

CONNECTICUT INVASIVE PLANT WORKING GROUP (CIPWG)
Minutes from the November 10, 2011 General Meeting

The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) held a general meeting on November 10, 2011 at the Valley Laboratory of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in Windsor. The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. and was attended by approximately 35 people. CIPWG Co-chairs Donna Ellis [University of Connecticut (UConn) Dept. of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture] and Penni Sharp (Connecticut Botanical Society) welcomed everyone. Brief introductions were made by the attendees, and a sign-in sheet was distributed. The CIPWG Speaker's List was circulated for updates and additions. Refreshments were provided by the University of Connecticut Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program and The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

1. CIPWG Annual Report

The CIPWG annual report for 2011 has been prepared by Donna Ellis and Logan Senack [UConn; Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)]. The report includes general information about CIPWG and its members, the CIPWG website, meetings and workshops presented during the year, invasive plant pulling parties, and activities and events that CIPWG members organized or in which they participated. The report will be posted on the CIPWG website and included as an attachment in the annual report of the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council.

2. Subcommittee Reports

a) Membership (Suzanne Simone, Subcommittee Chair)

Donna described the CIPWG Membership Committee and function within the organization. There are currently 700 people who are subscribed to the CIPWG list serve. Suzanne Simone (Town of Cheshire) serves as the point of contact for people who would like to join CIPWG and subscribe to the list serve.

b) Education and Outreach (Donna Ellis, Subcommittee Chair)

The Education and Outreach Subcommittee includes 20 CIPWG members. Donna discussed the overall education and outreach activities that many CIPWG members provide, which include staffing the CIPWG poster display at public events and conferences and giving presentations to various groups and organizations. She would like members of this subcommittee to assist with the 2012 CIPWG symposium in the fall, and there may be opportunities for involvement in additional activities.

c) Native Alternatives (Charlotte Pyle, Penni Sharp, and Peter Picone, Co-chairs)

Charlotte Pyle (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service) provided an update on the Native Alternatives Subcommittee. Subcommittee membership has increased this year as new CIPWG members have joined. The Native Alternatives Subcommittee is currently reviewing and compiling a list of herbaceous native alternatives for invasive plants. The plants on the list are native to Connecticut and are suitable for restoration as well as for ornamental plantings. The full list under review includes approximately 1,300 Connecticut native plants, but this will ultimately be reduced to a smaller, more manageable number that will be posted on the CIPWG website. Ruth Klue (North Central Conservation District) will conduct a survey of Connecticut nurseries to find out which species are available in Connecticut and where they are grown. Peter Picone (DEEP) developed and maintains a list of native trees and shrubs (www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/ntvtree.pdf); available as a link on the

CIPWG website), and Jess Lubell (UConn Dept. of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture) recently created a list of Connecticut native shrubs ranging from well-known to relatively unknown species. The native plant list will be posted on the CIPWG website.

d) Management (Todd Mervosh, Charlotte Pyle, and Logan Senack, Co-chairs)

Todd Mervosh [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES)] commented to the group that the CIPWG invasive plant management guide has been on the website for approximately 11 years and has been accessed by many who are seeking invasive plant management options. The Management Subcommittee has been busy with web updates for various invasive plant species. Basic information on invasive plant management currently resides on the CIPWG website.

3. 2012 CIPWG Symposium

The 6th biennial CIPWG invasive plant symposium will be held in the fall of 2012. Logan Senack and Tom Rathier (CAES) volunteered to serve as Co-chairs of the Symposium Planning Subcommittee and will be scheduling the first of many planning meetings soon. A sign-up sheet was circulated among the attendees who would like to be on the Symposium Planning Subcommittee to assist with this major event.

4. Interacting with Municipalities Regarding Invasive Plant Issues

Mary Gaudet-Wilson, Chairperson of the Conservation Commission, Town of Newtown gave a very informative and interesting presentation, entitled “Restoring Newtown’s Natural Flora by Removing Invasive Plants”. She described a number of invasive plant initiatives with volunteers that are underway in her town, and she has been very successful networking to bring many local organizations, schools, and individuals on board. Mary uploaded her presentation on the Newtown Conservation Commission website, and it is available for viewing and use by your organization if desired by clicking on this link: www.newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/NewtownCT_BComm/Restoring%20Flora%202011.pdf.

The presentation is given to 4th grade classes with their science teachers in Newtown schools and to area garden clubs. Conservation Commission members and volunteers in Newtown have formed an invasive plant working group. They create monthly posters on featured invasive plants and sponsor invasive plant seminars. They work closely with the Newtown First Selectman and many other Boards and Commissions in Newtown. The First Selectman proclaimed an Invasive Plant Month and appeared on a local cable television show to discuss invasives.

The Conservation Commission reviews open space regulations and all open space parcels, and commission members require developers to include detailed plans for invasive plant management. Additionally, Mary discussed management projects underway that focus on particular invasive species, including Oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, garlic mustard, and mile-a-minute vine. These projects focus on positive aspects of invasive plant control, such as the use of native species as replacement plants. The working group includes local photos taken around town in their presentations, uses innovative incentives such as contests, and makes these activities enjoyable for the volunteers and other participants. Mary suggested starting small when there are many invasives to remove on a parcel of land so that volunteers get a good feeling of accomplishment after the work has been completed.

5. Legislative Issues/Connecticut Invasive Plants Council

Nancy Murray (DEEP), Logan, and Donna provided updates on invasive plant legislative news and the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council. Logan, Connecticut Invasive Plant Coordinator assists the Invasive Plants Council by recording and posting minutes from their monthly meetings. The Council's Annual Report is underway and will be printed in December. Council members continue to discuss the running bamboo issue. Nancy, Logan, Donna, and Jeff Ward (CAES) gave presentations to the Council on surveys and related field work that were conducted during the summer to investigate running bamboo populations, particularly those that are in or near minimally managed habitats. A spreadsheet of running bamboo locations in Connecticut compiled by Seymour resident Caryn Rickel was discussed at the March 2011 CIPWG general meeting. Legislative information, Connecticut Invasive Plants Council meeting minutes, and the updated Connecticut Invasive Plant List are posted on the CIPWG website at www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg.

6. Invasive Species Updates (Mile-a-minute Vine and Giant Hogweed)

Donna, Logan, and Todd informed the group about survey, management, and outreach activities for mile-a-minute vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*) that occurred during 2011. Enhanced educational outreach efforts for invasive plants, and mile-a-minute in particular, resulted in the reporting and confirmation of new mile-a-minute populations in five Connecticut towns: Bristol, Ridgefield, Southbury, Wilton, and Woodbury. A map depicting the 24 confirmed towns where the invasive vines were found was shared with the meeting attendees and was posted on the CIPWG website. Logan contacted municipal staff in each of the new confirmed locations and provided educational materials and other information for dissemination to town residents. Donna and Logan coordinated three pulling parties in Sprague for mile-a-minute control during the summer months and, working together with Todd and many volunteers were successful in hand-pulling large quantities of this annual invasive vine at Mohegan State Forest and adjacent areas along the Shetucket River. Area surveys were conducted in and around Sprague during the 2011 summer to gather more data regarding the extent of the infestations.

Donna and Todd discussed the mile-a-minute vine biological control program funded by the US Department of Agriculture, which began in Connecticut in 2009. To date, 18,000 beneficial weevils have been introduced onto mile-a-minute vines in 10 towns in Fairfield, Litchfield, New Haven, and New London Counties where extensive populations of mile-a-minute have been confirmed. The weevils feed exclusively on mile-a-minute vines and do not attack other plants. During 2011, weevils were released in the towns of Bridgewater, Greenwich, Newtown, Norwalk, Sprague, and Stamford. Monitoring of release sites is ongoing to determine how well the weevils are establishing and to assess the extent of their feeding damage.

Donna provided a summary of giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) survey and educational outreach activities and disseminated a map depicting confirmed locations of this invasive plant and Federal Noxious Weed. Botanist Betsy Corrigan continued this year to conduct surveys for giant hogweed, and she and Todd provided assistance with removal of the plants at several locations in Connecticut. Giant hogweed was confirmed in the towns of Bethany and Sharon for the first time during 2011, and property owners worked with Betsy to initiate control at each site.

Due to a power outage that occurred midway through the CIPWG meeting, Donna was unable to give her PowerPoint update presentations on mile-a-minute vine and giant hogweed. The

slide shows have been saved as PDF files and will be available for viewing on the CIPWG website on the Mile-a-minute Vine and Giant Hogweed web pages.

7. Connecticut Early Detection and Priority Invasive Plant Lists

Logan discussed the use of the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (EDDMapS), a new mapping tool for web-based mapping of invasive species distributions. He requested distribution information on early detection and priority invasive plants in order for this data to be submitted to EDDMapS. Nancy commented that management of invasives will also be trackable through this mapping tool to allow resource managers to follow changes to invasive plant populations over time as various controls are implemented.

Sigrun Gadwa (Carya Ecological Services) commented that there are two half-acre sites in Cheshire and Wilton where Fiveleaf Akebia (*Akebia quinata*, also known as Chocolate Vine) is growing. She will send occurrence data in to Logan.

Donna requested occurrence data on Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) in Connecticut. Several members have provided photos, collection records, sightings, or other information regarding mugwort in natural areas/minimally disturbed habitats, including municipal or state parks, state forests, and open space or land trust parcels (public or private land). Please contact Donna Ellis (email: donna.ellis@uconn.edu; phone 860-486-6448) if you can provide information on this species.

8. CIPWG Website

Logan provided an update on the CIPWG website (www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg). The website continues to undergo renovations, and new material has been added. Kristen Ponak continues as our very talented CIPWG webmaster, and together with Logan and UConn student Andrew Brown they have added several new features to expand and enhance the website. These additions include a scrolling photo gallery of Connecticut invasive plants, a volunteer corner to recognize individuals or groups who are conducting invasive plant activities, early detection information, an event calendar, and new links to fact sheets and management information. The new invasive plant disposal document has recently been completed and is posted on the CIPWG website in the Resources and Publications section (www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/publications.html).

9. Volunteer Programs for Invasive Plant Projects

Donna talked to the group about ways that CIPWG members can volunteer their time for various activities related to invasive plants and their alternatives, including organizing and participating in work parties (“pulling parties”) for invasive plant control, staffing the CIPWG poster display at public events, and conducting other types of educational outreach. During 2011, three pulling parties for mile-a-minute vine occurred in the Town of Sprague, with approximately 15 volunteers participating in each event. The group discussed strategies to form a Volunteer Subcommittee, recruit additional volunteers, and, most importantly, identify someone to coordinate these efforts.

We invite you to volunteer your time for invasive plant projects. We are looking for a Volunteer Coordinator as well as interested individuals to be a part of this exciting new opportunity! If you are interested in being involved, please contact Donna (email donna.ellis@uconn.edu; phone 860-486-6448).

10. Other Old or New Business

a) Connecticut Flower and Garden Show

The Connecticut Flower and Garden Show will be held from February 23-26, 2012 in Hartford, CT. Penni will coordinate the volunteers who will staff the CIPWG educational exhibit at the Flower Show. The theme for the 2012 Flower Show is “The Fabulous Fifties”.

b) Japanese Barberry Control Videos on YouTube

A 3-part video on Japanese barberry control has been posted on YouTube. The video features Jeffrey Ward (CAES), Tom Worthley (UConn Cooperative Extension System), Kirby Stafford (CAES Vice Director and State Entomologist who studies ticks and the spread of tick-borne diseases like Lyme Disease), and CIPWG member Jasmine Wolf. The videos provide information on Japanese barberry and its control, including flame-weeding, and discuss deer ticks and Lyme disease. This video series is dedicated to the late Les Mehrhoff. Click here to link to the videos: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehN-QTPqSDQ&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL.

c) Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE)

Sarah Treanor Bois informed the group that current funding for the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) will be ending soon. She is working with John Silander (IPANE; UConn Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology) to pursue a new partnership with EDDMapS in order to preserve New England invasive plant data that currently reside in the IPANE database and to allow the IPANE website to continue.

d) Invasive Vines Cause Additional Stress to Trees Impacted by Storms

Donna discussed a CD of photos that she received from Advanced Master Gardener Joseph Mingo, who provided testimony at a public hearing on the impact that invasive vines such as Oriental bittersweet are having on trees, particularly those trees that were injured during Tropical Storm Irene in August. As the Tree Warden for the Town of East Lyme, Joseph included in his testimony his concerns for the overall health of the trees and the stress of these invasive vines, coupled with the resultant storm damage.

e) Proposal for Invasive Species Initiatives

Cynthia Boettner (Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge) described a grant proposal she recently submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support invasive species leadership initiatives and partnerships in the Connecticut River watershed. Applicants will be notified in February 2012.

We hope to see you at our next CIWPG general meeting in the spring and the Invasive Plant Symposium in the fall! Additional information will be available soon.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Ellis, CIPWG Co-chair
7 December 2011