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Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2013
2 pm, Dept. of Agriculture G8-A
Hartford, CT

Council members present: Bill Hyatt, Paul Larson, Rich McAvoy, Tom McGowan, John Silander, Dave Sutherland, Jeff Ward, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Ted Andreadis, David Boomer, Nancy Murray, Logan Senack, Penni Sharp

1. Hyatt called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

2. The minutes for the 9/17/13 meeting were reviewed.

Larson provided a suggested change: in section 9, change last sentence to read “DoAg plans to work on a form for reporting invasives at pet stores”. Silander moved (second: Sutherland) to approve the minutes as corrected. **The Council decided to approve the minutes with the correction.** Larson abstained since he was not present at the last meeting.

3. Annual report cover letter discussion and approval

The group discussed the annual report cover letter. Edits and suggested inclusions and attachments were discussed. Winslow requested the opportunity to review attachments prior to approving the cover letter (*see sect. 4b below for resulting process*). The use of the term “cover letter” to represent the material being provided in the first part of the annual report was discussed. The group discussed various options for arranging and describing the material and Silander proposed calling it an “executive summary”. Senack added that the letter itself, independently of the attachments submitted by the agencies, should fulfill the requirement of reporting annually to the Legislature. The attachments are supplementary additional material. Silander (second: Larson) moved to approve the annual report/executive summary as edited and to authorize the Chair to make changes over the next few weeks with input from the Council. **The Council voted unanimously to approve the annual report/executive summary as edited and to authorize the Chair to make changes over the next few weeks with input from the Council.**

4. Annual report deliverables and deadlines (Hyatt/Senack)

a. Materials from DEEP, CAES, DoAg, UConn, and others

Hyatt noted that all members should consider including brief, summary material from their organizations as attachments in the annual report. In past years, related groups have also submitted relevant information for inclusion in the annual report. The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group is likely to submit an attachment as in previous years. Invasive Plant Coordinator accomplishments will also be included.

b. Deadline and production schedule

Senack requested that all incoming materials be submitted to him via email by November 12, 2013 so they can be included in the report. Submissions may still be added through November 15, but there will not be time to edit or format them. The final reports will be submitted mostly electronically this year, but some paper copies will be available.

Tom McGowan arrived at 2:14 pm.

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5. Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) invasive status (Ward/Senack)

Ward and Senack presented information about mugwort seed production to the group. Larson noted that mugwort was one of a handful of plants that are problematic nursery contaminants. This could cause enforcement issues if mugwort was to be prohibited from sale. Ward clarified that he was proposing that the Council change the status of mugwort to invasive but is not recommending that the species be prohibited by statute. McGowan added that there should be discussion over what would qualify as inadvertent spread in the future, including spread as it relates to aquatic invasives and inadvertent sales of contaminants in nursery pots. Silander moved (second: Andreadis) to change the status of mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) from “potentially invasive” to “invasive”. **The Council voted unanimously to change the status of mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) from “potentially invasive” to “invasive”.**

6. Early detection/watch list discussion (Senack)

Senack is developing a list of plants for which more information is desired. This would not be a “pre-invasive” list or a legal or regulatory document. It would be a list of species for which more information would be helpful because current status in Connecticut is unknown, unclear, or not very detailed. Senack will share the list at a future meeting.

7. Yearly update of invasive plant list (Senack)

Senack noted that a few non-substantive typos had been found on the current plant list. Senack also proposed other minor updates such as adding additional synonyms for certain listed species. Larson moved (second: Sutherland) to allow Senack to make the changes as suggested. **The Council voted unanimously to allow Senack to make the changes as suggested.**

8. Update on Coordinator activities (Senack)

a. Reported invasive plant violations

Senack reported that he had received three reports of new invasive plant sale issues:

- i. sales of Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) at a flea market in the state
- ii. sales of Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) in the state via the website craigslist.com
- iii. a discussion proposing cultivation of autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). Senack provided this reporter with information about the invasive plant laws, which prohibit cultivation of any prohibited species, including autumn olive.

Senack also reported these instances to DEEP, which will follow up as appropriate.

9. Follow-up on cultivar issues (Hyatt)

Hyatt reminded the group of the history of the cultivar issues in Connecticut. After DEEP’s legal determination, discussed at the last meeting, DEEP brought this topic to the Attorney General’s Office for review. The Attorney General’s Office was not ready to take up this issue at the time, but requested scientific and technical information about cultivars from DEEP to help inform the discussion.

Additionally, DEEP has instances reported by the Coordinator of sales involving cultivars of species that are prohibited from sale by statute. Hyatt noted that DEEP continues to do everything possible to encourage voluntary compliance, and reported that DEEP plans to continue in this manner regardless of any legal determinations made in the future. Hyatt noted that there was a good record of voluntary compliance with DEEP working with the Connecticut

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Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA). Hyatt and Silander plan to meet in the future to discuss this issue and the development of technical information for the Attorney General's Office.

Larson noted that other states are also working on this issue. A colleague in Ohio reported that Ohio is working on a mechanism by which industry people could submit a cultivar to authorities for specific testing and there is work ongoing in other states. Hyatt noted that the IPC had reviewed a proposal that would establish a path whereby safe cultivars of prohibited species could be approved by regulation. This would allow cultivars to be addressed without frequent changes to the state statutes. Hyatt reported that New York is also investigating how to address cultivars. Silander asked who would pay for the research into individual cultivars. Hyatt suggested that the industry would pay via academics for research. Andreadis stated that cultivars should be evaluated on their own merits, according to the criteria already provided. McAvoy remarked that if the only transmission of a given plant was by seed and a cultivar that made no seed was developed, this could end up a clear cut issue. Otherwise, there would be other factors to consider. Silander commented that some cultivars were also known to revert back to the parent type and this should be considered as well. Senack noted that a group from New York assessed the similarities between the plant lists of NY, MA, and CT, which each use different criteria, and found that the lists had significant overlap of plants that were found to be invasive by all three systems. The group discussed a number of other topics on this issue, including where the burden of proof should lie, methods of calculating the likelihood of spread of a particular plant, and the potential for reciprocity with other states regarding the status of cultivars.

10. The group welcomed Ted Andreadis, the new Director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.*

11. Preparations for coordinating inspections with DoAg and DEEP

a. Status

Senack is developing informational handouts detailing the invasive plant laws for inspectors at pet shops and nurseries, and is working with Greg Bugbee (CAES) to plan a training session for pet shop inspectors which will include live plant specimens.

b. Expected timeline

Hyatt recapped the history of the inspection coordination issue between agencies for the upcoming year. Discussions between Hyatt, Senack, and staff from CAES and DoAg in June 2013 indicated that tighter coordination on the scheduling of the inspections may not be possible, as many inspections are unannounced, not scheduled, and fit into inspectors' schedules as time allows. However, it may be possible to coordinate joint inspections during slower times of year. The agencies will increase communication on the issue. The refresher training for pet shop inspectors will likely take place in late winter or early spring.

12. Meeting schedule for remainder of year and discussion

The last Invasive Plants Council meeting in 2013 is scheduled for December 10, 2013.

**Follow-up note (added 11/7/13): Andreadis plans to attend with Ward for the few next meetings. – LS*

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13. New Business

a. Aquatic invasives funding

McGowan reported that he met with Senator Chapin to discuss additional funds to help address aquatic invasives gaining access to lakes via boat launches. In previous years, specific fees from boat registrations had been distributed to municipalities. That program ended in 2009. McGowan detailed a proposal that would direct a portion of these funds to DEEP for boat inspectors at boat launches. Hyatt reported that DEEP provided supplemental information in response to a request from Senator Chapin. DEEP's response to Senator Chapin included a proposal that funds would be used to cover inspectors at boat launches, rapid response to new invasives, and to support a grant program to municipalities for invasive aquatic plant control.

b. Legislative info session

The group discussed the possibility of holding a legislative information session for legislators at a future date.

c. Prioritizing prevention of spread

Sutherland reminded the group that it is easier to prevent invasions, especially in aquatic situations, than it is to control invasive plants once established. Senack added that it is also more cost effective to address problems earlier when invasive plant populations are smaller or not yet present than it is once plants become established. Silander noted that in western states, there is much greater investment in both terrestrial and aquatic invasive plant issues. The group may discuss this issue in the future.

d. Meeting schedule for 2014

Senack will prepare a meeting schedule for 2014 based on the 2013 meeting frequency and will provide it at the next meeting.

e. Election of Chair

Senack reminded the group that the Invasive Plants Council must annually elect a Chair, and the Chair's current term ends on Dec. 31, 2013. A new Chair will need to be elected at the next meeting for the upcoming 2014 calendar year.

f. Advance meeting quorum procedure change

Instead of contacting each member to assemble planned attendance prior to each meeting, Senack asked that members contact him instead if they do not plan on attending a meeting. This is needed to ensure that there will be a quorum at meetings.

14. Adjournment

Larson moved (second: Sutherland) to adjourn the meeting. **The Council decided to adjourn at 3:54 pm.**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013, 2-4 pm, in room G8-A at the Department of Agriculture in Hartford, CT.