

**Minutes of the September 29, 2003 Meeting,
Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT**

Members Present: John Anderson, David Goodwin, Bruce Gresczyk, Paul Larson, David Leff, Tom McGowan, Les Mehrhoff, Mary Musgrave, and David Sutherland.

Members Absent: None

Also present were Sen. Andrew Roraback and several members of the general public.

The meeting was opened at about 2:10 by Sen. Roraback. Members introduced themselves and general discussion took place for several minutes with many members expressing their perceived goals and objectives for the council.

John Anderson offered to serve as acting Chairman and there was general consensus to have him serve.

After discussion, a nominating committee was appointed to come back to the next meeting with nominee(s) for a Chair. David Sutherland, Paul Larson, and Mary Musgrave were appointed.

John Anderson discussed Section 2 of the Act. He mentioned that control of spread is more feasible than actual eradication, and praised the list of Invasive and Potentially Invasive Plants as a good work to start with as we consider plants for the official list. He read through the Act to point out some of the stated goals and the timetable for the Council.

Les Mehrhoff mentioned the issue of synonyms and other taxonomic changes, as is the case with *Egeria densa*. Others mentioned the need for clarification on varieties, taxa, cultivars, etc., especially if some are sterile or do not produce viable seed. The status of research on sterile cultivars was questioned.

Questions arose regarding enforcement of the provisions of the Act. Comments by D.E.P. : regulating boating only; Dept. of Ag. : regulating pet stores but only animals at this time. It was noted that aquatic invasive plants are a main concern, yet little is being done to monitor them (i.e. their sale and availability). Education of the public was mentioned as a primary course of action regarding this.

John Anderson suggested a spreadsheet be developed to give basic information on any plant that we may identify as invasive or potentially invasive. Information such as name, habitat, problem it causes, distribution and abundance, effect on the environment, and effect on agriculture would be useful. Les commented that some of this information is on the IPANE website, though some data may be outdated.

Plant identification by the public was mentioned as being critical to prevent new populations of invasives from getting established. Individuals, agencies, nurserymen, and environmental organization volunteers need to be identified to assist with accurate identification.

Tom McGowan used an example of the Lake Waromog District's procedures to correctly identify invasive plants as an aid in detection of new invasive populations. He stressed the importance of classifying plants by habitat type and suggested that we focus on aquatic invasives initially.

John Anderson stressed again the need to proceed with the establishment of an initial list of invasive and potentially invasive plants.

Les Mehrhoff offered to attempt to create a list for the council that would classify terrestrial plants by habitat type and aquatic plants by location of waterbody.

There was discussion of how to break down the stated charge of the Council per the Act into workable and identifiable segments and how to address each one. Some would be given higher priority, as the Council chooses, and an action plan could be developed for the individual goals. Task groups vs. full Council to tackle specific areas was discussed. What will be the best structure to actually get the work done?

Citizens from the Housatonic Valley Association voiced that Purple Loosestrife is a primary concern for them. They asked for information on control options and help with the situation. Donna Ellis (U Conn) mentioned that a management guide is available, and control options.

Rep. Roberta Willis stressed that education of the public and specifically fish and aquarium owners could go a long way to prevent establishment of new populations of invasive aquatic plants due to people dumping tanks into waterways. She emphasized the cost that is being spent on control efforts of aquatic weeds.

Sen. Roraback brought up the question of what to do with the situation at Bantam Lake (Fanwort infestation). Tom McGowan commented on the inspection procedures and the repeated warnings and education that local residents get from the Lake Waromog District.

Tom McGowan mentioned that Massachusetts has published an invasive plant control/management guide and that such a project may (?) be eligible for 75% federal reimbursement. He also questioned the process of applying the fines per the Act to those who break the law. How does this process work? Comments from John Anderson regarding custody of samples and from David Leff regarding options other than a \$100 fine. Paul Larson mentioned that the fine issue is unclear i.e. are fines assessed per plant, per day, per business establishment, etc. It is not clear in the current law. Bruce Graczyk mentioned the inspection capabilities of the Dept. of Ag.

After much discussion, the date of the next meeting was set for October 23, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. at the Legislative Office Building. Room to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Larson, Acting Secretary