



**Utah Department of  
Agriculture and Food**

**ANIMAL INDUSTRY**

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Utah Fish Health Policy Board (FHPB)**

April 24, 2014

The Utah Fish Health Policy Board (FHPB) met at 10:00 a.m. at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food building in Salt Lake City, Utah on April 24, 2014.

The following Board members were present: Warren J. Hess, DVM (Ass't State Veterinarian), Michael Canning (DWR – Assistant Director), Dr. Chris Wilson (DWR – Fish Pathologist), Dr. R. Paul Evans (BYU - Microbiology & Molecular Biology), Neal Barker (Aquaculture Representative), Paul Dremann (Sport Fish Representative), Robert Judd (Aquaculture Representative).

Other attendees: Ron Arndt (UDAF - Fish Health Manager), Jordan Nielson (UDWR – AIS Coordinator), Bill Durler (UDAF), Brian Anderson (Trout Unlimited).

**Call to order, welcome and introductions** – Dr. Hess.

### **Approval of the minutes / summary from January 7, 2014**

Dr. Hess motioned that the minutes from the previous meeting on January 7, 2014 be approved. The vote was unanimous in favor of approving the minutes.

## **Ron Arndt introduction - new UDAF Fish Health Specialist**

Ron Arndt gave an introduction on his background and the steps that led to him becoming the new UDAF Fish Health Specialist, succeeding Mark Martin. Ron attended Utah State University. He became interested in fish health after taking an Aquaculture course there. He graduated with a degree in Fisheries Management. He then obtained a master's degree in Aquaculture and Fish Nutrition at the University of Washington. After spending time in Bozeman, Montana working for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ron was hired by Ron Goede and Dr. Chris Wilson at the Fisheries Experiment Station in Logan. He worked with the research department there for 13 years. The last 3 years Ron has been working with Wade Cavender in fish health inspections and processing samples.

Ron mentioned that he still needs to certify as a Fish Health Inspector. Dr. Hess stated that former UDAF Fish Health Specialist Mark Martin is on contract to assist Ron on his fish health inspections while Ron attains his certification.

## **Quality Assurance for Fish Health Labs across the country – Dr. Chris Wilson**

- There is a grass roots movement afoot among fish health labs across the country to raise the bar – making sure there is a uniformity of process and that our quality standards are up to par. The purpose of this is to have a formal quality control process for state and regional labs across the country. This has been talked about for around 15 years.
- There has been a program through USDA APHIS to certify labs – but this has been primarily for labs that certify shipment of eggs outside of the country.
- At a regional fish health conference in Wyoming last year, Dr. Wilson asked if the fish health section of the American Fisheries Society could be involved in this. Dr. Wilson was put in charge of an Ad-hoc committee to investigate this and come up with suggestions. This committee includes US Fish & Wildlife Service personnel as well folks from the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (WADDL). It is a daunting task.
- Dr. Hess asked if there was a central working group right now - and where would the standardization come from? Dr. Wilson replied that there was no central body at this time. It was proposed that perhaps the fish health section could act in this role. However, this section has no legal authority so it would be strictly voluntary.
- A leading idea at this time is to use the *third section* of the Blue Book (published by the American Fisheries Society) as a template to go forward. The section deals with quality assurance.
- Dr. Wilson hopes to have a firm proposal ready by the end of August. This is when the International Symposium on Aquatic Animal Health (ISAAH) will occur in Portland, Oregon from August 31 – September 4, 2014. There will be a section on Quality Assurance where Dr. Wilson hopes to submit his committee's proposal.
- Dr. Hess enquired about the labs UDAF currently uses. Is UDAF Fish Health going to look at other labs outside of the two we use (WADDL and Kennebec River Biosciences, Inc.) for future use? Ron Arndt answered that we would certainly look at other qualified labs, especially when it comes to convenience and cost.

- Dr. Hess also raised the issue of UDAF Fish Health using the Fisheries Experimental Station in Logan to send our samples. Dr. Wilson replied that currently his lab has to turn away work from DWR's own managers. They are presently maxed out in terms of facilities, resources and staffing.
- Utah possibly contributing to WADDL. Dr. Wilson brought up the idea of cooperation between the states of Utah and Washington. The Veterinary School at Washington State University is taking USU's third and fourth year veterinary students. Maybe there is a way Utah may contribute financially or other ways to expand the capabilities at WADDL, which is located at Washington State University in Pullman. Chris Wilson also stated that starting a lab that can deal with cold-water fish pathogens is not easy or cheap. For example, with trout pathogens you need to have all refrigerated equipment. It is a different expertise and ballgame. It is not easy to transfer over. *Dr. Hess mentioned that the USU Vet School/WADDL collaborative relationship could be brought up to Commissioner Adams.*

### **Trout in the Classroom Update (Paul Dremann)**

- The now grown fish from the two schools in the Salt Lake valley (Fremont Elementary, Neal Armstrong Academy) will be putting their fish in Sandy Community Fishery in May. It is not known where Midway Elementary is going to place their fish.
- The program has been very successful. They are getting more into wiper habitat and education. More schools want to become involved with the curriculum. However, there is a cost of \$2000 per classroom for the equipment. The question is one of funding. Paul felt that once the question of funding is resolved, you would see significant growth in this program.
- Robert Judd said that some of the schools which are participating would like to see the fish stocked somewhere close locally – rather than where they are designated now. The students want to show folks the fish they raised. There has been some talk of possibly providing the classrooms with triploid eggs next year so they can have more options as to where they put them.
- Paul also stated that with the fish planting's, a couple of the schools have set aside a half day where they are going to have classes on macroinvertebrates, fly-casting and even doing some fishing in the community fisheries ponds.

### **Boats from Lake Mead, NV at Utah Lake State Park – Jordan Nielson**

- Jordan Nielsen - The concessionaire at Utah Lake State Park went down to Echo Bay at Lake Mead, Nevada. He picked up 3 14' boats and trolling motors to go with them and brought them back to Utah. The boats sat in the state park for three days before UDWR was notified. The boats were quarantined and hot-water decontaminated – it was a close call. The concessionaire will receive a citation – it is a Class A misdemeanor. The fine is around \$2500.00. Altogether there have been 7 reported boats that have had adult Quagga mussels on them. Dr. Hess asked if someone is bringing a boat in the off-season – when the Port Of Entry is not checking boats – is it up to the boat owner to properly take care of their boat? Mr. Nielsen replied yes and they can also call UDWR.

## **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Committee – Jordan Nielson**

- The first meeting was held on December 5, 2013. The second meeting was held at the Utah Aquaculture Association meeting in January. Some DWR personnel gave presentations on what UDWR has been doing in their hatcheries re: New Zealand Mud Snails infestations.
- Paul Dremann suggested having an AIS Update as a line item at every future Fish Health Policy Board meeting. Neal Barker also agreed with this suggestion. Ron Arndt will be the UDAF representative for the future AIS meetings.
- Protocol for boats leaving Lake Powell: Robert Judd asked about the protocol for boats leaving Lake Powell – now that it is officially positive for Quagga mussels. The boats are required to decontaminate which can take one of two forms:

### **1) Clean, drain and dry**

- a) Remove all of the plants, mud or animals (attached mussels or fish) from your boat's exterior and interior by wiping the exterior and interior clean.
- b) Drain all the water from places in your boat where it may have accumulated. This includes the ballast tanks, the bilge, live wells and the motor. Even coolers that contain water from the lake should be drained.
- c) Finally, dry your boat and all the equipment that got wet (water toys, anchor or tie ropes and the anchor chest) at home or where you store it for the following length of time:

<b>MONTHS</b>	<b>DRY TIME</b>
March, April and May	18 days
June, July and August	7 days
September, October and November	18 days
December, January and February	30 days

Temperatures that drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit for three straight days will also kill the mussels.

### **2) Professional Decontamination**

- a) A certified operator will wash it inside and out with scalding hot water (140 degrees Fahrenheit). He or she will also use the same hot water to flush the raw water circulation systems on your boat.
- The mussels attach themselves with byssal threads and can embed on any material, especially porous ones. This happens even after they are dead. Jordan is not concerned so much with adult mussels as he is with veligers. Veligers are microscopic larvae that can float undetected in the water of bait buckets, live wells, and bilges. They look like a grain of sand. As long as everything is dry, we know the veligers are dead. DWR's focus with Lake Powell is to make sure the boats are cleaned, drained and go through the dry time. The dry time is a sure way to ensure that everything is dead.
  - The funding from the Legislature re: decontamination is specifically focused on Quagga mussels. The idea is to try to contain the Quagga mussel infestation at Lake Powell so they do not spread to other bodies of water.

## **Wiper Situation: Striped and White Bass – Robert Judd**

Robert Judd brought up the topic of possibly importing striped and white bass into Utah. Mr. Judd has talked with Roger Wilson and Drew Cushing on this issue. Robert has also spoken with Keo Fish Farm in Arkansas. He found that there are a lot of challenges growing and then transporting wipers to Utah.

In addition, Robert asked what concerns the board members have of possibly getting striped bass from Lake Powell – which is positive for Quagga mussels – and crossing them with white bass from Utah Lake in order to make wipers? Robert's facility drains into Utah Lake.

Dr. Wilson said that DWR is working on this issue. He said that because the spawning times are not the same for the striped (Lake Powell) and white bass (Utah Lake) there is a problem synchronizing them. He said Randy Oplinger has been working on cryopreserving the milt of striped bass and thinking of a way they can preserve that. He also stated that the other big concern is catching the white bass at exactly the right time when they are ready to ovulate. Randy and Eric from the Fisheries Experiment Station are working on this presently. One other issue deals with the hauling of adult wipers – many do not survive the trip. Dr. Wilson mentioned that possibly Randy and Eric sometime in the future could share the state of their research. Robert Judd felt that somewhere in this state we should be able to house both the white and striped bass in the same facility. Dr. Wilson stated that Lake Powell and Utah Lake are fish health approved. However, when you are talking about moving live fish from the wild into a hatchery, beyond what the law allows you, there are some real live biosecurity concerns. It is risky. No one has it down to a fine science but DWR is working on it.

### **FUTURE MEETING AGENDA TOPICS TO CONSIDER:**

- State of the research re: producing wipers: Striped Bass / White Bass; Have Randy Oplinger and Eric come down to present their findings.
- AIS update as an agenda item on every future FHPB meeting. Have Jordan or other AIS committee member give this update.
- Trout in the Classroom – Present and Future Plans. Person to be assigned.
- Boot Cleaning Stations. Person to be assigned.

### **Next Meeting**

Next Fish Health Policy Board (FHPB) will be held on June 24, 2014 at 10:00 AM at Fountain Green, Utah.