

Connecticut Invasive Plant Council  
March 11, 2008

Approved Minutes

**Present:**

Members: Mary Musgrave, Bill Hyatt, Tom McGowan, Paul Larson, Dave Goodwin, Phil Prelli, Lou Magnarelli.

Others: Sara Kuebbing, Donna Ellis, Roselyn Selsky, Marie Lipski, Bob Heffernan, Nancy Murray

Mary Musgrave called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

**February Minutes:** Dave Goodwin moved to approve the February minutes. Lou Magnarelli seconded. They were approved.

**Legislative Update:** Phil Prelli updated the Invasive Plants Council (IPC) that changes to current invasive bill have passed the Environment Committee and are waiting to be taken up on the House floor. Prelli gave testimony to the Environmental Committee and believes they are behind it.

Mary Musgrave asked if the minor language changes were made and Lou Magnarelli thinks that they were but that they need to check on that when the file copy comes out.

Mary Musgrave asked if IPC will need to testify again. Phil Prelli did not think it would be necessary.

Phil Prelli announced that Office of Policy and Management and Dept. of Public Safety are looking to move money to a central location and he is looking to do a training program for his inspectors. Mary Musgrave asked if there is a concern that the money will disappear at the end of this fiscal year. Lou Magnarelli says that there is a chance it might - depending upon whether the state has a surplus or not – and encouraged the group to continue moving forward on committing to spend the funds before the fiscal year ends.

**DEP Invasive Plant Coordinator:** Bill Hyatt updated the group on the 2 potential Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) positions. All paperwork is in the approval process, same as last meeting, but Human Resources has given DEP permission to post, interview and hire both positions from the same list of candidates. This will hopefully speed up the process and fill the positions by May/June.

The 2 potential positions are Invasive Plant Coordinator, funded by state legislature funds, and Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Coordinator which has some federal funding also.

Question arose as to what the qualifications were for both positions. Both will be posted as an “Environmental Analyst II” which requires at minimum a 4 year bachelor degree with at least 1 year of experience. Mary Musgrave asked if the ANS and Invasive Plant Coordinator hires will have different backgrounds and Hyatt said in previous experiences they have had good success to hire and fill positions with qualified candidates. Hyatt will provide the 1 page announcement write-up to the group.

**Department of Transportation (DOT) training video**

Group watched the US Forest Services (USFS) “Dangerous Travelers: Controlling Invasive Plants along America’s Roadways.” video. It is available on-line at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/invasivespecies/prevention/dangeroustravelers.shtml>

**Next steps with DOT:** Mary Musgrave suggested providing the USFS video to town road crews.

Sara Kuebbing noted that the New Hampshire DOT has just published a document with Best Management Practices for town road crews. She will provide the internet link to this document for the group.

Nancy Murray reminded the group that there was an invasive plant species in a DOT Erosion and Sedimentation Control seed mix. Murray has received DOT contacts from Kim Lesay (who has now left CT DOT) to follow up on this issue. She will also see if they want to come in and address the council.

Mary Musgrave felt this is an important area for IPC involvement but realizes that towns will not be able to do without financial help. Bill Hyatt mentioned that there is a range of tactics that crews can implement – from cheap to expensive – and that education and outreach are the number one concern. Tom McGowan said that for this to work IPC needs a comprehensive picture of the issue in CT, especially in terms of what equipment is needed and what the overall costs would be.

Nancy Murray suggested that IPC should begin by working with the State DOT to put together protocols and to set an example for towns to follow.

Dave Goodwin stressed that education of crews seemed to be the key step, either in offering training sessions or posters to help them identify plants and understand the issue.

Paul Larson suggested beginning by focusing on a single, important species to cut down costs. Dave Goodwin suggested promoting Best Management Practices that are low to no cost. Bill Hyatt said that the simpler and clearer the directions the more effective. Mary Musgrave suggested to look at NH DOT document and to ask Leslie Mehrhoff to put together a list of the most common roadside invasive plants.

Phil Prelli agreed that choosing a species with an effective and easy treatment that could be successfully controlled – such as mile-a-minute vine – may get a success story under IPC’s belt and then allow them to broaden the issue to other plants. Western CT towns

have already put in some effort with mile-a-minute and IPC could jump on this momentum. Bill Hyatt added that it would be good to pick an “umbrella species” whose management techniques could be used with other species.

Connecticut has a State Aid grant that town road crews can use for funding, based on the length of roads in each town. Maybe look into a way to use this funding for invasive plant control.

Phil Prelli asked who the contact in DOT is – group agreed that Ned Herle is best. Nancy Murray suggested that IPC should put forth a plan and then invite him back to hear the ideas.

Mary Musgrave suggested that next meeting the group will look over NH DOT plan and continue this discussion.

**Invasive Plant Poster:** Group looked at draft poster, provided by Bob Heffernan. Bob Heffernan will update poster to new legislative language for the rules.

Nancy Murray voiced Leslie Mehrhoff’s opinion that the poster should be subdivided into 2-tiers: banned plants in CT and invasive plants that are not banned. He believes that IPC should not endorse a poster without all invasive plants on it.

Tom McGowan suggested that it would be helpful for the public to separate the poster into aquatic and terrestrial plants. Phil Prelli suggested that IPC may want to print 2 different posters. Dave Goodwin said that if you separated posters then IPC could put proper disposal methods on the aquatic poster, as previously discussed in earlier meetings. If the aquatic pictures were removed, then either the terrestrial poster could have larger pictures (currently their size is about 2 inches) or the extra 15 invasive but not banned plants could be added, per Les Mehrhoff’s suggestion.

Roselyn Selsky suggested that adding a web address for people to see more information and pictures would be helpful. She may be able to post this on CT Agricultural Experiment Station website.

Phil Prelli made a motion to create 2 posters – 1 aquatic and 1 terrestrial for banned plants – to insure they are printed before the end of the fiscal year. Lou Magnarelli seconded the motion. The group acknowledges through meeting minutes that Leslie Mehrhoff opposes this and motion passes.

Bill Hyatt noted that the subject of a poster, or possibly brochure or other educational material, for non-banned invasive plants will be revisited at future meetings and not forgotten.

Poster To-Do List:

- Bob, with the help of IPC to determine what plants belong on which poster, will make changes and send drafts via email to group.

- Nancy Murray noted that the group now needs a list of everyone who should receive an aquatic plant poster (ideas are pet shops, marinas, bait shops, CT Federation of Lakes) so she will know how many posters to print.
- Resource websites including Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group, Invasive Plant Atlas of New England, and CT Agricultural Experiment Station will be added to both posters.
- Any additional text changes that members want should be forwarded to Nancy Murray or Bob Heffernan.
- Nancy Murray reminded group that a cover letter encouraging poster recipients to post the sign needs to be written to accompany the posters. It should probably be signed by IPC, Commissioners of Ag and Wildlife, and CT Ag Experiment Station. Murray will check to see if a cover letter can be inserted with the posters by the printer.

### **Old or New Business:**

Lou Magnarelli informed the group that there is a National Invasive Species Management Plan that established a federal Invasive Species Council which involves many federal agencies. Magnarelli passed around an executive summary for the group to peruse and noted that if the ISC gets moving, there may be new funding available. Also, the comment period on this document may still be open – if anyone wishes to do so.

Nancy Murray informed the group that the town of Darien is pushing for IPC to consider bamboo for listing on the banned plant list. Listing bamboo is a complex issue because of the variety of species and ornamental cultivars available. The group should be aware that this issue will probably be brought forward at a future meeting and they should prepare to talk about it.

Nancy Murray also said she now has a phone number and pass code so future IPC meetings may be attended through a conference call. She will give these to Mary Musgrave to give to people who cannot make the next meeting.

**Lou Magnarelli motions to adjourn the meeting. Dave Goodwin seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.**