

**Invasive Plants Council
Minutes
February 26, 2004**

Present: Dr. Anderson, Mr. Goodwin, Comm. Gresczyk (Melanie Attwater substituting), Mr. Larson, Comm. Leff, , Dr. Mehrhoff, Dr. Musgrave, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. McGowan

Absent:

The Meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by Chairman Leff in Room 1B of the Legislative Office Building.

There was a motion by Dr. Anderson to adopt the minutes of February 10, 2004. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goodwin. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Chairman Leff started a discussion on the report to the Environment Committee. He stated that the report is the same as what was mailed to members except that the Department of Agriculture wanted the request for authority to extend to anywhere they inspect, not just in pet shops.

Dr. Mehrhoff asked why the language for the front cover of the list was not included. Chairman Leff explained that he did not have a copy of the final language when the report was printed. Dr. Musgrave said she would forward a copy to the Chairman and it will be added to the report.

Mr. Sutherland expressed concerns with the pre-emption extension in the report. Even though he voted for the extension he said he is reserving the right to withdraw his support at a later date based on the progress of a ban list.

Chairman Leff stated that he thought it was unlikely that the council could come up with thoughtful suggestions in time for the current legislative session.

Dr. Mehrhoff said that he was concerned that the language change in recommendation 5 would set researchers up to be in violation. Chairman Leff noted that this discussion had come up before and that the current law gives exemptions for education and research and this does not impact that exemption.

Ms. Attwater made a motion to send the report to the Environment Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGowan and carried on a voice vote.

Ms. Attwater again expressed the concerns of Comm. Gresczyk about the inclusion of Reed Canary Grass on the invasive list. This is plant extensively by farmers and is concerned about the impact on them. Dr. Mehrhoff said that the list is a scientific document and this plant is invasive. Mr. Sutherland expressed concerns that the list should explain what the council is. Dr. Anderson said that the Public Act is cited and the act explains what the council is. There was consensus on this issue.

Dr. Mehrhoff asked when it would be ok to distribute the list. Chairman Leff said that as soon as the report has been delivered to the Environment Committee it would be fine to distribute it.

Presentations:

Rob Dietter from Dietter's Water Gardens in North Haven gave a presentation on the water garden industry. He has a 4 acre nursery in North Haven where he supplies 12 garden centers around the state. He stated that of the 30 species he sells six of them are on the invasive list. Water Hyacinth is a very important plant to him. He does not believe that it is winter hardy, this is what makes it so profitable for him, and so he doesn't understand why this plant is on the list. He sells \$15 to \$20 thousand of water hyacinth a year.

Dr. Anderson asked how certain he was of the products he sells. Mr. Dietter said that he is 100% sure of what they sell. Dr. Mehrhoff asked about Parrotfeather, which Mr. Dietter sells. Mr. Dietter stated that he also does not feel these over winter. Mr. Goodwin asked about Fanwort. Mr. Dietter said that it is more of an aquarium plant and that he does not sell it because it wouldn't be profitable to grow.

Dr. Musgrave asked if Salvina was a problem for his nursery and Dr. Mehrhoff asked if such contaminants were eliminated before they were sold. Mr. Dietter said that each year his decontamination gets better but it is not 100% yet.

Sue Merrow from the Lake Associations in East Haddam gave a presentation on the lakes in her town's efforts to control invasives. Bashan Lake, Lake Hayward and Moodus Reservoir. She stated that if you ask residents the number one threat to the enjoyment of their lakes the answer would be invasives.

She noted that Lake Hayward does not have gasoline engines and still has a big fanwort problem. Mr. Goodwin asked if the lakes test for nitrate levels. She said yes and that the two lakes are stable but the reservoir has too high levels. Mr. McGowan asked how native species are faring in the lake. She noted that Fanwort has pushed out most other species. Fanwort has been a problem for about 10 years now.

Ms. Merrow stated that each lake spends about \$8-\$10 thousand a year on efforts. The last time an herbicidal treatment was tried it cost over \$50 thousand.

Chairman Leff discussed the next few meetings. He said that the next few meetings would be about the ban list and pre-emption. Mr. Sutherland asked if industry was ready to give a presentation on economics of Euonymus and Barberry. Mr. Larson said that the industry is working on it. They have some numbers that they might be able to share. Mr. Goodwin said that he is hoping to poll growers to see where the market is headed.

Mr. McGowan asked if the council could address the issue of mail order sales. Dr. Anderson noted that this is very difficult to do because of interstate commerce concerns.

Dr. Anderson asked if the council would consider reducing the frequency of meetings. He also suggested that the council consider taking field trips during the warmer month to get a better handle on these issues. The council agreed that after the March meetings reducing the number of meetings and taking field trips for meetings might be a good idea.

There was a motion by Mr. Larson to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goodwin. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emanuel Merisotis
Clerk- Environment Committee