

Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 09/18/2024

Participants

Members

Ann Messerschmidt (League of MN Cities), Christina Basch (MNDOT), Cody Dock (MN CAIs), Fawad Shah (MCIA), Jane Youngkrantz (MN Assoc. Townships), Jason Beckler (BWSR), Jen Larson (USDA FS), Jim Calkins (MNLA), Kelsey Taylor (Fond du Lac), Laura Van Riper (DNR), Mary Jo Youngbauer (MN SWCDs), Raining White (Leech Lake), Rob Venette (UM MITPPC), Sascha Lodge (DNR), and Roger Becker (U of M)

Guests

Zach Schumacher (Schumacher Nursery)

MDA

Anthony Cortilet, Emilie Justen, Jennifer Burington, Julie Dellick, Kimberly Thielen Cremers, Michael Merriman, and Monika Chandler

Introductions

Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes

Monika suggested two changes to the agenda. The first is to change the topic “Specially regulated plants label requirements” from a discussion to an update. The second is to move this topic from New Business to after the Listing Subcommittee Updates to accommodate Kimberly’s schedule. Emilie made a motion to approve the agenda with these changes. Christina and Fawad both seconded the motion and there were no objections.

Raining White moved to approve the past meeting minutes. Jane seconded the motion and there were no objections.

MDA and Member Updates and Old Business

Listing Subcommittee Updates

Laura provided an update on the assessment progress. Risk assessments will be presented today. This year, the subcommittee is focusing on assessing new species, while next year will be dedicated to reassessments. An winged burning bush assessment of a low fecundity variety of the cultivar 'Fireball' will be presented next year. In addition to this assessment, we are also compiling information about how other states are making exemptions for low fecundity cultivars. During the November meeting, the committee will select species for updating assessments.

Nursery Update Regarding Labeling

There are three specially regulated maples in Minnesota that require labeling. These include all cultivars of Norway, Amur, and Tartarian maples. There is a small group of individuals who grow these trees and plant them as part of their own landscape business. It is not practical for these grower/landscapers to label because nobody but the landscapers sees the trees until after they are planted. It doesn't have the educational function of a labeled plant at a nursery. Due to these considerations, MDA will not require this group to label certain plants. We encourage them to notify and educate their clients about the notice of keeping plants one hundred yards from natural vegetation.

Raining asked about jumping worms with regard to the plant trade. Laura suggested that Raining set up a meeting with her to discuss this topic.

Jane asked species and cultivars for labeling. Kimberly said all cultivars require labeling. This is most difficult for Norway maple because there are many cultivars and some people don't recognize the cultivars as Norway. Outreach about labels has been helpful. Compliance has been very good. It is important for this committee to understand that labeling requirements tax both industry and inspectors.

Management and Policy Subcommittee Updates

The new RFP has been out for a few weeks for the new round of noxious weed grants. The deadline to submit is by October 23 of this year and several applications have already been submitted. It's set up like last year and the application is available online. All of the eleven current grants will be closing in December of this year except for one that has requested an extension in to next year. Extensions are available for any of the grantees that wish to extend the period.

Additionally, Emilie mentioned that the grants team is working on an increase in funding next legislative sessions. It is in its early stages, so there are no exact increases to report on at this time.

Raining asked if the grants are on a first come first served basis. Emilie answered that the grants are competitive grants that are ranked and reviewed by a committee. The people on the Management and Policy Subcommittee typically help with the grant reviews. Previously the subcommittee has had other NWAC members help, if anyone wants to volunteer reach out to Emilie stating your interest.

Outreach Updates

Jennifer provided updates that the Smarty Plants Podcast is up and running and are rolling out on a monthly basis. So far there are about 500 downloads from the website alone, statistics from the other streaming platforms have not been analyzed.

Monika has been working on updating the knotweed fact sheet and it is nearing completion. The update is based upon research by Roger Becker/MITPPC and also includes updated information from practitioners. She also brought attention to the MITPPC article on knotweeds.

Anthony added that the Palmer amaranth group and laboratory team had a paper accepted in Weed Science that discusses the genetic verification process and identification of Palmer amaranth. It is [Optimizing Palmer amaranth \(*Amaranthus palmeri*\) genetic testing of seeds using real-time \(quantitative\) PCR](#).

Garlic Mustard Biocontrol Updates

Roger and team submitted a petition to a weed biocontrol focused USDA APHIS PPQ Technical Advisory Group (TAG). It is for *Ceutorhynchus constrictus*, a seed feeding weevil. A collaborative team in Canada also submitted the petition to their regulatory agency. The Canadian regulatory agency must respond within 6 months. There is no maximum response time for USDA and took years for the *C. scrobocollis*, a crown boring weevil, petition. It was the first garlic mustard biocontrol petition submitted. Researchers think *C. scrobocollis* will be the most damaging weevil to garlic mustard but other biocontrol weevils may be important for garlic mustard management. Because garlic mustard is a biennial, it produces a lot of seed. Therefore, reduced seed dispersal would be very helpful.

Years ago, additional testing was required for *C. scrobocollis*. The testing was done on *C. constrictus* at the same time. Therefore, we anticipate the petition review process will go faster.

Tribal nations were asked for their input on the *C. scrobocollis* petition. Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe provided input and that was appreciated by the research team. The next steps in the petition process is to address any questions or concerns before going to public comment. After public comments are addressed, the petition goes up to USDA management for signature. Then, we would need a USDA permit to field release *C. scrobocollis*. Our former permits were all for working in quarantine, not in the field.

For the first releases in the US, the most optimistic timeframe for field release of *C. scrobocollis* is fall 2025. Although Roger is planning to retire, he and his research team will still be around and would like to be involved with garlic mustard biocontrol. Interest in garlic mustard biocontrol remains high in the US.

The first releases in Canada were in 2018 and established populations were documented recently. It takes years for weevil populations to build up to damaging levels.

Monika asked if these weevils fly. Flight could facilitate distribution. Roger said they can fly but they have not been observed flying in quarantine. They probably don't fly far but can fly short distances (100 – 200 feet) if needed.

Raining asked about the timeline for releases by agencies after approval. Roger answered that the timeline will depend on the data from initial releases.

Palmer Amaranth Updates

Julie said there was a new report of Palmer amaranth in Todd County. Samples were collected then genetic testing confirmed the plants were Palmer. Another site that has been monitored for years was found to have Palmer still growing in the field. MDA staff monitored this site bi-weekly and suspect plants were removed. All other previously monitored sites were free of Palmer.

However the MDA learned about seed contaminated with Palmer amaranth that was distributed to growers. Palmer was found in the seed lot by genetic testing. The seed was sent to about 20 farmers in the state. Luckily, some of it was recalled before planting. The MDA has been surveying the fields where the seed was planted. The feedback from the impacted landowners has been positive. They were interested in having the MDA help scout fields. By the end of this week, 70% of the impacted sites will be surveyed.

Roger asked what the contamination was in. Julie said it was in an organic sorghum sudangrass seed lot. Roger asked about the seed origin location. Tony and Mike said it is an active investigation and we are not sure about the source yet. Mike added the seed company did everything right according to seed law and the company's quality control.

Seed Program Advisory Updates

Michael provided updates on the Seed Program Advisory Council. There are three annual meetings that are held in March, August or September, and December. There is representation from farmers, seed industry, grain industry, Minnesota Crop Improvement, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Subcommittees, including a Listing Subcommittee and a Treated Seed Subcommittee, are being developed. We've been working on bylaws based upon the NWAC bylaws. The primary focus of the advisory committee is to advise the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's seed program and assess seeds that will be listed as noxious weed seeds in Minnesota.

Laura commented that many of the species NWAC recommended for review are species that are a risk for contaminating native seed plantings. Are there any representatives from the conservation realm? Mike said yes, there are representatives from the native seed industry. Two of the groups we are also considering are MnDOT and NRCS. They buy and plant a lot of seed in the state. They cross over from native seed to cover crops as well. Christina added that Ken Grave's group would be good to include. Mike agreed and has talked with them.

Raining asked if it was accurate to say that this committee is not focused only on crop seed. Mike agreed and said the seed program oversees all seed sold with the intent to be planted in the ground. Raining asked about wild rice as agricultural and also about natural replanting. Mike said it is a question for a seed analyst about how they handle germination tests for aquatic plants. Mike said he will ask about that.

New Business

Noxious Weed Risk Assessments

Canada Thistle - Laura presented the updated risk assessment. Canada thistle is widespread and established in Minnesota. We asked people to share information about current impacts but did not receive information. Laura

searched but there were no numbers about financial losses. We were asked to update the assessment and see the outcome. If we applied criteria similar to other species, Canada thistle would not be recommended for listing. However, because it is widespread, it is more in keeping with Restricted Noxious Weeds. The recommendation is to move this plant to the Restricted category. This would keep it on the noxious weed list, would prohibit its additional movement, and allow it to continue to get education and outreach.

Ann asked if you are still looking for letters of support. Laura said it depends on whether the committee votes to recommend moving it to Restricted. Jim added that if it were delisted, a county could list it. Roger added that there will be pushback but moving it to Restricted may encourage people to think about Canada thistle differently. Fawad asked if it was moved to Restricted, what responsibilities would change? Laura said landowners would not be mandated to prevent spread of Canada thistle. Jane asked if it would be delisted, what would be the recourse if a neighboring landowner doesn't control Canada thistle. For Restricted Noxious Weeds, you can't make your neighbor control the weed. Roger asked if a county could elevate it to a Prohibited. Laura said yes.

Raining said the county listing option is good to have. It is similar to Tribes having noxious weed lists. Christina asked if Tribal lists could be shared with MDA to post on the website so all of the weed information is in one place. Emilie said we have not talked about MDA's website as a place where if Tribes wanted to share their lists, they could be compiled.

Hybrid Crack Willow - Kelsey presented the risk assessment for hybrid crack willow (*Salix x rubens*). There is some debate amongst scientists about the species name. It is difficult to identify from other willows. This plant is being assessed since willows can reproduce vegetatively and quickly especially along waterways. There have been reports of these plants in Minnesota, and most are reported in St. Louis County. It is listed as a "watch list" plant in several Midwestern states. It would be difficult to control these big trees along waterways. The willow's occurrence and impacts have not been documented yet in the United States. It was suggested to reassess this species as new information becomes available and to consider early detection and rapid response strategies. The recommendation is Do No List due to difficulties with identification and lack of documented impacts.

Raining asked about concerns about hybridization with native willows. Kelsey said willows hybridize easily and there is concern. However, regulating this species would not prevent hybridization from occurring. Ann asked about the process for re-evaluating plants if more information becomes available. Laura said yes, we could add to this assessment in the future. Raining asked if Fond du Lac has done control for this species. Kelsey said no control has been done yet due to complications with erosion on Spirit Island where it has been found.

European mountain ash - Monika presented on European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Andy David wrote most of this assessment. This plant does well in cool, moist areas and has been planted extensively in Duluth and some other northern Minnesota cities. Plantings have been escaping cultivation and overtaking the overstory and understory in Duluth. The species has been documented as invasive and problematic in other states and countries, but there is not much information about infestations. There are concerns about it hybridizing with native species but this has not been studied yet. It is recommended to list the plant as a Restricted Noxious Weed with a 3-year phase out.

Christina and Jim asked about Finland documenting it as problematic given that it is native. Monika said she did not do that part of the assessment so does not have details. Raining asked about identification. Monika said there was a storymap to help with ID and added a link to the chat. Christina mentioned that European mountain

ash was abundant in Sweden. Jim added that all of the mountain ash are susceptible to fire blight so there is hesitancy to plant them.

Asian copperleaf / Heart copperleaf - Monika also presented on Asian copperleaf (*Acalypha australis* L.). There is a new common name called heart copperleaf. The new name will be added to the assessment. Copperleaf is an annual plant. It is an issue in cropfields in its native range as it has developed herbicide resistance. Iowa is where it has received the most attention largely because the Extension Weed Scientist Bob Hartzler raised awareness. It was a surprise when it was found in crop fields and has now been found in 6 counties. How it is moving is not well understood. Herbicide resistance is a big factor for how problematic this species is. The recommendation is Do Not List this plant at this time but can revisit if more information becomes available. There were no questions.

Autumn olive - Laura presented on Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). The plant is Restricted in Wisconsin as it can outcompete other plant species and produce dense stands. Autumn olive is not widespread in Minnesota at this time. It is documented as a problem in many other states. It is a nitrogen fixer and could change nitrogen cycles. This plant would be expensive and challenging to control for landowners. The recommendation is to list it as a Restricted Noxious Weed to prevent sales and purposeful introduction to new areas. There were no questions.

Hybrid willow/Austree - Laura also presented on hybrid willow known as austree (*Salix matsudana x alba*). The director of the Cowling Arboretum suggested that we assess this plant due to problems in Australia and New Zealand. It is known to be a fast-growing tree that can fill in large areas and reproduce sexually and asexually. The concern is about displacing native species through competition. Like the other willows, there are concerns about hybridization and they are difficult to identify. It is used and sold in Minnesota. The recommendation is Do Not List the plant. There were no questions.

Queen of the meadow - Emilie presented on Queen of the Meadow (*Filipendula ulmaria*). 1854 Treaty Authority raised concerns about this plant. The plant is regulated as Restricted in Wisconsin and was found to be in Minnesota. According to the Wisconsin DNR the plant invades wetlands, fens, bogs, and roadside ditches and can crowd out native plants. It spreads by rhizomes as well as by seed. It has naturalized in eastern states and Canadian provinces. There are about 144 reports statewide. It is not widely sold. The recommendation is Do Not List. There were no questions.

Russian olive - Christina presented Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*). It has been planted widely in Minnesota and other states and Canadian provinces. Most of the documented infestations are in western Minnesota. Several states in the west regulate this species. It reproduces vegetatively but the main reproduction is by seed that is vectored by birds and mammals. There is a hybrid cultivar with a native species but the fruit does not contain viable seed so that reduces concerns. It is not sold much, likely due to its bad reputation and regulation in other states. The recommendation is Do Not List.

Roger asked why to list Autumn olive but not Russian olive. Christina said climate predictions favor Autumn rather than Russian olive. Jim added that Russian olive is a Class C Noxious Weed in New Mexico.

Stiltgrass - Jen presented on stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*). It is native to Asia and is not reported in Minnesota yet but is in La Crosse County, Wisconsin. Stiltgrass reduces native plant community and inhibits

forest regeneration. Many states regulate stiltgrass. It can cause large financial losses by reducing tree regeneration. It is recommended to list as Prohibited Eradicate. There were no questions.

Ranking Survey

We decided to email the ranking survey rather than discuss it during this meeting.

Meeting Format

Monika will email a survey about meeting format preferences.

Next meeting date and goals

The survey will be sent out for ranking noxious weed list species. This list will inform the subcommittee on which species to reassess. The next meeting is November 20, 2024 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. The location is still to be determined.

Adjournment

Raining motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting ended at 2:05pm.