

Minutes – Invasive Plants Council
Wednesday, October 16, 2024, 2-4 pm

Attendees: Victoria Wallace (UConn), Simon Levesque, (Dept. of Ag), Jatinder Aulakh (CAES), Bill Moorehead (CT DEEP), Bryan Connolly (IPANE), Dustyn Nelson (CNLA), Denise Savageau (Environmental Planner/non-profit environment association), Darryl Newman (Planter's Choice Nursery, LLC), Connie Trolle (Bantam Lake Protection Association)

Absent:

Non-voting attendees: Lauren Kurtz (Invasive Species Outreach Specialist - UConn), Alyssa Siegel-Miles (Program Assistant - UConn), Rose Hiskes (CAES), Marcus Y, Chris Burke

A. Call to order. Victoria Wallace called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes: **June 20, 2024**

June 20, 2024, D. Sauvageau calls motion, D. Nelson seconds; Motion passes

C. Updates from Council members

D. Savageau: I'd like to follow up from June meeting: Moving forward, I'm working with US Forest Service and National Association of Conservation Districts on a statewide forestry forum. The 13-state forum runs from Ohio to Maine. They're focused on water quality and forest health. There is going to be a Northeast Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forests & Water Forum [workshop](#) on November 20th and 21st 2024. Also, the Long Island Sound study, for the first time is looking at upstream watershed health. Looking at forest management and overall forest health, including things like nutrient management, forest buffer, riparian buffer, streams, and forests within the watershed in general. The Long Island Sound watershed basically encompasses all of Connecticut. The Long Island [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) is something folks may want to comment on, comments open through November 22, 2024. Important to note that a lot of forest health issues people raise have to do with invasive species.

D. Nelson: The CT Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA) summer meeting Lauren and I were supposed to present at was cancelled. We will be speaking at the Winter Symposium on January 22, 2025 instead. Today's meeting will also help us steer that conversation to ensure CNLA is working with the industry as a partner and as a steward of the environment. CNLA wants to make sure the IPC advocates for that municipal preemption. There's no enforcement when it comes to invasive plant regulation. I haven't consulted with anyone on this yet but we already have nursery inspectors from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station visiting grower facilities to look for pests. I think this would include invasive plant pests, this might be good for the state to have the nursery inspectors look for invasive plants too. An inspector looking for invasive plants would be important to ensure no one is growing or selling prohibited

invasive species. Another issue of importance is whether the nursery inspectors are visiting the box stores that operate in the state.

C. Trolle: In Bantam Lake the major problem we are dealing with is blue green algae, cyanobacteria. Quite a few other lakes in the area also deal with this. Bantam Lake Protective Association tried a treatment this year, hydrogen peroxide was applied at the beginning of May. This treatment made the lake clearer for longer and we are pleased with the results. It's supposed to last three years, but we are not sure because we typically have heavy blooms towards the beginning of September.

B. Connolly: IPANE is fairly inactive, but I've been working with CIPWG as part of the subcommittee to evaluate what plant species should be listed or not listed on the State invasive plant list. I've been thinking about the role of IPANE which was originally a source of data gathering in the field, I started off as the volunteer trainer. I'm thinking about trying to reactivate IPANE membership to gather data about invasives in the state. I'm bringing my ESU students to Lyme Connecticut tomorrow for an invasive identification and removal activity at a powerline right of way, we are working with the town open space coordinator. There are two state listed plants (Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern) in the area and the threatened New England Cottontail as well.

B. Moorhead: In recent years in the state forests, whenever a harvest is proposed there is almost always proactive invasive shrub and vine control associated with harvests and hazard tree removal.

S. Levesque: Legislative proposals are in from the agency and are now getting reviewed. Legislative liaison Kayleigh Royston can be reached with any questions.

J. Aulakh: We are going to do more screenings on the herbicide resistant common water hemp. We have collected seeds from glyphosate and 2,4-D resistant plants. We have done some molecular work on water hemp and found there is one mechanism involved with resistance and we are sure to find more. There is an enhanced EPSPS gene copy numbers responsible for glyphosate resistance in this population. We will do more screening to see if it was a late application of herbicide or if it's genetically resistant. I've noticed that *Vinca minor* is becoming a predominant understory plant in Connecticut forests. I've started an experiment on chemical control of *Vinca* and we have started an experiment on Japanese knotweed control with different herbicides and methods including stem injection and cut stump treatments.

D. Newman: nothing to report.

V. Wallace: UConn Turf Field Day occurred in late July we had about 265 people attend the day-long program. We are getting ready for the CIPWG symposium that will be held on October 29, 2024. We are trying to reach 400 attendees, and we suspect we will sell out.

Old Business:

- Need recommendations on Japanese Barberry and Winged Euonymus per environmental committee.

Questions and Discussion

V. Wallace: Anticipating we would have feedback from the cancelled CNLA summer meeting, we needed another way to gather information from the industry to move the prohibition of invasive plants conversation forward.

L. Kurtz: In lieu of discussion at CNLA, a short survey was developed and sent to select growers and retailers in the state. We wanted their feedback and the economic impact of prohibiting the sale of the 15 invasive plants that are currently not prohibited from sale. The survey gathered information about preferred phase out periods, why or why not recommend a phase out, the use of sterile cultivars, and which invasive plants are most commonly sold and used in the landscape. According to the survey, the top six invasive plants still being sold are Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*), California privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*), miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis*) and rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*). There were comments about some of these plants ending up in containers and not overwintering in most circumstances. Some survey respondents also disagree with some of the plants on the list including rugosa rose because it is really only invasive in coastal areas and has potential to benefit sand dunes from erosion. Longer phase outs were preferred because of the planning involved; growing the plants to size requires multiple years. There are varying levels of invasive impact across the listed species and blanket regulation is not appropriate. Some nurseries or retailers are only selling sterile cultivars. Sterility is the key to that question, what is the threshold for sterility of a species? Generally sterile cultivars are valuable and useful in the nursery industry and blanket prohibition may be a concern. This was a pilot survey; we are going to deploy a larger survey later this year as a 20-year revisit to a survey done by Dr. Mark Brand at UConn who surveyed CNLA in 2007 about invasive plant preferences. We used the information gathered from the mini survey to inform the conversations with the CIPWG subcommittee and steering committee in order for CIPWG to develop recommendations. Dr. Brand has conducted research at UConn for many years to develop sterile cultivars of Japanese Barberry for which he was awarded CIPWG's Les Mehrhoff award in 2018. **D. Savageau:** I appreciate the information from the nursery industry. I'm wondering if we have additional information about the impact of invasive species on forest health in Connecticut. I think we need to balance the two. Did you collect or do research on that? **V. Wallace:** No. This was strictly to ask growers whether they have been selling these plants, the economic impact, and preferences about phase outs and sterile cultivars. **D. Savageau:** I want to make sure as a council that we are looking at both the economic side and ecological side of this, particularly when we are looking at climate change and nature-based solutions. **L. Kurtz:** While this survey didn't measure the environmental impact of invasive species on forests, we did bring the results of our survey to the CIPWG subcommittee, which includes foresters, wildlife biologists, botanists, and others who are actively involved in forest management and they informed the recommendations Alyssa will present.

A. Siegel-Miles: We discussed the survey results with the CIPWG subcommittee in order for this CIPWG committee to develop the recommendations to present to the CIPWG steering committee. The CIPWG steering committee voted and approved the following proposal to the IPC to ask for your support or changes to these recommendations. Immediate prohibition, no phase out: Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*). Prohibition with a 3-year phase out: Glossy buckthorn; European buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), California privet (*Ligustrum ovatifolium*), European privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis*) *with possible allowance for sterile cultivars, Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) *with possible allowance for sterile cultivars. No action/change: Rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*), Creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*), Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*), Common water-hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*).

D. Newman: Norway maple hybrid (*Acer truncatum* x *Acer platanoides* ‘Crimson Sunset’) is of great value to the nursery industry and has been shown to be sterile by the nursery that produced it, J. Frank Schmidt. It has been in the trade for at least 15 years. Banning California privet from sale will result in massive industry pushback. It sells by the hundreds near the shoreline, it tolerates salt and hedges well. People will not go quietly on that one. **B. Moorhead:** The privets are difficult to differentiate. I’ve only ever seen border privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*) escaping into the wild. **V. Wallace:** In the meetings with the CIPWG subcommittee, there was a lot of discussion about the sterility issue with sterile cultivars. Other states invasive plant lists were investigated. For example, Massachusetts does not allow the sale of sterile cultivars, while Pennsylvania and New York allow the sale of certain sterile cultivars of invasive plants. **B. Connolly:** Nothing is 100% sterile but as far as I know these are very low fertility cultivars that went through extensive research to create them and evaluate their sterility. The use of sterile cultivars does seem like an innovative tool to keep the economic value of the plant and to decrease the ecological threat of the plant. **D. Nelson:** Studying the ecological impact of invasive plants on forests comes down to funding, where does the responsibility lie in trying to generate funding to kick start this type of work? Maybe the Department of Agriculture could help us out with this. **S. Levesque:** From what I know about the climate smart grants from DOAG its more producer based for climate change mitigation and prevention, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. I can provide contact information for whoever handles this grant. **D. Savageau:** The U.S. Forest service has money for invasive species research. The EPA Long Island Sound study has research dollars related to watershed health. Since we are looking at the economic value of sterile cultivars of invasive plants, I want to make sure we are also looking at the economic value of native plants. **D. Nelson:** A retailer is going to stock what sells because that is what makes them money, it comes down to demand from the public. The opportunity for customer education at the point of sale is limited because of staffing limitations. Educating the public is a big factor in this, including encouraging the public to use alternatives to invasive plants. **D. Savageau:** The sterile cultivar issue is an ongoing issue, but I support going forward with this list as long as we address the sterile cultivar issue within the three-year phase out period. **B. Moorhead:** Can the sterile cultivars be distinguished from non-sterile varieties? **B. Connolly:** Sterile barberry

cultivars were bred as replacements for the existing nonsterile cultivars and might be difficult to distinguish. There may not be economic incentives to sell the nonsterile cultivars or sell nonsterile cultivars that are not what they claim to be. There are genetic tests available to distinguish between cultivars. There are pathways to explore on ensuring the sterile cultivars are what they say they are. **D. Nelson:** The only economic barrier to sterile cultivars is the royalty issue. **D. Newman:** All the sterile cultivars are branded plants. I can identify the different cultivars relatively easily. I don't see nurseries mislabeling plants because that is breaking many stages of compliance so hopefully that puts people at ease. **B. Connolly:** Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) enforces the banning or selling of invasive plants in Massachusetts. I'm uncomfortable with California privet being prohibited from sale at this time especially with comments about economic importance to industry and that border privet is the species that is found in the wild. **D. Newman:** Dr. Li at UConn has been developing sterile winged euonymus, should we add a sterile cultivar exemption for this plant too? **L. Kurtz:** I don't believe that plant is close to being commercially available, but we can specify in the annual report an evaluation process to provide a new cultivar exemption for newly introduced sterile cultivars. **D. Newman:** We have already purchased and planted Crimson Sunset maple liners that won't be ready for 4 years. Five-year phase out preferred for Norway Maple. **D. Savageau:** Makes motion to approve recommendations as discussed:

No action/change at this time

- California privet (*Ligustrum ovafolium*)
- Rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*)
- Creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
- Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*)
- Common water-hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)
- Watter lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*)

Immediate prohibition; no phase out period

- Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*)

Prohibition with 3-year phase out period

- Glossy buckthorn/European buckthorn *Frangula alnus* (*Rhamnus frangula*)
- Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- Winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*)
- European privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
- Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
- Miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis*) *with possible allowance for sterile cultivars
- Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) *with possible allowance for sterile cultivars

Prohibition with 5-year phase out period

- Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) *with possible allowance for sterile cultivars

* The IPC will develop regulation recommendations regarding possible sterile plants no later than January 2028, which may allow for the import, movement, sale, purchase, transplant, cultivation, or distribution of sterile plants.

- **B. Connolly** seconds. All vote in favor. No opposition or abstention.

New Business

- **V. Wallace** will set up a meeting with CT Nursery inspectors including DOAG and CAES to discuss enforcement.
- Set first meeting date for 2025 as February 19th 2025 2-4pm.
- Put forward recommendations for the end of year report which will be distributed to the environmental committee.
- Thank you to the CIPWG steering committee and CIPWG subcommittee for informing this discussion.

Announcements – thank CIPWG committees for providing recommendations

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 pm