

Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Rapid Response Plan Exercise: Review and Summary

On October 23-24, 2007, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in collaboration with the 100th Meridian Initiative Columbia River Basin Team, held a “table-top” exercise in Vancouver, Washington to evaluate the *Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Response Plan: Zebra Mussels and other Dreissena Species*. In addition to providing training on the National Incident Management System, (NIMS), the exercise helped evaluate whether the plan and its organizational framework can help enhance response to an invasive mussel introduction. This ground-breaking event sets the stage for future exercises to improve response readiness for invasive species introductions throughout the United States. Incident Solutions LLC, an emergency response training/consulting firm, helped design, facilitate, and evaluate the exercise.

Over 40 individuals representing nearly 20 agencies and organizations participated (see Attachment A). The response scenario involved the reported detection of dreissenid mussels on a vessel at a county boat access facility at the mouth of the Wind River in Washington, just upstream of Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. Subsequent “injections” into the scenario regarding other contaminated watercraft expanded the concern (and associated action items) throughout the Columbia Basin.

Overall, participant evaluations indicated that the exercise was an effective next step in refining the existing rapid response plan. For example, on a scale of 1-5 (1 = poor; 5 = excellent), participants gave an average score of 3.8 to each of the following questions:

- Were the presentation objectives realistic and were they met?
- Were the lectures and exercises effective in enhancing your ability to perform your duties during an incident response
- How would you rate the applicability of the exercises to your situation?

Participants, particularly upper level managers participating on the Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group, recommended additional exercises to improve collaboration and address more additional response issues not resolved during this initial exercise. Other key recommendations from participants and the exercise planning team – many of which have already been incorporated into the response plan and an associated preparedness strategic plan - included:

- Pursue a session 2 of this workshop. The plan represents a huge amount of excellent work. It will only improve and come to fruition by continuing to press on.

- All of the classroom time was essential and very helpful at explaining how the response will be acted out. One major concern is that there is not full "buy in" by all of the main agencies.
- This session was a good starting point. There was the lack of supporting documentation with regards to permits, Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs), funding arrangements, MAC member authorization of specific personnel, and a general comfort level that will be obtained through good working relationships.
- I was impressed with this exercise. It pointed out weaknesses not anticipated in this draft plan and reinforced the need for MOA's, MOU's and other agreements in advance of a real incident.
- I think this exercise was quite a success in terms of demonstrating the value of incorporating ICS into the response plan and refining elements of the Plan.
- Add relevant forms to the Plan in a forms appendix.
- Add a glossary of terms and acronyms
- Develop job descriptions for positions within the Coordination and Support Staff.
- Both groups need to identify someone to track significant events and actions taken.
- Take advantage of opportunities to speak and educate wherever possible. Create presentation kit including OPB video, abbreviated PowerPoint presentation, and talking points. This would let the group take advantage of opportunities to spread the word, and ensure that everyone is presenting a consistent message.
- Develop planning aids for the MAC Group and Coordination and Support Staff, including forms, meeting agendas, and planning cycle for MAC Group.
- Identify staff and ensure appropriate delegation of authority to MAC Group members.
- Ensure resources can be shared across state lines. Develop supporting MOAs and ordering procedures.
- MAC Group needs to meet regularly.
- Add NOAA Fisheries as a standing member of the MAC Group.
- Clarify language and role of tribal governments. Add BIA Tribal Liaison as advisor and interagency contact.
- Consider completing applicable permitting and environmental analyses in advance of an infestation.
- Ensure appropriate legal review before attempting to gain signatures. The minimum legal review should include review by all proposed standing members of the MAC Group.

- Develop a post-discovery briefing package including press release, talking points, protective action statements, boat washing instructions, etc. Use appropriate Lake Mead materials.
- Identify legal authorities that are likely to be required (stop commercial shipping, close boat ramps, etc.) and identify current holders of those authorities).
- Conduct a focus group session for each of the organizational structures (MAC Group, IRRT, Coordination and Support Staff, JIC) to fine tune position descriptions, checklists, and job aids. This should also address the concerns about checklists reflecting “our world” language.
- Develop a situation analysis tool to be completed as soon as possible after discovery. The tool should identify and discuss biological issues (life cycle phase, etc.), resources at risk, likelihood of successful intervention, and political, social, and economic ramifications. Note: There used to be a similar tool developed for wildland fire called the Escaped Fire Situation Analysis (EFSA). This may be a good place to start to develop a format.
- Conduct additional training and exercises for all organizational elements in the Plan. In order to be as time-efficient as possible, training and exercise should be coordinated with other recommended activities. For example, individual element table tops could be held as part of the focus group activities.

In summary, the CRB-RRP orientation and exercise was well received by the participants and the vast majority voiced their support of the plan. Participants felt that the new organizational structure was effective in principle, pending additional refinements to position descriptions, attention to authorities and delegations, and expanded checklists and job aids.

Most also agreed that upon completion of the edits to the plan, additional exercises would be needed to further test the plan and gain agency support. Several comments were received that indicated that the orientation and exercise increased the participants' knowledge and awareness of the problems associated with the introduction of the Zebra/Quagga mussels into the Columbia River Basin.

Participants expressed strong concern that not enough was being done in prevention, and additional funding sources needed to be identified to enhance prevention and response capability. They were also concerned about whether staff assigned to participate in the coordination structure would be delegated the legal authority required to perform in those positions.

Finally, this exercise serves as a model for other regions and/or species as additional aquatic invasive species rapid response plans are developed.

Attachment A:

**Columbia River Basin – Rapid Response Exercise
Heathman Lodge – Vancouver, Washington
October 23-24, 2007**

PARTICIPANTS

Boise State University

Rachel Winston
2064 S. Gourley Street
Douglas, AK 99824-5412
509-339-3143
rachel@getmia.net

Bonneville Power Administration

Jim Irish
PO Box 3621
905 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621
503-230-5914
jirish@bpa.gov

Mark Jones
PO Box 3621
905 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621
503-230-3470
mjones@bpa.gov

Andrew Thoms
PO Box 3621
905 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621
503-230-5827
acthoms@bpa.gov

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Scott Aikin
NW Regional Office
911 NE 11th
Portland, OR 97232
503-231-6883

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Keith Hatch
NW Regional Office
911 NE 11th
Portland, OR 97232
503-872-2876

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Blaine Parker
729 NE Oregon Street, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97232
503-731-1268
parb@critfc.org

Olney Patt, Jr.
729 NE Oregon Street, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97232
503-235-4228
pato@critfc.org

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Steve Yundt
PO Box 25
Boise, ID 83707
208-287-2770
syundt@idfg.idaho.gov

Idaho Department of Agriculture

Amy Ferriter
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83701
208-407-5134
aferriter@agr.idaho.gov

Incident Solutions

Margaret Dimmick
8941 W. Duck Lake Drive
Boise, ID 83714
208-377-0117
dimmicks@earthlink.net

Rich Wands
PO Box 876
Sonoita, AZ 85637
520-455-5821
rwands@incidentsolutions.com

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Eileen Ryce
1420 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59601-3872
406-444-2448
eryce@mt.gov

National Marine Fisheries Service

Mark Schneider
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite
1100
Portland, OR 97232-1274
503-231-2306
mark.schneider@noaa.gov

State of Oregon – Governor’s Natural Resources Office

Jane Bacchieri
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-378-3225
jane.bacchieri@state.or.us

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jim Gores
3406 Cherry Avenue, NE
Salem, OR 97303
503-947-6308
james.k.gores@state.or.us

Curt Melcher
3406 Cherry Avenue, NE
Salem, OR 97303
503-947-6044
curt.melcher@state.or.us

Oregon State Marine Board

Glenn Dolphin
PO Box 14145
435 Commercial Street, NE #400
Salem, OR 97309
503-378-2625
glenn.dolphin@state.or.us

Randy Henry
PO Box 14145
435 Commercial Street, NE #400
Salem, OR 97309
503-378-2611
randy.h.henry@state.or.us

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Jim Athearn
14026 S. Shoreview Drive
Medical Lake, WA 99022
509-299-5582
jathearn99@aol.com

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Randy Fisher
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 595-3100
randy_fisher@psmfc.org

Stephen Phillips
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 595-3100
stephen_phillips@psmfc.org

Bill Zook
320 E. Penzance Road
Shelton, WA 98584
360-252-2700
bjzook2@msn.com

Portland State University – Center for Lakes and Reservoirs

Mark Sytsma
PO Box 751
1025 SW Harrison Avenue
Portland, OR 97201
503-725-3833
sytsmam@pdx.edu

Sea Grant Extension – OSU

Sam Chan
307 Ballard Hall
Corvallis, OR 97331
503-679-4828
samuel.chan@oregonstate.edu

US Army Corps of Engineers

James R. Mahar
Bonneville Dam
PO Box 150
Cascade Locks, OR 97014
541-374-4550
james.r.mahar@usace.army.mil

Erik Petersen
PO Box 429
Lowell, OR 97452
541-937-2131
erik.s.petersen@us.army.mil

US Bureau of Reclamation

Steven M. Jarsky
1150 N. Curtis Road
Boise, ID 83706
208-378-5300
smjarsky@pn.usbr.gov

Scott Lund
1150 N. Curtis Road
Boise, ID 83706
208-378-5037
slund@pn.usbr.gov

USDI Bureau of Land Management

Joe Moreau
PO Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208
503-808-6418
joe_moreau@blm.gov

US Environmental Protection Agency

Joan Cabreza
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
206-553-7369
cabreza.joan@epa.gov

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Kevin Aitkin
510 Desmond Drive, SE
Lacey, WA 98503-4181
360-753-9508
kevin_aitkin@fws.gov

Dan Diggs
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503-872-2763
daniel_h_diggs@fws.gov

Amy Gaskill
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503-531-6874
amy_gaskill@fws.gov

Paul Heimowitz
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503-872-2763
paul_heimowitz@fws.gov

US Forest Service

Cynthia Tait
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84403
801-625-5358
ctait@fs.fed.us

US Forest Service

Jeff Uebel
333 SW First Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
503-808-2847
juebel@fs.fed.us

Linda Ulmer
333 SW First Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
503-808-2929
lulmer@fs.fed.us

US Geological Survey

Tim Counihan
Columbia River Research
Laboratory
5501A Cook-Underwood Road
Cook, WA 98605-9008
509-538-2299
tcounihan@usgs.gov

Jill Hardiman
Columbia River Research
Laboratory
5501A Cook-Underwood Road
Cook, WA 98605-9008
509-538-2299 ext. 201
jhardiman@usgs.gov