of Conservation Districts	Piper Sherburne, Amy Brown, Molly Burns
PA Environmental Council	John Walliser
PA Landscape & Nursery Association	Gregg Robertson
PA Sea Grant	Sarah Whitney
Penn State Extension	Patricia Prade
Penn State University	Julie Urban
PennAg Industries Association	Harold Brecht
Western PA Conservancy	Jeff Wagner, Brian Gallagher, Mary Walsh, Amy Jewitt
Interested in joining this committee? Council members and non-members are welcome. Contact Eve Adrian at eadrian@pa.gov.	

Invasive Species Act: We received feedback from PDA's legal division. One of the biggest pieces of information received is that PGISC cannot accept or distribute money because it is an advisory council. However, that's not necessarily a bad thing. It just means that if PGISC remains an advisory council, PDA's Bureau of Plant Industry would have to receive and distribute funds based on PGISC's recommendations (if we were to ever receive money). We will continue to work on those pieces of feedback from our legal division and make updates as needed.

PGISC is currently reframing our PA PRISM proposal (i.e., Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management), a statewide invasive species management strategy which up until this point was being referred to as "PRISM". The committee is now looking at two different styles for reframing the PRISM concept. Those styles include the Hardwoods Development Council (HDC) and a Center of Excellence (COE). The following table compares some high-level differences between these two structures:

	Hardwoods Development Council (HDC)	**Center of Excellence (COE)**
Framework	More structured, still flexible; HDC is in state legislation and has budget line item, Hardwood Utilization Group (HUG) regions across state are locally led and more self-directed and can have their own staff. HDCs are 501(c)(6)'s (have fees for members)	More flexible; Centers have staff/director with board of directors (BOD) advising the staff director. Funding can go to multi-county contracts
Funding	HDC oversees the $; HDC gets state budget line-item; lots of funding sources	Center oversees; can get state budget line-item; lots of funding sources
Legislation	Statutory framework needed for budget line-item and additional $	Statutory framework needed for budget line-item and additional $
Council	HDC	BOD advises staff
Projects	HDC distributes $	BOD advises staff; grantees get $ from Center
Regions	HUGs = regions; not all developed at once; locally led and organized with board of directors (BOD); HUGs are 501(c)(6); HUGs self-directed, but aligned with HDC priorities	Could be large multi-county contracts with pre-existing local groups; self-directed
Legislative Buy-In	HDC been funded since its inception in 1988; legislators are on HDC; legislators not on HUG BOD, but HUGs keep legislators involved	Organic Center of Excellence and Center for Plant Excellence were created by legislators in the last two years. Commission for Agriculture Education Excellence gets budget line-item funding.
PDA Role	Staff at PDA	Staff at PDA
Scope/Purpose	Represents and supports industry/trade; provides coordination and state resources	Public/private partnership structure; purposes are flexible from industry to societal needs; provides research, resources, and can be broad

Both the HDC and COE styles have been supported and funded in Pennsylvania, particularly within PDA. However, we've seen a few Centers for Excellence be "stood up" in the last few years, so we want to ensure relevancy if choosing the Center of Excellence style.

With the HDC, we're considering this style because it's been funded since the '80s. The HDC's Council is established in statute along with a state budget line item (good!).

The same PRISM model could be replicated with either one of these styles. Essentially, we like the structure of PRISM, but we want to package it in a way that's more familiar to legislators. Legislators understand that PRISM works in New York; however, it would be beneficial if we offered a concept (similar to NY's PRISM program) that was more familiar to the legislators here in PA. With that said, Council members and stakeholders can still reference PRISM as it's mentioned on the PGISC website and in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. However, keep in mind that we're looking at these other styles to present as alternatives to PRISM.

Our next steps are to continue this discussion with the Legislative Committee and the Council to ensure we're reframing a PRISM concept for Pennsylvania in a way that feels right. This ensures the decision is committee and Council-driven and not something that's emerging from state government.

Molly Burns (PACD) asked if these new approaches (HDC or COE) would make funding easier to obtain for a PRISM proposal (i.e., be an easier "ask" for legislators)? Eve said, "That is our hope."

Communications Committee Report

Speaker: Kris Abell, PA Governor's Invasive Species Council Coordinator, PA Department of Agriculture (krabell@pa.gov)

Communications Committee Members	
Committee Chair	Patricia Prade (Penn State Extension)
PA Department of Agriculture	Kris Abell, Daniel Blottenberger, Sarah Shiflett, Shayna Seeley
PA Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources	Andrew Rohrbaugh, Ryan Reed
PA Fish & Boat Commission	Michael Parker
PA Department of Transportation	Zachary Appleby
PA Sea Grant	Amber Stilwell
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	Amy Jewitt
Interested in joining this committee? Council members and non-members are welcome. Contact Patricia Prade at prade@psu.edu.	

A new edition of the PGISC e-newsletter will be distributed in October. The content of the Council's newsletter is largely dependent on information received from Council members and stakeholders. We look forward to receiving communications from members about what's happening in your respective agencies and organizations that can be shared with our e-news subscribers from across the state. **ACTION:** Council members and stakeholders are encouraged to send Patricia Prade and/or Kris Abell relevant content to include in the next edition of the PGISC e-newsletter.

Work continues on a brochure planned for public distribution at welcome centers statewide that will focus on the message of preventing the spread of invasive species. The committee is close to completing a draft of the brochure. Next steps will involve work by a graphic designer to have the brochure professionally produced. We look forward to sharing some mock-ups soon.

Our committee is considering ways to make the newly updated PA Invasive Species Management Plan (a very text-heavy document) more user friendly and consumable. We're currently considering several different options that would benefit various audiences. Ideally, the plan will be available in both print and digital versions. Amy Jewitt (WPC) has offered to create an ArcGIS StoryMap version of the plan that would be housed online.

As part of a collaborative effort involving the Council, Penn State, and Penn State Extension, an idea has been proposed to host a Pennsylvania-based invasive species conference in 2026. So far, there's interest and support from this committee and various

Council members for this type of event.

Invasive Species Listing Committee Report

Speaker: Sean Hartzell, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, PA Fish and Boat Commission (sehartzell@pa.gov)

Invasive Species Listing Committee Members	
Committee Chair	Andrew Rohrbaugh (PA DCNR)
PA Department of Agriculture	Kris Abell, Lawrence Barringer, Ekaterina Nikolaeva, Frank Schneider
PA Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources	Jill Rose, Houping Liu, Ben Mummert
PA Department of Environmental Protection	Jim Grazio
PA Fish & Boat Commission	Sean Hartzell
PA Game Commission	Scott Bearer
Ernst Conservation Seeds	Andrew Ernst
Juniata College	Norris Muth
PA Landscape & Nursery Association	Gregg Robertson
Penn State Extension	Patricia Prade
Penn State University	Deah Lieurance
Penn Ag Industries	Harold Brecht
Western PA Conservancy	Mary Walsh, Jeff Wagner
Interested in joining this committee? Council members and non-members are welcome. Contact Andrew Rohrbaugh at anrohrbaug@pa.gov.	

A new species that will be added to the committee's list of greatest concern for Pennsylvania is the golden mussel (*Limnoperna fortunei*). This species is a big deal and one to be aware of. Many of Sean's peers in the aquatic invasive species community and folks from other states at the federal level are talking about this species.

Golden mussel is native to Southeast Asia. It's a freshwater mussel species, but can tolerate some degree of salinity. It has been introduced elsewhere and is a major problem in parts of South America. The reason why golden mussels are such a concern in the U.S. is because they were first found in North America (in California) last year in October 2024. Sean's understanding is that golden mussels have been found in several waterbodies in California where they are a major concern for potentially spreading eastward into other parts of North America.

The spread and impacts of golden mussel are similar to Dreissenid mussels, such as zebra and quagga mussels. For example, golden mussel can attach to hard surfaces and foul industrial equipment, creating issues with boats and boat ramps and can cause other ecological consequences. For all intents and purposes, we could call the golden mussel

the “new flavor of zebra mussel,” as zebra mussels are very impactful both ecologically and economically. So far, golden mussel is still far away from Pennsylvania, but is still a species we need to pay attention to.

Aquatic Invasive Species Education and Outreach Committee Report

Speaker: Amber Stilwell, Coastal Outreach Specialist with PA Sea Grant; Master Watershed Steward Coordinator (Erie, Crawford, & Warren counties) with Penn State Extension (ars26@psu.edu)

AIS Education and Outreach Committee Members	
Committee Chair	Amber Stilwell (PA Sea Grant & Penn State Extension)
PA Department of Agriculture	Kris Abell
PA Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources	John Laskos
PA Fish & Boat Commission	Sean Hartzell
PA Lake Management Society	Kate Harms
PA Sea Grant	Sara Stahlman, Sarah Whitney
Penn State Extension	Brad Kunsman, Faith Kibuye, Glen Bupp, Jenn Fetter, Megan Luke, Natalie Marioni, Patricia Prade, Susan Boser
Western PA Conservancy	Mary Walsh
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Tony Honick, John Chopp
Interested in joining this committee? Council members and non-members are welcome. Contact Amber Stilwell at ars26@psu.edu.	

This committee is currently working on collaborative outreach and connection to agricultural communities and conservation districts.

The 2025 PGISC Farm Show booth activity was reused and exhibited at different events including the Master Watershed Stewards annual retreat in Pittsburgh. Members plan to take this outreach model and do it in their own community. *(The 2025 PGISC Farm Show booth included an interactive activity with a kayak. Booth visitors were asked to remove props from the kayak that represented invasive weeds to help demonstrate how to properly clean a boat after exiting a waterbody to prevent the spread of invasive species.)*

To better connect with agricultural communities, we've decided to work with conservation districts which allows us to be included in articles featured in their e-newsletters. We can host webinars for them and add programming to their Clean Water Academy. We also plan to provide resources to Penn State Extension staff, including PowerPoint slides and existing handouts.

Our group also plans to support Penn State Extension programming by being presenters in their webinar series, especially those that specifically target agricultural communities as their primary audience.

We plan to have a "Your Voice for Our Waters" Angler Engagement Session that will be hosted in conjunction with PGISC and PA Sea Grant. The event will take place on Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 10am-3pm, with a main goal of developing new and actionable solutions to the spread of round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*) by engaging the angling community. Participants will spend the day identifying issues surrounding the round goby, brainstorming solutions to angler behavior change barriers, and voting on actionable strategies by issue. Registration for this event is required. **ACTION:** Council members and stakeholders are asked to share this event broadly with folks across Western PA (the event's target audience).

Upcoming Events		
Date	Event	Host
September 17, 2025	Webinar: "Providing Boat Cleaning Stations to Raise Awareness and Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species" featuring PALMS & PFBC	Western PA Conservancy
September 24-25, 2025	Dive Deeper Summit; event for educators; featuring AIS components by PA Sea Grant and DCNR	Penn State Extension
October 3, 2025	Webinar: "Pennsylvania Invasive Species: Choose Native" featuring PA Sea Grant	Penn State Extension
October 15, 2025	Webinar: "Know It, Report It, Stop It: AIS Response Training"	PA Sea Grant
November 2, 2025	Film Screening: "Seeing The Unseen: Aquatic Invaders & What's at Stake" (film created by WPC)	Mount Lebanon Nature Conservancy

Finally, several upcoming events *(shown in the table above)* will be occurring and are being shared with the Council to help build better communication and information sharing across our networks.

Pennsylvania State Invasive Species Management Plan Breakout Groups

Kris Abell (PDA) introduced the purpose of the break-out groups in relation to the newly updated PA Invasive Species Management Plan. Each group will focus on a specific/major section of the plan. Categories include: Prevention, Early Detection & Rapid Response, Eradication & Containment, and Long-Term Management.

Each section have 5-7 specific recommendations. Groups should review and rank their assigned recommendations from the plan. Once that prioritization has occurred (as time allows), groups should review the top-ranked recommendation(s) and their associated actions as outlined in the plan and begin to consider how PGISC can try to implement those actions.

As a Council established by Executive Order, we are tasked with not only drafting the PA Invasive Species Management Plan but also trying to implement it. It is Kris's hope that these types of discussions/breakout groups can be a major focus of PGISC meetings moving forward. As needed, additional new subcommittees may be created to work on and implement Plan-related tasks in between quarterly Council meetings.

Breakout groups commenced with each group being led by a Council member.

Breakout Group Summary Reports

Summary: Kris Abell (PDA) facilitated Breakout Group #1 in a discussion of the Prevention recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. The group ranked their relevant recommendations in the order they felt made the most sense from a timeline perspective (e.g., "x" needs to happen before "y" can happen).

Breakout Group #1 participants included Kate Harms *(PALMS)*, Harold Brecht *(PennAg)*, Judith Harvey *(PA One Health Consortium)*, Matthew Helmus *(Temple University),* Jeff Wagner *(WPC)*, Gregg Robertson *(PLNA)*, Sarah Whitney *(PASG)*, Don Eggen *(retired from DCNR)*, Marie Maiuro *(FirstEnergy)*, Shayna Seeley *(PDA)*, Eric Roper *(Lancaster Conservancy)*, Jim Grazio *(DEP)*, Sarah Hammond *(PDA)*, Jennifer Senchak *(Restoreth Roots)*, Lucas Green *(Delaware Highlands Conservancy)*, Jeniffer Schwartz *(PDA)*, Kierstin Carlson *(WPC)*, Johnny Zook *(PDA)*, and Kris Abell *(PDA).* The group discussed the "Prevention" recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan and discussion was facilitated by Kris Abell (PDA).

The following table outlines Group #1's prioritized ranking of the five recommendations in the plan that relate to prevention of invasive species:

Ranking	**Recommendation**
1	Develop policies and resources to improve prevention of invasive species introductions and monitor invasion pathways. *(#2 in the plan)*
2	Improve public outreach and education for prevention of high-risk invasive species threats. *(#3 in the plan)*
3	Conduct Horizon Scanning to identify invasive species with a high risk of introduction to Pennsylvania. *(#4 in the plan)*
4	Conduct risk assessments for identified high-risk invasive species. *(#5 in the plan)*
5	Conduct pathway analyses and implement surveillance for identified high-risk invasive species *(#6 in the plan)*

The group decided to keep their recommendations prioritized in the order they are listed in the plan.

Discussion by the group included the importance of considering a timeline; what task should come first to complete the other tasks/recommendations correctly and effectively? The group thought that horizon scanning made sense to begin with to know what potential invasive species may be "on the horizon" and invade Pennsylvania in the future. With this knowledge in hand, risk assessments can be made, policies developed, and resources allotted, all with the goal of preventing specific species from ever entering or becoming established in the state. Education and outreach initiatives would help reinforce this knowledge to help make others aware too.

In practical reality, however, the group discussed that it takes money, time, and effort to do horizon scanning, risk assessments, and pathway analyses/surveillance, so policies, resources, and infrastructure first need to be in place before anything else can happen.

After ranking their list of recommendations, Group #1 discussed possible implementation ideas that PGISC could do, but only for their first ranked recommendation (the group ran out of time to discuss the other recommendations). Notes included:

#1 Recommendation – *Develop policies and resources to improve prevention of invasive species introductions and monitor invasion pathways*. *(#2 in the plan)*

- There are many good policies/regulations already in place, but what we often face is a struggle to implement or enforce those policies/regulations due to a lack of funding, resources, and infrastructure.

Summary: Deah Lieurance (Penn State University) facilitated Breakout Group #2 in a discussion of the Early Detection and Rapid Response recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. The group came up with three top priorities from their list of recommendations and emphasized the need for funding to do many of the tasks outlined in the EDRR portion of the plan.

Breakout Group #2 participants included Catherine Zeigler *(PDA)*, Chris Davis *(PDA)*, Grant Gulibon *(PFB)*, Frank Schneider *(PDA)*, Sarah Shiflett *(PDA)*, Shane Phillips *(PDA)*, James Mutunga *(PSU)*, Ben Mummert *(DCNR)*, Amber Stilwell *(PASG/MWSP)*, Amy Jewitt *(WPC)*, Nick Decker *(DCNR)*, and Deah Lieurance *(PSU).* The group discussed the Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan and discussion was facilitated by Deah Lieurance (PSU).

The group came up with three top priorities including the need for funding, developing a Pennsylvania terrestrial plant management plan, and having an incident command system (ICS) in place.

Ranking	**Recommendation**
1	Establish reserve funds that can be utilized to rapidly respond to new invasive species introductions. *(#11 in the plan)*
2	Develop a state rapid response plan for terrestrial invasive species to respond to high priority invasive species infestations in a timely manner to eradicate them at the early stage of establishment. *(#10 in the plan)*
3	Establish or improve organizational systems, such as incident command systems, that are implemented for responding to new invasive species introductions. (*#12 in the plan)*
Not ranked	Increase surveying and reporting for new invasive species. *(#7 in the plan)*
Not ranked	Improve invasive species reporting and ensure communication about priority invasive species among jurisdictional agencies, the Council, and partners. *(#8 in the plan)*
Not ranked	Effectively communicate information about new and emerging invasive species and rapid response efforts that have been implemented. *(#9 in the plan)*

During discussion about the terrestrial management plan, it became clear that all the other EDRR recommendations in the plan "feed into" that.

The group discussed the importance of knowing who to reach out to when an EDRR species is detected and knowing what to look for. The state has a good/effective ICS system in place as could be seen when PA responded to an outbreak of Avian flu. It would

be great for a similar foundation to be in place for EDRR invasive species that are identified through risk analysis or horizon scanning.

One big concern was the public vs. private lands; how are we going to work with private landholders? Funding was a big part of this discussion along with PRISMs (i.e., to do effective EDRR work requires the establishment of PRISMs in PA).

Summary: Jocelyn Behm (Temple University) facilitated Breakout Group #3 in a discussion of the Eradication and Containment recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. The group ranked their relevant recommendations and discussed potential implementation ideas.

Breakout Group #3 participants included Sean Hartzell *(PFBC)*, Ryan Reed *(DCNR)*, Chris Davis *(PDA)*, Jeff Thomas *(County Govts)*, Emilee Boyer Euker *(DCNR)*, Michael Hutchsinson *(PDA)*, Ben Mummert *(DCNR)*, Daniel Ludwig *(FPAC-NRCS)*, and Jocelyn Behm *(Temple University)*. The group discussed the Eradication and Containment recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan and discussion was facilitated by Jocelyn Behm (Temple U).

The following table outlines Group #3's prioritized ranking of the five recommendations in the plan that relate to Eradication and Containment:

Ranking	**Recommendation**
1	Increase agency staff and capacity for early detection and rapid response to emerging invasive species threats. *(#13 in the plan)*
2	Identify invasive species that warrant rapid response efforts (e.g., containment and eradication) using a standard evaluation process and proactively develop plans to implement rapid response. *(#14 in the plan)*
3	Improve public awareness and engagement for early detection and rapid response activities. *(#17 in the plan)*
4	Improve coordination between jurisdictional agencies and stakeholders for invasive species containment and eradication efforts. *(#16 in the plan)*
5	Support research to develop more effective early detection rapid response and control methods for invasive species. *(#15 in the plan)*

After ranking their list of recommendations, Group #3 discussed possible implementation ideas. Their ideas included:

#1 Recommendation – *Increase agency staff and capacity for early detection and rapid response to emerging invasive species threats.* *(#13 in the plan)*

- Legislative committee could possibly work on this to engage with legislators
- External funding isn't always a great solution due to staff capacity limitations (capacity is set by legislators)
- A lot of these positions are contracted out – this is a bit more flexible, but you still need staff in-house to manage those contracts and funding for the contracts
    - There is an administrative burden to managing grants; grants will commonly end at the fiscal year with $ left over
- Some agencies may be able to increase capacity because some staff aren't involved in invasive species removal and ID
    - There is some internal ability to increase capacity through training (e.g., invasive plant ID)
        - Come up with win-win scenarios within agencies
        - Can be a mixed bag depending on the complexity of tasks that need to be implemented

#2 Recommendation – *Identify invasive species that warrant rapid response efforts (e.g., containment and eradication) using a standard evaluation process and proactively develop plans to implement rapid response.* *(#14 in the plan)*

- PGISC is already doing this (somewhat) – species of greatest concern list; work from the Listing Committee on the tiering system within PRISM regions (Mary Walsh & Amy Jewitt)
    - Could be continued and expanded
- Having time for updates during PGISC meetings is a nice platform for sharing information
- PA Sea Grant – aquatic invasive plan; Council members use this as a reference
    - Already has framework for developing a rapid response plan
- Plans for implementing rapid response
    - May be somewhat agency and species-specific
    - DCNR already has a general plan for EDRR that works well

#3 Recommendation – *Improve public awareness and engagement for early detection and rapid response activities.* *(#17 in the plan)*

- Existing committees/new committees; communication committee, education and outreach
- Most wanted posters

Group #3 did not have enough time to discuss implementation ideas for the remaining two recommendations on their list.

Summary: Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR) facilitated Breakout Group #4 in a discussion of the Long-Term Management recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. The group ranked their relevant recommendations with the lens of not prioritizing funding or staff capacity as these things are not always forthcoming, or if they are, do not always come directly to PGISC. They also discussed implementation ideas.

Breakout Group #4 participants included Eve Adrian *(PDA)*, Brian Harris *(PSATS)*, Rosa Yoo *(DCNR)*, Ben Mummert *(DCNR)*, Roy Gothie *(PennDOT)*, Luke Crawford *(PennDOT)*, Chris Davis *(PDA)*, Molly Burns *(PACD)*, Beth Sassaman *(FPAC-NRCS)*, Maggie Wallner *(Lehigh CCD)*, Misty Matesig *(PDA)*, and Andrew Rohrbaugh *(DCNR)*.The group discussed the Long-Term Management recommendations listed in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan and discussion was facilitated by Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR).

The following table outlines Group #4's prioritized ranking of the seven recommendations in the plan that relate to Long-Term Management:

Ranking	**Recommendation**
1	Conduct outreach and education on the need and benefit of long-term management of invasive species in Pennsylvania. *(#20 in the plan)*
2	Develop outreach programs to assist private landowners with restoration. *(#24 in the plan)*
3	Apply ecological restoration at sites with well-managed or eradicated invasive species to improve biological diversity, natural processes, and habitats. *(#23 in the plan)*
4	Increase surveillance to determine locations/regions where rapid response efforts are no longer viable and should transition to long-term management. *(#18 in the plan)*
5	Improve coordination and funding for biological control of invasive species across the Northeastern U.S. *(#22 in the plan)*
6	Support and communicate the need for development of improved ways to measure the long-term economic, ecological, and health impacts of invasive species, and compare those to the costs of management. This should include studies on the values of ecosystem services, and study how to efficiently manage long-term invasive pressure with Invasive Pest Management (IPM) techniques. *(#19 in the plan)*
7	Increase staff capacity and funding dedicated to long-term management of invasive species in Pennsylvania. *(#21 in the plan)*

After ranking their list of recommendations, Group #4 discussed possible implementation ideas and focused on the need to have better data to make determinations for situations where EDRR is no longer feasible/practical and long-term management needs to be considered. Those ideas included:

#4 Recommendation – *Increase surveillance to determine locations/regions where rapid response efforts are no longer viable and should transition to long-term management.* *(#18 in the plan)*

- Provide funding to iMapInvasives to support the program
    - Does iMapInvasives source data from iNaturalist or other community science databases?
    - Require agencies to provide data to iMapInvasives?
- Public outreach
    - Social media
    - Places where PennDOT could help would be rest areas, etc.
    - DCNR Bureau of Forestry could advertise at trailheads, kiosks – especially for high priority invaders in an area
- PennDOT already has reporting of invasive species (?)
    - Not within any policy, but they have mechanisms – well-developed GIS mapping. It would take a little more policy/effort to track invasive plants that way. Perhaps a list of priority species could be given and a mapping list. Every road crew foreman carries an iPad with mapping software. Could be a stretch to ask them to take pictures of plants and look them up, but a roadside specialist could be given a "dirty dozen" (e.g., wavyleaf basketgrass, Ravenna grass, Asian longhorned beetle, etc.) and enter info into a PennDOT collector app. Data could then be given to iMapInvasives annually.
- Pennsylvania has a robust education and volunteer system – PA Master Naturalists, land trusts, watershed specialists, etc. Some get training on iNaturalist, but build off these groups to get more engagement with iMapInvasives.

All breakout group leaders commented that more time was needed to effectively have discussions concerning the recommendations in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan. Kris Abell (PDA) said he would try to allot more time for breakout groups at future PGISC meetings.

Following the breakout group summaries, Kris asked if Council members were receptive to approving the PA Invasive Species Management plan as it stands. Deah Lieurance (PSU) said she will send some suggested edits to Kris for the Prevention section.

Brian Harris (PSATS) asked if a specific entity in the state or this Council that ultimately adopts the plan? Kris responded that it is this Council's responsibility to draft, approve and release the plan. Amy Jewitt (WPC) commented in the Meeting Chat that something should be put in the plan that mentions, "PRISM is a placeholder for a yet-to-be implemented regional structure to coordinate invasive species management and related efforts in Pennsylvania."

After no further discussion from Council members, Kris said the plan will be published in its final form online and the Council can begin working to create different versions of the plan that are more user-friendly.

Public Comment Period & Other Miscellaneous Topics

Deah Lieurance (PSU) said that she has a funding proposal submitted to conduct an all-taxa horizon scan for Pennsylvania. She's currently waiting to hear if the proposal is approved. If it gets funded, the Council can cross that objective off our to-do list (i.e., one of the recommendations in the PA Invasive Species Management Plan discusses doing invasive species horizon scans).

Kris Abell (PDA) commented about a recent email he received about invasive jumping worms. Jumping worms seem to be getting a lot of attention lately from the public with many individuals expressing concern. The email read:

> *"I was told to reach out to you, Kris, about the insanity of worm populations at my home in Wexford, PA. Attached is some footage. Apple cider vinegar poured over or dispensing from a spray bottle kills them immediately by drying them out. I also sprayed stewing hydrogen peroxide on them as well with slower progression but still killing. Let's keep in touch to see what can be done with these annoying rainy-day problems."*

Kris asked if the Council would like to do something about this issue of jumping worms, whether that is forming a committee, discussing specific outreach and education, or other ways we can tackle the problem. *No feedback received.*

Concluding Remarks and Adjourn

Chris Davis (PDA) remarked on the usefulness of today's break-out groups, mentioning that he hopped back and forth on several of them and heard very good discussion. It was great for folks to not only review the plan's recommendations and be critical of them, but also determine what barriers there might be.

MOTION: Ryan Reed (DCNR) moved to adjourn the meeting. Gregg Robertson (PLNA) seconded the motion. **Meeting adjourned.**

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Jewitt, Pennsylvania iMapInvasives Program Coordinator with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program.

Questions or concerns regarding these minutes should be submitted to Kris Abell (krabell@pa.gov), Council Coordinator. If you are a member of the public and wish to attend the next PGISC meeting, please contact Kris for more information on the meeting date, time, and location.