

**Invasive Species Working Group Meeting
Tuesday, December 11, 2018
West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building
Richmond, Virginia**

Working Group Members Present

The Honorable Matthew Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair
The Honorable Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Vice-Chair
Clyde Cristman, DCR Director
Ellen Bolen, VMRC
Lori Chamberlin, VDOF
Bradley Copenhaver, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
Rob Farrell, State Forrester, Department of Forestry
Ray Fernauld, DGIF
Erik Gelhausen, NatureServe
Charles Green, VDACS
Mark Luckenbach, VIMS
Debra Martin, VDACS
Stacy Moulds, VDOT
Paul Munn, Virginia Nursery and Landscaping Association
Jason Sacks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources
Larry Nichols, VDACS
Zachary Sheldon, The Nature Conservancy

DCR Staff Present

Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Kevin Heffernan, Stewardship Biologist
Rick Myers, Natural Areas Stewardship Manager
Colleen O'Brien, Natural Heritage
Isaac Sarver, Deputy Director for Boards and Constituent Services
Tom Smith, Deputy Director for Operations

Welcome and Introductions

Secretary Strickler called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. He expressed his appreciation to attendees and welcomed the opportunity to discuss invasive species issues. He called for member introductions.

Secretary Ring noted that she previously attended the working group meetings as State Forrester and noted the importance of the work.

Director Cristman added that it was good for the group to get together and noted that he always leaves with a heightened awareness of the threat of invasive species in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan – *Kevin Heffernan, DCR*

Mr. Heffernan reviewed the 2018 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan.

The goals of the plan are:

1. Coordination. Coordinate state, federal, and stakeholder prevention and management of invasive species infestations.
2. Prevention. Prevent known and potential invasive species from entering the state through detecting and interrupting all unauthorized species introductions.
3. Early detection. Promote and enhance professional and volunteer invasive species early detection through education and reporting tools.
4. Rapid response. Enhance rapid response capability to implement eradication or containment procedures for target species through planning.
5. Control and management. Provide control of priority invasive species through containment, abatement, and other management strategies—including habitat restoration and use of native species—to minimize environmental and economic impacts.
6. Research and risk assessment. Support or conduct research and risk assessment necessary for assessing, prioritizing, and control of invasive species.
7. Education and outreach. Provide current information on invasive species, their negative impacts to environmental and economic resources, and methods of prevention and control to the general public, environmental nongovernmental organization, special interest groups, and K–12 science teachers.

Mr. Heffernan noted that there had been some success in each of these areas. The goals are circular and interconnected. He advised that there were no substantive changes in the plan.

MOTION

Director Cristman moved that the Working Group adopt the DRAFT 2018 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan as presented. Ms. Bolen seconded and the motion carried.

Noxious Weed Law, Regulations and Assessment Tool – *Debra Martin, VDACS*

Ms. Martin presented an overview of plant species being recommended for listing as noxious weeds by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. In 2017, VDACS issued a NORIA (Notice of Intended Regulatory Action) to make the changes. An advisory committee was established. The following plant species are being recommended to add to the noxious weed list.

- *Ailanthus altissima*, Common name: Tree of Heaven
- *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, Common name: Porcelain berry
- *Celastrus orbiculatus*, Common name: Oriental bittersweet
- *Corydalis insisa*, Common name; Incised fumewort
- *Hydrilla verticillata*, Common name: Hydrilla
- *Persicaria perfoliata*, Common name: Mile-a-minute weed

Mr. Fernauld noted that in some cases hydrilla can show benefits for water quality and habitat, and that it does not exclude native species. He suggested that hydrilla be managed rather than completely eradicated.

Ms. Martin noted that the recommendation was to list hydrilla as a “Tier 3 noxious weed,” meaning that it would be monitored but that the goal is not for complete eradication.

Running Bamboo Model Ordinance – *Larry Nichols, VDACS*

Mr. Nichols reviewed the Model Bamboo Ordinance.

In the 2017 Acts of Assembly: Chapter 392:

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Conservation and Recreation shall, by July 1, 2018, together develop a model running bamboo ordinance for use by localities based on §15.2-901.1 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act.

Mr. Nichols expressed appreciation to Ms. Martin and Mr. Heffernan for developing the model ordinance. He noted that this is a suggested model for localities, not a requirement.

VDACS worked with the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and the Virginia Agribusiness Council to develop the model ordinance.

The model ordinance is available on the VDACS website at the following link:

<http://www.vdacs.virignia.gov/plant-industry-services-noxious-weeds.shtml>

Mr. Nichols noted at this point Department is unaware of any locality introducing the ordinance.

iMapInvasives – *Erik Gelhausen, NatureServe*

Mr. Gelhausen gave an overview of iMapInvasives.

What is iMapInvasives?

- Online application for mapping invasive species observations and managing treatments
- Scalable, shared solution for all jurisdictions aids early detection and response

iMapInvasives Users

- Federal, state, local agencies
- Non-profits
- Universities, high schools
- Community projects, volunteers
- Many more are viewing and using the data
- Nearly 1 million records for hundreds of species across many taxa and environments

VA Initial work

- 2014-2015: VA NHP: 6,400 observation records
- Set up and integration with new system will be included

Coming in 2019

1. Map and share invasive species locations, surveys, and treatments from many data sources
2. Work collaboratively using specialized tools to make informed management decisions
3. Stay informed with customized e-mail alerts and GIS-based reports
4. Prioritize management actions with standardized information
5. Administer user permissions, species & record-level sensitivities, and custom map reference layers

Agency Updates

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Clyde Cristman

Director Cristman noted that DCR continues to work to address invasive species on managed lands that include over 77,000 acres in State Parks and over 56,000 in Natural Area Preserves. He advised that every state park has some sort of invasive species and many natural area preserves do as well.

DCR received some funding to do an aerial treatment on phragmites. The Department also conducts periodic prescribed burns.

Funding continues to be a challenge.

Mr. Myers expressed appreciation for the Department of Forestry and assistance provided to address wavy leaf grass.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission – Ellen Bolen

VMRC has developed an experimental shrimp fishery and continues to have some success.

The Asian Tiger Prawn has been found in Virginia waters. NOAA is also working on this issue. The species has a low tolerance for colder waters.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Ray Fernald

DOF continues to work on the eradication of feral hogs, working with USDA and landowners. This will be a continuing project.

The Department is also working on an interstate plan to address Nutria.

Snakehead fish have been introduced into Virginia waters. They have made it into the James River Basin. DOF and the Virginia Chapter of Fisheries Society worked together to host an international symposium on snakehead fish.

The Hydrilla program continues at Claytor Lake.

Ms. Chamberlin noted that DOF had a busy year with regard to forest health. Emerald Ash Borer has been found in an additional 16 counties, bringing the total to 17 counties where it is present. While most of the ash in Virginia will likely die, DOF is working with a grant program to attempt to preserve some of the trees.

DOF continues to monitor Gypsy Moth, mostly located in Giles and Bland counties.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Debra Martin

Ms. Martin reported that the spotted lanternfly has been found in Virginia in Frederick County. Prior to January, it had only been found in Pennsylvania.

Discussion

Secretary Strickler noted that the working group had a lot of knowledge regarding invasive species but that additional resources were needed to deal with eradication. He advised that agencies should consider that as the budget process moves forward.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting Date

Director Cristman suggested that the working group plan an April meeting as well as a fall meeting in 2019. Staff will work with the Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources to schedule.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.