

Approved Minutes

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday September 9, 2008
2PM, Valley Laboratory
Windsor, CT

Members present: Mary Musgrave, Lou Magnarelli, Dave Goodwin, Paul Larson, Bill Hyatt, Tom McGowan, Les Mehrhoff, David Sutherland.

Others present: Nancy Murray, Donna Ellis, Bob Heffernan, Logan Senack

1. The meeting was called to order by Musgrave at 2:10 pm.
2. **Approval of Minutes for 4/8/08 Council Meeting.** With inclusion of edits that were noted in the list of members present (add Sutherland) and on page 2 in the IPC position update, a motion was made (Sutherland) and seconded (Larson) to approve the minutes. The group voted to approve them.
3. **Absence of quorum, procedures.** The group discussed the problems that arose at the last meeting, when too few members were in attendance to have a quorum. The benefits and problems of having an email ballot procedure in place were discussed. Rather than spend Council time on group word-smithing, Musgrave offered to draft wording for consideration by the group at the next meeting.
4. **Legislative session recap; strategies.** Sutherland reviewed the fate of the technical change bill (containing the Council's recommendations) in the last legislative session. The bill was voted out of two committees. When it came up on the floor of the House, a couple of legislators got alarmed about pre-emption and had the bill held. Despite valiant efforts which got it amended onto two other bills (one in the House and one in the Senate), these were never called up for a vote. Magnarelli said there is legislative support to re-do it, and thinks we should give it another run. The group expressed frustration regarding the Legislature's unwillingness to pass the technical changes. Heffernan said he has pulled back the Industry lobbyists from this problem and wants to see as many people as possible agree to the bill in advance before he would re-commit them. Everyone must speak with one voice to get the technical changes passed and renew the \$1M biennial funding for the state's invasive plants program.
5. **Invasive plant poster.** Murray thanked Heffernan for his excellent work on putting together the invasive plant posters (a large terrestrial plant poster and a smaller poster on aquatics). DEP mailed out 2000 and they have another 800 to distribute. Approximately \$10K was spent to produce the posters, \$6K for postage and mailers, and \$500 for producing the letter inserts.

6. **Update on DEP Invasive Plants Coordinator Position.** Hyatt reported that the state hiring freeze has caused problems for getting the position posted. Currently the plan is to hire two people: (1) an Invasive Plants Coordinator to focus on terrestrial invasives and administer the grants to municipalities (through a co-op agreement with UConn) ; and (2) an Aquatic Nuisance Species specialist (federally-funded, so exempt from state budget hiring freeze) who would have responsibility for invasive aquatic species (both plant and animal). Other expenditures by DEP from the invasive plant funds include eradication and control of the aquatic invasive plant *Hydrilla* in the Silvermine watershed (which will develop a prototype approach) (\$150K through 2010); and \$15K/year to both the Department of Agriculture and the CT Agricultural Experiment Station for inspections. DEP has \$175K committed to their grants to municipalities program (eradication and control of invasive plants) and expects to issue the RFP at the end of September. Heffernan urged Hyatt to develop a 1 page accounting of where the funding has been committed and the accomplishments from the funding, for distribution to legislators as the group requests renewal of the funding.
7. **Henry (knotweed) letter and next steps with DOT.** Musgrave and Ellis distributed copies of the May 20, 2008 letter from Claudia and Andy Henry, which describes the problems caused by invasives (knotweed) carried into an environmentally-sensitive area by the highway department. This is a serious problem. The group agreed that highways are a major route of invasive plant spread. Mehrhoff said that likely demonstration species with regard to the highway problem would be knotweed, slender snake cotton, and tall peppertop (the latter, *Lepidium latifolium*, is not yet in CT but occurs on the Mass Pike). Larson said knotweed is a good choice because it is easy to identify, but Murray said it is too hard to control. NH has recommendations on how to control knotweed. Ellis volunteered to contact the NH DOT person involved. Mehrhoff said maybe doing it as an experiment or demo of how hard it would be to control would be worthwhile. Ellis said homeowners in Tolland have declared knotweed to be public enemy #1. Musgrave agreed to invite Ned Herle to a subsequent meeting, and also to arrange for a presentation on the roadside problem posed by herbicide-resistant creeping bentgrass.
8. **CT Invasive Plant Working Group's 2008 symposium.** Ellis distributed programs for this meeting, coming up October 1, and encouraged members to attend. She noted 50 co-sponsors and a very diverse audience (over 300 pre-registered). The keynote speaker, Doug Tallamy, will make a case for native plants based on whole-ecosystem relationships.
9. **Other old or new business.** Mehrhoff asked the group to consider adopting a technical definition of what constitutes a cultivar. Magnarelli pointed out that the ambiguity about whether a banned plant species includes the cultivars has not been an enforcement problem on the ground with the inspectors. Sutherland requested an update on the research at UConn regarding different barberry and

euonymus cultivars and the progress toward creating sterile cultivars (Mark Brand, UConn) for next meeting and the group decided to defer further discussion of the technical definition of cultivar.

10. Next meeting: scheduled for (Tuesday) October 7, 2008, 2PM Valley Lab
11. Adjournment. Goodwin moved adjournment and McGowan seconded, and with unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.