

**Virginia Invasive Species Working Group
600 E. Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia**

December 11, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

Working Council Members Present

Angela Navarro, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources
Sam Towell, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
Clyde Cristman, DCR Director
Lori Chamberlin, Department of Forestry
Ray Fernald, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Fred Huber, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
Julia Murphy, Virginia Department of Health
Jill Ramsey, Marine Resources Commission
Nikki Rovner, The Nature Conservancy
Larry Nichols, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Tom Thompson, Natural Art Landscaping
Bryan Waymack, Virginia Department of Transportation

DCR Staff Present

Tom Smith, Acting Deputy Director of Operations
Kevin Heffernan, Stewardship Biologist
Mike Fletcher, Board Liaison

Others Present

Ruth Douglas, Virginia Native Plant Society
Robert Floyd, Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands
Jim Hurley, Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species
Sujan Henkanaththegedara, Longwood University
Debra Martin, VDACS
Bill Tanger, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia

Call to Order and Introductions

Deputy Secretary Navarro called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

Approval of May 13, 2015

The minutes from the May 13, 2015 meeting of the Invasive Species Working Group were approved as submitted.

Review of Actions from May Meeting

Mr. Heffernan reviewed the actions from the May Meeting.

At the May meeting, the working group endorsed the concept of a letter in support of the Federal Invasive Species Act previously proposed in the U.S. Congress. At this time the Advisory Committee reported that the legislation was not reintroduced during the current session of Congress. Consensus was to hold the letter until legislation was actually reintroduced and then to work through the Governor's Office and the Virginia Liaison Office.

Legislation in the 2015 General Assembly created the opportunity for localities to create ordinances and regulations with regard to noxious weeds and invasive species. The Advisory Committee recommends that localities work through existing laws. The committee will develop a fact sheet specifically regarding bamboo with suggestions for species selection and management challenges, and horticultural recommendations for use of bamboo species.

Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management: A Public Private Partnership

Jim Hurley provided a presentation regarding the Blue Ridge PRISM.

- The Blue Ridge PRISM is the first Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) headquartered in Virginia.
- Forming a CWMA allows
 - Sharing of best practices
 - Obtaining additional funding
 - Increasing public awareness
- CWMAs are local, independent organizations that facilitate collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries for more effective invasive plant management.
- CWMAs
 - Operate within a defined, local geographic area
 - Involve a broad cross-section of landowners and natural resource managers
 - Led by a steering committee
 - Long-term commitment to cooperation (e.g. a signed agreement)
 - Have a comprehensive plan for invasive plant management
 - Facilitate cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries
- The Blue Ridge PRISM
 - Shenandoah National Park Trust is fiscal agent
 - Formal agreement out for review
 - Strategic plan is available
 - Working groups are addressing various aspects of the program
 - Grant proposals and funding activities have started
- The mission of the Blue Ridge PRISM is to reduce the impact of invasive species in the targeted geography
 - Treating the targeted species
 - Restoring native plants in the vacuums created

- Preventing new arrivals
- Creating an early warning system and task force approach to deal with new threats
- Obtaining funding to maximize programs
- Educating and engaging landowners and interested parties
- Current Top Priority Species
 - Ailanthus (tree-of-heaven)
 - Oriental bittersweet
 - Autumn olive
 - Japanese stiltgrass
 - Wavy leaf basket grass
 - Mile-a-minute vine
 - Kudzu
 - Japanese honeysuckle
 - Garlic mustard
 - Multiflora rose
 - Chinese privet
- Next Steps
 - Finish the formal agreement
 - Steering Committee meets four times per year
 - Focus on developing offerings for landowners and the public
 - Design and implement key programs, e.g. the Area Stewards Program, Wavyleaf Control
 - Continue to submit grant proposals for funding various programs

Report on Water-Wheel, a Recently-Introduced Non-native Aquatic Plant of concern at Fort A.P. Hill

Robert Floyd, Natural Resource Specialist with the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands gave a report concerning the Water-Wheel Plant (*Aldrovanda vesiculosa*).

- Life History
 - IUCN Red-List – Endangered in the Old World
 - Carnivorous
 - Free-floating
 - Rootless
 - Herbaceous
 - Sparsely-branched stem
 - Variable in length 6-20 cm
 - Mid-April through November (as observed at Ft. A.P. Hill)
- Very Fast Growing
 - In optimal conditions – 9mm of new stem and one new whorl a day
 - Biomass doubles in 13-15 days
 - Single individual can produce 20-30 new shoots per season
- USA Distribution
 - Confirmed USA Locations
 - § Fort A.P. Hill, Caroline County, Virginia
 - § Lake Owassa, Sussex County, New Jersey
 - § Big Pond, Cuddlebackville, Orange County, New York

- Unconfirmed USA Locations
 - § Hanover County, Virginia
 - § Louisa County, Virginia
 - § Orange County, Virginia
 - § Spotsylvania County, Virginia
 - § Succasunna, Morris County, New Jersey
- Habitat
 - § Acidic, tannic, low-nutrient, dystrophic water
 - § Constant decomposition and large amounts of decaying biomass
 - § Often found tangled with native emergent vegetation
- Carnivory
 - § Aquatic Venus Flytrap
 - Stem features whorls of 6-9 modified trap leaves
 - Traps will re-open after closing
 - § 80% of traps may contain prey at any given time
 - § Major concerns about rare invertebrates and effect on food chains
- Reproduction and Distribution
 - § Primary Vegetative Reproduction
 - § Seeds, leaf material, and turions transported by birds/waterfowl and/or beavers
 - § New Jersey population believed to have been established from migration from New York population 50km away.
- Fort A.P. Hill Actions
 - § Document the spread
 - § Coordinated with interested parties:
 - State partners: DGIF and DNH
 - Academic, NCSU, VCU, & Smithsonian
 - § Try to Develop Projects to study effects in invertebrate communities
- Management Challenges
 - § Personnel
 - § Limited data in New World
 - § Ponds drain from Fort A.P. Hill
 - § Native rare/listed species considerations
 - § Globally rare plant considerations
 - § *Aldrovanda* is still available for sale

Species Update: Feral Hogs – provided by Mr. Fernald

The population continues to spread and there are few regions or counties in the Commonwealth that do not have them. The difficulty remains because of their status as both a nuisance species and status as livestock. Regulations and laws between VDACS and DGIF still allow hunters to take them. There are no restrictions regarding seasons or trapping. Recreational hunting is problematic. The feral hogs can be baited and hunted at night, year round. They then become trap and bait shy. Feral hogs carry a number of wildlife diseases. Control will take further cooperation, legislation, and regulation.

Species Update: Wavyleaf Grass – provided by Mr. Heffernan

First found in Maryland in 1996, Wavyleaf grass has now been found in Shenandoah National Park, as well as the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Great Falls National Park, Fairfax County Parks, and on private conservation lands. It is well adapted and spreads quickly through animals and perhaps researchers and hikers. It currently has not been found on the Appalachian Trail but is in close proximity. Several small populations have been nearly eradicated by ongoing treatment, but much work remains. It is not clear whether it would be resistant to fire.

Agency Rapid Updates

Department of Conservation and Recreation, Director Cristman

The Code requires the working group to meet at least twice a year. That requirement had not been met in recent years, but was in 2015. He suggested that future meetings might be at on site locations. Staff will poll members for future dates.

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Mr. Fernald

DGIF is primarily focused on invasive wildlife, including feral hogs, Nutria, Blue Catfish, and Snakehead Fish. DGIF does have a hydrilla management program at Claytor Lake.

Department of Forestry, Ms. Chamberlin

The non-native invasive species cost-share program is in the second year. There are about fifteen participants in the program. This is funded through a grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

Marine Resources Commission, Ms. Ramsey

Ms. Ramsey commented that she was pleased to attend her first meeting. She did not have an additional update.

Virginia Department of Health, Ms. Murphy

VDH is primarily involved in a supportive role as invasive species relate to public health and the consumption of invasive species.

Longwood University, Dr. Henkanaththegedara

Longwood is conducting research regarding the impacts of invasive crayfish non native crayfish.

U.S. Forest Service, Mr. Huber

The Forest Service is conducting the annual non-native invasive weed treatment trying to control the spread into the woodlands. Some larger infestations of Wavyleaf grass are being treated with herbicides.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Mr. Nichols

VDACS is working on the noxious weed regulations regarding what items should be added to the list. Legislation is being discussed by Delegate Hope to change the definition of noxious. A plant would not be considered noxious if it could be commercially viable. The Agriculture Department's advisory committee will be meeting in January to develop a process for introducing or recommending plants to be added to the list of noxious weeds.

Virginia Department of Transportation, Mr. Waymack

VDOT manages invasive species on a complaint driven basis, and noted their budget of invasive control has been significantly reduced.

Public Comment

Mr. Tanger commented that the Friends of the Rivers of Virginia have a strong interest in the federal bill. He suggested that as a fallback position that a letter be written to the Governor. The working group will address this at a future meeting.

Next Meeting

Staff will be sending dates for consideration as soon as possible.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.