

# Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 12/06/2023

Via Teams

## Participants

### Members

Ann Messerschmidt (League of MN Cities), Ashlee Lehner (MN Forest Industries), Dave Hansen (MnDOT), 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), Rob Venette (UM MITPPC), Roger Becker (U of M), Sascha Lodge (DNR), Steve Chaplin (TNC), and Trent McCorkell (MACAI)

### Guests

Jeffrey Flory

### MDA

Emilie Justen, Julie Dellick, Kelly Anderson, Kimberly Thielen Cremers, and Monika Chandler

### Introductions

This was Trent's last meeting. His many years of work on weed regulations, funding and issues are greatly appreciated.

## Approval of agenda and past meeting minutes

Because Andy could not be at the meeting, Monika suggested that his European mountain ash assessment presentation be removed from the agenda. Trent made a motion to approve the agenda with this change. Jim seconded and none were opposed. Jane made a motion to approve the minutes. Roger seconded and none were opposed.

## MDA and member updates and old business

### Listing Subcommittee updates

#### Change to MS 18.78

Laura said that the statute about purple loosestrife and non-native Phragmites were updated in noxious weed statute 18.78 which relates to non-native plants on public waterways. The species were moved from Restricted to Control. These changes were introduced last session and the text for non-native Phragmites now mirrors purple loosestrife.

Rob asked about the priority infestation list referenced in the document. Is the list public? Laura said she would ask Wendy Crowell about infestations DNR managed in 2023.

#### Continued risk assessment discussion of Canada Thistle

- Jim Falk's letter against delisting Canada thistle was discussed. Jim Calkins asked whether we should respond to these letters and if so, how? He also said that people in favor of delisting need to speak up or all of the letters will be in opposition.
- Tony and Monika met with the commissioner and assistant commissioner about Canada thistle. The commissioner is concerned about going against the recommendations of farm entities in the state.
- Jason asked that given the discussion around Canada thistle, is there a need for a new noxious weed list category? Monika answered that these categories are in statute so if we need to define a new category, a statute change would be required.
- Jeffrey said it would be nice if there could be other categories that could fit other needs, specifically for plants such as garden valerian.
- Trent brought up the county listing process and said it could fit the need, but the county listing process has been used for local governments to focus on specific plants. Mary Jo agreed.
- Jeffrey said the county listing process could work for Canada thistle but not garden valerian. St. Louis County is dealing with garden valerian now but there are other counties who have no idea that it is present. How can spread be limited with only one county focusing on garden valerian?
- Monika said Cook County is also aware of valerian and are working with partners to take a strong county position. It is not a current county listed plant, but they may move forward with listing.

### Management and Policy Subcommittee Updates

#### Strategic framework

MDA is developing a weed program workplan based on our strategic framework. Emilie presented a draft of the workplan. It included objectives and deliverables that the MDA are confident they can meet in 2024. The bolded items are certain to be accomplished and we would like to accomplish the remaining items but may not get to them. The MDA is still hoping to add a third person onto staff which would help accomplish these goals. Emilie mentioned that the group will revisit the workplan early next year to make final changes and bring it back to the group.

Julie asked about the format of the new CAI training in the workplan. Emilie said part is online and part is in person. We receive many requests for weed ID training and we received positive feedback about Weed 'Em Out workshops done led Extension and done with additional agency partners.

Julie asked if there could be training for industry such as landscapers. Emilie answered that this hasn't been discussed. If MDA developed online weed ID training, it could be opened up to the public. Julie said that the pesticide applicator training provides a good refresher.

Trent said it may be useful if townships requested training from the county. It may help the county board to understand that there is a demand for addressing weed issues.

Emilie said that she heard there are some township supervisors would like training and will work with Jane to identify them.

For plant ID training, there would be work to identify interested groups. If it is a significant number of people, we would need Extension involvement.

Laura made a motion that Julie seconded to move this discussion to Management & Policy Committee.

## **Grants**

Group met before Thanksgiving to review rankings and put a list of recommendations together for the commissioner. Commissioner approved the list. Emilie has not notified grant recipients yet. There will 11, potentially 12 awards. When grant contracts are signed then the list of recipients can be made public. There was good discussion about how to address disparity between those who are ranking higher and lower than others.

Laura brought up that most people who applied were not funded. There were 39 applications, with project requests totaling \$400,000. The budget was only \$150,000. The evaluation rubric for grants is set up so it prioritizes projects with eradicate species or other high priority species. Projects that were going to broadcast spray roadsides and ditches scored low. Emilie thanked the group for their evaluations and added that having a few new people helped.

Jane asked how much the original request was compared to what was received because we fell short. Emilie said that we requested \$800,000 for the biennium and received \$300,000, so there is \$150,000 per year.

Jason reminded everyone that BWSR is accepting applications for their Cooperative Weed Management program.

## **New Business**

### **Outgoing and incoming chairs**

We thanked Julie for performing the duties of the Chair for the past two years. Kelsey will become the Chair. Julie nominated Raining as Vice Chair and he accepted. Julie made the motion that Raining be Vice Chair and Kelsey seconded. None were opposed.

## Voting

For voting on species recommendations, Laura made a motion on the recommendation for each species and Julie seconded each motion.

### Creeping meadow foxtail, *Alopecurus arundinaceus*

There was no discussion and the motion passed to recommend creeping meadow foxtail as a restricted noxious weed.

### Rough potato, *Metaplexis japonica*

Trent pointed out that it is listed by Stearns County, the one county where it was found. Raining asked how management was going in Holdingfold. Monika said that management has gone well. Rob asked if the recommendation of not listing is because the plant is not harmful to the state. Laura said that we should be thoughtful about what we add to the list, so as to not overload the list. The risk assessment discusses the potential to displace natives and unknown impacts to monarch butterflies, but rough potato is not a common plant in trade so limiting sales will have minimum impact. In addition, the county is doing good work on management so the plant may not migrate from its current county. If found more widespread in few years, we could reevaluate. Rob expressed concern that we are inconsistent if it is a threat. Laura said there isn't much information on this plant and that impacts are not documented. Steve said that we could make it clear in the assessment that we are not listing at this time but may revisit. Rob supported this.

Jim asked if neighboring counties have been notified and should list it. Monika said that they have been notified through the media and that rough potato samples were included in weed ID training at the ag inspector short course last summer. Surveys were conducted and the public was asked to report finds. Only one new infestation was found nearby. Trent added that Stearns County provided information on rough potato to other ag inspectors.

Steve made a motion to not list at this time and include qualifying information that Laura stated. Julie asked if that met Rob's concern. He said yes except he was concerned about the way 10F was answered in the assessment. (Additional note - Question 10F asks whether the plant is known to cause significant ecological or economic harm. The answer to this question in the assessment was No and there was text about many factors.) Laura said that there is no information on it causing economic damage.

Jeffrey said that it is concerning that rough potato is sold online. It's a problem when there isn't research to support the assessment.

Steve amended his motion to support the recommendation with clarifying language from Rob. Mary Jo asked where the clarifying language would go. Laura answered that it would go in the risk assessment.

Jim said that the qualification could go into the answer for 10F, that there is insufficient information for the risk assessment and the species could be re-evaluated if there are relevant research findings.

Steve said that was his intent in the motion. Jim seconded the motion. None opposed and the motion passed to recommend not listing rough potato with clarifying text from Rob added to the risk assessment about the lack of information.

### **Common butterbur, *Petasites hybridus***

There was no discussion and the motion passed to recommend listing common butterbur as a restricted noxious weed.

### **Giant butterbur, *Petasites japonicus***

There was no discussion and the motion passed to recommend listing giant butterbur as a restricted noxious weed.

### **Small leaf bramble, *Rubus parvifolius***

There was no discussion and the motion passed to not recommend not listing small leaf bramble.

### **False spirea, *Sorbaria sorbifolia***

Motion was to not list false spirea but to support research into seed production. This information will help future assessments. Ann is currently managing false spirea. Monika added that it appeared to spread with mowing and was aggressive in a wetland area. The motion passed to recommend not listing false spirea and support research into seed production.

### **Periwinkle, *Vinca minor***

There was no discussion and the motion passed to recommend not listing periwinkle.

## **Length of list discussion for specially regulated noxious weeds**

Rob asked if we have an idea of how often counties are taking action on specially regulated plants. Emilie replied that almost all of the species have labeling at point of sale requirements which are enforced by the Nursery team.

Kimberly added a response to a question from Rob at our previous meeting about whether a CAI could do enforcement in a nursery. The answer is that they technically have the authority but don't have a regulatory umbrella so they would have to use police or sheriff for enforcement. Trent added that they would look to MDA for a better enforcement option.

Jim interpreted Rob's question differently because it is related to labeling. If someone were to buy a Norway maple and planted it near a woodland, that would not be illegal.

Jim said he thinks the category works and he cautioned against putting many species here.

Steve added that specially regulated can address situations that aren't addressed otherwise.

Kimberly said phase outs have been helpful.

Ann said that the category is confusing and few people deal with this category. If Canada thistle were specially regulated, it would be similar to poison ivy. Jim pointed out that poison ivy is native. Richard asked if it would be

a good fit for Canada thistle to be Restricted. Ann said it is difficult that the assessment is do not list but we still go around with it. Julie and Richard noted that we are setting a precedence with what we decide.

Jason said that people overreact to Canada thistle and this negatively impacts native sites and costs taxpayer money.

Roger said that Chuck Dale was trying to reduce the noxious weed list length and brought in Roger and Trent for discussion.

## **Next meeting date and goals**

- Next meeting date has not been scheduled.
- Length of list – Prohibited Control
- Presentation about goats and buckthorn control research
- Julie would like a discussion about USDA Plants.
- Jim would like a ranking of weeds that are currently listed. This topic went to the Management & Policy Subcommittee for further refinement and discussion.
- Tony's presentation on the history of weed law would provide a nice overview.

## **Adjournment**

Trent motioned to adjourn; Richard seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.