

**Invasive Plants Council
Minutes
December 11, 2003**

Present: Dr. Anderson, , Mr. Goodwin , Comm. Gresczyk (Melanie Atwater attended for the Comm.), Mr. Larson, Comm. Leff, Mr. McGowan, Dr. Mehrhoff, Dr. Musgrave, Mr. Sutherland.

Absent:

The Meeting was called to order at 2:10 PM by Chairman Leff in Room 1A of the Legislative Office Building.

Chairman Leff had the members of the council introduce themselves to members in the audience.

There was a motion by Mr. Larson to accept the minutes of November 25, 2003. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goodwin. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Chairman Leff discussed various mail that he had received with regard to the council and made sure that members had seen it.

Dr. Mehrhoff gave a power point presentation on the work of the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE). He gave an overview of the work they do to gather data on invasives. He explained the databases that they are working on and what they are used for. Dr. Mehrhoff outlined IPANE's website and the information available to the public. He also explained how they handle reports from around the state on possible sightings of invasive plants.

Adam Moore from the CT Forest and Parks Association spoke about the mission and work of CFPA. He explained the use of their magazine (CT Woodlands) and how they can and do use it to educate the public. He offered the help of CFPA and said they are open to suggestions from the council on how they can help control the spread of invasive plants in CT.

Mr. Sutherland then explained the work of The Nature Conservancy in the fight against invasives. He outlined some of the successes and failures that TNC has had in controlling invasives on conservation land that they own or manage.

The Council then began discussion on the Tree, Shrub and Woody Vine portion of the Invasive Plant List. Mr. Goodwin questioned the change of Norway Maple from Potentially Invasive in previous lists to Invasive in this list. Dr. Mehrhoff explained that recent research points to Norway Maple as out-competing other trees, far more than previously thought.

Mr. Goodwin said he was uncomfortable with this decision. He feels that newer cultivars haven't been tested and shouldn't be lumped in with all Norway Maple. Dr. Mehrhoff disagreed stating that if new cultivars are shown to be non-invasive then they can be taken off the list in the future.

Dr. Musgrave stated that she has a concern about this approach as well. She is worried about the economic impact of this approach. Chairman Leff noted that economics can't be taken into account for the Invasive List. Dr. Musgrave also voiced concerns that this invasive list will be mistaken for a ban list by people. Chairman Leff said that this list will clearly not be a ban list. Mr. Sutherland pointed out that this is why the statute calls for two lists.

Mr. Larson stated that he does not agree with the argument that plants should be included that the research has not been done on. He feels that research should be concluded before plants are placed on this list.

Chairman Leff announced that he needed to leave for an emergency at the DEP. He noted that he is hoping to have several speakers next meeting including:

1. Mr. McGowan speaking on lake association work
2. DEP- Boating Safety
3. Dep. Of Ag. - Pet Shop education and enforcement

Dr. Anderson assumed the Chair.

Mr. Goodwin asked a question about the science of research on cultivars. Mr. McGowan expressed concern about cultivars as well. Dr. Mehrhoff explained that research on cultivars is very difficult. In the wild it is often hard to differentiate between cultivars so such research is often impractical.

Mr. Larson announced that it is the nursery industry's intention to fund research to trace some of the invasives in the wild to see exactly where they are coming from. Dr. Mehrhoff once again stated that such research is difficult and he is convinced that cultivars should not be removed from the invasive list before they are shown to be non-invasive.

Dr. Anderson moved the discussion to Shrubs. Mr. Goodwin asked if all privets were truly invasive or is it one type that is the most dangerous. Dr. Mehrhoff stated that it may be possible that one type is far worse than another but in the wild he finds it almost impossible to tell the difference. He also noted that the same thing is true for many varieties of honeysuckle.

Mr. Sutherland asked how the propagation of Rugosa Roses happen. Dr. Mehrhoff noted that distribution is so limited to coastal areas that it appears it is spread primarily by water.

The Council then discussed various educational issues. Dr. Anderson stated that maybe it would help for the council to hear from local groups, such as land use commissions. Dr. Musgrave asked if the council had interest in hearing about what type of research is now being conducted. Dr. Anderson noted that this was a good suggestion and that the council should discuss this at the next meeting.

Old/New Business:

Mr. McGowan said that he is concerned about the issue of cultivars and he feels it is pretty important for the council to come up with some sort of solution to this problem. Dr. Anderson said that he expects the green industry people to offer some sort of proposal for the next meeting.

Dr. Mehrhoff suggested that maybe the council should reconsider the voting process on the invasive list. Maybe the council should vote on the majority of plants that aren't going to be debated, get them out of the way, and then really debate the plants in question.

There was a motion to adjourn by Mr. Goodwin. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGowan. The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emanuel Merisotis
Clerk- Environment Committee