

**Invasive Plants Council
Minutes
March 11, 2004**

Present: Dr. Anderson, Mr. Goodwin, Comm. Gresczyk, Mr. Larson, Comm. Leff, , Dr. Mehrhoff, Dr. Musgrave (Donna Ellis sat in for Dr. Musgrave), Mr. Sutherland, Mr. McGowan

Absent:

The Meeting was called to order at 10:11 AM by Chairman Leff in Room 1C of the Legislative Office Building.

Chairman Leff started the meeting by introducing Rep. Pat Widlitz (Chair of the Environment Committee) to say a few words to the council. Rep. Widlitz explained the two bills under consideration in the Environment Committee. She also explained the history of these bills as well. Members expressed concerns over the language of these bills and did not understand why the Environment Committee was not waiting for the Council to issue their recommendations on plants to be banned. Rep. Widlitz thanked the council for their work and asked the council to do what they could to produce a list by the end of the legislative session so the bill under consideration could reflect the input of the council.

Nancy Balcom from CT Sea Grant gave a presentation on their work on Aquatic Species. They are developing a management plan that they plan to have to the Governor by the Fall of 2004. Their focus is on all Aquatic Nuisance Species (animals and plants.) They hope to start implementation of this plan by 2005 and have it fully operational by 2009. Their goal is to eventually coordinate with the Northeast Regional group and the Federal group.

Nancy Murray from the CT DEP spoke briefly to the council on CT Sea Grant's work.

David Wrinn from the Attorney General's Office spoke about the issue of restricting interstate commerce through a ban. He said that such a ban is possible if you are careful in how it is done. Certain questions must be answered such as: Is the ban truly to protect the state's environment? What level of impact does the ban have? Does it apply the ban unfairly? Will it completely stop commerce?

The council posed hypothetical scenarios to Attorney Wrinn which he attempted to answer.

Mr. McGowan presented a resolution to recommend banning certain plants. Mr. Goodwin suggested that the resolution be amended to allow for a two year phase out of yellow iris. There was consensus on the phase out. Dr. Anderson asked if the Council had made a decision about having public hearings before the council recommends to ban plants. Chairman Leff noted that the council had not made a decision to hold hearings. Mr. Sutherland stated that the legislature would have hearings on any plant ban so it is unnecessary for the council to hold hearings.

Mr. Larson asked about Watercress and what the ban would mean for grocery stores selling it as food. Chairman Leff suggested that the ban be on viable plants. There was agreement on this issue.

Mr. McGowan made a motion to adopt the resolution recommending the banning of aquatic plants with the conditions of the yellow iris ban will have a 2 year phase in and watercress (and yellowcress) would be banned only as a viable plant, not as a food item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mehrhoff. Mr. Larson asked what the effective date would be of a ban and Chairman Leff noted that most bills such as this have an Oct. 1 effective date. The resolution was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

There was a motion be Dr. Anderson to accept the minutes of February 26, 2004. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larson. The minutes were adopted by a voice vote.

There was a motion by Mr. Larson to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Sutherland. The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emanuel Merisotis
Clerk- Environment Committee