

MINUTES

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, November 8, 2011
2 pm, Dept. of Agriculture
Hartford, CT

Council members present: Dave Goodwin, Bill Hyatt, Paul Larson, Lou Magnarelli, Richard McAvoy, Tom McGowan, John Silander, Dave Sutherland, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Greg Bugbee, Donna Ellis, Nancy Murray, Will Rowlands, Logan Senack, Penni Sharp, Jeff Ward

1. Hyatt called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. The Council and guests introduced themselves.

2. Department of Agriculture representative to IPC

Hyatt introduced Katherine Winslow as the Department of Agriculture (DoAG) representative. Hyatt circulated the letter from Commissioner Reviczky (DoAG) appointing Katherine Winslow as his designee to the Council.

3. The minutes for the 10/11/11 meeting were reviewed

Larson moved (second: Winslow) to approve the minutes. **The Council decided to approve the minutes from the 10/11/11 meeting as submitted.**

4. Annual report:

a. Cover letter

Hyatt distributed copies of the cover letter of the annual report. Sutherland suggested adding a note that Senack has a role in coordinating volunteer efforts in the state. Sutherland moved (second: Larson) to approve the letter with the change. **The Council decided to approve the annual report letter with the change.**

b. State agency reports: DEEP, CAES, DoAG

Hyatt repeated his October request for members, especially state agencies, to provide a list of invasive plant accomplishments and activities from their organizations and the industry for inclusion in the annual report. Information for these reports should be sent to Nancy Murray within the next week. Magnarelli asked Bugbee to submit a short write-up for the report from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). The Department of Agriculture (DoAG) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) will also submit reports.

c. Industry report

Goodwin and Larson indicated that the green industry was preparing to submit a report.

Ellis submitted an additional accomplishments report from the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG).

Tom McGowan arrived at 2:14 pm.

5. Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) and sales (Greg Bugbee, CAES)

Hyatt summarized past actions and activities regarding aquatic nuisance species (ANS), particularly as they relate to plant sales in pet stores. Magnarelli introduced Greg Bugbee, a scientist at CAES, for a presentation on aquatic nuisance species and plant sales in Connecticut.

Bugbee detailed the projects CAES works on that relate to invasive aquatic plants. The group has surveyed over 185 Connecticut lakes since 2004. Fourteen aquatic invasive plants have been identified so far and 61% of lakes that were requested to be surveyed had at least one invasive species. The results of the surveys are made available online as georeferenced maps.

CAES staff also visited pet stores and aquarium shops in 2008 and 2010 to inquire about sales of banned species. In 2008, 28% of the stores were found to be selling prohibited plants. The primary plants found for sale were fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) and Brazilian waterweed (*Egeria densa*). In 2010, 29% of stores were found to be selling prohibited species.

In several cases, the particular species of plant being offered for sale was difficult to identify, and DNA methods were used in an attempt to determine species. In some cases, no genes were available in the online database GenBank for comparison, and so some plants were unidentifiable.

CAES revisited the stores to provide them with the following:

1. Letter from CAES Director Magnarelli about the project CAES is working on and asking sellers not to sell prohibited invasives
2. List of Connecticut Invasive Plants from the Invasive Plants Council
3. Copy of the CAES aquatic plant identification guide

Bugbee noted that CAES does not have an enforcement role and noted that the letters above were requests from CAES, not enforcement actions. Bugbee reported that some aquarium sellers felt that compliance should not be their responsibility and they suggested it was the distributor's responsibility not to sell them invasive plants. The general trend was that larger stores and chains tended not to be selling prohibited plants, but smaller stores were more likely to be selling these plants.

The group discussed this issue. Silander suggested that Dr. Don Les (UConn) could assist with identifying the species for sale using DNA, and noted that DNA tests have become less expensive in recent years. Silander asked how other states handled this issue. Murray noted that she always advocates education first, but if sales continue, someone from the Department of Agriculture, which has inspection authority at pet shops, should get involved. Bugbee added that CAES planned to host a workshop for aquarium store staff and others to learn to identify these prohibited invasive aquatic plants.

McGowan suggested that to avoid the problem of selling unknown plants that turn out to be prohibited invasive plants, stores could avoid selling unidentified or unknown plants.

Hyatt asked for a 1-page summary of this information to provide to the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species (NEANS) Task Force meeting later in November. Murray added that the lists of species found would be particularly useful.

McGowan asked what the prospects were for future funding of this program. Bugbee responded that CAES plans to continue the program to some degree, but changes in funding from USDA may lead to changes in the program.

6. Bamboo presentation (Jeff Ward, CAES) and discussion

Magnarelli introduced Dr. Jeff Ward, a scientist from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station. Magnarelli accompanied Ward to 3 sites in Woodbury, CT where bamboo populations (possibly *Phyllostachys aurea*) occurred.

Ward presented his findings on bamboo's invasiveness as it related to the criteria established in CT General Statutes Sec. 22a-381. Ward noted that some species of bamboo clearly establish and form dense stands, but that the plants do not appear to produce seeds and do not seem to have high dispersion potential. He also shared other observations:

- Connecticut appears to be at the northern range limit
- Bamboo can be killed by the herbicide glyphosate but may require multiple years of treatment
- With one possible exception, the bamboo in CT observed by Ward spreads only by the human movement of vegetative tissues

Murray has been working through EDDMapS to try to find an expert who could confirm the identification of the species. Silander said he could ask others to assist in identifying the species. Rowland noted that some species are sold under incorrect names, complicating the issue.

Hyatt asked Ward if he was still of the opinion that bamboo may be potentially invasive. Ward responded that there is no real evidence that bamboo is moving across the landscape. Silander noted that various bamboos are listed as invasive in some states and Murray added that towns south of Connecticut, including some on Long Island, are prohibiting some species on a town-by-town basis. Silander added that some species rarely seed even within their native range. Silander also noted that bamboo species have episodic synchronized flowering and may be monocarpic (die after producing seeds), and noted that some species may have extremely long time periods between flowerings and then flower in large numbers. The group discussed various methods of spread, whether the plants produced seeds, whether rhizomes could spread the plants and whether any of this constituted excessive dispersion as indicated in CGS Sec. 22a-381b(a) section 4. Murray suggested going out to see additional locations that are in natural areas.

Silander suggested that if the Council was concerned that there was not enough evidence to list bamboo species as Invasive, the Council could list some bamboo species as Potentially Invasive and continue to monitor them. The group discussed the criteria and whether or not plants must produce seeds to be considered invasive or to spread through the landscape. Goodwin noted that some roadside daylilies (*Hemerocallis* sp.) spread primarily via fragments spread by people. Silander noted that many aquatic plants spread by fragmentation without human assistance.

Hyatt asked if the fact that some bamboos needed to be sold with warning labels and additional information about preventing spread meant that the plants were showing a tendency to invade other areas. The group discussed various aspects of plant spread.

[Note: Paul Larson provided additional clarification following the meeting: At the present time, there is not any requirement for warning labels or the provision of additional information.]

There was discussion of asking CNLA to consider asking retailers who sell bamboo to provide some kind of information sheet to their customers. Larson does not know the status of the CNLA Board of Directors' decision on this issue.]

Larson reported that he spoke to Mike Johnson, owner of Summer Hill Nursery in Madison, CT, about the flowering of bamboo species. Johnson indicated that when bamboo does flower, which is rare, some species are very difficult to grow from seed and have very minimal growing rates from seeds that do germinate.

Murray stressed the importance of prevention and education responsibilities for both Aquatic Nuisance Species and other invasive plants, particularly since removal in both cases will be much more costly after the plants have become established. Murray also noted that there is the potential for problems since some towns want to list the plant as invasive on their own. The group noted that this could potentially conflict with state statute 22a-381d(e), which established a moratorium on municipalities adopting ordinances regarding the retail sale or purchase of any invasive plant until Oct 1, 2014.

Goodwin stressed the importance of following the already established guidelines for invasive criteria and making sure that all plants to be added to the list meet the criteria for listing. He also noted that the CT Nursery and Landscape Association has already conducted outreach events and grower education events about controlling the spread of bamboo in yards. McAvoy expressed concern that if this plant was only being spread by humans, it belonged in some sort of nuisance category. Silander noted that a designation of Potentially Invasive would mean the plants could be monitored further. Hyatt agreed that the plants could be listed as Potentially Invasive if they met the criteria, and noted that it was important for the group to act on this issue.

The group discussed the importance of education and interpretations of the meaning of “average conditions” in the invasive plant criteria. Goodwin noted that the industry now has guidelines for containing planted bamboo in yards.

Silander suggested that test plantings could be conducted to determine more about species spread throughout the state. Hyatt asked Murray to communicate with others to identify and confirm the species of bamboo found in Connecticut. Magnarelli added that the CAES could conduct experiments at their Lockwood Farm in Hamden, CT.

7. Aquatic Nuisance Species meeting update: Rapid Response Framework

Murray distributed a Connecticut Early Detection and Rapid Response Framework for Aquatic Nuisance Species based on programs in the Midwest. The framework uses the Incident Command System, a method used to organize the fighting of wildfires. The final version of the framework will be posted online once it is completed. Goodwin asked if part of the response could involve a way to get expedited approval for required permits for response activities. Murray detailed the procedures that would take place if the plan was activated and emphasized the step-by-step nature of the process.

8. Old/New business

- Ellis announced that the Fall 2011 general meeting of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group will be held on Thursday, November 10 from 1:30-3:30 pm at the Valley Laboratory of

CAES in Windsor, CT. The meeting is open to the public. Council members are invited to attend.

- Any other members planning to submit bullets regarding the benefits the Council provides to the member agency/organization or the industry for inclusion in the annual report should send those bullets to Senack within the next week.

- In order to include the November 8 meeting minutes in the annual report, the meeting minutes will be voted on by email vote. Senack will send out the minutes to the Council members by email and collect the votes.

12/2/11 Note: The minutes were distributed to the Council by email on 11/29/11. The Council voted 8-0-1 to approve the minutes as submitted by email vote on 12/2/11. -LS

9. Adjournment

Sutherland moved (second: McGowan) to adjourn the meeting. **The Council decided to adjourn at 3:56 pm.**