

Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 09/23/2025

Participants

Members

Ann Messerschmidt (League of MN Cities), Christina Basch (MNDOT), Cody Dock (MNCAIs), Elizabeth Zingg (Fond du Lac), Hunter Pederson (MN Farm Bureau), Jane Youngkrantz (MN Assoc. Townships), Jim Calkins (MNLA), Jen Larson (USDA FS), Laura Irish-Hanson (UM Landscape Arboretum), Laura Van Riper (DNR), Liz Beery (TNC), Mary Jo Youngbauer (MN SWCDs), Matt Widen (MN Forest Industries), Rob Venette (UM MITPPC), Sascha Lodge (DNR), and Seth Wannemuehler (UM Dept of Horticulture)

MDA

Anthony Cortilet, Emilie Justen, Julie Dellick, Kimberly Thielen-Cremers, and Monika Chandler

Introductions

Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes

Jane made a motion to approve the agenda. Laura VR seconded the motion. There was no discussion and there were no objections. The motion passed.

Jim motioned to approve the past meeting minutes, and Laura I-H seconded. There was no discussion or objection on the meeting minutes, so the past meeting minutes were approved.

MDA and Member Updates and Old Business

Listing Subcommittee Updates

- Laura VR said the listing subcommittees will be presenting their risk assessments later in the meeting.
- Laura VR updated the group that the Midwest Invasive Plant Network created a cultivar committee to consider the types of information needed to evaluate low fecundity and whether a plant may be exempted from regulation. The group has actively been meeting, researching, and looking at what other states and professionals are doing in this realm.
- MDA received a cultivar exemption request for Ron Williams Fine Line Buckthorn on 08/04/2025.

- During our November meeting, we will discuss which species and low fecundity cultivars will be assessed in 2026 and 2027.

Management and Policy Subcommittee Updates

- Emilie stated that funding was appropriated for County Agricultural Inspectors (CAI). This funding is focused for work on enforcement. The RFP went out in early July and closed a couple of weeks ago. The list of eligible applicants was sent to our division director for approval by our commissioner. Emilie hopes to notify people in a couple of weeks about their awards. This funding is different than the noxious weed grant. It is not competitive. The \$500,000 will be equally divided among eligible counties. The counties did not know how much they would be awarded before applying. There will be webinars for awardees on training and education on the grants and duties.
- The subcommittee has been meeting over spring and summer to work on noxious weed law statute revisions. The subcommittee created a document that was forwarded to the commissioner for technical changes for the next legislative session. There are a few changes and a document of these will be shared later. Some definitions will be added, sections will be cleaned up, and Section 18.82 will be revised.

Outreach Updates

- Emilie shared that the MDA has made a few website updates.
- The MDA will also be working on updating the prohibited eradicate species booklet. This will be updated with the new species additions. Emilie hopes to create a similar booklet for prohibited control species as well.
- Monika shared that the MDA did a mailing of cut stump and basal bark treatment information cards. These were purchased by DNR Forestry and were sent to County Agricultural Inspectors and that more will be sent to other groups such as Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the next round of mailings. Cody asked when they were mailed out and Monika answered at the end of last week.

Palmer Updates

- Julie said that Palmer was found growing in 4 counties at sites that had growth last year. Palmer plants were localized to the same areas as in the past.
- These sites were in Houston, Jackson, Polk, and Morrison counties. Most sites had no Palmer growing, and some were in their last year of management and therefore deemed to be eradicated going forward.
- At this time, there are just a few sites left to be monitored this season.

Legislative Updates

- Tony said that County Agricultural Inspector funding went through. \$1,000,000 (\$500K/year) was appropriated to the MDA for the current biennium to create grants for CAIs who meet specific requirements. This is only one-time funding.
- There was a late session change to the Noxious Weed Law due to a 2024 case where pesticide drift occurred because of a township spraying for noxious weeds. This led to changes being made where inspectors need to make their best effort to contact appropriate landowners before entering upon

property to inspect for noxious weeds. If inspectors receive no response in five days, then they can enter the property of concern and conduct an inspection under the Noxious Weed Law.

Seed Program Updates

- Tony updated on the Seed Program Advisory Committee (SPAC). The seed program and seed law are set up to enforce truth-in-labeling of seed to protect agricultural commerce and customers. SPAC has only been active for about a year and a half and has ratified bylaws. The SPAC committee does not have a lot of botanists/plant people who have wide knowledge of plants and their ecological and invasive characteristics, so they hope NWAC can recommend plants for SPAC to review and provide information on how they can be regulated. SPAC will be setting up a listing subcommittee and can offer perspective but will ultimately be looking at collaboration between these two committees (SPAC and NWAC).
- Tony said that Mike Merriman, the seed program supervisor, attended the National Seed Control Officials meeting. One topic that came up was that Arizona decided to add their state listed noxious weeds to their noxious weed seed list. This created difficulties for seed analysts who must learn how to identify those seeds in samples. There was pushback from some seed analysts nationally as it is time consuming. If every state does this, it could result in an extremely long and diverse list of seeds that analysts would have to screen for when doing noxious and purity samples. There were also complaints about the costs involved with doing genetic testing for Palmer for seed shipped to Minnesota.
- Laura VR said NWAC sent a list of plant priorities and general recommendations to SPAC in March. She asked if SPAC will include representatives from state agencies, the nursery industry and conservation groups. Tony said that Mike has that document. It was presented to committee, and they will discuss priorities. Tony also said they are looking into state agencies including MnDOT, BWSR and DNR, nonprofits, and others to join SPAC.
- Liz asked if national agencies are on these committees. Monika said that Jen Larson is with the Forest Service. Jen said she abstains from voting but acts as an advisor so there is no conflict. Monika said members should feel free to make suggestions for additional members. Some seeds are listed in weed law but there is potential to add more.
- Tony added that the Association of Seed Control Officials will host the national meeting in Minneapolis next May. He thinks it might be beneficial to have NWAC go and inform them about what NWAC is doing and how there can be collaboration between groups.
- Liz asked if the USDA ever regulated nationwide for noxious weeds. Tony said there is a federal noxious weed list, and they used to be active but no longer are. With seed in e-commerce moving across state lines, there is a need for federal oversight. Feds are involved with aquatic invasives and risk assessment (Tony Coop – USDA APHIS PPQ). Feds still fund some biocontrol development but not at the levels they did decades ago.

New Business

Elect a New Vice Chair

- Kelsey Taylor was the Chair, but she moved to a position with Barr Engineering. Raining White was the Vice Chair. He is now the Chair. The committee will need to vote to elect a new Vice Chair. The role

includes leading the meetings when the Chair is absent, helping the Chair as requested, helping to plan meeting agendas, and forming a nominations committee to help select a new Chair.

- Hunter was willing to be the new Vice Chair. Emilie asked if there were any objections to his nomination. There were none. All were in favor, so Hunter is the new Vice Chair.

Petitions at the MDA

- MDA received petitions to add creeping bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*) to the noxious weed list. This year there was a big campaign for creeping bellflower. MDA received 23 petitions for creeping bellflower with one petition signed by over 300 people. Historically the MDA received very few petitions, so this is a large increase. Creeping bellflower is not toxic or harmful to humans, it just spreads easily. Due to public push, the committee will likely select this species for assessment.
- Jim Calkins asked what a petition involves - do petitioners need to give a reason why it is a concern or just that they want it reviewed? Emilie said there are several fields to fill in, most of the form is not required except for contact information and species name. The form says the more information you put in, the better but petitioners can keep it simple if they wish. Monika said most reports for creeping bellflower have come from the metro area, but she has heard from Todd County that there is concern too.
- Jane asked how creeping bellflower compares to creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*) or garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*) which are both widespread. Monika said people are concerned about it because the plant is hard to get rid of once established. The plant has variable response to herbicides and digging them out is a lot of work since the roots run deep and are difficult to pull. If there is a seed source from an adjacent property, that is where some trouble and conflict can start. Liz Beery asked if it gets into natural areas. Monika said she is unsure and that would need to be researched for the risk assessment.
- Laura VR included this link with information on bellflower: <https://extension.umn.edu/weeds/creeping-bellflower>. She added that UMN is also trying to gather info on creeping bellflower reports in natural areas: <https://tips.umn.edu/completed/creeping-bellflower>

Risk Assessment Presentations

BLACK SWALLOW-WORT (*Cynanchum louiseae*)

- Laura VR went over black swallow-wort. It is a vine in the milkweed family, and there are no native Minnesota vining milkweeds. This plant is a population sink for monarch butterflies as the larvae cannot survive on this plant. It is also toxic to deer and livestock and impacts soil chemistry. It forms dense clusters and shades out other species. Currently, black swallow-wort is only in a limited number of MN counties and is known to be over 6 acres of the state.
- Currently it is prohibited eradicate in Minnesota. It is also regulated in a few other states and is documented as being a problem elsewhere. The recommendation is to continue to list black swallow-wort as a prohibited eradicate species.

BROWN KNAPWEED (*Centaurea jacea*)

- Jason and Laura VR collaborated on the brown knapweed assessment. Brown knapweed grows in open, sunny areas and is widespread in Minnesota. It is currently regulated as a prohibited eradicate species,

and the last assessment was written in 2012. Other knapweeds moved from prohibited eradicate to prohibited control categories, so brown knapweed was reviewed to see if it will have a similar move. Currently, there are seedhead weevils that work for both spotted and brown knapweed flowers. There is no information found on the plant having any toxicity issues, but it can be irritating and is unpalatable as forage. Brown knapweed can cause financial loss in pastures and hay fields, it decreases diversity and increases soil erosion risk. The official recommendation is to keep brown knapweed as a prohibited eradicate species.

- Monika asked about the distribution of this plant in the state – she said Hubbard County is dealing with a lot of knapweed infestations and said there are new reports included after this assessment was done. Would those new records impact the report? Laura VR said many reports were in the same area of Hubbard County, so reviewing those could lead to an increased number of reports in the county but wouldn't add a new county to the dataset.
- Rob asked why some knapweeds are lesser regulated than this one – what are the reasons? Laura VR answered that spotted knapweed is lower because it is more widespread in the state and therefore impossible to eradicate at this point. Diffuse, brown, and meadow knapweeds are thought to not be as widespread and have slightly different habitats. Meadow knapweed was moved from prohibited eradicate to control because it is also widespread and harder to differentiate from other species as it is a hybrid. Rob asked how much more widespread brown knapweed would need to be for it to switch categories if we don't believe EDDMapS distributions. Have sites where these plants have been reported truly been eradicated? Monika said she and Christina visited some sites in Hubbard County and there was very little noticeable brown knapweed. Greg Hensel (County Ag Inspector) has worked with multiple landowners and utilized MDA grant funds to greatly decrease brown knapweed. Christina added that the Dakota County reports were for a small cluster of plants and she agreed that there was good progress on the Hubbard County infestations.

HARDY KIWI (*Actinidia arguta*)

- Before launching into the assessment, Monika noted that Seth is an expert on this vine.
- Monika reported that hardy kiwi is a vining, woody plant, that can grow aggressively. There are several reported infestations in Duluth and a report in Mille Lacs County. The infestation in Mille Lacs has not been visited yet for confirmation. Hardy kiwi is problematic in New England as it engulfs trees. Land managers in New England say managing it is similar to bittersweet. Currently, there isn't commercial production Minnesota, but interest in production may increase. Based on this information hardy kiwi would be a specially regulated plant and provide recommended practices to reduce the potential for escape from production.
- Seth added that the cultivar sold at Home Depot is not cold hardy here.
- Laura I-H asked for clarification on a large infestation in Massachusetts and how it spread from the burned down hotel. Monika said there were original plantings and over time the plants have moved. They have been able to move into open space, but not in all directions. It is relatively slow movement so we are not seeing is probably bird vectored spread - so if the birds are utilizing this fruit or not is a question on how quickly the spread will occur. Seth added that hardy kiwi has been in the UM Horticulture Research Center since the early 1990s and there has not been any escapes noticed.
- Jim asked how the plan would work to list the management practices. Monika said the plan would be to collaborate with fruit breeders to make the guidelines. These would be available online and regulation

would refer people to these recommended practices. There would not be inspections to see if recommendations were followed.

- Laura VR said other special regulations involve labeling plants. Would this be the same for hardy kiwi? Kimberly answered that there is a lot of management over labeling. So, it would be difficult for nursery retailers as they need to manage all species on the list, and it would be cause for a violation for improper labeling. Laura VR asked Kimberly if there were other recommendations. Kimberly said this might be an outreach and information need so maybe UMN Extension could handle this instead of regulation.
- Tony said that finding the balance between outreach and education versus regulation is an issue with several regulated species. Laura I-H provided information that Extension has published on hardy kiwi best practices. <https://extension.umn.edu/fruit/kiwiberry>. She also said Extension has been doing webinars on this topic, there are vines in a public demonstration area, and there are other ongoing efforts to discuss kiwi berry. Laura VR said the Extension webpage was about growing the vines and producing lots of fruit but not about preventing spread.
- Jim agreed with Tony that if the species is listed, people may assume that there would be requirements.

JAPANESE BARBERRY (*Berberis thunbergii*)

- Jen presented the risk assessment for Japanese barberry which was last assessed in 2013. The plant is re-assessed because it has been so long and is currently restricted, even though it is a popular landscape plant. Since then, low fecundity cultivars were developed that may merit special exemptions. The recommendation is to have Japanese barberry as a restricted species with exemptions for specific low-fecundity cultivars.
- Liz brought up a concern with low fecundity is that people can go out of state and buy other cultivars but that is uncontrollable. Jen mentioned a committee is trying to get multiple states on board to push for only low fecundity varieties to be sold.
- Kimberly supported the change that all Japanese barberry are regulated except for specifically exempted cultivars. She also said there is a long standing federal black stem rust quarantine. Cultivars must be tested and certified for rust resistance. Jen added that the cultivars were all tested for resistance. Kimberly provided the list of certified barberry varieties. There appeared to be a typo with a couple of the UCONN cultivars. Kimberly and Monika will try to get that corrected.
- Rob asked whether this regulation would address hybrid barberry and about the parents of hybrid barberry. This regulation is for Japanese barberry and would not address hybrid barberry (*Berberis x ottawensis*) directly. The parents are common barberry (*B. vulgaris*) and Japanese barberry (*B. thunbergii*). Laura VR noted that the regulation would include all hybrids, cultivars and exemptions unless specifically exempted. She added that common barberry is designated prohibited control, so its hybrids are prohibited control.
- There was discussion about a 3-year phase out for cultivars that can be sold now.
- Jim added that although there are benefits to this regulatory change, it will probably be controversial with some of the growers. It's good that there is variety in the low fecundity cultivars with purple, yellow and green leaf colors.

NARROWLEAF BITTERCRESS (*Cardamine impatiens*)

- Christina said the recommendation for narrowleaf bittercress is to deregulate it. A big reason for this is that the species has not been found to be spreading widely.
- Rob asked whose observations were used to illustrate the lack of expansion of narrowleaf bittercress in Minnesota. EDDMapS and iNaturalist reports are the basis of the distribution. Rob asked about the confidence of these sources. Christina said that the data is only as good as what was reported so there is some uncertainty.

PALMER AMARANTH (*Amaranthus palmeri*)

- Laura VR suggested that Palmer amaranth remain a prohibited eradicate species. This is because Palmer is a significant risk to agriculture which is a big economy in Minnesota. Additionally, the plant is herbicide resistant making it difficult to control.
- There were no questions or discussion.

POISON IVIES (*Toxicodendron radicans* and *T. rydbergii*)

- Laura VR presented that the recommendation is to deregulate poison ivies. These plants are native to Minnesota and do not pose threat to the state's ecology and agriculture. Additionally, these plants are very widespread in Minnesota.
- There were no questions or discussion.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE (*Lythrum salicaria*)

- Emilie presented that the recommendation for purple loosestrife is to move it from prohibited controlled to restricted. Since 1924 in Minnesota, several cultivars were for sale but banned when regulation started. Now the plant is not currently sold or in trade. Additionally, biocontrol has been reported to keep loosestrife at a stable level.
- Liz asked if there was any insight on how control efforts might change for purple loosestrife with this change. Laura VR said the DNR focuses on biocontrol usage with herbicide being rare. Christina echoed the same goes for MNDOT; so overall there would not be much change in control efforts.

Freedom honeysuckle and winged burning bush are moving to the November meeting.

Next Meeting Date and Goals

Next meeting date

- November 25, 2025
 - Determine new species to assess in 2026 and 2027
 - Determine cultivar exemption requests to assess in 2026

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

Adjourn

Emilie adjourned the meeting at 2:04 pm.