

**Invasive Species Work Group  
Wednesday, October 2, 2019  
Patrick Henry Building  
Richmond, Virginia**

**ATTENDEES**

The Honorable Matthew Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair  
Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources  
Clyde Cristman, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Ryan Brown, Director, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Jewel H. Bronaugh, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Rob Farrell, Virginia State Forester  
Ray Fernald, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Julia Murphy, Virginia Department of Health  
Alexa Kretsch, Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Brian Waymack, Virginia Department of Transportation  
Jacob Varney, Virginia Tech  
Larry Nichols, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Lori Chamberlin, Virginia Department of Forestry  
Jim Hurley, Blue Ridge PRISM  
Rod Walker, Blue Ridge PRISM  
David Gianino, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Katelyn Salle, Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources  
Rick Myers, Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Kevin Heffernan, Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Secretary Strickler called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

**SPECIES UPDATES**

*Spotted Lanternfly*

Mr. Gianino gave an update regarding the Spotted Lanternfly and the quarantine. The first case of Spotted Lanternfly was found in Frederick County in 2018 through visual surveys. The agency worked with USDA to obtain funding for treatment in a 2 ½ mile radius. About 1500 acres were treated. Surveys were also completed on 40,000 trees, with about 18,000 being treated. Treatments were in July and August due to the efficacy of the insecticide.

So far, the Frederick location is the only known occurrence in Virginia. In 2019, the treatment area was increased to about 7,000 acres.

Businesses leaving the area must have permits. Training and inspection materials are provided before they relocate. To date, Virginia has issued 80 permits. Permits have been issued to 373 businesses under the Pennsylvania permitting process.

### *Wavyleaf Grass*

Mr. Heffernan gave an update regarding the spread of Wavyleaf Grass. He distributed the newest fact sheet regarding known locations. Since that printing, a new location was found in a cemetery in East Richmond. It has also been found in Rockbridge County and at Powhatan State Park.

The eradication of Wavyleaf Grass requires multiple treatments over time.

Through the DuPont Waynesboro settlement, DCR was able to direct funding to Blue Ridge PRISM to work in a concentrated area focusing on the South Fork watershed. PRISM has worked with localities and with Shenandoah National Park regarding treatments.

Dr. Myers noted that much of the work was possible because of funds shared from the Department of Forestry through the USDA Forest Health Grants.

## **BLUE RIDGE PARTNERSHIP FOR INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS**

Mr. Walker addressed the work of Blue Ridge PRISM.

### *Steps Toward Winning the War on Invasive Plants*

#### Topics

- What is the problem?
- What is the Blue Ridge PRISM?
- Requests and recommendations
- How can we help?

#### What is the Problem?

- There are many organizations working on invasive plants issues
- We work with people in many of your agencies
- They are all great, hard-working people doing good work
- But the bottom line is that collectively we aren't getting the job done
- This deck presents some of what we believe needs to be done

#### Invasive Species present in Virginia

- Oriental Bittersweet Vines
- Kudzu
- Bamboo
- Japanese Honeysuckle

- Fiveleaf Akebia
- Porcelainberry
- Bradford Pear Naturalizing
- Garlic Mustard
- Japanese Stiltgrass

### To Summarize

- Monocultures are overwhelming our landscapes
- Nothing stops them
- Relatively sterile substitutions in the food web
- Impacts on both native vegetation as well as reductions in native wildlife
- Cost of management rising steadily
- The longer we wait, the harder and more expensive it gets
- Our great-grandchildren will not see what we see unless we act

### What is the Blue Ridge PRISM?

- Blue Ridge PRISM formed July, 2014
  - PRISM = Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management
  - Generically a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)
  - Collaboration of federal agencies, state and local agencies, conservation organizations, contractors, and private landowners
  - Non-profit, funded by donations; volunteer driven
- Mission: reduce the impact of invasive species in our targeted geography

### *Two PRISM Core Activities*

- Focus On Our Home Geography
  - Educate, inspire, and facilitate landowners in our 10 counties to undertake the removal and replacement of invasive plants
- Broaden Our Impact
  - Take actions to help solve the invasive plant problem across the entire state

### *2018: 60 Landowner Activities*

- 2 Shenandoah National Park wavyleaf grass removal volunteer days
- 4 quarterly meetings with speakers
- 21 tabling events, some for multiple days
- 20 speaking engagements – total attendance >500
- 15 PRISM run workshops – total attendees over 200
- Handed out close to 10,000 factsheets

### Requests and Recommendations

#### *Better Understand the Problem*

- THE FEAR
  - We are losing the battle – overwhelmingly
  - Our forests and meadows will slowly fade away and lose the ability to sustain our native wildlife
- Collectively we are talking limited actions and hoping it will be enough
- NEEDED: Fund VT and/or UVA to tell us all what is likely to happen to our forests and fields if we continue to do so little
- We need our scientists to paint the picture of where we are headed
- Put more science in our funding requests

#### *Stop Making the Problem Worse*

- State agencies must stop planting and selling the plants on the DCR list of invasive plants
- Wherever possible, plant and sell only natives that will contribute to the food web
- VDOT and DOF may not be the only ones planting or selling plants on the DCR list
- Note that counties and cities sometimes follow state guidelines and therefore may be unwittingly contributing to the problem

#### *Show Real Leadership!*

- Have state agencies set the right example
- Show publicly
  - What can be done
  - How to do it right
  - How long it takes, and
  - What it costs
- Don't be stewards of decline with our state lands
- ALSO: Fund a serious EDRR (Early Detection and Rapid Response) program to go after new arrivals and plants not yet widely disseminated

#### *Support Willing Landowners*

- Many can't afford what is needed
  - Cost-share programs work
  - Both public and private landowners
- Help form more PRISMs
  - Provide information and education to more landowners

#### *Final Thoughts*

- The state has a decent Invasive Species Management Plan
- Fund it and make it work!
- Tell us how we can help

#### **NOXIOUS WEED SPECIES LISTINGS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Mr. Nichols gave the noxious weeds update. He reviewed the VDACS Noxious Weeds webpage and the DCR Noxious Weeds Assessment Tool.

#### *VDACS Noxious Advisory Committee*

1. A conservation representative or organization
2. An agribusiness representative or organization
3. A local government representative or organization
4. Virginia Cooperative Extension
5. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
6. Virginia Department of Forestry
7. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
8. Virginia Department of Transportation
9. A farming representative or organization
10. A forage-based agriculture representative or organization
11. A native plant conservation representative or organization
12. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
13. Virginia State University
14. A cooperative weed management area representative or organization, and
15. Virginia soil and water conservation districts

#### *Definitions*

##### Noxious Weeds Law:

“Noxious Weed:” any living plant, or part thereof, declared by the Board through regulations under this chapter to be detrimental to crops, surface waters, including lakes, or other desirable plants, livestock, land, or other property, or to be injurious to public health, the environment, or the economy, except when in-state production of such living plant, or part thereof, is commercially viable or such living plant is commercially propagated in Virginia.

##### Noxious Weeds Regulation:

- Tier 1 Noxious Weed: any noxious weed that is not known to be present in the Commonwealth
- Tier 2 Noxious Weed: any noxious weed that is present in the Commonwealth and for which successful eradication or suppression is feasible
- Tier 3 Noxious Weed: any noxious weed that is present in the Commonwealth and not listed as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 noxious weed.

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Tier 3 Noxious Weed: any noxious weed (i) that is present in the Commonwealth and not listed as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 noxious weed. (ii) whose spread may be slowed by restrictions on its movement, and (iii) for which successful eradication or suppression is not feasible.

Mr. Nichols noted that VDACS is in the process of adding an additional seven plants to the list of noxious weeds.

The proposed list of noxious weeds is (new recommendations are underlined):

Tier 1 Noxious weeds:

1. Giant salvinia
2. Tropical soda apple
3. Giant hogweed

Tier 2 Noxious weeds:

1. Cogon grass
2. Purple loosestrife
3. Water spinach
4. Beach vitex
5. Wavyleaf basketgrass
6. Incised fumewort

Tier 3 Noxious weeds:

1. Tree of Heaven
2. Porcelain berry
3. Oriental bittersweet
4. Hydrilla
5. Mile-a-minute weed

#### **VIRGINIA TECH INVASIVE SPECIES STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT**

Dr. Barney shared an update regarding work at Virginia Tech. He noted that several years ago, the University was given money to study the topic of invasive species at the university and across the state.

Data is showing that there are a number of new introductions globally. The invasive species problem will worsen with time.

Invasive species affect every ecosystem and facet of life. This reduces the abundance of native animals but not exotic animals. There are consequences to wildlife pollinators and more.

A workshop was held in Blacksburg in 2018 titled “Biological Invasions: Confronting a Crisis”

- Keynote speakers
  - Jamie Reaser, NISC
  - Heather Reynolds, IU
- Stakeholders
  - 62 stakeholders from across Virginia
- What’s working
  - Activities to determine where we are doing things right
- Room for improvement
  - Identify places for improved engagement and cooperation

*Invasive Species Devising Seminar*

- Richmond, Virginia, May 30, 2019
- Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Fralin Life Sciences Institute
- Objectives for the day
  - Bring together a diverse group of stakeholders relevant to the policy, management and science of invasive species in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
  - Outline the current policy environment around the management of invasive species in Virginia, including both the crafting of policies/regulations, research and management in practice.
  - Discuss how we can enhance interactions at the science-policy interface and better account for stakeholder interests to improve research on, policy for, and the management of invasive species

### **AGENCY UPDATES AND BUDGET PROPOSALS**

#### *Commissioner Bronaugh, VDACS*

- VDACS implemented the spotted lanternfly quarantine in July
- VDACS has been working to eradicate giant hogweed. The plant can cause painful skin burns. Two additional sites have been found in Fauquier and Rockingham Counties

#### *Director Cristman, DCR*

Director Cristman noted that while the media attention to treating giant hogweed was not favorable to VDACS, it was helpful. He expressed a desire that invasive species would receive more media attention to get the word. Out.

Director Cristman advised that he had been in seven state parks over the preceding five days. Invasives are present in almost every park. He expressed a concern that not enough was being done and noted that invasives don't always make it to the top of the budget priority list. He noted that it is important to realize the social and economic benefits of dealing with invasives.

Dr. Myers noted that it is DCR's intent to seek funding for a new state invasive species biologist to help facilitate the growth and development of new PRISMs around the state. This would be similar to the Master Naturalist position at Virginia Tech.

#### *Mr. Waymack, VDOT*

Mr. Waymack noted that VDOT works with the resources they have and would welcome additional resources for dealing with invasive species. VDOT has a number of cooperative working agreements with other agencies regarding invasives. He advised that Tree of Heaven and Kudzu are beyond control.

Secretary Strickler noted that his office has been working with the Secretary of Transportation to determine ways to partner in keeping invasives under control. He advised that this would be discussed by the Governor's Conservation Cabinet.

#### *Mr. Brown, DGIF*

Mr. Brown advised that from a budget perspective, DGIF did not at this time have requests regarding invasive species. He noted that these have been historically addressed with agency funds.

Mr. Fernauld reported that DGIF continues to work with other agencies regarding species such as snakehead fish, hydrilla, and water chestnut. He noted that snakehead fish are now in the James River watershed and will be a growing problem.

The DGIF feral swine project continues to work to control the population. The USDA Wildlife Services branch receives funding from the Feral Swine Project to deal with this issue.

*Mr. Farrell, Department of Forestry*

Mr. Farrell advised that fire ants are a concern for the logging community. DOF is working to have discussions with loggers to address the spread of this species.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Hurley asked if DCR had submitted funding requests to address Early Detection Rapid Response.

Dr. Myers replied that, to his knowledge, there had been no requests regarding that subject.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Secretary Strickler advised that the next meeting would be scheduled following the General Assembly session.

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.