

MINUTES

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday, March 8, 2011
2 pm, Dept. of Agriculture
Hartford, CT

Council members present: Bill Hyatt, George Krivda, Paul Larson, Lou Magnarelli, Tom McGowan, John Silander, David Sutherland

Others present: Nelson DeBarros, Donna Ellis, Nancy Murray, Peter Picone, Logan Senack, Penni Sharp

1. Hyatt called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

2. Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) representative to IPC

Hyatt introduced Dr. John Silander as the new IPANE representative. Hyatt shared the letter from Senator McKinney appointing Silander to the group.

Paul Larson arrived at 2:10 pm.

3. The minutes for the 2/8/11 meeting were reviewed

Krivda moved (second: Sutherland) to approve the minutes as submitted. **The Council decided to approve the minutes from the 2/8/11 meeting.**

4. ANS meeting update and DEP update

Murray informed the group that the ANS Coordinating Committee was deciding between two dates and will announce the date for the rescheduled meeting soon.*

5. Presentation by Peter Picone (DEP): Control and management of invasive plants at Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

CT DEP wildlife biologist Peter Picone delivered a presentation to the group detailing actions taken to control invasive plants at Sessions Woods WMA. Sessions Woods is a 764 acre wildlife management area in Burlington, Connecticut. Picone detailed projects on the property to manage and remove invasive species, encourage the re-establishment of native plants, and explained the importance of establishing native habitat and food sources through all four seasons to benefit wildlife.

The staff has taken action to remove a number of invasive species, including Japanese knotweed, black locust (with support from an NRCS-WHIP grant), Norway maple, winged euonymus, and other species, with an emphasis on removing plants and new invasions early before they are well established on the property.

**Follow-up note (added 3/9/10): The ANS Coordinating Committee meeting will take place on April 7, 2011, from 9 am-noon at the UConn Avery Point Campus, Room 312, Marine Sciences Building- LS*

Picone responded to questions after his presentation. Hyatt asked the group if they thought this material would be appropriate for a workshop held at the site for municipal staff or other individuals. The group discussed who would be involved, whether the workshop would include field visits and/or classroom work, and other details.

Sutherland left the room at 2:58 pm.

Murray suggested that landscape architects should be included in the workshop. Silander suggested that programs to educate town Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commissions would also be valuable. McGowan asked if any landscape architect organizations could be involved. Ellis suggested that the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) may be involved as some ASLA members are also members of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG).

The group discussed various topics for the workshop, including emphasis on local laws and ordinances, the removal and replacement of invasive plants, and the positive aspects of native shrubs. Larson suggested that the majority of the public would not be as interested in using only native plants in a design palette. Larson recommended that non-native plants that are not invasive should also be included. Silander added that there should be additional work done to develop and encourage the development of cultivars of native plants.

Senack will coordinate with Picone, staff from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, Larson, and CIPWG to begin planning a potential workshop for municipal staff. Larson suggested that if the workshop goes well, additional workshops could be planned for the future.

6. Mehrhoff memorial service and award status

Ellis informed the group that a Celebration of Life for Les Mehrhoff will take place at 11:00 am on Saturday, March 12, at the Storrs Congregational Church in Storrs, CT. A number of other events and awards are planned to remember Mehrhoff:

- Sutherland will present an Official Citation from the state legislature for the service.
- CIPWG has decided to present an award in Mehrhoff's memory to a deserving individual at its biennial symposia.
- Silander announced that the UConn Center for Conservation and Biodiversity will hold a conference at the end of May focused on topics that were important to Mehrhoff, including invasive species, endangered species, and biodiversity. The event will be free and open to the public. Silander will provide additional details at a later date.
- Sharp added that the Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists has decided to sponsor an annual grant of \$1,000 in Mehrhoff's memory for invasive plant control or to protect endangered species.

7. Office of Legislative Research (OLR) report

Hyatt reported that there was no news on whether the incomplete report on DEP's actions to deal with invasive species had been revised.

8. Invasive Plant Coordinator updates

Senack reported that a letter to be sent to companies selling invasive plants by mail order/internet sales to Connecticut consumers has been drafted and is being reviewed by DEP.

Senack distributed copies of two draft documents detailing recommended disposal practices for terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants after control efforts take place. The goal of the documents is to provide recommended low-cost invasive plant disposal options that would reduce the further spread of the invasive plants at a disposal site or during transport to a disposal site.

Magnarelli expressed concern that the creation of brush piles near human dwellings may provide ideal habitat for mice and other tick-bearing species and advised that the guidelines be revised to address this fact. Larson added that recommending firewood be burned only on the site where it was cut may unnecessarily restrict its movement. Firewood does not ordinarily contain seeds or other reproductive material and so would not pose a risk if transported to other locations. Ellis noted that the potential for the spread of Asian Longhorned Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, and other pests should also be a concern when addressing the movement of firewood. Senack noted that staff at DEP are also reviewing the documents to be sure the recommendations do not conflict with other existing DEP programs or policies.

9. Cooperative Weed Management Areas update presentation

Senack updated the group on the status of Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) in the United States. CWMAs are collaborative projects between multiple partners that coordinate efforts and share resources to control invasive plants across jurisdictional boundaries. A number of CWMAs have formed in the western United States and more are forming in the eastern US. Some groups are forming Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) in order to expand their focus to include non-plant taxa. Senack reported that David Gumbart of The Nature Conservancy has worked with a number of partners, including the Town of East Haddam and the Town of Lyme, to formally establish the first Cooperative Weed Management Area in Connecticut, the Eightmile River Invasive Species Management Area. The project will focus on Japanese stiltgrass. An inventory project for invasive plants is planned for spring 2011. Other groups, including one that is working on a scenic stretch of the Farmington River, are also working cooperatively to manage invasive plants in the state.

10. Old/new business

Ellis reported that CIPWG will hold a general meeting on March 30, 1:30-3:30 pm at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Valley Laboratory in Windsor, CT. Ellis noted that the group would like to present an update on the recent activities of the Invasive Plants Council at the meeting. Ellis invited Council members to attend and to provide the update, and suggested that she, Murray, and Senack could work together to update the group if no Council members were able to attend. There will also be a discussion of running bamboo at the meeting.

11. Adjournment

McGowan moved (second: Larson) to adjourn the meeting. **The Council decided to adjourn at 3:45 pm.**

The next meeting is scheduled for 2 pm, June 14, 2011 at the Dept. of Agriculture in Hartford, CT.