

DRAFT

Minutes – Invasive Plant Council
Thursday, June 20, 2024, 2-4 pm

Attendees: Victoria Wallace (UConn), Connie Trolle (Bantam Lake Protection Association), 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)

Absent: Darryl Newman (Planter's Choice Nursery, LLC)

Non-voting attendees: Lauren Kurtz (Invasive Species Outreach Specialist - UConn)

A. Call to order. Victoria Wallace called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes: **October 18, 2023 & February 14, 2024**

October 18, 2023 - D. Savageau calls motion, D. Nelson seconds; Motion passes.

February 14, 2024 - B. Connolly calls motion, B. Morehead seconds; Motion passes

C. Updates from Council members

B. Moorhead: Many positive reactions about plants added to invasive plant banned list. Also heard reactions that it's too bad more weren't added.

D. Savageau: CT River Conservation District (CRDC) puts out the invasive plant guide, shared [link](#). People are getting educated and using the guide, there is a big demand for it. We may need to reprint or update and reprint. If there are comments about this document as we consider an update, within the year, let me know. A lot of funding coming down through the US Forest Service to pay attention to stewardship work on properties. Also, USDA NRCS dollars focus on climate smart and invasive management is part of that, dollars coming into work on these efforts. Big effort on public drinking water supply watersheds to look at stewardship of their forests and forest management in general. There is an understood link between poorly managed forests and water quality/quantity. Program in November, NE partnership for forests and water from Ohio to Maine. CT hosting a workshop for forestry and watershed management professionals to discuss this issue. CRCD is in conversation with Aquarion about an invasive species management plan. Water utilities are concerned with Beech leaf disease, what will replace the Beech trees, will it be invasives?

S. Levesque: No active grants programs available right now, not sure when the next round is. We do offer climate smart farming grants, UConn Extension announced 18 new and beginning farmers receiving climate smart micro grant awards fueled by climate smart agriculture and forestry grant, was recently closed. Awardees can use mini grant funds to purchase tools, equipment, soil amendments, and support installation costs. I've been working on restoration

program grants; Jones Family Farm cleared a lot of invasives on their land down in Shelton. Laurel Glen farm also in Shelton was involved with restoration efforts of their property. Sub Edge farm also was awarded a restoration grant, and this is expected to be completed this summer. Farmington Farm Truck did some restorative clearing as well. Farmers recognize invasives can absolutely overtake a field quickly. These grant funds are imperative for farmers to put up a defense against Russian olive and barberry, etc. These grants are a 2-year contract between the Department of Ag and the contractor/farmer. A contract is developed with a defined scope of work; whether clearing, drainage, or soil amendments. The state in turn contracts with environmental scientists to visit the site and the farmer, learn about their situation and create a restoration plan to submit to DoAg for approval. After the project is completed, the environmental scientist will visit the site to sign off on the project so DoAg can award funds.

J. Aulakh: Herbicide resistance work continuation. Kochia is listed as an invasive plant in CT and Water hemp herbicide resistance screening. These two species are resistant to some herbicides. Water hemp is resistant to glyphosate and ALS inhibitors. Kochia is susceptible to glyphosate. Continuing this work with a weed scientist from Cornell. Molecular work will occur to determine the mechanism of resistance. Another focus of my research involves a strategy to manage burning bush. We did basal bark and hack and squirt treatments this year working with Frank Belknap from CIPWG. We found these herbicide treatments are very effective with one application. Will repeat this in the fall and add more locations.

C. Trolle: Bantam Lake received a grant from DEEP AIS grant opportunity to have inspectors trained for boat launch monitoring at one of the marinas, mainly for hydrilla which continues to be popping up at lakes statewide. On June 29th Greg Bugbee from CAES OASIS will talk about identifying aquatic invasive plants with several lake associations hosted by Bantam Lake Protection Association. Bantam Lakes received a permit from the state to use hydrogen peroxide to treat blue green algae, 33,000 lbs. of hydrogen peroxide was used, and the lake is clearer than it's ever been. We are optimistic. We've been using copper sulfate and speculate it's been more harmful than not. Alum treatment is too expensive. Received a grant from the Federal government to complete a watershed plan for Bantam Lake, found the biggest contributor to the blue green algae problem is a local country club. We are working with parts of the watershed we haven't worked with before, started a task force and getting people to be aware of what goes into the rivers, then lakes, then the Sound.

D. Nelson: Lauren and Dustyn will speak at the CNLA Summer Field Day in July at Site One Landscape Supply in Greenwich. They will host a discussion about the most recent plants added to the state's IP list and get feedback about potential plants (esp. burning bush and Japanese barberry) that may be prohibited from sale in the future. With the passage of HB 5225, the state legislature took the suggestion of the IPC to update the Invasive Plant list but did not extend the municipal exemption as requested. The environment committee would like a suggestion/determination in our 2024 annual report about burning bush and Japanese barberry, because they received public comment specifically on these plants. The easy suggestion would

be to ban these plants from sale, but we want to understand the economic concerns from growers or a potential “phase out” period. We need to anticipate recommendations of the CIPWG subcommittee and subsequent IPC recommendations. If CNLA wants to suggest to a delay on banning either of these two plants or other plants that already are deemed invasive, but not yet prohibited from sale, we need to have a concrete reason as to why CNLA would recommend to not prohibit these plants from sale. At CNLA in July, we will help nursery members to potentially prepare them for the eminent ban on these plants and help to make sure they feel included in the process. I believe it will help make the process less painful and acceptable for them to phase out these plants from their inventory. I received several phone calls about the wisteria CIPWG/IPC added to the invasive/banned list asking about why there was no phase out period. We need industry feedback about the economic impact and suggestions for phase out.

V. Wallace: I received some positive comments about the adding of plants to the IP list. We (the IPC) should be happy and pleased that plants recommended by the IPC were added to the IP list. I am grateful that the brief communication with Rep Gresco at a Summer CNLA meeting, when intended to inquire as to why the Environment committee doesn’t respond and provide feedback to the IPC annual report, yielded the renewal of dialogue for the IPC. When I emailed Gresco as a follow up after the 2023 IPC annual report was submitted, he introduced the house bill based on IPC recommendations. The report was submitted through the proper channels and our request to have new plants added to the state IP list was successful. We have reestablished the protocol for the CIPWG subcommittee recommendations that support future IPC recommendations to be part of our IPC annual report sent forward to the environment committee.

B. Connolly: reported on his Invasive plant research projects that are funded by USDA. Collecting rust spores off *Berberis vulgaris* and *B. × ottawensis* which is the hybrid species between *B. thunbergii* and *B. vulgaris*. The USDA cereal rust lab out of Minnesota is interested in the black stem rust of wheat and crop disease cycles between invasives and cereal crops in the Northeast. Common buckthorn also carries a rust that goes to oats, glossy buckthorn carries a rust that goes to reed canary grass. Invasives are involved with crop disease cycles and research is ongoing.

L. Kurtz: In my role as IP Outreach Specialist, I have been meeting with professional pond management companies including Pond and Lakes Connection, Solitude, Northeast Aquatic Research, New England Aquatic services to identify industry needs and spend time in the field. An identified need is that lake associations currently without management plans should prioritize the need to create and implement one. Plan to reach out to lake associations and the Connecticut Federation of Lakes and start this conversation. Just submitted a grant through regional IPM for pond integrated pest management. Working with DEEP on outreach materials and events for water chestnut pulls. The strain of Hydrilla from the CT river is in 6 lakes outside of the river. More lakes may prove to have river Hydrilla this season, will be keeping an eye on this. Plans for the CIPWG symposium, which is happening later this year, and there will be an aquatic breakout session with CAES OAS. Jatinder will be speaking at the CIPWG symposium as well which is in Storrs on October 29th.

Old Business

- None

Questions and discussion

- **D. Nelson:** with request from legislature in mind, what has CIWPG done as far as research into winged euonymus and Japanese barberry? **B. Connolly** responded that there is no doubt these two species are invasive, and they are everywhere. The question is about whether the cultivars that are marketed as sterile should be banned or not. **B. Connolly** doesn't believe there is a sterile cultivar of winged euonymus, but there are sterile cultivars of Japanese barberry, and this is something to consider. **V. Wallace** mentioned that the CIPWG subcommittee will have the conversation and if there are decisions to be made, these decisions will be reported to the IPC, especially related to these two species being recommended as prohibited from sale. This will warrant discussion for our October meeting. **D. Nelson-** we need to come together as a group to have a stance on this issue of sterile cultivars. **D. Savageau-** we will need to have the hard discussion about the cultivars, keeping the industry in mind, but moving towards nature-based solutions, increasing biodiversity, and encouraging native plants. **D. Nelson-** many of the growers have political influence and we need to make sure we have buy-in from industry going forward. **V. Wallace -**many nurseries have phased out selling invasive plants, there are other states with invasive plant bans, that ban the species: including cultivars. One of the considerations is the longevity of the studies evaluating the sterility of sterile cultivars. **D. Savageau-** these two plants are a big discussion; we may need to schedule another meeting in case we aren't able to finish our discussion during the October meeting. **V. Wallace-** we will schedule another meeting in November. **D. Nelson-** after July 4th I can send out a survey to CNLA members to get an idea of the economic impact of these plants and hopefully gain insight – hence, the reason for participation at this year's CNLA summer meeting.
- **V. Wallace-** regarding the municipal preemption, Dustyn do you want to reach out to CNLA regarding what we want to recommend on our annual report? **D. Nelson-** the ultimate goal would be to have the municipal preemption be indefinite instead of having an end date. CNLA should have a conversation with Rep. Gresko about the end date and inquire about removing the end date. Couldn't get an answer about why this wasn't included in the legislation this session. **B. Morehead-** the 20-year anniversary of the state invasive plant list, what is wrong with there not being a municipal preemption? **D. Nelson-**it makes it hard to enforce and manage a business doing business between towns without exemptions. Problems with the business, enforcement, and public relations point of view. Reduces confusion and keeps towns from regulating plants differently than the state. Keeps emotions out of the conversation and relies on research and predetermined protocol through this council. **V. Wallace-** edits it's easier to do business in the state when town by town has consistent policy. Enforcement is a concern and has always been an issue.

New Business

- Next meeting October 16th 2-4pm
- We will schedule another meeting early November to discuss anything we aren't able to fit into the meeting on October 16th.

Announcements –

D. Savageau hydrilla notice from army corps of engineers about public meetings

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/Topics/CTRiver/USACE%20Hydrilla%20Demonstration%20Project%20-PublicNotice-NewEngland-StakeholderMeetings-2024%20Final.pdf>

Meeting adjourned at 3:19

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