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Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, November 18, 2014
2 pm, Department of Agriculture, Commissioner's Conference Room 161
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

Council members present: William Hyatt, Paul Larson, Rich McAvoy, Tom McGowan, John Silander, Jr., David Sutherland, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Donna Ellis, Nicole Gabelman, Nancy Murray, Kevin Sullivan, Bradford Weeks

1. McAvoy called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from September 9 were reviewed. Larson pointed out an error in paragraph eight on the second page that read 'or' instead of the word 'of'. It was also suggested that the words 'running bamboo' be removed from the third paragraph on the second page. The minutes from October 21 were discussed. It was decided that since there was no quorum at this meeting the minutes would not be considered official but could still be included in the annual report. It was suggested that 'diagnostic feasibility studies' be removed from the second paragraph on the first page. **Larson moved (second: Hyatt) to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried.**

3. Update of Invasive Plant Council Personnel

a. Invasive Plant Coordinator

The position of Invasive Plant Coordinator was filled by Nicole Gabelman on October 31, 2014. The position is funded through June 30, 2015. The Council identified short-term priorities for the Coordinator as assembling the IPC annual report and arranging site visits for bamboo assessment. Tasks related to Aquatic Invasive Species will be a priority for the Coordinator since the majority of the funding for the position comes from the new Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) Aquatic Invasives program.

b. Invasive Plants Council member David Goodwin

Dave Goodwin, Council Vice Chair, resigned from the Council by letter on November 11 to accept a new position in Florida. He was a member of the Council since its inception and wished the Council the best of luck in their continuing efforts. He served as the representative from a company that grows or sells flowers or plants and was appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. The designation of a new member to represent this Council seat was discussed. Larson explained that the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA) board would recommend a replacement to the Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, with the intention of filling that vacancy early next year. In the meantime CNLA president Kevin Sullivan agreed to stand in as a nonvoting member.

4. Approval of Connecticut Invasive & Potentially Invasive Plant List

Two small changes were previously made to the list and required Council approval. The first change was correcting the spelling of 'Ghandi' to 'Gandhi' for the author of the scientific name

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Cynanchum louiseae. The second change was eliminating the parentheses around the name Willd., the author of the scientific name *Nelumbo lutea*. **Hyatt moved to approve the Invasive Plant List. The motion was unanimously approved.**

5. Annual Report

a. Cover letter from Chairperson

McAvoy presented a draft copy of the cover letter for the annual report. This included changes that were discussed on October 21. Hyatt suggested editing the lead sentence of the third paragraph to read ‘The legislature did not appropriate a specified funding line for the Coordinator in FY15 creating uncertainty for continued staffing’. There was some discussion and changes were made. Silander proposed that the cost of dealing with invasive species be incorporated into the letter as it is a multibillion dollar problem across the country. Murray added that the funding for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) decreases every year and it is important to bring attention to the cost of the problem. Larson recommended adding the word ‘supporting’ to the first paragraph before ‘the development of new non-invasive plant varieties’. McGowan pointed out that ‘annually publish and periodically update a list’ sounds more like secretarial tasks and our language should reflect our efforts which extend to making recommendations about what plants to ban. McAvoy will work to include this point in his letter.

b. Accomplishment Report Summary

McAvoy and Gabelman presented a draft copy of the summary of accomplishments. This report was laid out in a new bulleted format in order to highlight the direct impact of activities supported by the Invasive Plants Council. The use of Google Analytics to gather website user information was discussed. Using a general sentence like ‘Citizens received invasive plant information through 1,000’s of website viewings’ was proposed if gathering this data proved too difficult. McGowan requested the addition of the CT Federation of Lakes to the associated groups mentioned in the opening paragraph. Including the average cost of invasive plant control to the bullet point summarizing the hours of control labor was discussed. It was suggested that Steve Manning of Invasive Plant Control, Inc. be contacted to supply a range for the cost/hour charged by a commercial company. It was also recommended that the aquatic invasive species grants be mentioned in the accomplishment summary since these grants motivated municipalities to contribute enough funds to more than double the amount supplied by the grant. The use of an appendix for the detailed expansion of the bullet points listed in the accomplishment summary was examined.

c. Accomplishment Reports from contributors

The CAES is the only group to have submitted an accomplishment report thus far. Hyatt reported that he plans to submit the contribution from DEEP on Dec. 1.

6. CT Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA) Report

Sullivan, CNLA President, reported that the CNLA Board is currently undergoing a strategic evaluation and new hires have been made to the CNLA Executive Office. Sullivan distributed this information to Gabelman who will email the new contact information to the members of the Council. Sullivan commented that they will continue to support the Council and its mission. With regard to the open seat left by Goodwin’s resignation the CNLA Board will make a recommendation. He believes they should be able to find a permanent replacement for the seat by February.

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7. Bamboo Site Assessments

The Council sub-committee charged with assessing the potential for bamboo to spread to new sites by stream flow will make site visits on Thursday, December 4. It was suggested that Hyatt invite Nelson DeBarros as a representative from DEEP to join in the bamboo site visits. There was some discussion about what we are trying to assess and how we can go about doing this. McAvoy referred to Andreadis' suggestion that monitoring candidate sites over time will allow us to assess possible movement. If possible, the four or five sites to be visited will be focused in the eastern half of the state.

8. Update on Grants to Municipalities

Murray reported that of the 17 proposals that were submitted for the aquatic invasive plant control grant to municipalities, 12 were approved to receive the \$150,000. The next priority will be putting together the contracts so that the money can be allocated as soon as possible. A document summarizing the 12 municipalities, their aquatic invasive plant projects, amount of grant funding awarded, and their matching funds was distributed. The range of plants being targeted and the geographic distribution of the corresponding bodies of water were discussed. Many of the plans targeted milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*; *Myriophyllum spicatum*) and fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) in lakes; there are also a couple of projects using grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) as a biocontrol agent. Ellis asked if the grant money had to be spent by June 30. Hyatt responded that the priority is allocating the funds as soon as possible during the current fiscal year and there may be some figuring out in terms of the duration. Murray suggested we add information on the grants to municipalities to the annual report.

9. Old Business/New Business

a. 2015 Meeting Schedule

The Council set the 2015 meeting schedule as follows: February 10, June 9, September 8, October 13, and December 8. January 13 and November 10 were identified as tentative dates should additional meetings be needed.

b. Communication plan with Legislature

Senator Clark Chapin, State Representative Craig Miner, and State Representative Roberta Willis were discussed as representatives who have expressed interest in invasive plant issues. Invasive aquatic plants in lakes, economic concerns, and the discussion of bamboo are topics that have especially attracted the most attention. Sutherland suggested that the grass roots interests of local groups and land trusts represent important consideration for the legislature.

10. Adjournment

McGowan moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 4:05 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for 2 pm, December 9th 2014 at the Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Avenue in Hartford, CT.