

Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 03/21/2024, Online Meeting

Participants

Members

Alan Perish (MN Farmer's Union), Christina Basch (MnDOT), Cody Dock (MACAI), David Nolee (MLEP), Fawad Shah (MN Crop Improvement), Jane Youngkrantz (MN Assoc. Townships), Jason Beckler (BWSR), Jennifer Larson (USDA FS), Jim Calkins (MNLA), Julie Weisenhorn (UM Horticultural Sciences), Kelsey Taylor (MCT/Fond du Lac), Laura Van Riper (DNR), Mary Jo Youngbauer (MN SWCDs), Raining White (MCT/Leech Lake), Richard Moore (MACLC), Roger Becker (U of M Agronomy), Steve Chaplin (TNC)

Guests

Zach Schumacher (Schumacher's Nursery)

MDA

Emilie Justen, Monika Chandler, Julie Dellick, Mike Merriman, Kimberly Thielen Cremers, Jennifer Burington, and Eidan Silver

Introductions

Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes

Jane made a motion to approve the agenda and Julie seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed. Jim made a motion to approve the minutes but would like to add the vote totals. Julie seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed with this addition to the minutes.

MDA and Member Updates and Old Business

Listing Subcommittee updates

Update on assessment progress

Laura shared that the Listing Subcommittee has met multiple times and have begun work on this year's risk assessments. The species being assessed in 2024 are: Asian copperleaf (*Acalypha australis*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellate*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), winged burning

bush cultivar/s with low fecundity (*Euonymus alatus* cultivar/s), queen of the meadow (*Filipendula ulmaria*), yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon* and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*), tatarian honeysuckle hybrid 'Freedom' (*Lonicera tatarica* 'Freedom') – only assessing whether viable seed is produced, stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), Austree willow (*Salix matsudana* x *alba*), white crack willow (*Salix xfragilis* = *S. alba* x *S. euxina*), and European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*).

Seed assessment priority recommendations from NWAC document

The Listing Subcommittee met to discuss which species NWAC would recommend as priorities for risk assessments by the Seed Program Advisory Committee. The Listing Subcommittee drafted a document with recommendations which was shared with the full NWAC before the meeting and discussed at the NWAC meeting. The entire Minnesota Noxious Weed List was reviewed and species likely to be seed contaminants were selected. Currently, there are only a few species on both the Noxious Weed and Noxious Seed Lists. These species are leafy spurge, plumeless thistle, Palmer amaranth and Canada thistle. Fawad asked how the list would be used. Laura said these are suggestions that they can use as they like or ignore. Laura made a motion to approve providing the document to the Seed Program Advisory Committee. Kelsey seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion passed. Monika Chandler will provide the document to MDA's Seed Program.

Update on both DNR and MDA regulating non-native Phragmites

Non-native Phragmites was classified by the DNR as a prohibited invasive species effective 02/02/2024. Now non-native Phragmites is regulated by both DNR and MDA in a way that parallels purple loosestrife. Helpful links: [DNR Feb. 20 Rulemaking Press Release](#), the [DNR Invasive Species Rulemaking webpage](#), and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about non-native Phragmite rulemaking webpage. Many wastewater treatment facilities are transitioning from non-native Phragmites in the drying beds. Some are trying native Phragmites or a drying bed without plants. Others are trying new screw press technology. The MDA currently issues permits for the land application of the non-native Phragmites plant material.

Management and Policy Subcommittee Updates

Emilie introduced Cody Dock as the new MACAI representative replacing Trent McCorkle. Trent had to step back after 20 plus years advising MDA on weeds. Cody will serve on the Management and Policy Subcommittee. Cody spoke about his ecological restoration background and years of experience with invasive species management with an emphasis on common buckthorn management.

2024 Work Plan progress report

We have a strategic framework. From that, we developed a work plan that is more metric driven with specific goals. Here are work plan accomplishments to date.

- We completed new County Agricultural Inspector training on 02/13/2024 with 13 participants. Most participants were new but a few took the course as a refresher.
- A weed of the month article summarized finds of Prohibited Eradicate species in counties where they were not reported previously. There were only two new finds. One was Palmer amaranth in Wadena and the other was red hailstone in Fillmore. The decrease in new finds may be because three species (meadow knapweed, poison hemlock and round leaf bittersweet) moved from Prohibited Eradicate to Prohibited Control. Round leaf bittersweet and poison hemlock previously made up the majority of new finds.

- Emilie was very pleased to announce that after years of her advocacy for a better way to display images, we got a photo carousel for our webpages. All weed species webpages were updated to this new format. We go through the pages at least every 2 years to check that text remains current, links work, etc.
 - Cody stated this resource is great and is very much needed to assist landowners and local weed inspectors who have questions or who want more information on a species.

Cook County proposal to add garden valerian and marsh thistle to their county list

- Cook County would like to stop the spread of garden valerian and marsh thistle into the county. They think regulating the species at a county level would help them respond to new introductions. The county board meeting to approve the resolution has not occurred yet.
 - Raining asked whether a county would add a species to be more stringent than the state list? Emilie explained that yes, a county can do this so a species could be regulated differently than at the state level. For example, garden valerian is not on any list so Cook County would add it so they can regulate it like a Prohibited Control species. The process for this is that the county board passes a resolution to add a species to the county weed list and they share it with the MDA. Then it is shared with NWAC and the commissioner is consulted to learn if there are any issues with the county listing. Historically, the commissioner hasn't opposed a county listing. Then the species is added to MDA's County Noxious Weeds webpage.
 - Emilie said she will share the resolution with NWAC.
- Because we won't meet again until September and don't want to hold this up, Emilie made a motion for NWAC to allow MDA to approve the Cook County Board resolution to create a county list with garden valerian and marsh thistle. Alan seconded the motion. The motion passed with none opposed.

MDA noxious weed grants

All contracts were finalized. We had \$150,000 which didn't go far but will fund important work. Emilie will visit field sites to see grant funded work. Emilie will send a survey to past recipients to see what gaps exist in the program and identify additional needs. We've been asked whether grants change recipient behavior. Emilie is trying to get more information on grant impacts. This information may be useful for securing future grant funds.

Raining asked if past projects are posted and if any of these projects stand out? Emilie said there have been some innovative projects such as goats for weed management. Past projects are not officially published or compiled in a single location at this time but that could be done.

Online weed identification training

The Management and Policy Subcommittee discussed training. Julie and Emilie will continue to work on this. No timeline has been established yet.

MDA outreach update

- Jennifer Burington and Eidan Silver from MDA handle printed materials and webpages. They are moving MDA forward with outreach and helped with the updated weed webpages.
- Jen said updated round leaf bittersweet ID cards were printed recently and are available.
- Jen showed a form in development for requesting outreach materials.
 - Julie asked if there were a cost for materials. Jen answered no, there is no cost.

- Laura said the form will be helpful and she can point people to it. She asked if materials will be available online? Jen said yes, but it will take some time to make the pdf files accessible.
- Jane said the request form is great and asked when will it be available? Jen said the link should work in two weeks and the link will be shared with the committee. Julie said she doesn't want to overwhelm them with requests from Master Gardeners and the Arboretum. In response, Jen said the link will be on the County Agricultural Inspector webpage which is a little obscure.
- Eiden is leading the development of a new podcast that will be called "Smarty Plants". Bob Dunning (Stearns Co. Ag. Inspector) will be the first guest. Hopefully, the first episode will be in August.
- Online noxious weed distribution mapping useful at a township level is on the to-do list.
- A wild parsnip factsheet is in development and Julie is working on a fake wild parsnip flowering stem. Many committee members expressed interest in receiving these materials.
- Julie said that Angie Gupta, UMN Extension Natural Resources, has some 3D models. Her contact is agupta@umn.edu.

Seed Program Advisory Committee update

Mike Merriman said the Seed Program Advisory Committee (SPAC) is in its first year as a formal committee. All advisory members have been appointed. The first meeting was held on 12/12/2023. There will be a minimum of three meetings per year with additional meetings as needed. The next meeting will be in August and they will continue to work on bylaws. Mike gave SPAC an update on NWAC. The previous seed program advisory group was advisory only and did not have a role with listing. Through SPAC, MDA will receive feedback on how our program works. Mike will provide the seed assessment priority recommendations document from NWAC to SPAC.

Mike also gave an update on MDA's seed regulatory program.

- Palmer amaranth was found in screenings. We will try to do trace backs to learn where the screenings originated and where they were disseminated.
- We are finalizing our report about Palmer in feed samples that both seed and feed programs collected. We are likely to continue this pilot next year. We also found Canada thistle and field bindweed in samples. These species are Prohibited Noxious Weed Seeds.
- Collected close to 800 samples to date. Inspectors are about halfway through their sampling season.
- Starting to sample from online orders.

New Business

Clarification text about cultivars and hybrids added to Noxious Weed List

The following text was added to the [Minnesota Noxious Weed List Webpage](#). This is the official Minnesota noxious weed list. All species on the Minnesota noxious weed list include all hybrids, cultivars, and varieties unless specifically exempted.

Jim said the text is premature because we did not specifically evaluate each cultivar. Also, MDA should use the term botanical varieties.

Length of list discussion for the Prohibited Control category

Prohibited Control species are established in the state or a region of the state. These plants must be controlled in a way that prevents spread of these plants by seed or vegetative means.

- Kelsey started the discussion by saying that she does not think that the list is too lengthy and supports all of the plants on the list.
- Alan concurred with Kelsey and stated that problematic plants should remain listed.
- Julie agreed with Kelsey and raised the concern that if plants are removed, they won't get managed.
- Richard said that the list should be reduced. It is difficult to learn all of the species and a long list is diluted and unfocused. We should work hard on the species we can get a handle on and make a difference. Canada thistle had been on the list from the start and that listing did not have any impact on its prevalence, so it is time to knock it off the list. Monika asked if he has an ideal number of species in mind. He thought 10-12 would be good and the focus would result in increased impact.
- Julie suggested that ranking the list may provide some prioritization. Christina asked if the categories act as a preliminary ranking system.
- Kelsey suggested a compromise could be a ranking system for funding without shortening the list. Emilie replied that we have some ranking for funding.
- Mary Jo expressed agreement for listing species if the assessment says it should be listed.
- Steve commented that during his time working with the legislature on overhauling weed law, there was concern about the length of the list and that there would be hundreds of species listed. Steve is no longer worried because the list hasn't grown as fast as expected and he thinks there prioritizing which species are listed has been handled well.
- Jim said that so long as the status of listed species are reviewed regularly and changes in listings are made as appropriate, the length of list should not be a consideration. He does agree with Kelsey about prioritization of species from a control perspective would be helpful.
- Laura added that it would also be helpful if there was base funding for management but there is not.
- Julie suggested that maybe species could be ordered on the list by most recently added and then prioritize education in the same way so inspectors can focus on building their knowledge about the newly added species.
- Emilie said the management and policy subcommittee will potentially discuss ranking species and how that would be done. Hopefully by the next full member meeting in September that there will be a ranking process started.
- Mary Jo said to correct her if she is wrong but if most township supervisors respond to complaints, they can look up that species rather than have to learn them all.
- Christina asked if lowest ranked priority species be good candidates for reviews to see if there is a better fit category for the species?
- Julie added that ranking may also be done by counties because every plant isn't equally problematic everywhere. There were several likes to this comment.
- Christina asked if there are resources for that endeavor.
- Monika mentioned that there are regional priorities and that is a way to think about species. Since plants are regional, not all plants are present everywhere in the state. Location is an important factor to consider in prioritization and she hopes the online distribution mapping will add nuance to management and priorities at the local level.

- Julie agreed that this mapping could help with prioritization.
- Zach suggested considering regional vs. state listings. Not all plants are problematic everywhere in the state.

Next meeting date and goals

Next meeting date has not been scheduled. We know that there will be new members in the fall and want to respect them by scheduling with them. However, after discussion, the advantages of scheduling meetings now outweighed waiting until we have new members. Monika will work on meeting scheduling.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.