

**Connecticut Invasive Plants Council
December 12, 2006**

Minutes

Present:

Council Members: Dave Goodwin, Paul Larson, Phil Prelli, Tom McGowan, Leslie Mehrhoff, Lou Magnarelli, David Sutherland, Nancy Murray (representing DEP); Donna Ellis (representing Mary Musgrave)

Others: Representative Clark Chapin, Representative Mary Fritz, Representative Roberta Willis, Representative Richard Roy, Senator Andrew Roraback, Phyllis Silverman (Aide to Senator Toni Harp), Jillian Spears (aide to Representative Denise Merrill), Karen Weeks, Betty McLaughlin, Bob Heffernan

Lou Magnarelli called the meeting to order at 2:10. After introductions, Magnarelli suggested that since some legislators might need to leave, the group move to item #3 on the agenda, the council's legislative proposals.

Clerical Assistance Magnarelli first pointed out the council's need for clerical assistance, noting that in its first year, the Environment Committee provided a staff person to record minutes and help with meeting arrangements. He asked the legislators if such help from the committee might be possible again. Representative Fritz offered that she would consider whether her aide might be able to assist, and confirmed with Representative Roy that the Environment Committee did not yet have a clerk.

Legislative Proposals Magnarelli described each of the proposals. He asked Sutherland to clarify his position on pre-emption of municipal sale bans. Sutherland stated that he was willing to vote with the council to support the entire package of proposals as a whole, but that he would vote against a motion to split the appropriations request into one proposed bill while leaving the pre-emption in a separate proposed bill with the more technical or minor changes. He said that he would not lobby against any provisions during the legislative process. Prelli stated that the entire package represented a compromise by different members and that it was important to advance the entire package.

After the appropriations request was described, Representative Fritz asked if land trusts can play a role in controlling invasive plants. Sutherland and Mehrhoff described various efforts to train trusts and other local groups. Fritz suggested that more localized training by regions would be helpful. Representative Fritz offered that she could approach US Representative DeLauro, who will be the Chair of the Agriculture Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee concerning possible federal funding of state education and control programs. Prelli noted how critical funding is to the council's objectives.

Representative Chapin asked why additional funding was needed for inspectors if the CAES and DoA are already in facilities inspecting them for other things. Prelli and Magnarelli explained that while these new inspections would be less expensive to perform due to that redundancy in trips, there is considerably more involved with inspections, such as responding to complaints and subsequent re-visits to businesses

to verify compliance with state laws. These extra trips, not associated with routine inspections will incur the additional expenses to be covered by the requested funding.

In discussing the proposed grants program, Senator Roraback offered the suggestion that bonding might be the more appropriate source of funds.

Representative Fritz inquired whether sterile grass carp are being used to control invasive plants in lakes. Murray explained that DEP does give some permits for use of carp, but that it requires great caution, since the carp are non-selective feeders and can significantly harm a lake's native vegetation if too many are introduced.

Magnarelli handed out McGowan's report on expenditures to control aquatic invasive plants, and referenced expenditures by other groups and communities to control these plants. McGowan stressed two points from his report: that the approach used in New Hampshire of raising state revenues to provide a staff person who educates communities about invasive plants has helped to reduce infestations; and that communities usually put off dealing with an identified threat from an invasive species until they have a crisis and it is then much more expensive to remedy. Mehrhoff stressed that many communities are also incurring great expense in controlling terrestrial invasive plants.

Senator Roraback thanked the council for all its work on the legislative proposals and stated that it was now up to the legislature to follow through and fund this work. Representative Fritz noted the importance of pushing the entire package together, that if we start picking off particular provisions, we will lose important segments of our support.

Legislative Process In discussing which legislative committees would need to approve the package, Prelli stated that the penalty section should not send the bill to the Judiciary Committee, since that committee does not have to approve penalties involving infractions. There was discussion as to whether the bill should be introduced as an Environment Committee bill or as a bill sponsored by several legislators. It was agreed that one person would testify on behalf of the council at the public hearing.

The group discussed the federal appropriation for the Invasive Plant Center at UConn.

Goodwin remarked that the council should consider expanding its scope to address other orders of invasive species, including insect pests. He and Sutherland noted the threat posed by the Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Long-horned beetle.

The legislators left the meeting.

Minutes In response to Magnarelli's question, Murray concurred that the October minutes correctly reflect her suggested corrections.

Prelli moved approval of the November minutes as drafted, McGowan seconded. There were two suggested corrections, and the minutes were approved with those corrections.

Annual Report Goodwin moved approval of the 4th Annual Report; Mehrhoff seconded. Magnarelli noted a few suggestions for changes, including the total amount

of the appropriations request, and that the terms “invasive plant species” or “invasive plants ” should be used rather than “invasive species”.

Goodwin asked if DEP’s conservation officers can legally enforce the invasive plant laws; Murray confirmed that they can.

Research on Cultivars Mehrhoff distributed a list of research of which he is aware being conducted on cultivars of five species that are on the Invasive Plants list and are not banned for sale. He asked the group to let him know of any research being done on the other nine species that are on the list and not banned. He suggested that the council begin to consider action on any of those plants for which research is not being conducted. Bob Heffernan listed research being done on some of the other plants.

Magnarelli clarified that Sutherland will follow up with the Environment Committee regarding possible clerical assistance. Prelli offered that he would have his legislative liason follow the legislation, and would suggest that DEP follow it as well.

Goodwin moved adjournment, McGowan seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10.

The next meeting will be January 9th at 2:00 in the Ensign Room at the DEP Building.