# Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 03/25/2025

## Participants

### Members

Ann Messerschmidt (League of MN Cities), Christina Basch (MNDOT), Cody Dock (MNCAIs), Hunter Pederson (MN Farm Bureau), Jane Youngkrantz (MN Assoc. Townships), Jen Larson (USDA FS), Jim Calkins (MNLA), , Kelsey Taylor (Fond du Lac), Laura Van Riper (DNR), Mary Jo Youngbauer (MN SWCDs), Raining White (MCT/Leech Lake), Rob Venette (UM MITPPC), and Sascha Lodge (DNR)

### Guests

Zach Schumacher

### MDA

Monika Chandler, Julie Dellick, Michael Merriman, and Kimberly Thielen-Cremers

### Introductions

## Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes

Ann motioned to approve this meeting's agenda and Laura seconded the motion. There was no discussion to add topics to the agenda.

Laura brought up that people voted Canada thistle should not be listed as restricted for different reasons and asked if the minutes could be updated to reflect the opposing views. Monika said she included it in the minutes and asked if it needed further clarifications. Kelsey said it accurately reflects people's opinions but thinks it would be good to have an explicit summary of views and Laura said she agrees. Monika asked Laura if she could send her a sentence that reflects her thoughts, and Monika will add it to the minutes and Canada thistle risk assessment.

Jim commented that he would like a change in wording under the listing subcommittee updates. A line on the bottom of page one states that during the November meeting the committee will discuss "which species to assess in 2025" and suggested it be changed to "assess for risk assessment updates in 2025." He believes this more accurately reflects the point as he said the original made it seem like new species were being evaluated.

With the changes, Jim moved to approve the past meeting minutes. Raining seconded the motion. There were no objections and the minutes were approved.

## MDA and Member Updates and Old Business

Monika stated that most of the MDA Updates are in writing since most MDA members could not attend the meeting today. Jim stated he read them already and asked if the commissioner has reviewed the voting recommendations. Monika stated that she is pretty sure that the recommendations have been sent to the commissioner but has not received a response. Kelsey stated that everyone should read the updates and reach out with any questions or concerns and opened the floor for questions. There were no further questions. (*Update from Anthony Cortilet – MDA, the commissioner has received the NWAC recommendations from 2024 and wants time to review and better understand views of NWAC members voting for or against the recommendation to move Canada thistle from a Prohibited-Control regulated species to a Restricted Noxious Weed.*)

### Listing Subcommittee updates

Laura said the listing subcommittee already met twice this year. They had a January kick-off to assign risk assessments to authors and in February to discuss low fecundity cultivars and what kind of information is needed to assess for exemptions. The committee is meeting again in March to go through the species in more depth. Species being assessed in 2025 are Palmer amaranth, Japanese barberry, narrowleaf bittercress, brown knapweed, black swallow-wort, purple loosestrife, poison ivy, hardy kiwi, yellow archangel, Tatarian honeysuckle hybrid 'Freedom', and winged burning bush. If you have information sources or comments on the species being assessed or low fecundity cultivar information, send it to Laura.vanriper@state.mn.us and she will pass it along to the assessment author.

### Management and Policy Subcommittee updates (provided in writing)

- We did not receive any updates to county noxious weed lists this year.
- We met on February 10th to discuss the Top 10 noxious weed threat ranking list.
    - Emilie committed to writing 1-2 species management plans in 2025. She does not have a draft yet but will send one out sometime in the next 3-4 months.
- Weed law statute review:
    - Emilie and Monika will be reviewing the language of the categories for consistency (18.771)
    - We'll be drafting text to clarify the restricted category, and looking at the text about native plants in the Specially Regulated category to improve consistency (18.771)
    - We'll talk with MDA legal counsel to see if the state of MN can prohibit exportation of regulated species.
    - We'll also be reviewing the language about certification and approval of disposal sites (18.82)
- Subcommittee is meeting April 23 to discuss potential revisions to statutes.
- Grants
    - Still waiting on a few grant contracts to be finalized before we publicize the list of awards. We're hoping to announce the awards in the next two months.

## Outreach Updates (provided in writing)

- New County Finds from 2024 was published in February. Palmer in Morrison and Steele and hooked hair hops in Washington.
- Annual report was published in February and is linked on our program page.
- New Knotweed factsheet is printed and available. Contact Monika or Emilie if you want us to mail some.
- Held New CAI training in February and trained 15 new CAIs. Very engaged group!
- Held weed law enforcement refresher webinar for all CAIs. 75 registered and 55 attended. We had great engagement and are planning another webinar on April 1 to cover weed management for wild parsnip, leafy spurge, and buckthorn. It's open to counties and municipalities and we have over 90 people signed up.
- Emilie gave a webinar to the Minnesota Outdoor Sports and Skills group through DNR on toxic plants. Over 500 people signed up and 200 attended. Attendees had great questions!
- Emilie talked about her career as a plant scientist to four classes of 6th graders (100 students) and had a lot of fun. The students asked thoughtful, engaged questions and she hopes some of them consider careers in biology.

## Palmer Amaranth Update (provided in writing)

- Morrison and Steele Counties were added as "New Palmer Finds" in 2024. MDA is working with both CAIs and the landowners impacted and will assist with scouting and any management in 2025. We are hopeful that plants were found and destroyed prior to seed set last year but will monitor sites for the next three years.
- MDA Weed and Seed Programs are working with a grain processing company and a local farmer to learn more about grinding of screenings and the potential to significantly reduce the threat of Palmer infested screenings being spread onto agricultural lands. The MDA will sample pre and post grinding efforts and test for Palmer. Julie will also survey row crop fields where manure from the ground screenings will be spread. This is an opportunity to learn about opportunities that can be incorporated for the massive amount of grain and resultant cleanings that come into MN from other states to produce animal feed.
- Any other questions about Palmer can be directed to Tony or Julie.

## Legislative Update (provided in writing)

- CAI Funding Bill
    - CAI's testified (Bob Dunning – Stearns County) in front of both the House and Senate Agricultural Committees in regards to House File 39 and its companion bill Senate File 1831. Both bills were moved for possible inclusion in the final omnibus bill.
        - Tony testified was asked to testify in front of the Senate Ag, Veterans, Broadband and Rural Development Committee by Senator Anderson to explain how the MDA would approach funding CAIs if the bill were successful.
        - This is a bill developed by the MN Association of CAIs with support from the MN Association of Counties. Any questions about the bill or how it is structured should be directed to the bill's developers.
        - The goal of this bill is to provide money to counties to help fund the CAIs primary duties as required under MS 18.75-18.91 – which is primarily serving as a contact for noxious weed issues and overseeing enforcement/compliance. Any county meeting the criteria

set-forth in the bill would be qualified for an equal amount of dollars, based on the total counties applying for funds who also meet the criteria.
    - For example, if all 87 counties apply and meet the bills criteria, that would amount to approximately $11K/County. If only 50 Counties met the criteria, then it would be around $19K/County.
  - Due to the projected deficit in FY28/29, this will only be funded for FY26/27.
  - There is bipartisan support for both bills and the SF has two DFL and Three Rep authors this year.
- DNR Foraging Task Force
  - HF819 and its companion SF1464 were brought to MDA's attention by Laura. The goal of the legislation is to create a sustainable foraging task force to make recommendations to the DNR Commissioner for foraging regulations on state lands. Currently its membership lacks anyone from agriculture or county/local weed inspection.
  - Tony passed the information on to MDA's legislative team, and they thought that adding an MDA weed specialist and/or CAI would be beneficial and would reach out to DNR's legislative team.
- Budget
  - MDA Weed Program submitted a budget proposal requesting almost $2 million to continue the Noxious Weed Grant Program that expires at the end of this fiscal year. The proposal was not included in the Governor's budget for this session.
  - FY25/26 Weed Program funding was included in the governor's budget for the upcoming biennium.
    - MDA has one of the smallest budget targets for all state agencies but represents the largest industry in MN. That said, the predicted budget deficit in FY28/29 could be damaging, especially to general funded programs if 10 – 20% budget cuts are requested by the governor's office. This issue, combined with a primary election for governor and other key state offices, could have further impacts on agency operations and directions.

## Seed Program Advisory Committee (SPAC) Update

Michael shared that the next SPAC meeting is Monday, March 31st. They are having three to four public meetings annually with one of those being in-person. In their December 2024 meeting they voted on and approved their by-laws. Membership for the committee is defined in law but Michael suggested it might be good to have some crossover between SPAC and NWAC since noxious weeds and noxious weed seeds have overlap.

Laura brought up NWAC's document from last year that was sent to the SPAC that stated concerns that there weren't members from state agencies, conservation group members, and nursery industry members on SPAC. She was wondering if those demographics have been added to the committee. Micheal said members have not been added since they are currently trying to build operating procedures and get the committee off the ground first. Though it has not been done yet, it is something Micheal will bring up in the following meetings. Michael did note that there are representatives from the native seed industry as well as people who sell seed for the nursery industry.

SPAC has assigned Jochum Wiersma from the University of Minnesota as the chair for a two-year term. There have not been any subcommittees established yet. Voting procedures and record keeping have been described. SPAC's next meeting will cover MDA updates on legislative updates and seed regulatory updates, new business,

risk assessment process, and mainly to establish subcommittees and getting volunteers for positions. At this time, a management and policy subcommittee and a listing subcommittee will be discussed. Upcoming discussions will also include reassessing some noxious weed seed lists as they have not been updated in a long time.

There have been updates to the Seed Program's website to make it more user friendly and accessible. The noxious weed seed list is now on the website and is broken down by the categories and shows exemptions. "Seed Program Partners" is another tab on the site and links all the SPAC material and statues. Michael says to let him know if there is any feedback on the program.

Raining asked if there is any wild rice regulation and if it is considered an agricultural crop. Michael said there have been import inspections on wild rice seed but does not know what companies are selling it. He said he would get more information on it. Raining said Leech Lake is concerned of other organizations doing restoration of rice stands. He said he is concerned that those groups may introduce seed from commercial producers and introduce those genetics into wild rice stands. He also suggested including tribal members to the seed committee. Michael appreciated the input and said the state tribal liaison is working to include tribal groups more. Raining asked if native seeds for restoration are regulated, and Michael confirmed native seeds are agricultural crops and are regulated and should be labeled properly. Kelsey followed up asking if labels had to specify if it were paddy rice or wild rice. Michael said law specifies that species or the generally accepted type would need to be labeled, he said the industry typically drives the type. The variety would be the specific genetics, if it is native wild rice, it would not have a variety but if it is a developed or patented seed the variety would be listed on the label.

Jim asked about seed vendors outside of the state and how are they monitored. Michael said that interstate commerce is big, a lot of the companies licensed by the state are located outside of state. Interstate shipments are also regulated by the USDA and federal seed act. All seed entering Minnesota needs to have a Minnesota noxious weed seed test.

- Seed program webpage: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/seed-program
- SPAC webpage: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/seed-program-advisory-committee-partners
- MN Noxious Weed Seeds: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/prohibited-restricted-weed-seeds
- All States Noxious Weed Seeds: https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/StateNoxiousWeedsSeedList.pdf

# New Business

## Length of List Discussion for Prohibited Eradicate Category

Monika stated that the Prohibited Eradicate is the most stringent category where all propagated parts (above and below ground) must be destroyed and may not be sold or propagated in Minnesota. This list has been deliberately kept short but is continually added to. Monika asked for people's thoughts on length of current list for the category.

Monika stated that over 4,000 plants (aquatic and terrestrial) have been introduced to the lower 48 states and of those 39% are designated as invasive by the USGS. MISAC has evaluated many different species and has

designated 282 (terrestrial) species as invasive. The MDA currently regulates 57 species as Noxious Weeds. Several plants on the Prohibited Eradicate list are not currently known to be in the state, but were deemed to be listed by the committee because they are established in neighboring states or have shown to be spread via pathways that could lead to establishment in Minnesota. It may be a good idea to keep these species on the list to prevent introduction or reintroduction. Monika suggested to update the MDA website to illustrate that not all these species are currently in state. Christina said she agrees that these species should stay on the list to prevent reintroduction or introduction. She asked if there was a way to pull out those species into lists of their occurrence on the website so it would be easier to visualize. Monika said she likes that idea of the website ordering.

Kelsey asked if there is a limit on how many infestations of eradicate species are documented before they are moved from the eradicate category or if it is it just whenever these species are reassessed. Monika said there are not absolute numbers that make a species eradicate versus prohibited control. In the assessments there is information about the species distribution, but because species are different in threat posed, distribution is only one factor when considering their listing.

Christina wanted to caution against putting a limiting number of prohibited eradicate species in case something really threatening enters the state and the list length could prevent addition. Jim stated that he does not think there should be a concern about the length of the list and shouldn't be a threshold for any of the categories. Kelsey agreed with Jim. Ann mentioned that she has met with plant managers around the cities and that some prohibited control plants are being overlooked such as knapweeds. It might be good to look at what is being managed actively. Kelsey agreed it is important to manage what is possible and to prioritize but stated that she believes leaving them on the list since it is helpful to keep accountability in implementing prevention methods.

Jim said there is a process underway to create a state strategic management plan for noxious weeds where part of it is prioritization which would address the requirements on management for prohibited species. This would require law changes. There was a survey completed about the threat of species listed to determine highest priority species. Jim echoed that in this survey the knapweed species each had about one vote maximum and are not a concern.

Christina was wondering if a plant species has established biological control agents available for management, they should still have control regulations. Laura said the topic would come up with purple loosestrife being up for assessment this year. Monika said she believes it is a sign of success that some of the species like knapweed are not a concern anymore and are not spreading as aggressively as they have in the past. Monika discussed a current project where MDA is revisiting knapweed sites that were previously mapped and seeing how the populations are doing.

## Meeting Preference Poll

A survey was sent out to determine preferences for upcoming meetings. Members voted and these were the results.

For our September meeting, do you prefer to meet in person or online?

- 14% voted for In-person, and
- 86% voted for Online

For our November meeting, do you prefer to meet in person or online?

- 15% voted for In-person, and
- 85% voted for Online

Is it likely that you would attend a meeting in the following potential locations?

- 29% voted for Duluth
- 64% voted for St. Paul
- 64% voted for Arboretum in Chaska, and
- 43% voted for St. Cloud

Ann commented that an in-person meeting at least once a year would be nice as it could make for better conversation. Raining agreed that one meeting a year in person would be a good idea. Monika agreed and said she is happy to do a hybrid meeting once a year. Monika suggested the MNDOT facility in Shoreview for a meeting space or the Arboretum in Chaska. Jane voted for the Arboretum and said she likes the idea of in-person. Laura mentioned that there has been low turnout for the hybrid meetings and tech issues. She mentioned that if there was an in-person event or discussion that might get increased turn out. Ann suggested that the November meeting is a good time to try in-person so there can be increased discussion on the risk assessment presentations before voting occurs in December. Kelsey stated that most of her in-person meetings are occurring in November, which would make it busy and difficult. Monika stated that December to February and even March would be a concern for winter weather impacting driving conditions. There were no objections to having an in-person meeting in November.

## Next Meeting Date and Goals

### Next meeting date

- September 23, 2025 (Virtual - Risk assessments will be presented.)

### Future meeting goals

- Assisted migration - Superior National Forest's plan was recommended by a committee member
- Presentation from a township about weed management
- Presentation about goats and buckthorn control research
- MDA Seed Laboratory Tour

## Adjourn

Kelsey adjourned the meeting at 11:22am.