

**Invasive Species Working Group
Tuesday, December 12, 2017
Senate Room One, The State Capital
Richmond, Virginia**

PRESENT

Clyde Cristman, DCR
Sydney Alhale, VMRC
Jason Bulluck, DCR
Lori Chamberlin, DOF
Ray Fernald, VDGIF
Ashton Fisher, Blue Ridge PRISM
Michael Fletcher, DCR
Kevin Heffernan, DCR
Deb Martin, VDACS
Larry Nichols, VDACS
Paul Munn, VNLA, Waynesboro Nurseries

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – *Clyde Cristman, DCR*

Director Cristman called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed attendees. He noted that he was chairing the meeting on behalf of Secretary of Natural Resources, Molly Ward.

NOXIOUS WEED ASSESSMENT PROCESS – *Deb Martin, VDACS*

In 2015 the regulation for the enforcement of the noxious weed law was changed to better match the law. The advisory committee is working to develop an assessment tool to add new plants to the noxious weeds. The changes to the regulation became effective on November 30, 2017. There are three tiers of classification.

- The first tier is not known in Virginia
- The second tier is known but not in large amounts
- The third tier can be added by the general public

To submit a weed to be considered for the list an individual must use the assessment tool hosted on the DCR website. There are twenty-three questions that must be answered. The assessment is then sent to Mr. Heffernan at DCR for review. The submission will then be presented to the advisory committee. Ultimately, the VDACS Board of Directors decides whether or not to designate a species as a noxious weed. The assessment site will be accessed from the VDACS web page.

BAMBOO ORDINANCE PROGRESS REPORT – *Larry Nichols, VDACS*

Legislation was passed in the 2017 General Assembly session to address running bamboo. Bamboo is not addressed in the VDACS section of the Code of Virginia, but may be regulated under the authority of localities. The legislation charged VDACS and DCR with developing a model ordinance. Staff reviewed ordinances from other states and developed a model ordinance for Virginia localities. This ordinance is

now being reviewed by the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO). Landowners may plant running bamboo but must take measures to prevent the spread to a neighbor's property. The model ordinance differentiates between running bamboo and clumping bamboo.

The model ordinance will also be provided to industry representatives and stakeholders for review prior to finalizing the document.

REGIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES PARTNERSHIPS REPORT – *Ashlyn Fisher, BRPRISM*

The Blue Ridge PRISM was formed in 2014 as the first cooperative weed management area in Virginia. The mission is to reduce the negative impact of non-native invasive plants in a ten county region. PRISM focuses on 12 different invasive plants.

Blue Ridge PRISM works with federal and state entities, non-profits, landowners and contractors.

In 2016 Blue Ridge PRISM signed an agreement with NRCS for a regional conservation partnership program. This will provide funds to 640,000 land owners to do invasive species management.

PRISM is the recipient of a DuPont settlement grant to do a five-year project to address Wavyleaf Basket grass.

Director Cristman asked how the wavyleaf grass would be addressed with the funds from DuPont.

Ms. Fisher noted that historically the most efficient means of treating wavyleaf grass is through herbicides. The treatment is a multi-year process as it is as yet unknown how long the seeds would reside in the affected area.

SPECIES UPDATE: WAVYLEAF GRASS – *Kevin Heffernan, DCR*

DCR and the Department of Forestry started a two-year project to deal with Wavyleaf Grass in 2014. The project has been funded through grants from the U.S. Forest Service. Currently DCR and DOF are in the second year of an additional two-year project.

Mr. Heffernan distributed a map of known Wavyleaf Grass Sites in Virginia and Maryland. Wavyleaf Grass was first discovered in 1996 in Maryland and has since spread to Virginia.

In 2017, 57 master naturalists were trained in identifying Wavyleaf Grass and in the use of GPS apps to document their discoveries.

Wavyleaf Grass has been discovered at Sky Meadows State Park in an area that surrounds the Appalachian Trail. The area has been treated but staff will continue to monitor.

Staff has compiled a list of best management practices that will be developed in a two-page brochure to share with land managers.

MID-ATLANTIC PANEL ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT – *Ray Fernald, DGIF*

The Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species held a workshop in November to discuss activities. Information regarding the panel can be found at <http://midatlanticpanel.org>.

The panel receives \$40,000 in funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This has been directed to a small grants program. These grants are used to begin funding new initiatives.

The 1st International Snakehead Symposium will be held in July, 2018 in Alexandria, Virginia. The symposium is being organized by the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

There has been substantial interest in instituting a program for watercraft inspection and dealing with contamination. The Mid-Atlantic Lake Forum in 2019 will address these issues and how Eastern states regulate watercrafts.

DGIF now has two dogs that are trained to detect nutria in the field.

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION – *Kevin Heffernan, DCR*

DCR working with the advisory committee to revise the Invasive Species Management Plan for 2018. The revision will address new opportunities and new technologies available for tracking invasive species.

2017 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan Revision Update

- From the 2012 Plan, 41 of 54 action items implemented
- 14 action items to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee
- 3 new strategies and 6 new actions proposed

The following are strategies and actions for the Advisory Committee to review/revise and implement or remove. New Strategies and actions are also listed here.

Goal 1: Coordination

Action 1.1.3. Establish a sub-committee for oversight of each of the goals of this plan. Each sub-committee should present an annual summary of activities undertaken and progress toward the plan goals to the VISWG.

Action 1.2.2. Identify priority funding needs for invasive species prevention, detection, response, control, research, and education.

Action 1.3.1. Define clear, quantifiable outcomes for management actions.

Goal 3: Early Detection

Action 3.1.2. Provide training and information for resource professionals to enhance their knowledge of early detection species and reporting protocols.

Goal 4: Rapid Response

Strategy 4.1. Develop contingency/emergency response plans for potential invasive species of high concern most likely to be introduced.

Strategy 4.2. Identify current available funds or fund sources for rapid response implementation and assess needs for more funding authority.

Goal 5: Control and Management

Action 5.2.2. Evaluate potential incentive programs or assistance for private landowners for the restoration of ecosystems vulnerable to invasion.

Strategy 5.3. Encourage and support the formation of Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs; also known as Cooperative Weed Management Areas).

Action 5.3.1. Develop and share a summary of PRISM/CWMA concept, goals, and accomplishments with relevant agencies and community partners.

Action 5.3.1. Identify potential PRISM leaders.

Action 5.3.3. Conduct workshops for potential PRISM leaders and partners.

Goal 6: Research and Monitoring

Strategy 6.1. Building on existing state, federal and university programs, establish and coordinate a State invasive species research network. This network will develop long- and short-term research capacity and will collaborate and communicate invasive species research needs to other institutions.

Action 6.2.4. Develop environmental and economic indicators for evaluating impacts of invasive species on Virginia's economy and environment.

Goal 7: Education and Outreach

Action 7.1.1. Develop programming for Master Naturalists and others to take into schools.

Action 7.1.4. Ensure Cooperative Extension agents have training, tools, and information for educating the public on invasive species.

Action 7.2.1. Create listserv or other social media channels for distributing invasive species news and information among interested stakeholders.

Strategy 7.3. Create and deliver training programs for professionals and volunteers on identifying, mapping, and reporting invasive species occurrences.

Action 7.3.1. Offer training on species identification

Action 7.3.2. Offer workshops on collecting field data, GPS and GIS tools, and reporting methods (*eddmaps.org* and *MAEDN app*, *vainvasivespecies.org*, *ArcGIS Online* and *Collector app*)

Strategy 7.4. Invite targeted public to participate/assist in invasive species risk assessment

Action 7.4.1. Create and deliver risk assessment workshops for targeted groups (university biology programs, Master Naturalists, Tree Stewards, etc.) to encourage use of the forthcoming Noxious Weed Assessment Tool.

AGENCY RAPID UPDATES

Department of Forestry – Lori Chamberlin

An area survey for gypsy moth was done in the summer of 2017. Damage was found in Bland and Giles Counties in 2016. There was still damage in 2017, but less than the previous year.

Over 50 counties are infested with Emerald Ash Borer. DOF received a grant from the U.S. Forest Service to do landscape restoration. This will be used to treat trees across the state. DOF will hire a part-time coordinator and will hopefully be able to offer cost-share to provide financial assistance to landowners and localities. Each tree must be treated by injection or a soil trench.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Larry Nichols

VDACS has a suppression program for gypsy moth which works well in infested areas. There haven't been any treatments since 2009 since gypsy moth is at a fairly low level.

An infestation of fire ants has been found in Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties. VDACS is working to eradicate the infestation before they spread neighboring counties.

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries – Ray Fernald

Most of the DGIF coordination is now done through regional offices.

Feral hogs are still one of the most significant problems. DGIF works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide landowner education. Last year an aerial shooting was authorized to address the population in Back Bay Wildlife Refuge and False Cape State Park.

DGIF has established a regional plan for managing Nutria. This is found mostly in the Chesapeake Bay area and north of the James River.

The federal management plan for snakehead fish has been approved. Snakehead fish are well established in the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers and have been found in Lake Anna.

Zebra mussels have been eradicated in Virginia, but DGIF continues to monitor due to the potential for a reoccurrence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.