

**Exotic Aquatic Weeds and Species Committee
Meeting of 18 November 2013, LOB 305, 10:00 AM
Minutes of Proceedings**

Members present: Rep. Ben Lefebvre (Chair), Rep. Dennis Malloy, Rep. Harry Merrow, Rep. Rose Marie Rogers; Public Members Andrea LaMoreaux (NH Lakes Assoc.), Bob Reynolds (Clerk)

NHDES Representative: Amy Smagula

Members Absent: Rep. David Kidder (Vice Chair), Sen. Bob Odell

Guests present: Joel Anderson (House Committee Research Staff)

Rep. Lefebvre called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Rep. Rogers moved to approve the minutes, as revised, from the October 21 meeting. Rep. Malloy seconded. The motion passed 5-0-1 (Rep. Merrow abstained).

Rep. Lefebvre welcomed the newest member of the Committee, Rep. Harry Merrow, who replaces Rep. Schroader. Rep. Merrow also serves on the House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee.

Rep. Lefebvre reported on progress in identifying a candidate from the Lake Sunapee Protective Association to fill the public member position on the Committee vacated by Don Foudriat.

Rep. Lefebvre also discussed LSR 14.2701.1, filed by Sen. Odell, that would amend RSA 487.30, II(a) to add new members to the EAWSC from the NH Rivers Council, the NH Dept. of Fish and Game, the Connecticut River Watershed Council, and the NH Marine Trades Association. John O'Neil from the NH Water Works Association might be another candidate.

The members discussed ideas for the roles and objectives of the EAWSC.

Mr. Reynolds asked if the Committee could assist in reducing the time and cost involved in obtaining permits to apply herbicides to control aquatic invasive species. Ms. Smagula discussed the current rule revision process underway by the Pesticide Control Board and added that she is preparing recommended revisions for submittal to the Board. The rule revision process will take approximately one year before any changes take effect, including public comment periods, review by the Joint Legislative Committee on Rules, etc.

Ms. LaMoreaux suggested that the Committee conduct a mission/vision/strategic planning session to define our mission and vision before we identify specific activities that we should undertake. Ms. Smagula mentioned that the Dept. of Education provides a strategic planning facilitation service that has been used successfully in the past by other state agencies and committees. Rep. Lefebvre requested that she follow up to determine how and when we could schedule this service, preferably during our January 13, 2014 meeting. Rep. Lefebvre suggested that potential new members be invited to this planning meeting.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that the Committee is an advisory committee, but also has the unique ability to raise and distribute funds from outside sources. A few years ago, the Committee raised approximately \$15,000 from private donations and contributed it to the grant managed by the NH Lakes Association to fund the purchase of 2 DASH units by the Tri-Town Milfoil Committee from Moultonboro, Tuftonboro, and Wolfeboro.

Ms. Smagula suggested that the Committee request a modification of the LSR to include Dept. of Agriculture and Dept. of Environmental Services representatives as permanent members of the EAWSC meetings, similar to the proposal for Fish & Game.

Mr. Reynolds was tasked to forward minutes and handouts from the previous 2 years of EAWSC meetings to Rep. Mellow and to the potential new members. Rep. Lefebvre and Ms. LaMoreaux will forward names and email addresses of the potential new members to Mr. Reynolds.

Ms. Smagula offered to re-distribute her latest Exotic Species Program Report to the EAWSC members.

Rep. Mellow and Mr. Anderson reported on the status of HB292. The bill was passed by the RR&D Committee by a vote of 13-5. The primary reason for votes against the bill was that it contained a fee increase. The bill currently contains a \$2.00 increase in the in-state boat registration fee that would generate an estimated \$184,000 in additional funding to be dedicated to invasive weeds and species control programs. This would still leave a significant shortfall compared to the \$1 million being spent annually to control milfoil infestations statewide, as identified by Ossipee Lake Alliance surveys. Ms. LaMoreaux commented that NH Lakes Association supports the idea of raising additional funding for both control and prevention programs, as both are critical components of the management of invasive species.

There was significant discussion about legislative strategies comparing the likelihood of passing multiple bills for multiple, small increases in the boat registration fee (e.g., \$2.00) versus passing a single, large increase (e.g., \$10.00). No consensus was reached, but concern was expressed about the likelihood of increased opposition to a bill containing a large fee increase. It was also mentioned that the Senate could amend the bill by increasing the fee increase, if Senators could be convinced of the importance of this funding increase.

The bill will be discussed on the floor of the House sometime after the first of the year. If it passes, the bill would likely go to the House Finance Committee and back to the floor of the House before being considered by the Senate. Members were advised to check the legislative calendars.

Rep. Rogers raised a question about establishing a “standard” for boat ramps owned/designed by the NH Fish & Game Dept. that incorporates inspection stations for invasive species as well as accommodations enabling the “Clean, Drain, and Dry” activities. There is significant Federal (US Fish & Wildlife Service) funding supporting the NH F&G boat ramp program. Silver Lake currently has a well-engineered boat wash station at its boat ramp that would likely cost \$15-20,000 today. Ms. Smagula mentioned that the State of Vermont is distributing a list of local car washes that have exterior power wash facilities that could accommodate boats. If this information were compiled and widely distributed in New Hampshire, the “free publicity” might incentivize more car washes to obtain the exterior power washers. Rep. Lefebvre suggested that we invite the appropriate F&G representative to an upcoming EAWSC meeting to make a presentation on the criteria they incorporate in their boat ramp designs.

Ms. Smagula submitted a written report on the NH DES Exotic Species Program, a copy of which is attached. She is currently involved in evaluating over 200 bids for exotic aquatic plant control projects in 2014 and determining how much funding she will have to partially fund these projects next year. Potential uses of increased funding from HB 292 were discussed, including reducing the local towns’ burden of paying for control activities as well as providing support to the 30% of the infested water bodies that are not currently managing milfoil infestations. Ms. Smagula mentioned that local “buy-in” and support for control activities is absolutely crucial to project success, based on her many years of experience.

Ms. Smagula discussed her interaction with the Fish & Game Dept. Environmental Review Team and their lack of management of the growing Asian Clam infestation threat. She will meet with the Team during January and inform them of the status of the threat and work with them to develop management approaches. Rep. Lefebvre requested that she brief the EAWSC about the results of that meeting.

Ms. LaMoreaux discussed the opportunity for the EAWSC to host a “milfoil summit” or a “presentation track” on invasive species at the NH Lakes Association’s Lakes Congress to be held on June 27th 2014 in Meredith. This could include presentations or panel discussions of, for example, a section on the status and trends of prevention and control of invasive species, another section on the economics and policies of the issue, and then a section of case studies of what various groups are doing. This is an opportunity for the EAWSC to introduce itself and explain our role in the issue. The Committee is very interested in participating, and will further discuss its input after the strategic planning session.

Ms. LaMoreaux distributed a handout summarizing the NH Lakes Association’s Lake Host Program in 2013, a copy of which is attached. The program currently covers primarily weekends and holidays at 100 of the most active boat ramps on 82 lakes, includes 250 seasonal employees and 500 volunteers, and was responsible for 153 “saves” (detection of invasive species on boats and trailers) in 2013.

The members decided to cancel the previously scheduled meeting on Dec. 16. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2014 at 10:00 AM in LOB Room 307. This meeting will hopefully be a strategic planning meeting facilitated by the Dept. of Education. If the facilitation service cannot be scheduled in January, then topics for the next meeting will include:

- Status update on the appointment of new members to the EAWSC (Rep. Lefebvre)
- Update on a strategic planning meeting to develop the role and objectives of the EAWSC during the next two years (Rep. Lefebvre, Ms. Smagula)
- Status update on HB 292 (Rep. Mellow, Mr. Anderson)
- Scheduling a presentation on boat ramp design criteria by a representative of the NH Fish & Game Dept. (Rep. Lefebvre)

- NH DES Exotic Species Program financial and activity reports (Ms. Smagula)
- Status update on the F&G management of Asian Clam (Ms. Smagula)
- Further discussion of participating in an invasive species “track” at the NH Lakes Association’s Lake Congress in June 2014 (Rep. Lefebvre)

Future meeting dates:

January 13, 2014 (strategic planning meeting?)

February 10

March 17

April 21

Rep. Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:41 AM. Rep. Malloy seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Reynolds, Clerk