

Invasive Plants Council
Minutes (*approved at June 14, 2023 meeting*)
Tuesday, February 28, 2023
2:00-4:00 PM

Attendees: Connie Trolle, Denise Savageau, Darryl Newman, Victoria Wallace, Dustyn Nelson, Jatinder Aulakh

Absent: Bill Moorehead, Simon Levesque, John Silander (retired and asked for replacement; see notes below),

Non-voting attendees: William (Bill) Hyatt (former DEEP representative), Sydney Everhart (notetaker), Barbara Thomas (Chair of Monroe's conservation commission), Holly Kocet (Newtown Conservation Commission), Donna Ellis, Rose Hiskes (CIPWG)

Out of the 9-member panel, there is not sufficient attendance to meet quorum.

- a. Call to order. Victoria Wallace called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.
- b. Minutes of the October 19, 2022 meeting
 - i. Amend the 10/19/22 minutes: Savageau asked S. Levesque if the DoAg should consider a broader definition of climate smart as opposed to USDA NRCS definition, in the future might allow more opportunity for applications to the climate smart grant? She believes the NRCS standards are narrow and focused on carbon sequestration. She supports a broader definition that would include practices to support climate adaptation/resiliency not just GHG mitigation.
 - ii. Motion to accept amended minutes by: Savageau. Second by Newman. Vote is unanimous to approve as amended.
- c. Updates from Council members
 - i. **Nelson:** CNLA is closely watching HB 5278 act concerning ability to combat invasive plants asking to adopt plant list of neighboring states. What constitutes an invasive plant may be different from other states. We do have set in statutes to consider those other sources of potential plants. This move would circumvent the IPC recommendations. **Savageau** – agree that we cannot just adopt this – we don't like the current language, want substitute language to add porcelainberry to the list. **Nelson** will draft a letter of support from CNLA and follow-up with members of IPC. The lists should potentially be taken into consideration. Savageau: it is IPC that should make recommendations. (**Wallace** reminded her that IPC/we have made recommendations). **Nelson:** has not gone to testimony yet. **Wallace** mentioned that CIPWG also had concerns about the bill as written. There was concern about plants listed in surrounding states.
 - ii. **Nelson:** HB 5595 CT Invasive Plant Working group asking for financial support for the invasive plant coordinator. As a council, IPC is trying to make a positive impact on invasive plants in our state. This, if approved, would broaden the responsibilities of the coordinator. The bill did not specify if it would be another person or the same person to support terrestrial efforts. CNLA is working with DEEP on this as a legislative liaison. **Wallace** mentioned that CIPWG is a working group and funds would be better served to flow to outreach education coordinated by IP coordinator when he/she is in place.

- iii. **Nelson:** Callery pear will come up to the CNLA for a final vote on a phase-out without yet being added to the invasive plant list. **Newman:** No major producer uses Callery as a rootstock, so this would not impact Bartlett or other pears. There is a fully-developed triploid of callery pear that is fully sterile (cv. Chastity). In general, NY State did a good job on the adoption of sterile cultivars that would not have the ability for invasive potential. Would strongly recommend that IPC provide accommodation for fully sterile cultivars.
 - iv. **Aulakh:** Published from Asiatic dayflower management paper. Still need to continue the mugwort non-chemical management for next year. Research is being done at the Valley Lab.
 - v. **Wallace:** Developed a survey to assess economic importance and measure invasiveness of Pyrus calleryana. Survey was distributed to several industry groups via email and in-person at the CT Nursery & Landscape Association Summer and Winter events. Survey received 30 responses.
 - vi. **Wallace:** CIPWG formed a subcommittee to review the invasive plant watch list. **Savageau:** urges IPC members to make suggestions to CIPWG subcommittee with other plants worth of review. **Savageau** also suggests having a NGO bring changes to invasive plant statute changes forward to the legislature due to the lack of response to IPC's Annual Report.
 - vii. **Wallace:** The Memorandum of Understanding for the Invasive Plant Coordinator position is being finalized. There has been an issue with funding and a no cost extension has been filed. The search committee is ready to go as soon as funding has been approved.
- d. Old business:
- i. **Wallace:** CIPWG website will be updated to make it more user-friendly and include IPC link.
 - ii. **Wallace:** Not having an invasive plant coordinator has limited correspondence and the ability to get quorum in IPC meetings.
 - iii. **Wallace:** Annual report filed on time and posted on the IPC website.
- e. New business:
- i. **Wallace:** Letter sent to Environment Committee Chair on guidance about how the IPC recommendations should be communicated and whether the most recent annual reports that document needs are received since no acknowledgement of the annual report is received upon submission.
 - ii. **Wallace:** John Silander would like to step down as iPane representative on the IPC. iPANE is no longer a funded and active project. Letter by Wallace on behalf of IPC was sent to Senator Kevin Kelly, the Senate Minority Leader and Environment Committee member responsible for appointing the iPANE position on IPC, to convey the recommendation to appoint Bryan Connolly as the iPane representative. Dr. Connolly was formally involved with the IPANE project. Wallace will follow-up after this meeting to find out if there is a recommendation.
 - iii. **Wallace:** Will have quarterly meeting with CT-DEEP DEEP AIS group.
 - iv. **Savageau:** 2008 farm bill was amended to remove ability to use 'whip' program in state lands. Large tracts of land are owned publicly and by municipalities. Wanting to change the language of the 2023 farm bill to allow use of the whip program on non-federal public lands. Out west they have so much public lands (>95%) and don't want conservation efforts going to another agency, but we do want those dollars to be used.
 - v. **Savageau:** Informed council of our duty under the Freedom of Information Act. **Wallace** recently was informed that IPC falls under FOI and will file information in accordance with FOI. CIPWG and IPC websites will be updated to include agendas, minutes, members, and future meeting dates.

- vi. **Trolle:** In 2022 there was a lack of invasive plants in Bantam Lake and other lakes. The drought is the suspected reason for this due to less water currents spreading propagules. Invasives are already presenting themselves in Bantam Lake and will likely be problematic in 2023. **Savageau** stated that cyanobacteria had an increase occurrence during the drought resulting in more alga blooms.
 - vii. **Addition to Aulakh:** Study on Oriental Bittersweet is currently being conducted.
 - viii. **Addition to e(iv) Savageau:** 'whip' program is now known as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- f. Announcements:
- i. No announcements were made.
 - ii. Meeting times in the future: Second Tuesday from 2-4pm. At least two meetings a year, but targeting three per year.
 1. June: 14th of June 2-4 pm (online only)
 2. October: 18th of October 2-4 pm (online only)

Barbara Thomas: We have been really worried about invasive plants. I understand that the IPC coordinator was eliminated 8 years ago and that hampered productivity. Holly and I have been talking with land trusts and they need more outreach related to invasive plant removal. They need help and coordination with the state to be able to identify and remove them. I just want you to put that into your thought process on how to get more resources and education. As chair of Monroe's conservation commission, I am doing outreach to other conservation commissions. Just having something consistent where there is emails going out to land trust property managers or stewards, out to conservation commissions, that are often responsible for managing invasive plants, also getting involved with public works in the towns. She says she does not think towns are getting involved. They need a list and be asked to be proactive. Like CIPWG to provide a calendar of when they should be out looking for these plants and when to attack things. Coordinate efforts, like CIPWG, to get people to go out to help out another town or land trust, but also to say and concentrate on the main problems and where the biggest areas of porcelainberry and other invasive plants in the state to address them in a concentrated area, rather than being a haphazard effort, to identify and address. To develop best practices for the approach would be better than the haphazard approach.

Bill Hyatt (willam.a.hyatt@icloud.com): Ag experiment station has completed its search to find the lead person for the AIS office, completed two weeks ago. A great person has been selected. At CT-DEEP, the 2023 aquatic invasive plants grants have been decided and grants are being funded. Correcting some of the business delays is one of the top priorities for their administration. In discussion over a number of bills at the legislature with the Environment Committee, surprised and shocked at the lack of knowledge of some of the current members relative to the Invasive Plants Council. The reason it was created by the Env. Committee in the first place was the lack of knowledge and to facilitate education, coordination, and communication. I'll just toss out there that I would welcome a conversation outside of the meeting.

Holly Kocet: Chair of the Newtown Conservation Commission. Thank you to Vickie for taking this up. Following up with what Barbara said, that homeowners, people and conservationists, outreach is key. Neighbors don't recognize invasives. I have a question about the proposed bill 5995. It was not clear to me that the funding was earmarked to hire a coordinator. I can't say strong enough how important it is to get a coordinator for the terrestrial species. With the list of plants under review, is that published?

Wallace: there are two lists, one by IPC and one from CIPWG and on the website. The sub-committee

will review the watch list from the CIPWG. **Kocet:** Is there funding for a terrestrial coordinator?

Wallace: The mechanism is not in place with how the funding is established now. The IPC does not provide outreach education. If there was a way to ensure money for outreach and education, legislating it through CIPWG may not be the correct mechanism. If education and outreach, the university system would be the best mechanism for outreach and education. **Rose Hiskes:** CIPWG is not set up to receive money and hire people. I had no idea that this bill would be proposed. At this point in the legislative session it is essentially dead. CIPWG educates 100 people per year on this type of thing. They identify sites in need and offer programs and mitigation efforts. Barbara and Holly are invited to contact CIPWG to have volunteers come to their communities. **Wallace:** The request for site visits is ongoing and CIPWG is considering each request individually.

Darryl Newman: Holly – my suggestion is that you are great with grassroots and to look up people on the Environment Committee. It might not get into this session, but if you find people in the district that you know to rattle their cages, it will get their attention much better if volunteers can do that and it will yield results. **Kocet:** Agreed that people on the Environment committee and conservation commissioners don't know about invasives.

Denise Savageau: Soil and water conservation groups do work on invasives. Provide outreach and education to municipalities and they should reach out for their own town. If it is multiple towns, they could host a program. There is a guide on invasive plants that is updated every few years. She will bring this up as a need to the commission. Land trust property is private property and you can get a conservation contract to manage certain invasives and there is money to support it. From her experience reaching out to the Env. Committee, they generally do not respond to letters once they get into full-blown session. We need to put it in front of legislators to get it in front of them. The CT League of Conservation Voters needs to bring it up. The CT Forests and Parks or other NGOs needs to push it this year. CTLCV has the ear of the legislators. Every year they have a conference and put key issues before the legislators on the Env. Committee. Even if your member isn't on the Env. Committee, they can still raise a bill. Most of the bills have been raised at this point. It's very unlikely at this point that something not already on their radar will get raised. Below are links provided by Savageau:

- [conservect.org](https://www.conservect.org)
- https://www.conservect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Invasive_guide_2020_web.pdf

g. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Dustyn Nelson. Second by: Denise. Adjourn at 3:40 pm