

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday Dec. 14, 2010
2 pm, Department of Agriculture
Hartford, CT

Council members present: David Goodwin, Bill Hyatt, Paul Larson, Lou Magnarelli, Tom McGowan, Les Mehrhoff, Mary Musgrave, Phil Prelli

Others present: Peter Aarrestad, John Blasiak, Pat Bresnahan, Donna Ellis, Bob Heffernan, George Krivda, Nancy Murray, Logan Senack, Richard Shaffer, Penni Sharp

1. Musgrave called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm.

2. Ellis brought in a cake and thanked Musgrave for all her accomplishments as Chair of the Invasive Plants Council. The group thanked Musgrave for serving as Chair for the past three years.

3. Musgrave distributed copies of the 2010 annual report

The report needs to be distributed to various state offices by Dec. 31, 2010.

Note 12/15/10: An electronic copy will be available online at the following address:
www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/ipc.html -LS

4. The group discussed two email votes that occurred between the November meeting and the December meeting

The votes approved the minutes for the November meeting so they could be included in the annual report and elected Magnarelli as Vice-Chair of the Council starting Jan. 1, 2011. Prelli moved (second: Hyatt) to accept the two email votes. **The Council decided to approve the email votes.**

5. Murray detailed DEP's projects from 2010 and priorities for 2011:

- Establish a data management system for early detection and rapid response species. Other more common species will continue to be reported to the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE).
- Continue the Cooperative Agreement with UConn for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) and reestablish a coordinating committee for ANS.
- Complete a Personal Service Agreement for zebra mussel surveys with federal ANS funding.
- Continue water chestnut control projects, phragmites control, and Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) control projects.

- Maintaining funding for the Invasive Plant Coordinator through the Cooperative Agreement with UConn is still a top priority, but the uncertainty of the budget process may make the funding situation unclear.
- Two mile-a-minute removal projects, a project to control aquatic invasives at Bantam Lake, and a project to control water chestnut were funded in 2010. The projects were funded by DEP using Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) funds.
- DEP is seeking long-term funding for invasive plant issues by pursuing federal funding possibilities including options with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Magnarelli, Hyatt and Murray briefly discussed the phragmites control program and its relation to other mosquito control activities and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)/Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) projects by DEP.

Musgrave asked how long the Invasive Plant Coordinator position was currently funded. Hyatt responded that the Cooperative Agreement for the Coordinator position was funded until June 30, 2011. DEP is attempting to find additional funding but that issue may not be resolved until the end of May or the beginning of June.

6. Frequency, topics, location and schedule of meetings for 2011

Hyatt and Senack provided meeting dates and information to the group for the 2011 calendar year. The meetings are scheduled to take place in room G8A of the Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford, from 2-4 pm on the dates below:

January 11
 February 8
 March 8
 June 14
 September 13
 October 11
 November 8
 December 13

Hyatt noted that a number of topics for the upcoming year had been outlined at the November 9, 2010 meeting and that these items will make a good starting point for discussions next year.

Musgrave asked if the Council could find more ways to help or assist homeowners as they work to control invasive plants on their own properties. Musgrave suggested that in addition to providing information and public education, projects such as the grants to municipalities program or other funding for invasive plant management projects could also be helpful.

Hyatt informed the group that DEP was working to find a way to add incoming funding to the Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) account. The SEP account provided funding for

three grants this year, but a method to increase the funding in the account is necessary so that funding could go out for grants to municipalities and other programs in the future.

Prelli asked if additional efforts could be made to ensure that activities, progress regarding invasive plant issues, and information about programs like the grants to municipalities program were making it to the public. He suggested contacting the Council of Connecticut Municipalities and the Council of Small Towns.

Murray asked if the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) provided this sort of information to the public. Ellis responded that CIPWG, the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, and other groups do provide outreach materials and control information about invasive plants, but that CIPWG does not provide funding or sponsor grants to municipalities.

7. Legislative strategy for 2011

Musgrave asked Heffernan if he had any suggestions or thoughts on a legislative strategy for the 2011 legislative session.

Heffernan responded that he did not have any suggestions, but noted that this would be a very difficult legislative session and that the new administration and legislature may not have much experience with invasive plant issues. Heffernan suggested that the group might want to find out if any position papers for the new administration are being developed that should include invasive plant concerns, and they may want to find some way to educate the legislature about the Council's activities. Hyatt noted that if DEP has the opportunity to provide input to the legislature or administration about important issues, invasive plants would likely be included, along with other items.

Hyatt asked how the Council usually involves legislators in its work. The Council discussed inviting legislators to future meetings. Prelli suggested inviting legislators to the January meeting, to showcase the impressive accomplishments of the Council and DEP and to note the funding issue and any other issues that may need legislative attention. Hyatt suggested the group could assemble material for presentations focused on success stories.

McGowan reminded the group that it would be important to note that some coordination is needed to help the Council meet its legislatively required responsibilities and that funding for a position such as the state Coordinator position may be an inexpensive way of ensuring that this coordination still occurs effectively.

Prelli referenced an email from Heffernan suggesting that a working group be formed to address the cultivar issue. Prelli suggested that this might be a good idea and that the working group could prepare something in time for the next annual report. This would resolve the cultivar issue instead of postponing resolution to an indefinite future point.

Prelli suggested that individuals from the industry, from academia, and others not on the Council could contribute to the discussion of this issue in the working group. The group discussed the logistics and challenges of forming a working group and may correspond over the winter so that a group could be set up at the February meeting.

8. Old or new business

Mehrhoff reported that he checked the state invasive plant list and found that there are a number of plants on the list that do have associated cultivars, but many of them were not sold in the trade. Hyatt asked Mehrhoff if he could assemble a list of banned plants with cultivars that are or are not in the trade. Mehrhoff said he would start pulling the list together for a future meeting.

McGowan asked Murray and Bresnahan how the ANS committee will relate to the Invasive Plants Council. Murray responded that the ANS committee will be focused on implementing the ANS plan that was approved in 2006 for all taxa (not just plants) in aquatic and marine systems and will be primarily focused on reducing spread. The ANS committee will report to the Council and the Council will be able to provide feedback.

Murray noted that the ANS plan has been approved by the US Forest Service and other organizations, so actions approved in the plan may be fundable with federal dollars.

Hyatt added that some of the items in the ANS report are generic, for example the report includes development of early detection and rapid response plans, and that these items will provide a number of opportunities for the IPC to provide feedback to the ANS committee and vice-versa. Murray also noted that DEP and others continue to work with CIPWG on invasive plant issues statewide.

McGowan asked if there was any continuity planned for the ANS agreement after the first year. Murray said DEP wanted to keep the project going and Hyatt added that federal funding might be available for up to three future years. Funding does generally decrease in successive years but Murray noted that they were working on doing more with less funds.

McGowan suggested that the presentation for the legislators in January could include a comment that continued funding for the Coordinator position helps the ANS project move forward and that the ANS project helps with invasive plant coordination efforts. Murray informed the group that Senack will be assisting with ANS efforts in the next few months.

Ellis updated the group on the status of bamboo in Connecticut. Ellis thanked Heffernan and the CT Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA) for providing information about bamboo as the cover story of the latest issue of the CNLA magazine, and for including bamboo as a topic at the upcoming CNLA 2011 Winter Symposium. Goodwin noted that it is still important to let the public know that even if bamboo is not considered invasive by the Invasive Plants Council, it is important that it be planted appropriately to avoid unwanted spread.

Prelli thanked the group for all their efforts and said it was a pleasure working with the group. The group thanked Prelli for his efforts and assistance. Larson also thanked Prelli for contributing his perspective on the many issues of invasive plants.

9. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 11, 2011, 2-4 pm in room G8A of the Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT.

10. Adjournment

Goodwin moved (second: Magnarelli) to adjourn the meeting. **The Council decided to adjourn at 2:55 pm.** Musgrave wished the group happy holidays.