

# INVASIVE PLANTS COUNCIL MEETING

## Minutes of 9/14/06

### As Approved by the Council

A regular meeting of the Invasive Plants Council (IPC) was held on Thursday, September 14, 2006. Dr. Louis Magnarelli, Acting Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m. in the Senate Caucus Room at the State Capitol, Hartford, Connecticut.

**Attendees:** Acting Chairman Dr. Louis Magnarelli, Paul Larson, Tom McGowan, Les Mehrhoff, Dr. Mary Musgrave, David Sutherland and Ed Parker.

**Other Attendees included:** Senator Andrew Roraback, State Representative Mary Fritz, State Representative Clark Chapin, Jillian Spikes on behalf of Representative Denise Merrill, Betty McLaughlin, CT Audubon, Jason Crisco (in place of Sandy Breslin of Audubon CT), Ken Metzler and Nancy Murray of the Dept. of Environmental Protection, Donna Ellis of the University of Connecticut; Linda Kowalski of the Kowalski Group & on behalf of CNLA, and Bob Heffernan of the CT Nursery and Landscape Association.

**Absent:** F. Philip Prelli, Commissioner of Dept. of Agriculture.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Dr. Magnarelli distributed the May 9, 2006 minutes for Council approval. These minutes were accepted with minor edits. David Sutherland seconded. Paul Larson Motioned. Council passed the May 9, 2006 minutes.

### **Future Direction of The Council:**

Dr. Magnarelli expressed a concern about the direction of this Council. Right now, it will need a new Secretary and in the future, a new Chairman. His observation over a two-year period is that the Council members are a very dedicated group of individuals. He feels that the Council now is drifting and suggested that this group become an Advisory Committee. He asked the Council members for their suggestions, i.e., how to operate, how to still be effective.

Senator Roraback said that even though the Council right now is at an impasse, the "world and mother nature" is crying out for what this Council is doing. He thanked the members for their efforts.

Tom McGowan agreed with Dr. Magnarelli. He felt what is needed is a Statewide Coordinator. The states of Maine and New Hampshire each have one coordinator for Aquatic Species. Example of importance: right now Curly Leaf Pond Weed is in Lake Waramaug and also is at Lake Waramaug State Park too. This will hurt the economy. It will cost approximately \$110,000-\$140,000 for weed eradication, if it can be accomplished.

Representative Mary Fritz asked if Sterile Grass Carp could be used in milfoil eradication. Ed Parker said they did a study at Ball Pond and that this "Carp" was successful and this could be an inexpensive solution. But, this

only helps the milfoil solution. Ed Parker said the public needs education on invasives and that the Connecticut Legislature needs to be a driving force. Ed Parker feels that the Council should continue in its present role. He also said the invasive plants issue must be on the front page! He said DEP simply does not have resources and it is very frustrating when you know the end result.

Representative Mary Fritz asked if DEP's Commissioner, Gina McCarthy, would add the Invasive Plants Council as an agency budget line item? Ed Parker will ask Commissioner McCarthy.

Les Mehrhoff said the Council should stay in its present form. He felt there is an issue of habitat destruction in our state. He thought education was important too. He felt that the Invasive Plants Council should focus on education. He felt the "system" was working. Education would help the Council raise dollars. Nancy Murray stated that any dollars would have to include staff.

David Sutherland thinks the Council should stay in its present form. He felt that it had an important role to continue. He said that appropriated dollars is needed for eradication and rapid response. He also said that the Council should stay aware of the cultivar issue – but it does not need to be discussed at all Council meetings. Les Mehrhoff said the cultivar issue should be off the Invasive Plants Council table until more finite information is made available.

Dr. Mary Musgrave stated that the way the IPC legislation now exists on the books is flawed. She, as a member, is frustrated. She felt we need people to enforce and inspect invasives. She does not think the Council was formed for education. She agreed with Dr. Magnarelli's suggestion that the Council become an Advisory Committee.

David Goodwin said the Council needs support from the legislature otherwise he agrees with Dr. Magnarelli and Dr. Musgrave that it becomes an Advisory Committee. He also felt it needs help at the State level.

Representative Clark Chapin gained more knowledge on invasives when he met with the Council last year. He said that the questions he raised in last year's meeting were never answered. He went on to inform the Council members what happened with the proposed legislative bill. He said it was the request for fees – but again, he did not have any backup for support. He wanted to accomplish the task of moving the bill out of the Environment Committee and after he discussed this with both Chairs, he had to delete the piece on dollars. He did lobby for the legislation. He said some members of the Invasive Plants Council were working against what he was trying to accomplish. Representative Chapin is looking for guidance from the Council members and is frustrated and at a loss of where to take this.

Representative Mary Fritz said the Council has to be unified in its efforts to correct future legislation.

Paul Larson would be disappointed if the Council ended. Everyone put a lot of effort and time into this matter. He said there needs to be a focus on what issues the Council does agree on; this maybe a way to move forward.

David Goodwin understands Representative Chapin's frustration. Senator Roraback stated that as legislators, they need to know that any recommendations made from the Council have been done unanimously as a group.

Representative Mary Fritz said that there has to be agreement within the Council that whenever the majority makes a decision “that’s it.” She went on to discuss the two issues that Dr. Magnarelli brought up: replacement of a new Chair and a new Secretary. She said that the Council needs to begin thinking about a new Chair now. Much discussion took place from members about who will take over as the Chairman of the Council.

Dr. Magnarelli wants it known that the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) staff does not have the regulatory authority to order the destruction of banned plants. The CAES can give out copies of the law. The CAES staff can report a violation to the local police department. Dr. Magnarelli does not want to demonize the Nursery Industry because the growers have always cooperated when diseased plants needed to be destroyed. Dr. Magnarelli noted the handout by Donna Ellis for the CT Invasive Plant Working Group Symposium to be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Mountainside Resort in Wallingford.

Senator Roraback said it is important to make the case of why the Invasive Plants Council needs funding. Example: Hydrilla is a large problem in the state and it is something we should be very scared about. Senator Roraback went on to say that the Invasive Plants Council needs to make a case to the legislators for funding of a budget. Think about making a case for a full-time coordinator in DEP. Let legislators know that this is a serious problem and merits a state budget.

Nancy Murray said that the Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan is going to DEP’s Commissioner and the Governor’s Office for approval. Once the Governor’s has approved this plan, it will make DEP eligible for some federal funds.

This Plan can easily be modified to address terrestrial species and invertebrates. This Plan could be used to coordinate all efforts and eliminate duplication of efforts – this Plan has good structure. If a Coordinator were in place in DEP, then there would be a good opportunity to show what the Invasive Plants Council can accomplish. The federal dollars could pay for a portion of the Coordinator position. There will still be a need to look to state legislators for approval of further funding.

Representative Mary Fritz told the Council Members to be prepared with the necessary information in early December. This way she, Senator Roraback and Representative Chapin can bring this information in a timely fashion to the Appropriations Committee.

Senator Roraback and Representatives Fritz and Chapin will attend another Invasive Plants Council meeting in either December or January. This will give the Council Members time to put together a proposed legislative bill.

Dr. Mary Musgrave said the states of Connecticut, Vermont and Maine received federal dollars earmarked through the USDA for the New England Invasive Plants Center, which is centered at the University of Connecticut. A specific goal of the center is to develop sterile alternatives for ornamental plants, education, and sterile cultivars. Representative Mary Fritz suggested that Dr. Musgrave plan on giving a slide show on what invasives are.

**Finding A  
Replacement  
Secretary:**

Dr. Magnarelli acknowledged Jill Carr's loyalty to the Council. Dr. Magnarelli will be writing a letter to Commissioner McCarthy, noting the above. It was suggested that the Co-Chairs for the Environment Committee be approached with a request for providing the Invasive Plants Council with a Secretary. Dr. Magnarelli stated that he invited by letter both Co-Chairs to attend today's meeting and they did not show up or even responded back to him. When Senator Roraback and Representatives Fritz and Chapin return in either December or January, he suggests that the Council Members request their help in getting the Environment Committee provide to a Secretary, as it has done in the past. Ed Parker said it is very hard to take minutes and engage in a meeting discussion and suggested that Dr. Magnarelli approach Commissioner Prelli to provide a Secretary. Paul Larson agreed with the Ed Parker because he has taken notes early on, when the Council began. Dr. Magnarelli again said that there are no resources and there is a reluctance to move forward. Example: the Council did not act on electing a new secretary today.

**Old/New Business:** October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held in the Ensign Room. Dr. Magnarelli may look at another location to hold future meetings. The October meeting will be focused on the elements of proposed draft legislation. Ed Parker suggests canceling the October 10<sup>th</sup> as a meeting and come together as a working group, for both members and non-members. There was a general discussion that October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting could be a working group session only with no minutes being taken. Betty McLaughlin thought the working group is a good idea, but she stated to be sure that others outside of this meeting are aware of this. David Goodwin will take attendance at the October meeting. The October agenda will be sent out electronically to all groups.

November meeting date discussed – will be rescheduling the 11/14 meeting because Dr. Magnarelli has another conflict. Newly, proposed date is 11/21 in the DEP, Ensign Room.

**Motion to  
Adjourn:**

David Goodwin motioned. Les Mehrhoff seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jill Carr  
Department of Environmental Protection