

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, November 15, 2016
2:00 pm, Dept. of Agriculture
Conference Room G8-A, Hartford, CT

Council members present: Theodore Andreadis, William Hyatt, Richard McAvoy, Tom McGowan, Darryl Newman, John Silander, David Sutherland, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Gregory Bugbee, Richard Canavan, Donna Ellis, Michael Finley, and Randy Miller

1. R. McAvoy called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from September 13, 2016 were distributed and reviewed. The minutes were amended to add the names of council members who moved and seconded the minutes. J. Silander moved (second: T. Andreadis) to approve as amended. Motion Carried (W. Hyatt and K. Winslow abstained).

3. Greg Bugbee Presentation

Greg Bugbee, Associate Scientist at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), gave a presentation on invasive aquatic plant surveys in Connecticut. Bugbee and Research Associate Jennifer Fanzutti surveyed aquatic invasive plants in 227 lakes and ponds. Fifty-eight percent of the water bodies surveyed were found to have one or more invasive species, with Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) found in 54 lakes the most abundant species. Crispy-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) and brittle water-nymph (*Najas minor*) were both found in 44 lakes, and hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) was found in 3 lakes.

(D. Sutherland [2:11 p.m.] arrived.)

Bugbee also discussed aquarium surveys he conducted from 2008 – 2012 at pet shops and other businesses where aquatic plants were sold. During 2008 and 2010 surveys, approximately 30% of the stores visited were selling prohibited aquatic invasive species. In 2011 these businesses were provided with information on aquatic invasive species, and the following year (2012) 80% were found to be in compliance. Bugbee reported that annual drawdowns in some lakes decrease native species richness and don't necessarily reduce aquatic invasive populations. Following the presentation, Invasive Plants Council (IPC) members discussed the need for rapid assessment of cyanobacteria to determine cyanotoxin levels, which have increasingly shut down lakes during the summer. T. McGowan thanked CAES on behalf of the council for all of the work that Bugbee and the agency have done surveying lakes and ponds for invasive aquatic species and assisting with control efforts.

4. Annual Report

- a. Draft Letter: R. McAvoy distributed copies of the draft letter for the 2016 IPC Annual Report. The group reviewed the letter and provided comments. McAvoy will

include additional revisions before finalizing the report and sending it to Environment Committee members by the end of December.

- b. Call for Supporting Documentation: McAvoy requested reports from associated groups and agencies, which will be posted on the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) website.

5. DEEP Update

- a. Update on Hydrilla in Coventry Lake and the Connecticut River: W. Hyatt provided an update from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Herbicide treatments for management of hydrilla on Coventry Lake were successful, with a low population of plants found. George Knoecklein with Northeast Aquatic Research resurveyed the lake in the fall. Hyatt reported that for 2017, funding will be available to support hydrilla surveys, treatments as needed, and follow up surveys. Hyatt also reported that unfortunately hydrilla was found in the Connecticut River in June. Large patches of this aquatic invasive species were found in the back end of Keeney Cove in Glastonbury and East Hartford during the Connecticut State BioBlitz. Additional surveys in the fall found plants outside of the cove in the tidal portion of the river, particularly in Glastonbury. Hyatt stressed that educational outreach will be important, particularly with boat launch volunteers.
- b. Meeting with Representatives Ferraro and Bolinsky Regarding Bamboo: Hyatt reported that a meeting was held on October 5 with Representatives Ferraro and Bolinsky. The legislators commented that they were aware of the issue, the legislation that has been enacted since 2013, and the conclusions of the IPC. They indicated that in response to constituent concerns, they planned to craft legislation that would provide immediate relief to existing bamboo problems and also prevent future problems from occurring. However, they indicated that they were not interested in banning the plant but could increase liability for past infestations in combination with the 2013 legislation already in place and municipal enforcement. Relief would occur with litigation.
- c. Federal Funding Update: Hyatt discussed a federal bill entitled, "Recovering America's Wildlife Act" that was introduced in September and will move forward in 2017. \$1.3B from mineral rights and offshore leasing will be redirected to states to address listed endangered and threatened species problems as well as threats to biodiversity. The bill would tie in with invasiveness as a threat to listed species, and it has broad support for next session. While the bill is more directed to animal species than plants, it could still be tied to species of concern on a state-by-state basis, thus invasive plant species would be impacted. Hyatt also reported that Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) funding, which had decreased over the years from \$100K to \$20K per year per state, has now increased to \$48K. The ANS funds will be used for Coventry Lake and for inspectors at boat launches.

6. Old Business

- a. Future of the Invasive Plants Council - Operating Without Support: *Joint Meeting with CIPWG or Other Potential Collaborators.* R. McAvoy and D. Ellis (CIPWG Co-Chair) discussed the joint meeting with CIPWG and the IPC at CAES, Valley Laboratory in Windsor on Tuesday, March 7, 2017. The IPC business meeting would

- take place from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., followed by the joint meeting from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. The purpose of the joint meeting will be to share information on invasive plant educational outreach and management activities and discuss producing a report on the status of invasive plant issues.
- b. Other (Master Gardener): Master Gardeners and other interested groups will be invited to the joint meeting on March 7.

7. New Business

- a. Demonstration Projects in Collaboration with the Center for Biological Risk: J. Silander discussed the new center, which will begin a demonstration project in 2017, looking at nine invasive species attributes and developing a quantitative scale for risk assessment. Silander requested input from council members. The scale will be tested on invasive species already on the Connecticut state list. The center researchers may incorporate an economic risk component that affects all different stakeholders, or they could look at biodiversity. Silander offered to present a talk at the March IPC meeting.
- b. CIPWG Symposium: D. Ellis reported the successful 8th biennial Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group symposium, which was held on October 11, 2016 at the UConn Storrs campus. Approximately 490 people attended the symposium to learn about invasive plant legislative updates, management success stories, new invasive species on Connecticut's horizon, native alternatives to invasive species, and other topics. R. McAvoy informed the group that Ellis received the Leslie J. Mehrhoff Award during the symposium, and Ellis announced that CIPWG recently received the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District's Environmental Organization Award.
- c. McGowan announced his intention to step down as Council member representing the interests of Connecticut Lakes. The Connecticut lakes representative on the IPC serves as a gubernatorial appointment. Tom will continue to serve until a replacement is named.

8. Meeting Dates for 2017

The 2017 IPC meeting dates were scheduled for March 7, July 11, September 12, and November 14.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.