

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

February 20, 2014

10:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Eric Feige
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Bob Herron
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Kurt Olson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: SEA OTTERS IMPACTS ON PETERSBURG AREA FISHERIES

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME - UPDATE ON
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES IN SITKA

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES - INTERAGENCY MOU
ON ELODEA

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

MARK JENSEN

Petersburg, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of the
presentation the Sea Otters in Southeast Alaska.

CHARLIE SWANTON, Director
Division of Sport Fish

Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the update on aquatic invasive species in Sitka.

ED FOGELS, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Elodea.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:03:51 AM](#)

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Representatives Feige, Kreiss-Tomkins, and Seaton were present at the call to order.

PRESENTATION: Sea Otters Impacts on Petersburg Area Fisheries

[10:04:27 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the first order of business would be a presentation: Sea Otter impacts on Petersburg area fisheries.

[10:06:01 AM](#)

MARK JENSEN stated that he currently serves as the mayor of the Petersburg Borough although he is speaking today on behalf of himself. He offered to provide information on how sea otters have affected his family and fishermen in Southeast Alaska. He said he is a third-generation resident of Petersburg, noting his grandfather moved from Norway in the early 1900s to the East Coast, then to Seattle, and on to Petersburg. His father was born in Petersburg in 1920 and he was born in Petersburg. He has two sons, one of whom plans to be a commercial fisherman in Petersburg.

[10:07:53 AM](#)

MR. JENSEN began his PowerPoint and highlighted a series of maps. The first map was entitled "Translocation Sites" [slide 1] and shows where sea otters were transplanted in the 1960s, including in the Barrier Islands south of Craig and the Maurelle Islands near Sea Otter Sound [depicted on the map as 51 and 55], with area 51 having experienced the most significant growth.

The second map depicted concentrations of otters, with the largest dots showing the concentrations between 36-51 animals [slide 2]. The third map highlighted annual growth rates and inhabitation projections of sea otters. He predicted that if sea otters multiply by 12 to 14 percent per year it is likely that currently there are 30,000 sea otters in Southeast Alaska [slide 3]. He turned to a handout provided by Representative Kreiss-Tompkins entitled "Sea Otter Tagging Statistics by Hunt Origin." He noted that despite the 2013 Alaska Native harvest of 1,750 sea otters, the predicted increase in the sea otter population is 3,800 sea otters [page 2 of the handout]. Thus, the population will grow by twice as much as the annual harvest. He expressed concern over federal management of sea otters and suggested the state should be more involved in encouraging the federal government to take action.

MR. JENSEN referred to a map of navigable inside waters to indicate populations and explained the impacts of otters [slide 4]. Using a pointer, he identified the red areas which are closed [to salmon and shellfish fisheries] or have been negatively affected due to sea otters. He pointed to Sumner Straits on the map, noting that despite the local harvest of up to 200 sea otters for the last four to five years, the populations continue to rise. He pointed to Petersburg, Wrangell, and Stikine River, Duncan Island and Mitchell Point and reported that approximately 200 to 500 sea otters are located between Mitchell Point and Little Duncan. He related a scenario to illustrate that crab are being decimated in some areas, that sea otters are encroaching on his community, and the adverse impact that the growing population of sea otters will have on commercial crab fishing.

[10:12:18 AM](#)

MR. JENSEN indicated that the Dungeness crab fishery is set up in four tiers, but he sold his Dungeness crab permit due to the increased pressure sea otters had placed on the resource. He found it disturbing that young people can't really expect to earn a living fishing for Dungeness crab any longer. He encouraged the state to consider establishing an aggressive sea otter management plan to protect the affected fisheries. He feared that sea otters will negatively impact communities with potential losses totaling tens of millions of dollars annually. Moreover, the dive fisheries are also being adversely affected, he said.

[10:14:11 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recalled a previous session's presentation and the sea urchin population impacts on kelp beds and asked whether he has observed any changes to the kelp beds.

MR. JENSEN replied that he has not noticed any changes. He acknowledged that if sea otters eat the sea urchins so one upside to growing sea otter populations is that the kelp beds are likely healthier. The herring roe on kelp fishery will occur next month in Sea Otter Sound [so he'll have more opportunity to assess the kelp at that time].

[10:15:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted previous consideration was given to expanding the use of the sea otter pelts. He asked whether any progress has been made to support Alaska Native traditional and cultural uses. He recalled that some restrictions on sea otter fur use has been enforced since it was determined that "teddy bears" were not historically made from furs such as sea otters. He wondered if any of those restrictions have been relaxed.

MR. JENSEN indicated that there are tanneries operating in the area as well as some skin sewing by Alaska Natives has been occurring. He was unsure whether any changes to the definition of "significantly altered" or any other federal changes have been made.

CHAIR SEATON asked Mr. Jensen to provide contact numbers of those who are actively harvesting otter in the Petersburg area for use for cultural and traditional uses.

MR. JENSEN offered to provide names of the four main harvesters from the Petersburg area.

[10:17:41 AM](#)

MR. JENSEN highlighted instances that demonstrated the impact that sea otters can have on one bay through the course of a single winter season. In conclusion, he related a scenario that illustrated problems that have occurred in Lower Chatham Strait with respect to sea otters.

PRESENTATION: Alaska Department of Fish & Game - Update on Aquatic Invasive Species in Sitka

[10:19:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the next order of business would be a presentation: Alaska Department of Fish and Game - Update on Aquatic Invasive Species in Sitka.

[10:19:21 AM](#)

CHARLIE SWANTON, Director, Division of Sport Fish, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), provided an update on the progress being made to eradicate the invasive species *D. vexillum*, or colonial tunicate, infestation in Whiting Harbor. He related his understanding that the committee has had several updates so he hoped to briefly report on progress that has been made.

[10:21:03 AM](#)

MR. SWANTON stated that *D. vexillum* was discovered in Whiting Harbor in 2010 adjacent to the City of the Sitka. That was the first known identification of that specific invasive species. The ADF&G's approach was to complete two surveys - an initial survey in 2011, and a more comprehensive survey in 2012. In essence, the ADF&G received a capital improvement project (CIP) in FY 13 to address remnants of an aquatic farm as well as to conduct containment and eradication activities. The 2012 survey performed by ADF&G's staff used refined transects to identify the coverage and concentrations of *D. vexillum* tunicate in Whiting Harbor and to create a map for submitting a request for proposal (RFP) for use by a proposed contractor to eradicate or control the invasive species. However, the department did not receive any initial response to the April 2013 RFP, which is detailed in the status report [including reasons, such as prior commitments, lack of sufficient time to prepare and implement treatment trials, and unfeasible expectations for the project]. In response to a question, Mr. Swanton acknowledged that there were not any responses to the RFP.

MR. SWANTON related that he held follow-up conversations with interested parties, such as the Smithsonian [Environmental Research Center](SERC), an organization with experience working in this area. The SERC subsequently submitted a scope of work and interest for control and eradication processes. The department has reviewed the SERC's scope of work and hopes to contract with them by the end of this month or early next month. He anticipated that activities would take place in August 2014 to test treatments to induce mortality in Whiting Harbor. In response to a question, he acknowledged that the SERC is a

potential contractor. He related that the next testing will be conducted to observe one-to-three meter enclosures using the same treatment scales, which ranges from cement dust, high concentrated saline, or chlorine, in order to determine which treatment will work best. He related that the timeline is outlined on page 2 [of the February 20, 2014 ADF&G status update]. He said the department hopes to collaboratively work with the SERC on a full scale eradication and monitoring program proposal to be submitted to the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) in December 2014.

[10:24:27 AM](#)

MR. SWANTON anticipated that typically a granting agency will fund the work that the department is currently investigating. By including treatment trials the department hopes to leverage the CIP monies to do a full scale eradication and subsequent monitoring through 2017 or 2018.

MR. SWANTON directed attention to page 2 of the committee handout to the final bullet point, which is to review the financial information and various funding sources that have been used in this process. He noted the balance of the CIP is about \$431,000.

MR. SWANTON turned to page 3 to a map of Whiting Harbor to highlight the actions taken to map the *D. vexillum tunicate's* presence. He reported that the largest concentration of the *D. vexillum* is at the head of the harbor and came from aquatic farm infrastructure, including nets, lines, or other equipment. The coverage that exists is largely a function of the cleaning of the nets on the shoreline, in other words, nets were brought up and pressure washed and the tide moved the matter back into the water and colonies formed.

[10:26:24 AM](#)

MR. SWANTON turned to the final map, which indicates populations for 2011 and 2012 [page 4]. There was concern that the invasive had moved outside of the harbor; however, it appears that it would be minimal with concentrations occurring only in the head of the bay. He pointed out that the top left was adjacent to an island in which infrastructure had washed up, but extensive searching did not indicate any invasive species. He directed attention to the two circles on the chart of Whiting Harbor that indicate the outlier populations of *D. vexillum*. He estimated

the area is about 2,000 feet from the head of the bay where the highest concentration of invasive species is located.

MR. SWANTON asked to discuss Botryllid and Star Tunicate: Botryllusschlosseri invasive species.

[10:28:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked to first direct attention to page 4. He asked for further clarification on the transect lines and the sampling area. He further asked whether the area has expanded or if transects have been placed in new areas.

MR. SWANTON answered that the white lines are the transect lines with respect to the surveys. He said the scale of the 2012 survey was refined to every 50 feet instead of every 150 feet as in 2011.

CHAIR SEATON related his understanding that some of the areas may not have been sampled in 2011, but the more detailed 2012 survey may have picked up more incidence of *D. vexillum*.

MR. SWANTON disagreed that there had been any significant expansion of the invasive species, but noted the differences may be due to statistics. In response to a question he identified Neva Island as the island that lies beyond Whiting Harbor.

[10:30:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked why the Smithsonian (SERC) did not respond to the initial RFP.

MR. SWANTON answer that he was unsure.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked about the ADF&G's staff capacity to respond effectively to invasive species.

MR. SWANTON responded that the department has done the best it can with what it has. He acknowledged that Alaska has been lucky, thus far, since it hasn't had the issues that some coastal areas in the Lower 48 have had. He offered his belief that part of the reason is due to geography, plus the department has been able to learn from other states how to thwart these types of threats. He reiterated that the department has been doing okay given its current staff and funding.

CHAIR SEATON concurred that this specific invasive species doesn't appear to be a rapidly expanding species. He did not question the department's response, noting the legislature has also been working to obtain funding; however, he concluded that the response has been a slow response in dealing with this invasive species. Luckily, this particular invasive species has moved very slowly, which has allowed the department and the legislature time to respond. He imagined if *D. vexillum* was beginning to spread to the commercial sac roe herring fishery areas that it could mean cancelling the fishery since the seine nets would be affected and could easily spread the invasive species. He asked whether the department has developed a plan to employ decontamination and quarantine strategies to respond to a rapidly moving contaminant.

MR. SWANTON answered that it would be difficult to address a complex topic such as this without a body of knowledge behind it. He applauded efforts made by the department and cited the efforts it has made. Progress has been made in a reasonable time, he suggested. He agreed that the department has been lucky that this invasive species reproductive rates [were low]. Further, the authority for vessel movement is a broad topic and the scope for contamination and quarantine measures will need to be fully explored, he said.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON offered his belief that a structure will need to be created, but it is likely that legislation will need to take place in order for a comprehensive plan to be formed. Once again he applauded the department's efforts to address the problems in Whiting Harbor, but he underscored the importance of developing rapid response strategies now, given that warmer water temperatures will likely lead to more invasive species.

[10:41:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS acknowledged the department is doing a great job with what it has; however, he expressed concern not so much with eradicating the *D. vexillum*, but on the timeline since the nets and aqua farm superstructure contamination occurred in August 2011, but signage in Whiting Harbor discouraging boaters from anchoring was placed during the spring of 2013. He underscored the importance of placing signs immediately once the invasive species was discovered to act as a preventive measure.

MR. SWANTON answered that signs have been in place for several years. In addition, the department has warned and published

information on the situation since it was discovered. He clarified the information in the document referred to the department signage during the spring of 2013 that consisted of floating buoys, which were essentially located in the middle of the harbor. Short of blockading the area, the department has taken adequate measures to thwart any vessels from moving into the contaminated area.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE also expressed concern on the handling of the situation in Whiting Harbor. He suggested the department might have taken a more aggressive approach. He was glad this invasive species is one that doesn't spread quickly, but the risk exists for the tunicate to become more devastating. Thus, action may be needed to move forward despite the planned scientific approach underway.

[10:46:28 AM](#)

MR. SWANTON turned to ANB Harbor project and the discovery of botrylloides, noting the infected pilings have been removed and shipped south. No other infestation has been noted and the herring fleet has not been affected, he said.

[10:48:20 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether there is a concern for sport fishing or subsistence fishing. He asked whether Whiting Harbor has been restricted to any use.

MR. SWANTON responded that recreational activity has been prohibited and anchorage has been discouraged.

[10:49:16 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether that area was traditionally used for herring spawning collection area.

MR. SWANTON answered not to his knowledge; however he was unsure of the historical use and offered to provide further information regarding historical use of the area.

CHAIR SEATON asked whether the Sitka residents are aware of the situation and use other areas.

MR. SWANTON stated his belief and deferred to Representative Kreiss-Tompkins.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS offered his belief that there is widespread local knowledge. He expressed concern that the area has substantial transient traffic so nonresidents may not be aware of the problems but local residents are informed.

MR. SWANTON responded that the department believes that the D vexillum came to Whiting Harbor on infected aquaculture infrastructure and that it was not brought in by vessels.

[10:51:21 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether any policies have been instituted that would require gear inspection, or does legislation need to be drafted to address marine gear crossing state lines.

MR. SWANTON offered to provide the information to the committee.

CHAIR SEATON offered to attach provisions to an existing bill to avoid delays.

[10:52:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked whether the harbor star and golden chain tunicates are invasive.

MR. SWANTON answered yes.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked for further clarification on where these tunicate invasive species are found in the world.

MR. SWANTON answered that he was unsure, but the worldwide distribution information will be made available to the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked whether information exists on eradication and what is the potential for invasive species to spread.

MR. SWANTON answered that the location where [the botrylloides, or harbor star and golden chain tunicates] have been found appears to be isolated to pilings in the ANB Harbor [discovered during the ANB Harbor replacement]. The piling that was being replaced was loaded on barges and shipped to the Lower 48. Once the pilings are dry, the invasive species is desiccated and shipped, which seems to be the best means to handle the invasive species, in terms of eradication.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked for further clarification if removal from the environment is the solution.

[10:54:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked whether a survey has been conducted to ensure that invasive species are not found throughout the ANB Harbor. He asked whether ANB Harbor is the main harbor or is a satellite harbor.

MR. SWANTON offered to provide the information to the committee. He offered his belief that this species was found in 2010 at the same time as the *D. vexillum* was found.

[10:55:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked how the ANB tunicate invasive species arrived in ANB Harbor.

MR. SWANTON answered that he was unsure of the specifics and preferred not to speculate; however, he offered to research this and provide the information to the committee.

[10:56:19 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON acknowledged that it would be good to know the origin of the tunicate invasive species and whether they all arrived via similar means. He was unsure whether North Pacific Research or the Smithsonian (SERC) were trying several control measures, including powdered cement. He asked for the range of control measures being used to study the invasive species.

MR. SWANTON responded that control measures include use of hyper saline solution, acetic acid, cement dust, and a combination of solutions. He offered to provide a copy of the publication published on the trials that have been conducted. He said it was fairly comprehensive and the department will be expanding on the aquarium size trials to one to three meter treatments to ascertain if the results are the same.

[10:59:02 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON related his understanding that powdered chlorine is also highly used throughout the state in processing facilities. He queried if powdered chlorine has been used or if it is a possible eradicator.

MR. SWANTON answered the treatments he mentioned were the ones he recalled after reading the report. He recalled that it might be something like a "hockey puck" that dissolves over the course of time to keep the concentration constant. The treatments being considered were either liquid, powder, or some type of puck.

CHAIR SEATON responded the committee will appreciate receiving this information.

**PRESENTATION: Department of Natural Resources - Interagency MOU
on Elodea**

[11:00:25 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the final order of business would be a presentation by the Department of Natural Resources on the interagency MOU on Elodea.

[11:00:45 AM](#)

ED FOGELS, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), offered to provide an update on the efforts to fight Elodea. He reported that on January 15, 2013 the DNR signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regarding freshwater aquatic invasive species, specifically Elodea. The MOU clearly stated that the agencies consider Elodea to be noxious, degrading fish habitat, and displacing native flora and fauna. The DNR has the responsibility to coordinate efforts to eradicate the invasive species, noting that freshwater invasive species falls under the DNR. The agencies have formed an Elodea working group consisting of technical experts from DNR, DEC, and ADF&G and have included other stakeholders, including staff from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and federal agencies. The DNR has an Invasive Species program located within the Division of Agriculture with Brianne Blackburn, the coordinator and technical lead.

[11:02:41 AM](#)

MR. FOGELS said there are currently three battlegrounds for Elodea in the state. He identified a fairly significant infestation of Elodea is located in Fairbanks in Chena Slough, where Elodea growth has minimized grayling and other fish movement. The Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District

(FSWCD) has been identified as the local lead to address the Elodea problems in Chena Slough. The FSWCD has considered various physical and mechanical removal techniques. The mechanical methods have a disadvantage since Elodea propagates very easily. A one-inch piece can float away and re-propagate in another location. Significant effort surrounded chemical methods. It's much more difficult to figure out how to use chemical methods in flowing water so the Fairbanks area is problematic.

MR. FOGELS said the Kenai Peninsula is the second battleground. The Kenai Peninsula the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District has been partnering with several groups to look at several lakes; Stormy Lake and Daniels Lake. The DNR has permitted the use of an herbicide for those two lakes, and additional permits still need to be acquired, but the hope is that this could be tried this summer. However, herbicides have not been used for Elodea in Alaska in the northern climates so considerable concern exists in terms of effectiveness and other effects since this is a new approach and the impacts are not fully understood. He anticipated that herbicides will be used in one of the lakes.

MR. FOGELS identified that the third area is in Anchorage, which has had infestations in a number of lakes, with the prime infestation in Sand Lake. He reported that Sand Lake is heavily used by float planes. Thus, how Elodea spreads is important to consider. For example, the plants can get caught up in float plane rudders and potentially could be transferred to other lakes. The DNR has been working closely with the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) to address Elodea in Sand Lake. The department has had some capital appropriations to review the problems, map out Elodea and look for possible solutions. The ASWCD has been investigating using certain microbes to eat sediments in hopes that it would make Sand Lake inhospitable to Elodea.

[11:06:03 AM](#)

MR. FOGELS advised a report from the ASWCD is forthcoming. He suggested that microbe use is one option. Another would be the use of herbicide, although a number of homeowners live around the lake so concern exists due to local wells. Funding for mechanical removal would minimize the biomass and may help minimize spreading Elodea to other areas via float plane.

[11:07:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE inquired whether Lake Hood has been inspected for Elodea.

MR. FOGELS answered that Lake Hood has other weed issues, but he was not aware that Elodea is one of the invasive species. He indicated that mechanical harvesting of other weeds occurs to maintain the float plane pond.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE said he was familiar with the weeds, noting the weeds are naturally occurring and not invasive.

MR. FOGELS said he believed so, but offered to verify that for the committee.

[11:08:47 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recalled a plan on the Kenai to restrict float plane activity to one of the lakes and asked if any float plane usage is being considered for Sand Lake.

MR. FOGELS answered that boat and float plane use was restricted at Stormy Lake, but the DNR has authority to do so through the state park system. He questioned whether DNR would have the same authority to restrict planes or boats at Sand Lake.

[11:09:46 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said he hoped with the MOU signed that the department will advise the legislature what authority the department will need to restrict vessel or float plane access in identified areas to inhibit spread of the invasive species. He expressed concern that without restrictions, the Elodea invasive species will quickly spread.

MR. FOGELS answered that the department concurs with the issue and will try to cut down on the biomass to reduce chances of Elodea spreading. He offered to report back to the committee.

CHAIR SEATON commented that the committee does not want to continue control measures without hope of eradication. It emphasized the importance of eradicating the invasive species since the legislature is not interested in funding control measures over the next twenty years. He anticipated that responses to a request for proposal (RFP) might be less for control measures in the short run, but it doesn't eliminate the

potential of invasive species spreading so the legislature [would be interested in eradication measures].

[11:12:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS related his understanding that resources and staff exist in the department. He asked for purview difference with the ADF&G authorities in terms of eradicating invasive species.

MR. FOGELS offered to outline the DNR's authority, but he is less familiar with the ADF&G's authority. The DNR has an invasive species program within the Division of Agriculture, which provides hard funding to work with other agencies. The director has the authority to quarantine pests. The DNR has been looking at quarantining Elodea and will public notice the quarantine, which would prohibit import, sale, or distribution. He pointed out that DNR's focus is on land management and it does not focus on marine aquatic invasive species; however, the department does issue aquatic farm leases with stipulations. He was unsure if the department has the authority to require certifications but it is something the department can review. Moreover, the DNR does have authority to restrict motorized use of a waterway, such that restriction on jet boat use in Kachemak Bay have been implemented. He acknowledged imposing restrictions typically involves opposition and the restrictions are limited to a special use area.

[11:14:59 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON expressed concern that Sand Lake could become a hub for the spread of the invasive species. He asked for further clarification on which agency would have the authority to do so. He further asked whether the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities will need to be included in the MOU to provide regulations in this effort.

MR. FOGELS agreed to do so but advised that the water and land is under state authority managed by DNR. He doubted that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would restrict air traffic for biological reasons. He commented that float plane use is a generally allowed use of state lands, which is typically not restricted. He speculated that the municipality may have some authority also. He offered to research and provide further information.

CHAIR SEATON commented that the legislature will consider gaps in authority in conjunction with incipient invasive species until eradication can be accomplished.

[11:17:31 AM](#)

MR. FOGELS summarized the efforts the DNR has made. He advised that the department has enlisted help from Dr. Lars Anderson, a renowned expert on aquatic invasive species, who has traveled to Alaska on several occasions to assist in planning. He described efforts being conducted through the working groups, including development of an aquatic invasive species communication plan to educate the public and field staff who are helping to address the situation and track Elodea statewide. The working group was formed one year ago, progress is being made, and the department is working to address the issue.

CHAIR SEATON related his understanding that the funding is adequate.

MR. FOGELS answered that DNR has funding for its invasive species program; however, specific projects are funded separately and the DNR does not have funding for them. These projects typically funded by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are seeking grant or capital funding to help with evaluations of areas. For example, the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District has received funding for Sand Lake. He anticipated something similar will happen in the Kenai Peninsula and the department will rely on the stakeholder groups to raise funds to address the issue. He offered his belief that to actually do eradication will be costly. He estimated the costs will range from \$200,000-\$300,000 per lake. The DNR has been involved in considering whether pesticides are effective, if they can be used safely, and whether cost estimates are available. Currently, permitting has also been difficult and is one reason that DEC is part of the working group, since DEC can streamline the permitting process for invasive species so the DNR won't need to wait a year to obtain permits when an infestation occurs.

CHAIR SEATON asked to be kept informed so the legislature can assist with any necessary authority. He asked for further clarification on outstanding permits for Elodea.

MR. FOGELS reported that for the Kenai Peninsula, Stormy Lake area, the DEC has issued a permit for an herbicide, Diquat, and another permit is pending for Sonar. Although an ADF&G habitat

permit and a Division of Mining, Land and Water permit are still pending, these permits will be straightforward once the DEC permits are issued.

[11:23:06 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked to have the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District's information forwarded to the committee so it can have the analysis on Sand Lake once it is public information.

MR. FOGELS agreed to do so.

[11:23:32 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.