

MINUTES

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday June 12, 2012
2 pm, Dept. of Agriculture
Conference Room G8-A
Hartford, CT

Council members present: Bill Hyatt, Paul Larson, Lou Magnarelli, Rich McAvoy, Tom McGowan, John Silander, Katherine Winslow

Others present: Ellen Bender, Donna Ellis, Nancy Murray, Caryn Rickel, Logan Senack

1. Hyatt called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

2. The minutes for the 3/13/12 Council meeting were reviewed.

Silander moved (second: Magnarelli) to approve the minutes. **The Council decided to approve the minutes as submitted.**

3. Presentation by Caryn Rickel

Caryn Rickel of Seymour, CT delivered a presentation about bamboo in Connecticut. Rickel has been compiling a list of sites where bamboo is growing since 2010. Rickel presented photos and additional information about bamboo occurrences in towns including Milford, New Canaan, New Milford, Newtown, Orange, Southbury, and Woodbury.

Paul Larson and Tom McGowan arrived at 2:09 pm.

Silander added that he joined Rickel for a site visit last Sunday to Orange, CT and observed a bamboo planting that was spreading into a forest understory area.

Dave Goodwin arrived at 2:21 pm.

Rickel was concerned that the recommendations for containment on the CNLA bamboo tags may not be adequate to prevent spread of the bamboo from the planting site and that the recommendations for control via herbicides may not be effective. Rickel also expressed concerns that bamboo was frequently sold online and advocated that some species, such as *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* (yellow groove bamboo), be prohibited from sale in the state. She also answered questions from the group. Hyatt thanked Rickel for her presentation and the information she provided.

4. Legislative debriefing and Invasive Plant Coordinator position

Hyatt thanked Bob Heffernan, Linda Kowalski, and David Sutherland for their efforts in obtaining funding for the Invasive Plants Coordinator position. \$90,000 has been approved for continuing the position. The language in the original Appropriations Committee budget indicated that the position would remain at UConn.

5. Update on Senack activities

Senack distributed finalized copies of the Guidelines for the Disposal of Terrestrial and Aquatic Plants to the group. Copies have been printed and are available for distribution. Both guides are also available on the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group website at

www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg.

MINUTES

Senack reported that there are two new mile-a-minute sites this year: one in Prospect, CT and one in Madison, CT. Hyatt asked about the possibility of control at both locations. Senack reported that both populations were small but that it is very likely there are other plants nearby as the populations have been present since at least 2011, or earlier.

6. Outdoor burning of invasives

Winslow reported that the Department of Agriculture is seeking clarification from the Invasive Plants Council about the burning of invasives in brush piles in the state. The group discussed burning options, including slash-and-burn, targeting flame weeding, and burning piled material. The Guidelines for the Disposal of Terrestrial and Aquatic Plants documents provide information for all groups regarding state laws for open burning, permits required, and health and safety considerations.

7. Old/New business

a. Bamboo

Genetics: Murray reported on the status of the genetic testing being conducted at the University of Washington by Dr. Melissa Smith. Plant material from 8 to 10 populations in Connecticut has been sent to Dr. Smith and viable DNA has been extracted. The project is still in progress. Murray highlighted the fact that these species were extremely difficult to tell apart and noted that the group was taking the required steps for proper identification of species. In addition, Murray reported that specimens from these populations will be deposited at the UConn Herbarium.

Winslow asked if the specimens and populations mentioned were the same sites as those found in Rickel's presentation. Some populations are the same, and some are different.

Rickel added that other species besides *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* (yellow-groove bamboo) are less common and therefore she recommended that they should not be listed. Rickel has sent Dr. Smith an additional 8 specimens from a variety of locations in the state. Silander added that presumably the group will have some sort of update on the bamboo genetics at the next meeting in September.

Site visit reports (DEEP/UConn): Hyatt updated the group on a bamboo visit to properties in Waterbury with Murray and Senack. A large patch of bamboo is spreading onto several neighboring properties.

Hyatt discussed compiling a list of contractors willing to remove bamboo. Heffernan requested this information from growers and others through a CNLA Update and is assembling a contractor list for bamboo removal and control. Only one response has been received so far. Heffernan noted there was not much concern over bamboo until recently, and so landscape professionals may not have previously been asked to remove this plant. Silander added that one other company that may be involved with bamboo removal could be Invasive Plant Control, based in Tennessee.

Rickel added that she feels landscapers do not really know how to deal with this plant and that some landscapers say that they need multiple years for control. Rickel also voiced concerns that some landowners were calling unlicensed people to do removal of bamboo. McAvoy reminded the group that nursery owner Mike Johnson had conducted some

MINUTES

research in controlling bamboo with various herbicides and had found control to be very successful. Senack noted that other sources had also indicated that bamboo control via herbicide use may be possible.

Larson and Magnarelli reminded the group that the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station will be planting some bamboo on their properties, experimenting with barriers, herbicide applications, and measuring growth rates. Heffernan wondered if it would be possible to offer control training for landscapers or if Mike Johnson should be invited to discuss bamboo control with the Council. Murray reminded the group that homeowners may want non-chemical control options as well. Senack added that eradication of any difficult-to-control plant may take more than one year.

Senack reported that he worked with Ellis and Murray to visit several bamboo sites in April and collected specimens and material for DNA analysis.

Bamboo field trip: Hyatt suggested that the group set up a field trip to see some areas where bamboo was growing into unmanaged habitats and locations where it is causing property damage. Senack will set up a bamboo field trip for the group.

Murray added that she is still giving out information on town ordinances and provided this information at the Waterbury site. Hyatt reported that Senack had asked the DEEP legal department about possible issues with bamboo being killed across property lines due to systemic herbicide application. The report back was that there was no clear answer.

Winslow reminded the group that state law preempts towns from restricting the sale of a plant if the plant is on the state invasive plant list.

b. Water chestnut

Murray reported that she and others from DEEP worked with federal staff to remove water chestnut from the West Thompson flood control reservoir. The group will return in a few weeks to monitor the site and remove any additional plants. The plants removed were only vegetative at this time. McGowan reminded the group that in 6 years of aquatic vegetation surveys, only one plant in each of 2 years had been found at Lake Waramaug, and the plants found were nowhere near the boat launches. Silander noted that this dispersal could be due to birds. Murray reported that another location for water chestnut is in Mansfield, CT at McLaughlin Pond. Murray will be visiting the site with Dr. Don Les (UConn) and will also check other waterbodies nearby.

Hyatt reported that water chestnut control projects have been very successful so far, but small populations do frequently arise. He noted that a vigilant public is a major help in identifying new locations. The group discussed water chestnut seed viability and other topics.

c. Mugwort and wavyleaf basketgrass presentations in September

Ellis will provide the group with an update on mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) and Senack will provide the group with a report on wavyleaf basketgrass (*Oplismenus hirtellus ssp. undulatifolius*) at the September meeting.

MINUTES

d. Invasive Plant Symposium

Ellis informed the group that the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group will be holding an Invasive Plant Symposium on Thursday, October 25, 2012. Ellis invited the group and encouraged the Council members to distribute information about the event within their organizations. She added that Pesticide Certification Credits and other Continuing Education Credits will be offered.

e. Other topics

i. Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) update

Hyatt provided an update about topics from the recent meeting of the Federal Invasive Species Advisory Committee. The committee discussed building consensus on how to move forward for better funding of invasive species efforts at the national level. A Memorandum of Understanding is circulating for comment between the Department of Interior, the pet industry, and state agencies involving a collaborative non-obligatory approach to reducing the impacts of invasives, particularly fish in the aquarium trade.

Hyatt also reported that Oregon passed a law to take coal-fired power plants offline. The plan calls for converting their largest power plant to run on biofuels, and would use giant cane (*Arundo donax*) as the plant material. Hyatt noted that giant cane is considered an invasive species in parts of the west coast. 90,000 acres of fruit and food production would be instead planted with giant cane to produce enough charcoal for the power plant. Large areas of the northeast are also targeted for biofuel development in the current Farm Bill.

ii. Phosphorus and weed growth in lakes

McGowan reported on progress in restricting phosphorus in established yards and noted that excess phosphorus ending up in lakes contributes to the growth of weeds and invasive plants. McGowan noted that this could be a potential educational idea or opportunity for something that could go through either DoAg or the Invasive Plants Council to address phosphorus. Goodwin reported that many companies have been taking phosphorus out of their fertilizer formulations. The group discussed this issue.

iii. IPANE app available

Silander reported that the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) now has an iPhone and Android app. The app, called "IPANE", allows users to report populations of invasive plants with photos and GPS locations to a public website where that information can be viewed.

8. Adjournment

McGowan moved to adjourn (second: Larson) the meeting. **The Council decided to adjourn at 3:30 pm.**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2012, at the Department of Agriculture Building in Hartford, CT.

8/6/12 note: This meeting has been rescheduled to September 18, 2012. -LS