

CONNECTICUT INVASIVE PLANT WORKING GROUP (CIPWG)
Minutes from the March 27, 2013 General Meeting

The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) held a general meeting on March 27, 2013 at Goodwin College in East Hartford, CT. The meeting opened at 9:30 a.m. and was attended by approximately 40 people. CIPWG Co-chair Donna Ellis (UConn Dept. of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture) welcomed everyone. Brief introductions were made by the attendees, and a sign-in sheet was distributed. Delois Barnes (CT Department of Transportation [CT DOT]), Bob Capers (UConn), Stacey Leicht (UConn), Lindsay Michel (CT Forest and Park Association), and Bruce Villwock (CT DOT) were welcomed as new members of the CIPWG Steering Committee. The CIPWG Speaker's List was circulated for updates and additions. Refreshments were provided by CIPWG and the UConn Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program.

1. Goodwin College Environmental Studies

Bruce Morton, Program Director for Goodwin College Environmental Studies, welcomed the attendees to today's meeting. Bruce provided information about Goodwin and the projects they are working on in Environmental Studies, which include bald eagle nesting on the Connecticut River, Japanese knotweed control studies (hand-pulling, use of black plastic to solarize the plants, and possible installation of root and rhizome barriers), and installing informational trails at the College.

2. 2012 CIPWG Symposium Recap

Nicole Gabelman (UConn) presented a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the evaluations from the October 25, 2012 CIPWG symposium, which was held at the UConn Storrs campus and attended by a capacity crowd of 475 people. Donna, Logan Senack (UConn), and Tom Rathier [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES)], also provided comments about the event. Logan and Tom served as Co-chairs of the symposium planning committee. The CIPWG website (www.cipwg.uconn.edu) has links to speaker presentations and photos from the symposium.

3. CIPWG Reports

- **CIPWG Annual Report** - The CIPWG annual report for 2012 was prepared by Donna Ellis, with contributions from Todd Mervosh (CAES), Charlotte Pyle (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service), Logan Senack, Penni Sharp (Connecticut Botanical Society; CIPWG Co-chair), and UConn Master Gardener Coordinators Jackie Algon, Regina Campfield, Patricia Eldredge, and Susan Munger. The report includes general information about CIPWG and its members, CIPWG website updates, 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 has been posted on the CIPWG website and was included as an attachment to the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council Tenth Annual Report.
- **Subcommittee Reports**
 - a. Education and Outreach (Donna Ellis, Chair) – The Education and Outreach Subcommittee includes 35 CIPWG members. Donna discussed the educational programs and outreach activities that are conducted by many CIPWG members throughout the year. She will contact the subcommittee members for their suggestions regarding projects that the subcommittee could focus on this year.

- b. Management (Logan Senack, Todd Mervosh, and Charlotte Pyle, Co-chairs) – Logan informed the group that the Management Subcommittee has been working on web updates for various invasive plants, with a goal of providing control options and related links for all species on the Connecticut state list. Basic management information for the more commonly occurring species currently resides on the CIPWG website.
- c. Membership (Suzanne Simone, Chair) - Donna described the CIPWG Membership Committee and function within the organization. There are currently 780 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, and people can also subscribe online.
- d. Native Alternatives (Charlotte Pyle, Penni Sharp, and Peter Picone, Co-chairs) - Charlotte provided an update on the Native Alternatives Subcommittee, which is developing lists of plants native to Connecticut that may be used in place of invasive plants. Currently the working list includes over 500 species names, and the subcommittee is winnowing it down to a more manageable size. The group is also checking on nomenclature and possible additions to the list. After the stable list is set, they will prepare sublists and involve more subcommittee members. The final reference lists will include plants suitable for various cultural conditions and types of uses.

4. The New Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) App

Stacey Leicht presented the new IPANE App, which allows anyone to enter invasive plant distribution data directly into the Early Detection Distribution and Mapping System (EDDMapS) database, even if they have not received IPANE training. The mobile App can be downloaded for iPhones, iPads, and Androids via the EDDMapS website (www.eddmaps.org). Stacey commented that use of the App will result in more people looking for invasive plants and entering in distribution data. She went over the steps involved with using the IPANE App and its various features.

5. Update from Municipalities

Tom Ouellette, Chairman of the Vernon Conservation Commission, gave a presentation on the Tankerhoosen River watershed, which is a tributary of the Hockanum River. Variable-leaf watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) and fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) were found in the watershed in 2008. Following this discovery, the Conservation Commission worked with George Knoecklein of Northeast Aquatic Research to conduct surveys and determine the extent of the populations. The commission held a public meeting to present their findings and discuss control options. Concerns with fragmentation if mechanical harvesting were implemented led to a decision in 2010 to use herbicides to control the plants. Variable-leaf watermilfoil returned to one area of the watershed in 2012 but was controlled that year. Tom also described a volunteer survey program to look for aquatic invasives that might move downstream, and follow up control efforts that took place when plants were found. The Conservation Commission expanded their survey efforts to examine 74% of the 52 small ponds in town, together with additional surveys conducted by Northeast Aquatic Research. These activities were made possible by a comprehensive approach involving professional and volunteer collaboration, prioritizing strategies, and sustained partnerships with town staff.

6. Volunteer Programs for Invasive Plant Projects

Donna talked about opportunities for volunteers to get involved with invasive plant activities. During the December 2012 Steering Committee meeting, committee members were in favor of repeating a call for invasive plant projects that was piloted in 2011 to invite organizations to submit proposals for invasive plant projects where volunteers are needed. The proposals will be reviewed by the Steering Committee. CIPWG will assist with promoting the projects that are selected and will help recruit volunteers from our membership or the general public via the list serve and website.

7. Legislative Issues/Connecticut Invasive Plants Council

Logan provided an update on legislative activities and the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council. He reported on the status of a bill (Substitute Senate Bill No. 1016) that has been introduced to regulate the planting and sale of running bamboo. Brad Robinson (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection [DEEP]) reported that there is legislation currently being voted on by the Environment Committee that would ban lawn care pesticides in municipal parks, which might impact invasive plant control options.

8. Open Forum – Idea and Information Exchange

A portion of the meeting was designated as an open forum for attendees to share ideas, concerns, or other thoughts pertaining to invasive plants:

- One concern discussed involved the vegetation management along public roads in southeastern Connecticut. Clear-cutting the areas allows opportunities for invasive plant invasions to occur. CT DOT staff who attended the meeting commented that cutting vegetation along roads was done per order to keep roads open during storms. Vines that take down power lines, which may include Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and porcelainberry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), can result in power outages and also need to be removed.
- Other comments pertained to non-native trees along highways, and that towns should be encouraged to plant native species if possible. Plants selected for roadsides, however must be able to tolerate salt that is applied during winter storms and other adverse conditions present on roadsides.
- Requirements for pesticide applicator licenses were discussed. Permits from DEEP are required for aquatic herbicide applications.
- Control projects for running bamboo (CT DOT and CAES) are in the planning stages.
- Viability of Japanese knotweed seed was discussed.
- Have Conservation Commissions or other groups hold a native plant exchange, where citizens can bring in an invasive plant and obtain a native plant replacement.
- The topic of eating invasive plants was brought up.
- A suggestion was made to teach basic botany skills in Connecticut school systems so students can identify basic common native flora. This may involve discussions with the State Department of Education.
- Some landscapers are still planting invasive species on the state list.
- An App for plant selection of native coastal plants is being developed by UConn and the Connecticut Sea Grant Program.

9. Other Old or New Business

- Donna thanked all of the wonderful volunteers who have helped staff the CIPWG exhibit and provided educational outreach at many events during the past year, including the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show.
- Logan informed the attendees about the Les Mehrhoff Invasive Plant Walk, which is being created in Mansfield, CT. Invasive plant signs will be installed on Saturday, June 1st and can be viewed on the CIPWG website.
- Residential Rain Garden Training will take place in Wilton April 4-5.
- The Greenwich Land Trust is presenting an Invasive Plant Management Workshop on April 4. Logan will be one of the speakers on the program.
- Several Earth Day programs are occurring this month around the state, including the Hamden Earth Day Celebration (April 20) and Fairfield's Earth Day Celebration (April 27). CIPWG members are volunteering to staff the CIPWG exhibit at these events.
- The Ridgefield Tree Committee will present an invasive plant program for Arbor Day on April 25. Donna is the invited speaker for this program.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

We hope to see you at our next CIWPG general meeting in the fall! Additional information will be available during the summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Ellis, CIPWG Co-chair
30 April 2013