

**INVASIVE PLANT COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Minutes of 2/14/06**

**Approved by the Council**

**Regular Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Invasive Plants Council (IPC) was held on Tuesday, February 14, 2006. David Leff, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m. in the Ensign Room at DEP Headquarters, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

**Attendees:** All members were present: Chairman David K. Leff, Vice-Chair, Dr. Louis Magnarelli, Commissioner F. Philip Prelli, Mr. David Goodwin, Mr. Paul Larson, Mr. Tom McGowan, Dr. Les Mehrhoff, Dr. Mary Musgrave and Mr. David Sutherland.

The following attended this meeting: Nancy Murray and Ken Metzler of DEP; Bob Heffernan of CT Nursery and Landscape Association; Donna Ellis of the University of Connecticut and Laura Reid of fish mart.

**Introduction:** Council Members did round table introduction for attending guests.

**ANS Presentation** William Hyatt, Director of DEP Inland Fisheries Division did a power point presentation on the draft of Connecticut's Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. He distributed to members a cover of the draft of Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, along with a sheet indicating who has been involved in the Plan, and four pages of the summary of the Draft Report. Per Bill Hyatt, there will be some changes to the report. He also offered to attendees that if they would like to see the draft report its available by leaving name and address with him. Bill Hyatt explained the Plan was put together for Connecticut to qualify for federal funding through the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. All states that have an approved Plan are eligible for assistance of up to 75% for the cost of implementing the Plan. At present, there are not a lot of dollars available. If the Plan is put in place, Connecticut could be looking at \$60,000 – 70,000. Bill Hyatt thinks there will be more money available 3,4, or 5 years down the road. DEP did not have staff resources to put together the Plan. It did apply for a grant through Sea Grant, which was able to contract out to the Institute of Water Resources of the University of Connecticut. Nancy Murray mentioned that there was also input in the Plan from the nursery and pet trades. The catalyst for the aquatic nuisance species management nationwide was introduction of Zebra Mussels in the Great Lakes in the 1980's. In the last 10 years 3 billion dollars have been spent on this species alone. Bill Hyatt and Nancy Murray described the Plan in detail throughout the presentation. Chairman Leff noted the differences between Connecticut's Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan because it is broader but more limited than the Invasive Plants Council jurisdiction because it is only dealing with aquatic and not terrestrial species. There are a lot of terrestrial species causing havoc. Dr. Magnarelli asked Bill Hyatt how fish are collected. Collection is mostly done by electro-fishing, per Bill Hyatt. DEP Inland Fisheries staff visits 30 to 40 lakes per year. A full state wide survey was done in the early 1990's. At that time, staff visited 500 lakes. Staff is doing this fish collecting at night and is seeing a lot of vegetation in the lakes. Bill Hyatt gave a brief

description of electro-fishing. Dr. Magnarelli asked Bill Hyatt if staff sees external parasites on the fish. Per Bill Hyatt they are seeing a mixture of flatworms and various grubs imbedded in the skin tissue and fins. In coastal streams they will see crustaceans.

Bill Hyatt and Nancy Murray spoke about Nancy possibly helping train staff to identify invasive plants. The use of volunteers from IPANE, Trout Unlimited, Audubon and The Nature Conservancy was discussed. Nancy Murray: further explained the ANS Plan and stated that the Plan is educational and clearly layed out. Nancy brought up the suggestion of bringing together ad hoc working volunteers.

Motion to endorse the report of Aquatic Nuisance Species Working Group – **Motion carried unanimously.**

Bill Hyatt mentioned there is a real concern with “didymo” an invasive Chrysophyte. It’s causing problems in Australia, New Zealand and western Rocky Mountain waters. New Zealand Mud Snail’s main mode of transportation is being carried on fishermen’s gear, wading shoes, waders, flies, and equipment. Three waters have been closed to all recreation use because the snail has been seen in these waters. Colorado is the closest waters to CT with this snail. – Per Bill Hyatt many trout fishermen travel from the west to east and they expect it to probably show up next in New York waters. Les Mehrhoff: suggested information be placed with the fishing license information about what people should and should not do when they are traveling to and from different areas or states. Chairman Leff: suggested another place to get the word out is through the DEP Anglers Guide.

### **Pet Industry**

Chairman Leff introduced Laura Reid from “fish mart.” Chairman Leff noted that some plants are available in pet stores. He wants to explore how the Council can work with the pet industry regarding getting the word out on the banned plants list and how to treat plants on the part of the industry and its customers. Laura Reid said she was part of the working group on the Aquatic Nuisance Management Plan. The pet industry is pro-active where it can be regarding invasive plants. Laura Reid distributed a brochure she developed entitled “Protect Your Pet, Preserve the Environment, Don’t Release Exotic Species.” Her store “Fish mart” is located in West Haven and is the largest wholesaler of tropical fish, reptiles and small animals to pet stores in the northeast. Wholesalers in the state need to be included in the pet shop list. If she receives information on plants she can include this in her monthly newsletter to retail pet shops she deals with. In the November 2005 minutes there was a comment that there are about 1,100 pet shops in Connecticut. This is not true – there are 125-140 pet shops in Connecticut. Also, noted in the November minutes, there were many aquarium shops that do not require a pet shop license. This number is also not true. To the best of Laura’s knowledge there are less than 5. These shops need to be added to the master pet shop list too. Laura Reid stated that it is very important that we educate the public. Chairman Leff asked if there is an industry wide newsletter or website – so we can get the word out? Laura Reid: there is no bonafide statewide pet shop organization. She suggests direct letters to

owners of pet shops. She thinks the direct approach is best because there is nothing at the state level to reach the entire industry. Les Mehrhoff: biggest problem with pet shops is the selling of ageria – because the stores sell it by another name, they claim they are not selling the plant ageria. Laura Reid will notify pet stores through her newsletter noting the common name of plants along with the Latin names. Les Mehrhoff thinks a lot of stores are not aware of the aquatic plants they are selling. Laura Reid will help distribute Les Mehrhoff's information, once it is completed. Laura Reid states that in the pet trade there are wholesalers who either deliver or sell to Connecticut. Laura Reid said the list should include wholesalers or retailers from outside of Connecticut that sell in Connecticut.

**Annual Report**

Invasive Plants Council Annual Report had been distributed to the Environment Committee Chairs and members. The report included all comments and concerns of the Invasive Plants Council from past meetings.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes from the 1/11/06 meeting will be available at the next IPC meeting on 3/14/06.

**Legislative Strategy:**

Chairman Leff will be sending a letter to the Chairman and the ranking members of the Environment Committee asking them to raise a bill, which will embody all of the Invasive Plants Council's legislative proposals. David Sutherland suggested separating the appropriation issues from the other matters. Chairman Leff: many of the other items are dependent on the finance, so it may be best to keep together. Bob Heffernan thinks it should go in as one package. Commissioner Prelli agrees with Bob Heffernan because if separated out we could end up with fractured pieces. Bob Heffernan stated that the present proposal looks to the legislature as a comprehensive legislative strategy. Chairman Leff will wait for the public hearing. It is important to have a diverse group at the hearing - conservation groups, state agencies, municipalities concerned about its lakes. It is up to these groups to get together and talk about approaching legislators to move the bill out of the environment committee. Chairman Leff said there will be one public hearing and it will probably be at the latter part of March. Chairman Leff asked Tom McGowan about notice to municipalities with lakes. Commissioner Prelli said the IPC annual report should be sent to CCM & COST and some other non-profit organizations that had an interest. David Sutherland noted that any one living in Denise Merrill's district would do well to see her. Chairman Leff stated that once the proposed bill is moved out of the Environment Committee some key legislators to speak with are: Senator Harp of Appropriations Committee, Finance Committee and Speaker and Senate President Pro-Tempore. Initially, at the Environment Committee, it is important to have a broad based group in attendance. Commissioner Prelli suggested maybe raising the proposed bill in the Appropriations Committee first vs. Environment Committee. David Sutherland suggested to keep it in the Environment Committee. Bob Heffernan said to start with the Environment Committee and try for unanimous vote - this would be a huge message to the other Committees. Chairman Leff observed that information

really needs to be put together for the public hearing. The Office Legislative Research Report requested by Senator Roraback's report was noted. Ken Metzler provided information to the Chairman on what the Natural Resource Conservation Service believes are costs yearly in Connecticut- costs are in hundred thousands of dollars. Chairman Leff said what we lack most is how much municipalities and lake associations are investing. Chairman Leff said that such information will be very important for the public hearing.

Chairman Leff distributed a handout – an article by Pimental et al – regarding. ...Economic and environmental costs associated with alien-invasive species in the U.S. DEP's Wildlife Biologist, Peter Picone, sent this in.

**Old and**

**New Business:**

Chairman Leff re-distributed the Invasive Plants Council meeting schedule.

Nancy Murray thanked all attendees from the various groups that have been at the Invasive Plants Council meetings and all who have helped with the Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan.

Les Mehrhoff said we have to keep in mind trying to find out what research has been or is being done on cultivars. He will be breaking this down by current or recent research (see attached list entitled: Plants included on Invasive List but Not Considered for Regulations – as Exhibit "A") – Les asked members about plants on this list (one's he did not know) if they had cultivars in the trade:

Amur Maple – Yes

Water Hyacinth (?)

Porcelain Berry – (?)

Japanese Rose – Yes

Burning Bush - Yes

California Privet - ?

Moneywort – Yes

Reed Canary Grass – Yes

Star of Bethlehem - ?

Chairman Leff: Motion to adjourn. Dr. Magnarelli seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Carr, Office of Deputy Commissioner Leff