

Minnesota State Management Plan Workshop Summary

Roseville, Minnesota

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Scope

A Workshop to Develop a Comprehensive State Plan on Invasive Species for Minnesota was sponsored by the University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program through a grant from the Great Lakes Commission in collaboration with the Minnesota Invasive Species Council (MISAC), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). It represented the first time that experts from terrestrial and aquatic invasive species had met together in a forum of this kind in the State of Minnesota. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum to engage in discussion on a framework of a draft plan on terrestrial and aquatic invasive species for the State of Minnesota. Under the leadership of MISAC, an ad hoc team developed the draft plan framework for review. The goals of the workshop were to engage MISAC members along with invited stakeholders in discussion about the plan's framework, identify gaps and needs, timing and responsibilities, and identify ways to leverage support from communities, agencies, businesses, and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) to address invasive species issues in Minnesota.

A plan was needed because both the DNR and the MDA are mandated to administer invasive species response plans, and other organizations, including Sea Grant, were interested in creating a plan. Merging efforts into one plan makes sense because it provides a common structure for coordinating and guiding invasive species detection and response efforts, encourages input from partners, and improves access to funding. Since Minnesota is one of the first states working on a combined terrestrial and aquatic invasive species plan, it is hoped that the plan will serve as a model that encourages other states to take a similar approach.

Workshop attendees participated in two afternoon breakout sessions according to their interests. In those sessions, they indicated how their organizations will address invasive species based on five elements: prevention, early detection, rapid response, management, and

leadership/coordination efforts. Input is being used to revise the draft plan. Participant interest expressed during the workshop demonstrated the relevance for the need to address invasive species issues through a comprehensive approach. The workshop was well attended, representing a broad array of stakeholders including: state and federal agency representatives, local governmental officials, academics, environmental organizations, industry representatives, and concerned citizens such as those from local lake associations. Based on workshop evaluations, the workshop was very successful.

Comments received on the draft plan are being considered during revision by MISAC. Once a revised plan is ready, it will be distributed to the public for comment. As of April 2007, the plan is expected to be finalized this year and submitted to the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) for implementation funds to support the aquatic portion of Minnesota's plan, recognizing that ANSTF funds are not available for the terrestrial portion of the plan.

Goals and Objectives

Goals of the workshop were to facilitate development of the state invasive species plan; provide a forum for stakeholder input; and determine actions, resources, and other needs for plan implementation. Based on work by an ad hoc team from MISAC, key elements were identified for inclusion in the plan that includes: prevention, early detection and rapid response, management, and leadership/coordination. In addition, it was hoped that the workshop would provide a unique opportunity to integrate both aquatic and terrestrial species in Minnesota's state management plan. MISAC is working to build partnerships to address prevention, containment, research, and management of invasive species. MISAC is comprised of 30 members, alternates, and interested parties with meetings held quarterly that are open to the public. More information is available on the MISAC website at www.mda.state.mn.us/misac.

Workshop Proceedings

Welcome, purpose and goals

Doug Jensen, University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program

Doug Jensen welcomed workshop attendees, identified the purpose and goals of the workshop, and reviewed the agenda (see attached). He acknowledged that to get to this point for a workshop it took an "alignment of the planets," which included relationship building, the leadership from MISAC, months of hard work by the ad hoc team to develop a draft plan, and the funding made possible through the Sea Grant Program and managed by the Great Lakes Commission. He also mentioned that Governor Pawlenty proclaimed October as invasive species month for the purpose of raising public awareness for invasive species problems and the need for a statewide management plan to respond to those invaders.

Jensen provided an overview of the invasive species threats to Minnesota. He emphasized that the economic viability of the State of Minnesota depends upon its environmental quality – agriculture, forests, tourism, wilderness, managed urban lands, waterfowl management areas, lakes, rivers and wetlands. Invasive species can decrease recreational opportunities, increase costs for business and industry, diminish natural heritage of national, state, and local parks, and urban and rural lands. Some estimate that this cost nationally is over \$100 billion per year. As a state with so much to offer, he stressed that as an outcome of this workshop it is an opportunity

for government to join forces with community, business, industry, conservation, and recreation groups to address invasive species through a comprehensive state management plan.

Jensen discussed how the Minnesota workshop fits into a larger regional initiative involving similar state specific workshops being conducted in the other Great Lakes states. Following the conduct of the state workshops over the next 12-18 months, a regional summit is planned for all the states to convene and learn from each others experiences as well as developing some regional strategies for responding to new and existing invasive species in the Great Lakes region. By way of introduction, he discussed how Kathe Glassner-Shwayder and Lisa Butch, Great Lakes Commission staff who were present in the audience as observers, provided guidance in planning the workshop, and would be facilitators and recorders during breakout sessions. Glassner-Shwayder provided background information on the Sea Grant project and the regional implications of similar state specific workshops that were held in the Great Lakes states, culminating in a regional summit in 2007.

Jensen acknowledged Jay Rendall, MDNR, Terry McDill, MDA, Valerie Cervenka, MDA, Luke Skinner, MDNR, and Jackie Lind, facilitator, for their contributions to planning the workshop. He also extended acknowledgement to Rendall and McDill for their leadership as MISAC co-chairs, and to the ad hoc drafting team of: Val Cervenka, Kevin Connors, Meredith Cornett, Tony Cortilet, Collie Graddick, Mike Hoff, Bob Jacobson, Doug Jensen, Alan Jones, Nick Palaia, Luke Skinner, Anna Travaglione, and Rob Venette.

What is MISAC and why a comprehensive invasive species state plan?

Jay Rendall, MDNR, and Valerie Cervenka, MDA

Jay Rendall provided background information about MISAC, what it is, and how it operates. Besides the effort to draft a state management plan, MISAC has created a Web site (www.mda.state.mn.us/misac/), supported Invasive Species Awareness Month activities, posted a reporting form on the Web site, and produced invasive species calendars. MISAC partners and stakeholders include universities, Extension, Sea Grant, state programs, federal agencies, local, tribal, non-governmental entities, and businesses.

Val Cervenka described some examples of species specific responses to gypsy moth and soybean rust. She explained that many agencies are currently collaborating to control the gypsy moth and that this effort might serve as a model for collaboration in controlling other invasive species. She noted that while soybean rust has not reached Minnesota, concerns over potentially devastating impacts for soybean growers was the impetus for a rapid response plan to be put into place. Rendall stated the purpose for developing a statewide plan was to provide a common framework to coordinate and guide efforts in Minnesota and encourage input from partners and stakeholders. Reasons for developing a plan is that it is required in statute for the MDNR and MDA. The national acts in 1990 and 1996 encourage state plans for aquatic aquatic invasive species and authorizes funding to implement them. He further reasoned that the goals and strategies are similar for all types of invasive species and it is better to have one common plan than several unrelated ones.

Rendall explained the benefits for developing a plan: show what is being done, who is doing it, and what is needed. It also gets players and partners together, encourages coordination and cooperation, helps to avoid duplication, and increases efficiency. He identified other needs for

Minnesota's SMP including developing a common vocabulary among all parties and stakeholders interested in invasive species, securing federal funding through the ANSTF, and developing a framework under which other plans can operate.

Highlight key aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and pathways of concern in Minnesota

Luke Skinner, MDNR, and Valerie Cervenka, MDA

Luke Skinner highlighted invasive species and pathways for introduction and spread. He explained that just because a species is non-native, it is not necessarily invasive. To be considered invasive, a species must cause ecological or economic harm. Invasive species include terrestrial and aquatic plants, insects, fish, amphibians, birds, mammals, and pathogens. Skinner then gave an overview of some of the most threatening invasive species to Minnesota such as Eurasian watermilfoil, curlyleaf pondweed, hydrilla, Asian carp, zebra mussels, buckthorn, gypsy moth, and emerald ash borer. Some species discussed are established in Minnesota while others are considered potential invaders. He identified key pathways for spread to include: overland transport on trailered boats, horticulture trade, aquaculture escapement, shipping, barges, natural water connections, canals and diversions, transport on farm and landscape equipment, domestic animals, forest products, firewood, and weather events.

Programmatic responsibilities: Federal, state, tribal, NGO, private and local

Jackie Lind, Workshop Facilitator

Jackie Lind gave an overview on the responsibilities of the federal government, state government, tribal governments, local and county governments, non-government organizations, and businesses regarding invasive species. She introduced each entity's role on invasive species issues, emphasizing how local communities, private business, and NGOs can play a vital role. She then asked all participants to introduce themselves (see attached participant list).

Development of plan framework

Jay Rendall, MDNR

Jay Rendall discussed the process used for development of the plan. MISAC formed an ad hoc team that met about every two weeks to develop new sections of the draft plan. For plan development, federal guidance was provided by the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. Other federal guidance was provided by other federal plans. For state guidance, they used other state plans and State of Minnesota statutes, which require plans to address aquatic plants and wild animals by the MDNR and terrestrial species by MDA. Rendall stated that the draft invasive species management plan was distributed to participants prior to the workshop for review and comment. He mentioned that workshop participants will play an important role in providing input on the implementation tables to be incorporated in the plan. More time for discussion of the implementation tables would follow in the afternoon breakout sessions. He further explained that comments received before and after the workshop, would be used as the basis for developing the next iteration of the management plan. The new draft will then be presented to the ANSTF along with the MDNR and MDA for comments. Based on this feedback, the plan will then be finalized and submitted to the ANSTF for approval, as required, to be eligible for federal funding for plan implementation. It was interjected that the funding from the ANSTF is modest and as more states obtain approved plans, funding will invariably decrease. It was suggested that an effort be made by all stakeholders to contact their state legislators to conjure up more appropriations for invasive species control.

Synthesis of pre-workshop comments

Rendall gave an overview of the pre-workshop comments, which were received from nine individuals or entities. Comment suggestions included:

- incorporating measurable outcomes for evaluation;
- a plan to secure state funding;
- engaging the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Districts as active participants in plan implementation;
- defining more explicitly the role and function of participating agencies; and
- using lake associations throughout the state that are currently considered an untapped resource that need to be used to support many programs, such as educational initiatives.

Comments and ideas related specifically to early detection and rapid response identified the need for more survey work on terrestrial invasive species. Participants noted the need for research and development of rapid response tools, along with related educational tools. Comments on containment conveyed various needs including a more aggressive approach, transfer knowledge to action, regulation and fees, quarantining soils, and mower deck cleaning to prevent seed transport. Comments and ideas about management included developing new approaches such as biocontrol and eradication of species rather than merely controlling their populations.

Participant reaction and comments on the draft state management plan

Comments taken from the audience included the importance of educating the public about the necessity of sometimes using chemical control in rapid response given the high costs incurred from no action. Another comment was that preventative action for new invasive species introduction is very important and needs to be balanced with rapid response, eradication, and containment of invasive species already introduced. Participants also identified the need for a terrestrial plant survey, funding and training for volunteers to monitor boat ramps, and using youth and master naturalist volunteers. Another participant issued concern that since much of the vegetation in the forest understory is invasive, many well-intentioned people are doing understory clearcuts, resulting in the loss of a seed source for the native plant populations. Other issues mentioned included gaps in regulatory enforcement and the need to bring invasive species to a higher priority level in the state and federal governments.

Break-Out Sessions

One purpose of the break-out sessions was to allow participants to review and begin to complete implementation tables as part of the implementation plan. A second purpose was to provide an opportunity for discussion of new strategies and actions for the plan, and to develop potential partnerships between entities with similar interests. Facilitators and workshop organizers helped answer questions, encouraged discussion, and reminded participants that they would be asked to report on one thing they would do from their implementation table in the final session. Breakout session I was grouped according to common interests, knowledge, and responsibilities related to five pathways/topics groups including: ground transportation and roads; horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture (2 groups); lakes and water recreation; and ports, ships and airports. Breakout session II was grouped according to common interests, knowledge, and responsibilities related to: aquatic management; aquatic research; terrestrial management; and terrestrial research. Participants were asked to hold discussion on the topic and issues, while leaving some time to fill in their implementation tables with actions relating to the assigned topics for each group.

Great Lakes Commission staff observed that group discussion was focused primarily on brainstorming and discussing ideas, leaving little time to really focus on addressing action needed for the implementation tables. Participants offered suggestions as alternative approaches regarding implementation tables: 1) focus only on discussion at the breakout sessions so attendees could spend more time learning, sharing ideas, and leading up to recommendations on actions that could be taken; 2) reserve time at the end of the day for attendees to complete their implementation tables; and/or 3) allow people to take their respective group's implementation tables home to provide a chance to think about the issues further.

Evaluation, wrap up and next steps

Jensen, Rendall, Lind, and Cervenka co-lead discussion following reconvening, including workshop evaluation, participant reports, and next steps.

Workshop Evaluation

Results of the evaluation show that the workshop was very successful:

- 89% of attendees felt the workshop was useful to address their organization's invasive species-related mission, goals, and objectives
- 71% thought that the draft plan is on track to become a viable approach
- 79% felt it brought together diverse stakeholders
- 78% were more than likely to implement aspects of the plan.

A copy of the workshop evaluation is attached. More results of the workshop evaluation are available by contacting Doug Jensen.

Participant Reports

Attendees continued to complete their implementation tables as participants shared one idea that their organization would implement. There was a variety of responses expressed including the need to conduct more invasive species research, transfer research findings into educational programs, facilitate better communication among stakeholders, and involving local groups such as lake associations. Some participants raised new actions that could be implemented by their respective agency/organization while others reported on activities that were currently being conducted. Another suggested that as development of Minnesota's state management plan progresses, current implementation priorities identified in the plan should be assigned to the appropriate entities. Another mentioned that agency approval would be needed to commit to new activities, which might impede adding new activities to the implementation tables the day of the workshop. Still another suggested working on a set of implementation tables less centered around the prepared state management plan and more focused on activities already being pursued by represented agencies/organizations. A couple of participants stated that several participants had not received the plan before the workshop. As a result, they were not familiar with it and it was a challenge to figure out what part of the plan their idea fit into in the short period of time provided.

Next steps

On behalf of the workshop organizers, Jensen thanked everyone for participating – it was a very productive workshop. He thanked Jackie Lind for facilitating aspects of the workshop. He also thanked Lisa Butch, Great Lakes Commission, Mike Hoff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, Heidi Wolf, MDNR, and Elizabeth Zeuhlke,

MDA, for facilitating sessions and as recorders. He again thanked the ad hoc team and the workshop planning team for their work. He explained that the next steps were to compile the notes from implementation tables, compile notes for a workshop proceedings, the ad hoc team to revise the plan based on comments received on the plan, and put it out for further review.

Rendall opened the floor for closing comments. He reminded that anyone who did not receive an email copy of the implementation table should update Jensen with their email address. Concerning next steps, Rendall reiterated that comments received on the draft plan will be considered during revision by MISAC. Once a revised plan is ready, it will be distributed to the public for comment. Time to complete the process including public review and approval was tentatively set for December 2006. [Note: Due to unexpected delays, the current plan is expected to be finalized in 2007 and submitted to the national ANSTF for implementation funds to support the aquatic portion of Minnesota's plan, again, recognizing that ANSTF funds are not available for the terrestrial portion of the plan.]

Proceeding prepared by:
Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Lisa Butch,
Doug Jensen, and
Jay Rendall