

SPECIAL MEETING

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, January 7, 2014
2 pm, Dept. of Agriculture G8-A
Hartford, CT

Council members present: Ted Andreadis, David Goodwin, Bill Hyatt, Paul Larson, Tom McGowan, John Silander, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Ellen Bender, Donna Ellis, Nancy Murray, Logan Senack, Jeff Ward, Brad Weeks

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

2. The minutes for the 10/29/13 meeting were reviewed.

A typo was noted and corrected: on page 4, section 13 c, change misspelled word to “noted” in the fourth line. **Silander moved (second: Andreadis) to approve the minutes with the correction. The Council decided to approve the minutes with the correction.**

3. Annual report approval and release date

Senack and Hyatt have discussed turning the cover letter into an executive summary in future years. This would make the material more accessible and more readable. The report could be streamlined, shorter, and the main document will be an executive summary with 3-5 bullet points on future issues. Council members expressed support for the idea.

Senack reported on the results of the email vote held by the Council in December to approve the 2013 Invasive Plants Council (IPC) annual report. The vote was unanimous (9-0) in approving the report for release and distribution. Senack delivered copies of the report to the state library. Other copies were emailed to the appropriate offices as the report is now distributed mostly electronically. The report is also available online at www.cipwg.uconn.edu/ipc.

4. Legislative plan for 2014

The group discussed the legislative plan for 2014. McGowan reported that Senator Clark Chapin has reviewed material from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) about aquatic invasive plants and has been involved in aquatic invasive issues. The Chairs of the Environment Committee have agreed to host a meeting of the committee on Jan. 28, 2014. Greg Bugbee from CAES will provide information on aquatic invasives. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, Jan 28, 2014, at 1 pm in the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Hyatt added that Senator Chapin had subsequently contacted DEEP for more information. Larson arrived at 2:13 pm.

Murray reported that DEEP has developed a request for proposals for companies that will work on eradication of nuisance aquatic wildlife. This will standardize the cost of control of aquatic invasives and speed up response by having a list of pre-approved contractors ready. Towns will also be able to use their own funds to hire a contractor on the list.

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McGowan asked that the Council put together a priority list of actions for aquatic invasives. McGowan moved (second: Silander) to authorize Hyatt to speak on behalf of the IPC at the Jan. 28 meeting. The Council discussed potential priorities for the meeting. Three priorities of the Council on the 28th for aquatic invasives will be: 1. improved boating inspections, 2. rapid response funds, 3. additional funding for research into control methods, vector studies, early detection, new research, etc. The Council decided to approve the motion.

Silander noted that keeping the Coordinator funding is important and should remain the Council's top priority. Goodwin added that a strong focus on direct, specific issues at the meeting would be beneficial. Winslow asked if Senack could assemble material relating to potential funding needs statewide and share it with the IPC. Hyatt suggested Senack prepare a document for a long-term (longer than 1 year) plan for future meetings of the IPC and of invasive plant needs. Senack will begin work on the document.

Hyatt reported that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) held a hearing in November that included comments on bamboo. The CEQ also met on Dec. 18, 2013 and discussed bamboo further. Senack will send out the CEQ meeting minutes to the group. Hyatt has responded to requests from the legislature about why bamboo was not listed as invasive. In his responses, he indicated that the General Assembly would have the authority to list bamboo as a problem plant that was not invasive, or to address it through other means. The most difficult question is how to resolve existing homeowner issues. Senack reported that he continues to monitor bamboo reports and will do field inspections as warranted to investigate cases where natural spread may have occurred.

Ward asked if the state had a noxious weed list, separate from the invasive plant laws, that could be useful for the listing of bamboo. Listing plants that are not thought to meet the criteria for invasiveness somewhere other than on the invasive plant list would prevent the dilution of the invasive plant laws and inclusion of species that do not meet the criteria. Ellis will look for noxious weed seed legislation from Connecticut and will share it with the group.

5. Meeting schedule for 2014

Senack distributed a list of proposed dates for the 2014 Invasive Plants Council meetings. The group discussed the needed frequency of meetings and the process to assemble the annual report. **McGowan moved (second: Silander) to have 5 regular meetings in 2014: February 11, 2014, June 10, 2014, September 9, 2014, October 21, 2014, and December 9, 2014. Tentative additional dates of March 11, 2014 and November 18, 2014 would be left as placeholders in case they are needed. The Council decided to approve the 2014 meeting schedule.** Senack will communicate the schedule to the Secretary of the State's Office.

6. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Larson delivered a report from the nominating committee (composed of David Sutherland and Larson). The committee would like to ask Hyatt to serve as chair for another year, but Hyatt is not available to continue as Chair for a full year due to other responsibilities. Instead, the committee recommended that Hyatt serve as Chair on an interim basis through at least June, with David Goodwin as Vice-Chair for the same period. The committee will

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discuss alternatives prior to the June meeting. *Hyatt left the room at 3:05 pm. McGowan moved (second: Silander) to approve the nominating slate proposed by the nominating committee. The Council decided to approve the motion as submitted. Hyatt entered the room at 3:10 pm.*

7. Coordinator update (Senack)

a. Enforcement issues

Senack provided an update on enforcement issues. Since the October meeting, Senack has received an additional report of bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), a listed invasive species prohibited from sale, being sold at a business in Wilton. Senack provided the information to DEEP, which will follow up as necessary.

b. Bittersweet press release

Senack developed a press release reminding people not to purchase or move bittersweet in holiday decorations. The release was sent out by DEEP before Thanksgiving and was covered in a number of state and local newspapers, other publications, and online. Senack received additional reports of invasive bittersweet as a result of this publicity.

c. Towns visited

Senack reported that he visited 22 towns in the past year for invasive plant monitoring, outreach, trainings, and workshops. This number does not include towns visited for annual meetings of statewide organizations or other state events.

d. CT DOT staff training project

Senack reported that he is working with UConn's Technology Transfer Program and with CT DOT to develop training for DOT maintainers on invasive plants. Approximately 160 maintainers will be trained in 5 full-day classes in the spring.

8. Invasive aquatics presentation to Env. Committee (McGowan)

This topic was discussed previously in item 4 (see above).

9. Old Business

a. Other states' invasive plant lists?

The Council discussed whether it would be helpful to hear from other states about the processes and criteria they use to arrive at their invasive plant lists and how those processes differ from the Connecticut process. The Council decided to invite MA and NY staff to a future meeting. Senack will contact the appropriate people in both states to develop this further. If Council members know of other states working on similar processes, they should inform Senack.

b. Council tour/visit of UConn facilities? Meeting at UConn?

The Council decided to hold the June 10, 2014 meeting at UConn, and will also visit UConn facilities including the UConn Research Farm at that time.

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10. New Business

a. Congressional Invasive Species Caucus opportunities (Hyatt)

Hyatt distributed two handouts and reported that he had presented at a meeting of the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus as Chair of the Invasive Species Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). Hyatt thanked everyone who had provided language for his speaking points on short notice. Hyatt also provided information on multi-state fish and wildlife funds to the Council.

b. CNLA Executive Secretary update?

Brad Weeks of the Kowalski group reported that the Kowalski group is providing interim management services to CNLA as CNLA is conducting a search to fill an executive secretary position.

c. CNLA cultivar news

Weeks reported that CNLA sent a letter to the Attorney General's Office on the cultivar issue. Hyatt reported that he spoke with Kevin Sullivan (CNLA) on this issue as well and distributed copies of the letter from CNLA. Hyatt will continue to work with the industry to resolve the issues voluntarily. Hyatt noted that DEEP talked with Attorney General's Office, which has expressed a desire for more technical information on this issue.

Weeks added that CNLA is hosting an Expo and Symposium on Jan. 14-15, 2014 at Manchester Community College and invited everyone to attend. Dr. Mark Brand and Dr. Jessica Lubell (UConn) will be presenting on native plant alternatives to invasives. Senack and Ellis reported that they will be in attendance with the invasive plant display.

11. Adjournment

Goodwin moved (second: Larson) to adjourn the meeting. The Council decided to adjourn at 3:42 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014, 2-4 pm, in room G8-A at the Department of Agriculture in Hartford, CT.