

**WNY PRISM Steering Committee Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> 2014; 3:00 – 5:00 pm**  
**Ecology & Environment, INC.**

**In Attendance:** (in-person) Paul Fuhmann, Alisia Vilonen, Bob Smith, Jen Tait, Evyn Iacovitti, Shanna Shaw, Helen Domske, Andrea Locke, (on phone) Jeff Diers, Jim Berry, Sandra Keppner, Lynn Greer

**Steering Committee Member Updates**

Jen Tait (NYSDEC) – hydrilla treatment begins this summer, Army Corp will be contracting the work, DEC is hiring an invasive species intern for a few months this summer. Shanna Shaw (NRCS) – covers 13 counties, focuses on private lands and habitat work, in an agriculture setting, she oversees contracts and works a lot with managing invasive shrubs and wetlands. Helen Domske (NY SeaGrant) – SeaGrant is hiring seasonal stewards for boat launch program in Oswego and Salmon River, continues with public, K-12 and university education, State of the Lakes Meeting will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Paul Fuhmann (E&E) discussed the state of invasive species work in the region, the increased and wide-spread nature of projects have people being stretched thin. Paul would like to see a database that brings together project information across ownerships and agencies along with increased invasive species information. Alisia Vilonen (DOT) – works mainly in capital projects and is currently working in a large wetland restoration project spraying invasives. Alisia is also working on getting DOT information into iMap and is a certified pesticide applicator. Evyn Iacovitti (NYSPRHP) – Meg Janis wasn't able to make the meeting, so Evyn came to represent Parks and updated us on the hiring of a strike team and boat stewards for this summer. Jeff Diers (SUNY Fredonia) - updated committee on water chestnut outreach and eradication efforts in Chautauqua County and a meeting held earlier today. On behalf of the water chestnut working group, WNY PRISM drafted a letter that is being sent out to area business owners along with informational fliers for dispersal to the public. Jeff raised some questions about eradication efforts (mostly hand pulling) and what type of permits may or may not be necessary to obtain for these efforts. Jim Berry (RTPI) also spoke about concerns over permitting with respect to water chestnut efforts and is looking for information on wetland designations and regulations. Lynn Greer (USACE) will be working with Jen Tait on the hydrilla project in Tonawanda Creek, there will be a public information meeting within the next few weeks, excited about Invasive Species Awareness Week and is looking for a way to be involved. Bob Smith (NYS Nursery & Landscape Assn.) – spoke at the nurseryman's conference and people there were very interested in PRISM. Bob also encourages PRISM to get out into all of the counties and interact directly with all of the various stakeholder groups and communities.

**Next Steps:**

Permitting - Andrea will look into permitting requirements for hand pulling water chestnut in different ownerships, Lynn Greer will check within Army Corp as well.

**Strategic Planning**

Chris and Andrea met with a facilitator (Laura Ryan, LAMA Innovations) to discuss the 5 year strategic plan. We had a good conversation and decided to move forward with Laura. We talked about some ways to go about creating the strategic plan, but the best option presented was to schedule 2 full day sessions, back-to-back. We understand this is a significant time commitment and every attempt will be made to ensure this planning will be run efficiently with regard to time management and effectiveness of planning. Suggested dates included April 22 & 23 or May 12 & 13.

**Next Steps:**

Determine dates for the strategic planning sessions

Andrea will complete pre-work to ensure our planning time is used most effectively

**PRISM Updates**

- Operational Guidelines finalized
- iMapInvasives Trainings – good response so far

- May 14<sup>th</sup> @ Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY
- June 7<sup>th</sup> @ Lockport Public Library, Lockport, NY
- Invasive Species Awareness Week (July 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)
  - Website including a calendar of events will be live soon - around 4/11
- PRISM Leaders Meeting - Boot Camp
  - Great meeting that provided important clarification to DEC Grant deliverables, time tables and funding rules/limitations
  - Invasive Species Management Plans were clarified to be site and/or project specific. A region-wide ISMP does not need to be completed
- Seasonal Hires – good response so far, application deadline is Friday April 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **2014 Annual Work Plan**

- Draft 2014 Annual Work Plan was distributed to Steering Committee Members prior to meeting for review.
- This work plan was based off of the DEC Grant Scope of Work, while future annual work plans will be based on the Strategic Plan.
- Website
  - The need for a more informative and easy to navigate (more user friendly) website was discussed.
  - NYIS website has limited functionality for PRISM Leaders to make additions and other PRISMs have developed independent websites - this may be something WNY PRISM will need to consider.
  - Efforts should be made to improve the website this year, as quickly as possible
  - Lynn suggested getting a facebook page up and running and using the listserve/emails as a way to get information out while working on website ideas/development
- Invasive Species information
  - There is a need for more comprehensive information on invasive species including technical and treatment options for the public.
  - There is currently a project underway to bring together invasive species information and make it available as part of the Clearinghouse. This effort is being led by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Andrea suggested waiting until we have a better idea of what this will look like before taking this on independently
- Information for Prioritization
  - Andrea brought up regional prioritization of sites & habitats, for management activities.
  - Paul suggests that the information exists to create a database for aiding in the decision making for priority areas. Some of this information is proprietary and often in the hands of individual landowners.

### **Next Steps:**

- Steering Committee Members will provide Andrea with any new thoughts or additional comments
- Andrea will update and finalize 2014 Annual Work Plan

### **Cooperative Agreement**

A draft Cooperative Agreement was provided to the Steering Committee prior to the meeting. Discussion began with an explanation of the intent for this Cooperative agreement, which is primarily to show broad support for the existence and mission for WNY PRISM and show that our region is working together to achieve our mutual goals. It is also intended to lay out the basic framework for what that cooperation will include, specifically keeping each other informed about the activities we are doing and providing each other with expertise and input. While the intent for the Cooperative Agreement was agreeable and had strong support within the Steering Committee, there was concern over Partner's ability and desire to actually sign the agreement due to how it is presented and structured. Concern

centered on potential legal implications of signing the document. An expectation is that most agencies and many organizations would not be willing to sign such a document or be willing to place the document under the legal/agency scrutiny that would be necessary to get signature approval.

The language used in the Cooperative Agreement came from a PRISM/DEC template, so it is possible that other PRISMs have had the agreement already approved by various organizations, eliminating some of the concern. We also discussed ways of making the document less formal, using different language or offering the option for organizations to provide letters of support.

Next Steps:

Andrea will follow-up with PRISM leaders to see if the agreement has already passed organizational scrutiny, find examples of potential alternatives, including simplified language and letters of support.

### **Full Partnership Meeting**

- Tentative date for our first Full Partnership Meeting is Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The Cornell Extension office in East Aurora and Senior Citizens Center in West Seneca were offered as options. Concern over having the meeting in Erie County was raised due to potentially keeping participants from further out from participating. Attempts to rotate the location of meetings to encourage greater participation will be made, but there is also an understanding that southern Erie County is a central location for the WNY PRISM region.
- Ideas for making the most of this meeting included some presentations and/or having a panel discussion with Partners discussing their roles, along with a question session.
- Advertising for the meeting should occur as soon as possible

Next Steps:

Andrea will set a location and develop an agenda/plan to send out for comments

### **Other Business**

- Andrea asked for some help tracking down examples of volunteer waivers and a number of names/organizations were provided
- Bob and Paul talked about getting the PRISM message and brand out into the public's mind through different forms of media (print, radio), offering a few contacts to follow-up with.

### **Next Meeting:**

Thursday June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014; 6 – 8 PM; Location TBA

Steering Committee will meet from 6:00 – 6:30 pm

Full Partnership Meeting will be from 6:30 – 8:00 pm