

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 20; 1:00 – 3:00pm**  
**Great Lakes Center Field Station**

**In Attendance:** In-person: Aaron Heminway (Parks), Peter Pasnik (DOT), Marcus Rosten (BNW), Colleen Kolb (USFWS), Jennifer Dunn (NYS DEC), Christopher Pennuto (GLC, WNY PRISM), Andrea Locke (WNY PRISM), Emily Thiel (WNY PRISM). On-phone: Paul Fuhrmann (E&E), Jonathan Townsend (CWC and RTPI)

**Steering Committee/Partner Updates**

Peter Pasnik (DOT): The DOT has been experimenting with pollinator planting, reduced mowing and *Phragmites* treatment at the 179 and Route 5 junction.

Marcus Rosten (BNW): Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (BNW) is currently planning its Buffalo River Stewardship Series which will include an invasive species monitoring program at Seneca Bluffs and a kayak safety fair. They are also working with Erie County to develop a long-term invasive species management plan throughout Erie County's area of concern. This work is currently focused on obtaining landowner permissions. The Town of Tonawanda would like to partner with BNW and WNY PRISM to do an invasive species management and native planting effort along 2-Mile Creek. Lastly, the Annual Shoreline Sweep is planned for Saturday, April 25 and will take place over 25 sites throughout western New York.

Colleen Kolb (USFWS): The benthic ID of samples taken this past field season are close to completion, having processed most of the 30,000 gastropod samples and still having to do the bivalve and arthropod samples. Work is progressing on the genetic assessment of 13 species internationally recognized as high risk invaders. This will inform eDNA development for both new fish and invertebrate species. The canal plant and fish survey done each year is looking for new sampling sites between Tonawanda and Albany.

Aaron Heminway (Parks): The Strike Teams of NYS Parks received an overhaul. Now each region will have teams of 2 people that will work in one region throughout the 4-month field season to do mapping, removal, etc. Unfortunately, this means the loss of the forest health specialist. Letchworth State Park has a bid out for emerald ash borer and hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) treatments at Letchworth State Park and surveys for HWA at Darien Lake and Lakeside Beach State Parks have not found any new infestations. Albany is beginning to standardize their invasive species management plans. Meanwhile, NYS Parks has Parks-specific management plans that mandate the removal of frog-bit to certain levels and the monitoring and removal of 5-6 species on a target list including *Phragmites*, multiflora rose, buckthorn, etc. Lastly, NYS Parks has posted several invasive species management positions and any help spreading the word about these positions would be appreciated.

Jennifer Dunn (NYS DEC): DEC will once again have an intern who will be available to help partners on occasion. This position will help facilitate the attendance of many different partner organizations at this year's Canal Fest (July 19-26).

Paul Fuhrmann (E&E): The Erie County Department of Environment and Planning has moved forward on several management plans which include a collaborative effort with NYS DEC and WNY PRISM. This program makes good use of assessment, evaluation and the knowledge base found in the Buffalo/WNY area. Similarly, the Native Plant Collaborative meetings have been very successful, and they are

currently working with Erie County to develop a native plant database and website. Paul has also been engaged with the deer management group at Tiffitt.

Lynn Greer (USACE):

- USACE will participate in the WNYPRISM Boat Steward Training scheduled for May 19 or 20.
- Hydrilla Project Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal: Tentative treatment dates are scheduled for the week of July 26 with spot treatment tentatively scheduled for the week of August 23.
- Unity Island Aquatic Plant Control: A three year construction contract was completed in fall 2019 that included demonstration of management strategies aimed to improve wetland quality and function by reducing coverage and spread of AIS (specifically Phragmites, tree of heaven, mugwort, and purple loosestrife), coupled with active restoration of native wetland plants, increase native plant and animal biodiversity, and minimize impacts to threatened and endangered wetland species on a 10 acre site. Monitoring and adaptive management will continue through September 2020.
- Buffalo River Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: The purpose of the project was to restore native aquatic habitat along an urban corridor to include the installation of in-water structure features such as locked logs and rootwads, and native planting of submerged and emergent vegetation. Work at 2 of the 3 locations (Savarino and Irish Propane) was completed at the end of calendar year 2019. In spring 2020, the third site (Ellicott) will have additional work done to bolster the locked log structures to mitigate substrate migration and protect submerged aquatic vegetation.

**PRISM Updates**

- Rails to Trails Volunteer Program with the Town of Tonawanda
  - We've held our first in a series of events designed to survey and manage the invasive species along the Town of Tonawanda's Rails to Trails Pathway. This event saw 29 people attend who learned some invasive species ID, how to download and install the survey form and basic removal techniques. Follow up events will be held in May to teach volunteers how to survey and June/July to manage the invasive species along the trail.
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Trainings
  - We held an HWA volunteer training on Saturday, February 8 at Chestnut Ridge Park with 32 volunteers. Overflow participants necessitated a second event on Saturday, March 14 at Emery Park. Volunteers signed up for additional plots at Chestnut Ridge to survey for HWA. This volunteer initiative has led to the first confirmed report of HWA at Chestnut Ridge Park. Management follow-up is unknown at this point.
- Seasonal Hiring
  - WNY PRISM is currently seeking applications for our many seasonal job openings. We are hiring 3 Invasive Species Management Assistants, 1 Education and Outreach Assistant, 1 GIS Analyst, 1 Early Detection Survey Technician, 18 Boat Stewards. We are also looking to develop some special project positions to assist with data collection, such as targeted surveys for yellow flag iris and flowering rush.
- Annual Report
  - Work on the 2019 Annual Report is progressing, a draft will be presented to the Steering Committee by early March.
- Early Detection Program

- Slender False Brome – The final report for the Great Lakes Slender False Brome Working Group Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant is coming together. WNY PRISM and the Working Group will continue to work on slender false brome outreach and management. The next Working Group Meeting is scheduled for April 8 at Genesee County Park and Forest.
- Mile-a-Minute
  - WNY PRISM will facilitate an upcoming working group meeting, currently being scheduled, to discuss last year's efforts and plans for 2020.
- Japanese Stiltgrass
  - We would like to develop a Japanese stiltgrass working group, similar to the mile-a-minute effort, and are currently working on getting stakeholders to the table. In the meantime, we are looking to hold a management workshop this summer, aimed at training volunteers in identification and removal

### **Discussion Topics**

- Crew Assistance Program Requests
  - We received 21 requests from 13 partners this year.
  - Requests totaled >40 days, not including projects clearly outside of WNY PRISM capacity. The 2020 CAP/Crew schedule has ~20 days available for projects.
  - Projects were reviewed for completeness and scored based on established criteria (priorities, sustainability, partnership and capacity) by Andrea and Lucy.
  - Proposal and scores were presented to the Steering Committee and further prioritization took place.
  - Clarification on a few projects is necessary to finalize selections and we'll reach out to those partners. Once clarification is received, final selection of lower ranked projects will be based on time and capacity.
- New NYS PRISM Network Logos
  - SLELO, Capital Region, LIISMA and APIPP recently changed their PRISM logos and DEC asked if the remaining four PRISMs were interested in doing so as well, using the template developed.
  - Consensus that our current logo is strong and well-established, it clearly identifies WNY PRISM and represents the region and organizational purpose.
- Partner Meeting Reorganization
  - During our strategic planning process, partners requested additional meetings for early detection updates, approaching region/emerging species, resources for the supervisors of summer seasonal employees pertaining to reporting protocol and species of interest, and a general protocols update. These could be integrated into the Spring Partner Meeting, eliminating our guest speaker time. Steering Committee agrees that this would be a good use of everyone's time.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Spring Partner Meeting – Thursday, April 16, 1 – 3pm; Webex/Online

Steering Committee Meeting – Thursday, June 18, 1 – 3pm; Great Lakes Center Field Station

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 18; 1:00 – 3:00pm**  
**Conference Call**

**In Attendance:** Lynn Greer (USACE – Buffalo District), Jennifer Dunn (DEC – Great Lakes Office), Mike Shaw (NRCS), Sharon Bachman (CCE-Erie County), Colleen Keefer (USFWS – Great Lakes), Paul Fuhrmann, Mark Bogdan (DOT), Jonathan Townsend (RTPI, CWC)

**Steering Committee/Partner Updates**

*Note: Due to COVID-19, NYS Pause and additional health and safety measures, many activities have been suspended, postponed, or otherwise reduced across all Steering Committee member organizations. Field activities including volunteer and education and outreach efforts have been particularly hard hit.*

Lynn Greer (USACE): USACE has prepared and is ready for field work. Mitigation measures (PPE, number of people per boat) have been put in place for field work including *Hydrilla*, Buffalo River and Unity Island projects.

Jennifer Dunn (DEC): Field work has been mostly suspended for DEC due to COVID-19 – outreach capabilities have been reduced and they will not host an Intern this summer.

Mike Shaw (NRCS): – USDA-NRCS staff are continuing to work, albeit from home whenever possible. Staff are currently working on projects involving development of pollinator habitat and meeting with farmers in the field when possible.

Sharon Bachman (CCE Erie County): Continuing with SWD monitoring, no reported catches in Erie County, but there have been some in Niagara County. Lily leaf beetles have been released this year and extra bugs are available. There are plans to set up biocontrol study sites and cages for swallow-wort at Woodlawn Beach in later next week. May be able to do releases with Clarence Oak opening site as well, just working with the Town of Clarence for approval. (update: the cage set-up at Woodlawn Beach was stolen and without the ability to replace the cage, this site will no longer receive the biocontrol. Permission was received for Clarence Oak Openings and the biocontrol has been released there).

Colleen Keefer (USFWS): USFWS staff are all currently working from home, but plans are to have a reduced number of staff work from the office, pending approval. No field work has been approved yet but hope that approvals are in place ahead of *Hydrilla* work.

Paul Fuhrmann: Continuing to work with NYS Parks on project designs for parks on Grand Island – Grass Island and Buckhorn Island. Has seen lots of cow parsnip and great angelica. Was out at Seneca Bluffs to hike and take a look at the high water, was very impressed with the successful invasive species removal efforts.

Mark Bogdan (DOT): DOT construction projects are going forward and ensuring invasive species information and project notes are adequate and included. DOT is actively looking at ways to incorporate additional monarch butterfly habitat into projects and staff are actively looking for opportunities for habitat improvements.

Jonathan Townsend (RTPI, CWC): Working on initiating our Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring and citizen science education program. Will be heading out to the Chadakoin River

tomorrow if the weather holds to look for water chestnut that was documented there and removed last year. Volunteers are not currently allowed due to COVID-19, so these are purely staff endeavors.

### **PRISM Updates**

- WNY PRISM has hired a new Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager – Marcus Rosten. Marcus started at the beginning of May and has been primarily working on coordinating the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program. Marcus will also coordinate the Water Chestnut Working Group and AIS related early detection programs.
- Andrea has reached out to Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper about selecting a new representative for the Steering Committee but has yet to hear back.
- The Spring Partner Meeting had a great, virtual, turn out with 42 attendees.
- WNY PRISM's Spring Webinar Series was also a success. We held four Webinars with over 100 attendees. Those were recorded and are available on the website. The topics were Early Detection, Birds and Invasives, Prevention and Boot Brush Stations, and Ask an Expert.
- In-person education and outreach events have been canceled through the field season. We are re-working some of our E&O efforts and may focus more on materials development this year and possibly another webinar series for the fall.
- Education and Outreach Working Group has been meeting quarterly again. Meetings are open to all and if you are interested in joining, please contact Emily at [thieles@buffalostate.edu](mailto:thieles@buffalostate.edu).
- Grants/Projects
  - Due to COVID-19 impacts, WNY PRISM was able to secure a one-year NCTE for our USFS CWMA Priority Lands Project. We were unable to onboard summer staff in time to train and complete the remaining work. Originally set to end June 30, 2020, it will now continue through June 30, 2021.
  - Received funding from LEWPA for purchase of native plant seed mixes, to assist with creating resilience against future invasion.
  - Received funding from Tiff Nature Preserve (through Greenway) to assist with invasive species removal and native plant restoration within the Mosquito Junction area, adjacent to areas previously restored.
- Seasonal/Summer Staff
  - Start dates for Invasive Species Management Assistants and our Education and Outreach Assistant were delayed due to COVID-19, but as of May 18, all WNY PRISM seasonal staff have started.
  - WNY PRISM was able to secure exemptions/essential worker status for all staff, full-time employees as well as seasonal staff.
  - Adjusted Work Plans, COVID-19 Guidelines, Daily Health Checks and other policies and protocols have been developed and implemented to ensure staff safety and compliance.
  - The full impact of COVID-19 on our field season projects is unknown at this time. The later start date for the Crew resulted in a loss of almost a month, which is 20% of the season, and COVID-19 related restrictions on activities led to additional loss of days.
- Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program
  - WISP got off to a great start – overall things are great, and boaters are happy to both be on the water and to talk with the stewards. As of June 17, we've had 4,673 inspections and 10,795 interactions.

- Initially, Sturgeon Point Marina was expected to be closed due to a large sandbar blocking the entrance. We identified two new launches to replace Sturgeon, Griffon Park in Niagara Falls and Hanover Municipal Marina, as Sturgeon was our busiest launch and we had two stewards hired to work there. Businesses donated money to assist in the removal of the sandbar, and as of this week Sturgeon is back open. This leaves us with an extra couple launches. We elected to stay at Griffon Park and only move one steward back to Sturgeon but are considering hiring an additional steward to cover Hanover, or possibly doubling at Sturgeon.
- We have decided not to hold the Stewardship Conference/Symposium this year, due to COVID-19. We feel that as another online conference it will not generate enough interest and things are too unknown for September. We will look into other options including holding it during year 5 (2023) of our current contract.

### **Discussion Topics**

- Invasive Species Management Certification
  - Increased volume of calls from private landowners for assistance removing common invasive species from individual lots has brought up the need to address invasive species management capabilities within smaller contract services, possible lawn care companies.
  - Concern was expressed over inexperience and use of management methods that are not effective long-term, and discussion shifted to a possible IS Mgmt certification. Committee Members were unsure if something like this already existed through CNLP or other professional organization.
  - WNY PRISM will do some research into whether such programs exist, within NYS and beyond.
- Volunteers
  - Briefly discussed working with volunteers during COVID-19. At this point, most organizations are not permitted to work with/have volunteers but are ready with projects should this be allowed later this summer. Master Gardeners are allowed to volunteer, but only for identified essential programs.
- COVID-19
  - Briefly discussed organizational requirements for working during COVID-19. Specific protocols for work, health and safety were similar across the board – maintain physical distance, wear masks, wash hands and use hand sanitizer when unable, daily health checks before reporting to work, etc.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Steering Committee Meeting – Thursday, September 24, 2020, 1 – 3pm; Conference Call

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 24; 1:00 – 3:00 pm**  
**Conference Call**

**In Attendance:** Lynn Greer (USACE – Buffalo District), Jennifer Dunn (DEC – Great Lakes Office), Mike Shaw (NRCS), Colleen Keefer (USFWS – Great Lakes), Mark Bogdan (DOT), Claudia Rosen (BNW), and Aaron Heminway (Parks).

**Steering Committee/Partner Updates**

Lynn Greer (USACE): There has been little education and outreach amid COVID-19 and efforts have focused on completing field work, including *Hydrilla* surveys and treatment, within COVID-19 restrictions. Currently working with WNY PRISM and the E&O Working Group on opportunities to use graphic artists and videographer to develop videos on invasive species, awareness and what people can do.

Jennifer Dunn (DEC): Followed-up on a new report of *Hydrilla* in Orchard Park. The plant has been identified as Brazilian elodea, and not *Hydrilla*, and are currently seeking management recommendations for the landowner. This is the first report of Brazilian elodea in WNY.

Mike Shaw (NRCS): Working with a few new landowners on habitat restoration projects where they are working on invasive species removal including buckthorn, honeysuckle and multi-flora rose.

Mark Bogdan (DOT): Active construction projects include paving and ramps. Controls have been put in place to avoid invasive species at staging areas and to avoid spreading species. Efforts involving the bike path/Robert Moses replacement in Niagara Falls continue with work to finalize contracts.

Colleen Keefer (USFWS): Field work was limited due to COVID-19 restrictions but were able to assist USACE with Hydrilla work and completed the annual water chestnut survey resulting in a handful of plants being removed from the canal. This winter, USFWS will reassess the water chestnut project to determine if the project/survey area can be reduced. Completed benthic surveys and some additional boat work that resulting in finding a water chestnut infestation within the Genesee River. Will reach out to and work with FL-PRISM to address the infestation.

Claudia Rosen (BNW): Claudia is attending her first Steering Committee Meeting and is excited to be involved – otherwise no updates from BNW.

Aaron Heminway (Parks): Made great use of the Regional Strike Team/Technicians and AIS Strike Team which remained in WNY due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The AIS Strike Team worked on frog-bit removal at Buckhorn Island, removing over 20,000 lbs, using 900 person hours and conducting invasive species surveys throughout the region including Grass Island. Survey efforts for beech leaf disease increased this year due to a number of reports across the region. BLD has been found in Orleans, Niagara, Erie, Chautauqua, and Wyoming Counties. Parks has released biocontrols for EAB and knapweed. Current funding for the AIS strike team is finished and there is uncertainty when it comes to capacity for Technicians and other seasonal staff for next year due to state budget concerns.

**PRISM Updates & Discussions**

- General Updates

- Summer/Seasonal Staff – The WNY PRISM Crew will be finishing up at the end of next week (October 2), joining our Boat Stewards who finished on Labor Day (September 7). Our special project folks have also mostly finished, including the Survey and Monitoring Technicians for slender false brome and yellow flag iris and flowering rush.
- Fall/Seasonal Staff – We have decided to keep our GIS Technician on staff through the end of the year, she will assist with end-of-year reporting, geodatabase development and FTE training. We are also hiring two Research Assistants to assist with data organization and analysis. One will work on a phenology project using iMap data while the other will work on a variety of projects involving early detection and WISPA data.
- FTE are currently working a maximum of two-days in the office and three-days either at home or in the field. This will continue through the fall semester.
- Fall Partner Meeting will be held remotely on October 22, more information to follow.
- Aquatic Programs
  - The Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager position closed on Monday, September 21 and we are currently reviewing applications. Our goal is to have someone on board early in November.
  - Emily Harrower, Southern Lead Boat Steward, has been helping us finish up the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program for the season. She's been working on inventory, data and reporting, and is providing us with a draft end-of-season report. Emily's last day will be Wednesday, September 30.
  - Preliminary Numbers
    - >21,500 inspections (increase of 5,000), >51,000 interactions (increase of 14,000), and >1300 interceptions (decrease of 500).
- Terrestrial Programs
  - Crew Assistance Program Crew will finish up next week. Its been a very hectic summer as we've tried to fit in as much of our originally planned stewardship work into a shortened window due to COVID-19 restriction. With the field season finishing up and the ability to spend more time in the office, we'll be able to provide more information on project work soon.
- Early Detection Programs
  - Red swamp crayfish was reported to iMap and WNY PRISM. The photos provided were inconclusive, so Dr. Pennuto plans to conduct a site visit to confirm the identification. (update: red swamp crayfish has been confirmed).
  - Water Hyacinth
    - Water hyacinth was found at two sites this year. One was a previously known site that we've been monitoring and had been hyacinth free for 3 years. The second is a new site reported on 9/14, at Buckhorn Island State Park. We removed 6 plants from the first site and reported the second to Parks who have plans to follow-up.
  - Water Lettuce
    - Water lettuce was reported to us by BNW in mid-August at Hyde Park Lake. Marcus went out to confirm identification and pulled 30-40 plants the following Monday. We determined that a full survey of the lake would be needed, but with Marcus finishing up, we turned to one of our survey and monitoring techs



still with us and Alex went out on August 20 to complete a full survey. Alex removed 291 plants during the initial survey and we've continued to monitor this site.

- Slender False Brome & Japanese Stiltgrass
  - We surveyed over 43 sites and 64 miles of trails for terrestrial early detection species.
    - We found one new section of the Groveland Secondary Trail in Genesee County that has slender false brome and worked with the DEC while they treated the species with herbicide.
    - We found 7 new sites with Japanese stiltgrass infestations. These sites, along Cazenovia and Eighteen Mile Creek, were prioritized for surveys based on our Japanese stiltgrass habitat suitability model. We removed over 23 bags of Japanese stiltgrass this season by hand-pulling.
- Education Programs
  - Education and Outreach Working Group met remotely on Monday, September 22.
  - WNY PRISM will be hosting a fall webinar series. The series will include weekly webinars held on Thursdays at 2:00 pm. The first webinar will be held October 15 and the last on November 19. October 22 is the Fall Partner Meeting, and there will not be a webinar this day. Topics will include winter ID and spread prevention, managing woody invasives in winter, emerging aquatic threats and an APHIS session on ECFF and PPV.
  - The Fall eNewsletter will focus on biocontrols and will be release in early October, ahead of the fall partner meeting.
- Grants
  - Received a one-year extension for our CWMA project, it will now end June 30, 2021.
  - Finished year one of Tiff/Greenway habitat restoration grant/project that funds efforts to remove buckthorn from the Mosquito Junction area of the preserve and to restore with native vegetation.
  - We received funds through LEWPA for a one-year project to install native seed at sites that have seen invasive species management and are in need of vegetation to help keep invasive species coming back. We developed two seed mixes, one for riparian areas and the other for upland and/or mesic sites and have identified three sites for planting.
  - Opportunities
    - IPM Partnership Grant is open and awarding up to \$200,000 for 2021, with a maximum of \$50,000 per award. The program supports projects that foster the development and adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) methods including three project types: IPM Applied Research, IPM Working Groups, and IPM Communications. Applications are due November 12, 2020 and more information can be found here: [www.northeastipm.org/rfa/partnership](http://www.northeastipm.org/rfa/partnership)
    - NFWF Bats for the Future Fund - NFWF is seeking grant proposals to slow or halt the spread of white-nose syndrome disease (WNS) in North America and promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bat populations and

species. This Request for Proposals will award approximately \$600,000.

Applications are due November 12, 2020. [Learn more](#)

- Pesticide Regulatory Update
  - DEC is working to streamline categories – there are currently 28 commercial and 7 private. Vegetation Management will include 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, and 6A and Aquatic Pest Control will include 5A, 5B, 5C.
  - Many changes to Certification and Training were discussed, but these seemed less certain. Included are changes to apprentice training requirements, redefined supervision terminology, CEU needs and record keeping fields.
  - One proposed change involving eligibility for certification is of concern. It shifts eligibility away from experience in favor of length of employment, requiring at least 8 consecutive months of experience. This has some serious impacts for our seasonal staff since our field season is only 5-6 months long.
  - Comments about the regulations can be sent to [PestRegs@dec.ny.gov](mailto:PestRegs@dec.ny.gov).

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Thursday, October 22, 2020 – Fall Partner Meeting

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Location: Webex

Thursday, November 19, 2020 – Steering Committee Meeting

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Location: Webex

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 19; 1:00 – 3:00pm**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**In Attendance:** Andrea Locke (WNY PRISM), Jonathan Townsend (RTPI), Claudia Rosen (BNW), Mike Shaw (NRCS), Sharon Bachman (CCE Erie County) and Aaron Heminway (NYS Parks).

**Steering Committee/Partner Updates**

Colleen Keefer (USFWS): Identification of the benthic invertebrates collected in 2020 has been completed and efforts are shifting to identification of larval fish samples collected in 2019.

Jonathan Townsend (RTPI): Current funding for the AIS and HWA programs are set to expire soon but are hopeful that another round of funding will be approved. Funding supports water chestnut surveys and removal and supports HWA surveys. Water chestnut was found in the Chautauqua Outlet and removed this year. No new HWA sites were found in NYS survey sites in 2020.

Jonathan is working on a fellowship through UB that focuses on climate vulnerability with Erie County, looking at biological threats due to climate change. Royal Fern Nursery has been growing substantially this year and they are continuing to source native seed.

Claudia Rosen (BNW): BNW submitted a project proposal to Greenway – Ecological Standing Committee to further develop and support their RestoreCorps and to grow a volunteer base to assist with ongoing monitoring and management at restoration sites. The project was found consistent. The Invasive Species Management Plan for the Cayuga Creek Restoration Site is being finalized and will be made available.

Mike Shaw (NRCS): Work has continued with private landowners incorporating invasive species management Best Management Practices. NRCS is beginning to look more closely at start incorporating biological control standards into practices as interest in using these tools has increased. There is interest in the new swallow-wort biocontrol and may be able to provide potential test sites.

Aaron Heminway (NYS Parks): Received data on Niagara County SWCD knotweed treatments. The AIS Strike Team will be finishing up in a couple weeks – they are currently finishing up mapping and reporting. A lot of data was produced this year as they mapped regional state parks. Data will be used to develop and/or update Invasive Species Management Plans. Beech leaf disease is being monitored at Knox Farm State Park, received a Sustain our Great Lakes grant for invasive species management efforts at Lakeside Beach State Park and HWA surveys are being planned for this winter.

Sharon Bachman (CCE Erie County): The swallow-wort biocontrol project was successful this year – a single cage was set-up at Clarence Oak Openings, off Sheridan. The pupae hatched and took hold, and were visible within the cage. Looking forward to next year and possibly adding a few sites. While they were happy with the pupae, they may look at moths for next year. Sharon would like to get the WNY Forest Pest Taskforce up and running again. Spotted lanternfly has been confirmed in Ithaca, increasing the need for surveys in our region. An iMap training for Master Gardeners has been developed and set for December 15. The training will focus on observation confirmation for common species.

**PRISM Updates**

- WNY PRISM has welcomed Nicole Smeenck as our new Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager. Nicole will take over AIS programs including the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program, Water Chestnut Working Group, *Hydrilla* and AIS related early detection efforts. Nicole started on Monday (11/16) and has already begun to review launches for 2021.
- WNY PRISM hired two Data Technicians for the fall semester (Buffalo State students) who have been working on a few projects for us. The Technicians will work through mid-December.
  - One project involves looking at our slender false brome management data, specifically the species composition within the management plots. We're interested to learn about species associates as well as native species regeneration after management.
  - A second project is looking at the flowering rush data collected this summer and determining management strategies and recommendations.
  - The third project involves looking at phenology data for Tier 4 species with the goal of improving Best Management Practices recommendations specifically aimed at management timing.
- Our Fall Partner Meeting was held on October 22 and we had between 30-45 attendees. In addition to providing programmatic updates, we worked through some Tier Ranking and prioritization questions, receiving some great feedback from partners. This effort will lead into our discussion in the second part of this meeting.
- WNY PRISM's Fall Webinar Series ends today with our final program focused on AIS. We welcomed guest presenters from USDA APHIS, Western New York Land Conservancy and Finger Lakes PRISM. The programs were very successful, averaging 30-40 participants, and recordings are available on our YouTube Channel.
  - Dormant Season ID and Spread Prevention.
  - Western New York's Emerging Forest Pests.
  - Invasive Agricultural Pests: European Cherry Fruit Fly and Plum Pox Virus.
  - Managing Woody Invasives in the Dormant Season.
  - Emerging Aquatic Threats in Western New York.
- We are currently developing a grant proposal for the USFS CWMA/GLRI program that will focus on Japanese stiltgrass removal efforts, primarily within Erie County. We are also partnering with the Nature Sanctuary Society of Western New York on a proposal to work at the Houghton Preserve.
- Crew Assistance Program
  - Lucy Nuessle is finishing up Crew Assistance Program reports, which are provided to our partners, and has begun putting together the 2021 request for projects.
  - Based on many previous discussions with the Steering Committee, we had begun asking partners requesting assistance to sign an MOU. This document put in writing what was expected from our partners as part of receiving WNY PRISM assistance and includes items such as publicly acknowledging our assistance, and following through on agreed upon project assistance, such as pre-treatment mowing or providing supplies and equipment. The MOU's worked very well for us this year.
- WNY PRISM staff are currently working on end-of-year reporting, including data analysis, and beginning to plan for 2021. The 2021 Annual Work Plan is being developed and will be provided to the Steering Committee for review in December.

## Discussion Topics

- Priority Species Lists
  - WNY PRISM first established priority species lists in 2015. Candidate species were reviewed and ranked by the Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species Working Groups and approved by the Steering Committee.
  - Lists (Terrestrial, Aquatic and Approaching Region) were updated in 2017/2018, primarily through the Steering Committee.
  - The current NYS Tier Ranking System was developed and first released in test form in 2018 and by 2019 had been adopted by NYS as the ranking systems PRISM's were expected to use. WNY PRISM completed rankings for an initial list of approximately 70 species and updated our priority lists from 2018 to 2019, settling on early detection priorities and a watchlist. A protocol was put in place for updating the lists.
  - Throughout 2019 and 2020, small updates were made based on the established protocols and species were moved from the watchlist to the early detection list.
  - Discussions focused on defining early detection and confirming what being a priority species means in terms of resources and management action. WNY PRISM maintains priority lists (Early Detection and Watchlists) to help focus attention on Tier 1 and Tier 2 species determined to have the greatest negative impact while also having effective management methods available. Eradication remains the primary goal for early detection priorities while education and raising awareness remains the goal for watchlist priorities.
- Tier Rankings
  - Current tier rankings were reviewed and approved with the following updates:
    - Balsam Woolly Adelgid, Hardy Kiwi, Porcelain Berry and Brazilian Elodea (Waterweed) were moved from Tier 1 to Tier 2.
    - European Cherry Fruit Fly and Jumping Worms were moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3.
    - Rusty Crayfish and Eurasian/Wild Boar were moved from Tier 4 and Tier 2 (respectively) to Tier 1.
      - Data supporting rusty crayfish's distribution in WNY never surfaced despite years of trying to track it down, so based on verifiable data it was reclassified as Tier 1.
  - New species rankings were approved for the following species:
    - Parrot-feather and Common Milkpea – Tier 1.
    - Red Swamp Crayfish and Amur Corktree – Tier 2.
    - European Fire Ant and Oriental Weatherfish – Tier 3.
  - Looking forward to 2021, Terrestrial and Aquatic Working Groups will be re-established to assist with the ranking of additional species.
- Meeting Schedule 2021
  - Due to lacking quorum, discussions to approve the 2021 Steering Committee meeting schedule was postponed. Approval will be requested through email communications.