

WNY PRISM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 17, 2022; 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Conference Call

In Attendance: Aaron Hemminway (NYS OPRHP), Colleen Keefer (USFWS), Christopher Pennuto (WNY PRISM/GLC), Megan Kocher (NY Sea Grant), Mark Bogdan (DOT), Sharon Bachman (CCE-Erie County), Mike Shaw (USDA-NRCS), Andrea Locke (WNY PRISM), Brittany Hernon (WNY PRISM)

Steering Committee/Partner Updates

Aaron Hemminway (NYS OPRHP): Funding is expected to continue for regional strike teams and the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program, which will include a Boat Steward at Silver Lake. Applied for emerald ash borer biocontrols for Darien Lakes State Park, which should be a priority as Genesee County represents a gap in release sites across the state. Work will move forward on monitoring at Grass Island, Buckhorn Island State Park and Burnt Ship Creek and funding for *Phragmites* removal along 4-mile Creek is expected. Concern is growing over starry stonewort.

Colleen Keefer (USFWS): Benthic samples have been picked and sorted into 3 categories (gastropods, arthropods and bivalves). Identification will be contracted out moving forward. Planning for the 2022 field season, focused on the Tonawanda Creek/Erie Canal *Hydrilla* project and eDNA sampling for Asian carp surveillance. Terrestrial invasive species survey work will be taking place at Niagara Falls Air Force Base this summer.

Christopher Pennuto (WNY PRISM/GLC): Work with the Park School/red swamp crayfish is expected to continue – looking into having a graduate student work on trapping this summer while students are out of school.

Megan Kocher (NY Sea Grant): Currently working on the New York Invasive Species Clearinghouse (NYIS) website redesign. The first step will be moving the New York Invasive Species Awareness Week website to NYIS.

Mark Bogdan (DOT): Conducting preliminary survey work on upcoming project sites.

Sharon Bachman (CCE-Erie County): Working with Erie County, The Hemlock Initiative and WNY PRISM to bring HWA biocontrols to Chestnut Ridge and Franklin Gulf County Parks. Work continues with the Swallow-wort Biocontrol Research Group and efforts are underway to train a new class of Master Gardener volunteers.

Mike Shaw (USDA-NRCS): Working with landowners and developing contracts involving several USDA-NRCS programs including the Agricultural Management Assistance Program.

PRISM News and Updates

- The 2022 Annual Work Plan was released, and the 2021 Annual Report is nearing completion.
- WNY PRISM has completed our move to Buckham Hall, but there is no change to our mailing address.

- The primary office phone number has not changed (716-878-4708), but this will double as Cecilia's direct line.
- Staff Direct Lines (716-878-XXXX):
 - Andrea Locke – 0342, Brittany Hernon – 5422, Nicole Smeenk – 3429, Cecilia Pershyn – 4708, Douglas Knoph - 3290
- WNY PRISM has hired Douglas Knoph as our new Field Operations Manager. His first day will be February 22.
- Seasonal positions have been posted and will close on Friday, March 4 – except for the Boat Steward positions which will remain open until filled.
 - WNY PRISM is hiring 3 Invasive Species Management Assistants, 1 Education and Outreach Assistant, 2 Early Detection Survey and Monitoring Technicians, 2 Lead Stewards, 17 Boat Stewards and 1 part-time GIS Technician.
- Student intern, Noah Hodson from Canisius College, is assisting WNY PRISM with hemlock woolly adelgid survey and volunteer management efforts this semester.
- WNY PRISM held a two-part hemlock woolly adelgid volunteer survey training with online and field portions.
- Seven volunteers were trained, and 5 sites have been surveyed.
- NYS Updates
 - Lower Hudson PRISM has welcomed their new Coordinator, Brent Boscarino. Brent has been with Lower Hudson PRISM for several years and is stepping into the role left open with Linda Rohleder's departure.
 - The glyphosate ban on state lands went into effect December 31, 2021. Exemptions include use in support of invasive species management. DEC is working on procedures for securing project exemptions.
 - NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets has hired several new Horticultural Inspectors and have updated their regional coverage.

Discussion Topics

Crew Assistance Program

- The Crew Assistance Program (CAP) closed for proposals on January 28. WNY PRISM received 13 proposals including 2 from new partners and at least 1 from each of our 8 counties and they included a mix of survey, removal and restoration projects.
- Terrestrial Program Manager, Brittany Hernon, and Coordinator, Andrea Locke, reviewed the proposals and each gave them scores based on established criteria. The scores were averaged and given a preliminary rank based on this score.
 - Note: Although scores were different, the order in which the proposals were ranked by each reviewer individually were similar to the combined rank.
- The WNY PRISM field season consists of 106 days. Crew commitments will take up between 78 - 82 days, which leaves approximately 24-28 for CAP projects. Crew commitments include training, outreach, early detection program projects and other long-term or otherwise committed habitat management and restoration efforts.
 - The number of days requested by CAP proposals fell within 28 – 35 days.

- The Steering Committee reviewed committed projects and CAP proposals and the overall ranking of the CAP projects was approved. However, we recognized that several proposals were either lacking in detail necessary to determine if they would fit within WNY PRISM capacity or would require additional support from the partner to implement. WNY PRISM staff will reach out to partners to discuss proposals prior to final selection as part of 'pre-selection' meetings. Pre-selection meetings will also be used to ensure everyone agrees on individual responsibilities.

Upcoming Meetings

- Spring Partner Meeting
 - Thursday, April 21; 1:00 – 3:30 pm
 - Location TBD
- Next Steering Committee Meeting
 - Thursday, June 16; 1:00 – 3:00 pm
 - Great Lakes Center Field Station