

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, July 11, 2017
2:00 pm, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Valley Laboratory, Windsor, CT

Council members present: Theodore Andreadis, William Hyatt, Paul Larson, Richard McAvoy, Darryl Newman, John Silander, David Sutherland, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Ellen Bender, Bonnie Burr, Donna Ellis, Nicole Gabelman, Mary Mushinsky, and Brad Weeks

1. R. McAvoy called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

2. Updates

- a. Legislative: State Representative Mary Mushinsky and Brad Weeks (The Kowalski Group) reported that one of the initiatives during the legislative session was the municipal preemption, which expired October 1, 2014. A proposed bill included an extension of the preemption for five years. The preemption would continue one statewide ordinance rather than 169 separate ordinances for towns. The bill started with the Environment Committee, and the language contained in this bill then went to another bill, which did not pass. Representative Mushinsky served in the Legislature for many years and was Co-chair of the Environment Committee for six years. She wants to keep pressure on the Legislature to care about wildlands and has recommended the prohibition of Japanese barberry and winged euonymus on the state invasive plant list. These two invasive species require extreme physical effort to remove them in natural areas, using taxpayer's money. Rep. Mushinsky supports the development of sterile cultivars and wants to see the green industry plant environmentally-friendly species but not invasives.

(T. Andreadis [2:15 p.m.] arrived.)

R. McAvoy informed council members that Dr. Mark Brand (UConn Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture) has produced sterile cultivars of Japanese barberry that should be ready for sale in the fall of 2018. Dr. Yi Li (UConn Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture) has developed cultivars of winged euonymus that should be available in two years. Rep. Mushinsky commented that she would like to see a shift to sterile cultivars, and these plants should be tagged for sale as "sterile", to set them apart from "non-sterile" (invasive) cultivars. J. Silander describe a new paper on Japanese barberry that was published in the National Academy of Sciences journal. The authors of the paper wrote that even if Japanese barberry produces "a couple of seeds", these plants would still be invasive. In Connecticut, we can declare this species as invasive or potentially invasive but not prohibited, as it is in MA and NY. Silander asked how the horticulture industry is dealing with Japanese barberry in neighboring states. D. Newman commented that the real issue is that prohibited plants can't be shipped to other states, which is a real economic consequence.

D. Sutherland mentioned how the nursery industry voluntarily phased out many cultivars of Japanese barberry with high seed production approximately 6 to 7 years ago, following Dr. Brand's research results. Growers now sell cultivars with "fewer" seeds. According to the new paper, however, only a few seeds are needed.

(P. Larson [2:24 p.m.] arrived.)

W. Hyatt added that it is an extremely hard concept to predict the invasiveness of a plant even before it has been introduced into a new environment, and there is a level of uncertainty. K. Winslow asked the group about alternatives to these plants. There are no native alternative species, some alternative exotic (non-native) species, but no exact replacement. McAvoy commented that if Dr. Brand's new cultivars are fully sterile, this would be the best start.

3. Discuss Collaboration Logistics on Invasive Plant Mitigation with Master Gardener Program

Bonnie Burr (UConn Extension) suggested to council members that Master Gardeners could work with the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council (IPC) to conduct invasive plant projects. The joint meeting with the IPC and the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) held in March was mentioned, and the high level of invasive plant expertise among CIPWG members that could be a contributing factor as well. Burr commented that the Master Gardeners are eager to work with the council but need logistics and someone to plan and coordinate activities with volunteers. The Master Gardener Program is completely volunteer based. Sarah Bailey, the Master Gardener Program Coordinator, oversees nine Master Gardener Coordinators around the state. Burr and D. Ellis can meet to talk more about this. Comments were shared regarding potential sites for invasive plant management events, including more than 100 Land Trusts.

4. Review of Meeting Minutes (November 15, 2016) and Meeting Notes (March 7, 2017)

The meeting minutes from November 15, 2016 were distributed and reviewed. W. Hyatt moved (second: D. Newman) to approve as distributed. Motion Carried. The meeting notes from March 7, 2017 were distributed and reviewed. Notes were recorded rather than minutes from the March meeting due to lack of a quorum. Topics from the March meeting were discussed by council members at today's meeting.

5. Developing a Quantitative Scale for Assessing Risk Potential Based on Biological Attributes

John Silander described a grant he received from a new UConn Center, the Institute of Biological Risk. John is conducting assessments to determine the invasive risk potential of species on the Connecticut state list, rather than designating a species as "Yes" or "No" regarding its status as invasive. A level of uncertainty with ranking species was also factored into the assessments. The list of 97 invasive and potentially invasive plant in Connecticut is being evaluated, as well as invasive species in neighboring states, for a total of approximately 300 species. N. Gabelman was hired on a part-time basis to put the list together and assist with the project, and Ellis is also collaborating. Silander commented that there are some

species not on the Connecticut list that could or should be added. A subset of 21 species was ranked prior to a summer workshop at UConn, attended by scientists and others with invasive plant expertise. Additional species were ranked and discussed during the workshop. One outcome of the grant activities would be for the council to examine the current list of 97 species more closely to determine if there are any additions or deletions, based on risk assessment. Silander mentioned that individuals are encouraged to collect field reports of invasive plants via the Outsmart Invasives app. Field reports are then uploaded to the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (EDDMapS). Silander plans to give a presentation on the project at the October 5th CIPWG meeting and write a white paper.

6. Old Business

Council replacement for T McGowan: McAvoy informed the council the former IPC member Tom McGowan asked the members to accept his resignation. McGowan suggested Connie Trolle, President of the Connecticut Federation of Lakes and Chair of the Bantam Lake Commission as his replacement. McAvoy drafted a letter from the IPC thanking McGowan for his many years of service. Connie will be invited to attend the next meeting.

7. Next Meeting

The next IPC meeting will be held on November 14, 2017 at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Valley Laboratory, Windsor, CT.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.