Minutes: Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

Date: 09/15/2026

Participants

Members

Andrew Falk (MN Farmers Union), Ann Messerschmidt (League of MN Cities), Cody Dock (MN Assoc. CAIs), Debalin Sarangi (U of M Agronomy), Erin Loeffler (BSWR), Hunter Pederson (MN Farm Bureau), Jim Calkins (MNLA), Kris Folland (MCIA), Laura Irish Hanson (U of M Extension/Arboretum), Laura Van Riper (DNR), Lee Frelich (U of M Forest Resources), Mark Westphal (MN Assoc. Co. Land Commissioners), Mary Jo Youngbauer (MN SWCDs), Rob Venette (U of M MITPPC), and Seth Wannemuehler (U of M Horticulture)

Guests

Kelsey Taylor (Barr Engineering)

MDA

Anthony Cortilet, Emilie Justen, Julie Dellick, Maya Sarkar, Michael Merriman, and Monika Chandler

Introductions

Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes

Laura Irish Hanson moved to approve the agenda and Cody seconded. There were no objections, the motion passed.

Laura Van Riper moved to approve the past meeting minutes and Laura Irish Hanson seconded. There were no objections, the motion passed.

MDA and Member Updates and Old Business

Listing Subcommittee updates

The risk assessments will be presented today and the protocol for exempting low fecundity cultivars. The risk assessments will be presented in the order in the table.

Management and Policy Subcommittee Updates

Statute changes were put forward in the agriculture bill last year. The changes passed in both the House and the Senate. The problem was that the House could not come to an agreement on an Ag bill. Without a House Ag bill, the Senate's bill was not formalized. The changes will be brought forward again this year. There is funding for the county agriculture inspector grants and the grantees are getting ready to close out their grants. The window to apply to the new round of grants will close tomorrow September 16, 2026. There were 47 grants awarded in the last round. It is not a competitive grant, if applicants meet the criteria, they will be awarded a grant.

Funding has been received from the Western Weed Coordinating Committee to create a noxious weed dashboard, and it is currently in development. The goal is to incorporate the previous noxious weed grant data into this dashboard to show the impacts of the grant.

In November, there will be a discussion on full committee direction to subcommittees about the priorities they work on.

Seed Program Advisory Committee Update

The Seed Program Advisory Committee (SPAC) meets three times a year with the next meeting on Wednesday September 23, 2026. Members are listed on the Secretary of State webpage. Over the past year, SPAC has voted and established their by-laws. There have been minor modifications to membership terms and they are currently getting the oaths of office signed. SPAC is hoping to expand membership to ensure interested parties in the risk assessment and legislative process are involved. There are two subcommittees including a policy management subcommittee and a technical subcommittee. The technical subcommittee evaluates the noxious weed seed list. Michael, Kris and Garth Cassidy have worked on a seed risk assessment process. It is tentatively approved but the group needs to run some test species through the assessment process. Mike will share a document of the seed risk assessment process. Debalin asked about how Palmer amaranth was likely to be assessed and regulated. Mike said that it hasn't been through the assessment process yet. Tony brought up that the assessment is science based but politics comes into play with regulatory decisions. Andrew pointed out that practicality of control is important to consider rather than could a species be controlled with unlimited resources. Mike agreed and added that the assessment allows some leeway for the assessor's evaluation.

Weed Risk Assessments

Common name	Scientific name	Recommendation
Bristly locust	*Robinia hispida*	Do not list.
Creeping bellflower	*Campanula rapunculoides*	Do not list.
Yellow-flowered teasel	*Dipsacus strigosus*	Do not list.

Angelica tree	*Aralia elata*	List as a Restricted Noxious Weed.
Empress tree	*Paulownia tomentosa*	List as a Restricted Noxious Weed.
Yellow archangel	*Lamium galeobdolon, Lamiastrum glaeobdolon*	List as a Restricted Noxious Weed with exemption for 'Herman(n)'s Pride' cultivar'.

Bristly locust (*Robinia hispida*)

Bristly locust was reviewed because it can form dense thickets which could potentially displace native plants. It also fixes nitrogen into the soil since it is in the legume family. Additionally, it is a relative of black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia* L.) which is currently listed on the MN Restricted Noxious Weed List. Bristly locust is mainly an aggregate of triploid, sterile clones that reproduce vegetatively. Though there may be some fertile diploid varieties in the Appalachia region, they have not been found in MN. There is no evidence of this plant producing seed in Minnesota and it appears that bristly locust thickets in state are from vegetative spread. There are no known controls for bristly locust though Missouri Botanical Gardens list some borers as pests. Bristly locust is currently listed as a noxious weed in Wisconsin, but it is not currently recommended to list this species in Minnesota. The nursery survey indicated that nurseries are not selling this species. Jim brought up that it would be interesting to go to the reported Minnesota sites and see if they are from intentional plantings or not. This would clarify whether all of infestations were planted or whether there is vegetative spread since there isn't documented spread by seed and there has been no research on the topic in Minnesota.

Creeping bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*)

Creeping bellflower can grow up to 3' tall and form dense patches that are hard to manage. There were numerous petitions for assessment for regulation. The plant spreads by both rhizomes and seeds. In Wisconsin creeping bellflower is a restricted noxious weed which means people cannot transport, transfer, or introduce the species without a permit and control is encouraged but not required. Additionally, Alberta, Canada had it listed as a provincially regulated weed but it was removed effective January 28, 2026. There are no documented controls that can limit the spread of this plant.

Creeping bellflower is documented throughout most of Minnesota. It is non-toxic and has not been found to cause financial losses to crops. There are currently no scientific articles on creeping bellflower displacing native species. People have mentioned allelopathy but no definite proof has been found. The majority of issues related to creeping bellflower are related to yards and gardens. It is not currently recommended to list this species but to encourage Extension to keep being the lead on the educational front.

Yellow-flowered teasel (*Dipsacus strigosus*)

Yellow-flowered teasel is related to common and cutleaf teasel that are already on the Prohibited Eradicate list. It was just recently reported in the United States but only in two Indiana counties. The species is not known to be in Minnesota at this time and it is not sold in state. There are no other states that are currently regulating this

species. There is limited information on this species regarding its invasive potential and management, but Butler University is beginning to look at the behavior and invasive potential of yellow-flowered teasel.

Yellow-flowered teasel is native to central Europe and has been introduced to other countries. The species produces seed but does not spread asexually so its spread would be biologically limited, but there no hard data on the matter. There are no known natural controls documented at this time. At this time there is no data to support adding this plant to the Noxious Weed list. Once more data is available on this species the noxious weed risk assessment could be updated.

Angelica tree (*Aralia elata*)

Angelica tree can quickly form monocultures as it forms a lot of fruit which are then dispersed by birds. The tree is not widely reported in Minnesota but is mostly reported around the Twin Cities. Angelica tree is regulated in New England where it is problematic. There are no natural controls for this species and there is no record of this plant being toxic. This tree is not found to cause significant losses in agriculture and this tree is not sold by retailers in Minnesota. However, there are an increasing number of reports in Minnesota. It is recommended to list the species as a Restricted Noxious Weed.

Empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*)

Empress tree has conflicting information regarding its US Hardiness Zone but there has been a tree that has present in Minnesota and is present in a few Wisconsin counties (5a and 5b, no recorded reproduction). It can easily invade disturbed sites, can reproduce asexually, can displace native plants, and is currently regulated in a few US States as a restricted or noxious weed. There are no known natural controls for empress tree and it is non-toxic. There is no economic analysis of if it would impact agricultural systems and it has not been found for sale in Minnesota. Keeping this plant out of the nursery trade would help keep this plant from establishing in Minnesota in the future. Empress tree is recommended to list the species as a Restricted Noxious Weed.

Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon, Lamiastrum glaeobdolon*)

Yellow archangel is in the mint family and can spread through stolons/runners which grow up to 3 feet long. Yellow archangel has been found to aggressively displace native species. Yellow archangel has 17 reports in Minnesota of which 13 were in residential landscapes. This species is regulated in Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin as well as other countries. There are no natural controls documented for this species. This plant has not been found to cause significant financial losses in agriculture and is sold on a limited basis (about $12,000/year) as a landscape plant, most commonly found in hanging baskets.

The cultivar ‘Herman(n)’s Pride’ (*Lamium galeobdolon* supsp. *flavidum*) differs in reproductive properties compared to the species (*Lamium galeobdolon*). It does not spread vegetatively via stolons and plants exist as small clusters. It is recommended to list yellow archangel as a Restricted Noxious Weed with exemption for the ‘Herman(n)’s Pride’ cultivar.

- Rob asked how long has it been in the state. Jim answered that it was introduced to North America in the early 1900s.

- Rob asked about what prompted the species to be evaluated. Jim answered that the vegetative spread can be aggressive and take over multiple acres in a few years. Rob suggested that it would be helpful to include anecdotes about spread in the assessment.
- There were questions about the climate modeling in EDDMapS maps that were included. Rob explained that the model is based on a Maxent model which is driven by presence points.

Cultivar Screening Tool

The Midwest Invasive Plant Network has collaborated to make a low fecundity screening tool. This tool is intended to determine if specific cultivars of invasive species pose a sufficiently low invasion risk and that they are not problematic, consequently warranting an exclusion from state-based regulation. The cultivar screening tool has been designed to balance scientific principles by evaluating traits linked with invasive potential with practical feasibility in terms of what traits can be measured within a realistic timeframe. This tool was developed over the last year by a working group of representatives from academia, the green industry, arboreta, state and federal government, and invasive species managers. In Minnesota this screening tool would not replace the noxious weed risk assessment, but can be used supplementally if a new cultivar comes out after a plant is already designated as a noxious weed.

- Jim asked about vegetative spread and whether a species should be regulated based on this. Laura answered that if there were vegetative spread only and that were not problematic, it shouldn't be regulated as a noxious weed in the first place.
- Rob asked whether the committee considered a numerical threshold for viable seed production. Laura answered that this is addressed in the document and that the committee would not pick a number that every state must follow for every plant species. Monika added that plant breeders would like us to say 2% seed production (98% seed reduction) is sufficient. There was a lot of discussion. Nobody on the regulating side was comfortable with a blanket 2% seed production. Rob asked whether we would need to determine a numerical threshold each time. Laura replied that we could use 2% as a default but explain why we may not find this acceptable. In some cases, a plant may produce such large volumes of seed that even 2% of normal production is more than NWAC may consider to be acceptable.
- Monika added that it is unlikely that this new assessment tool is perfect. We're going to have to give it a try and modify if needed.

MDA Next Meeting Date and Goals

Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference

The UMISC conference is coming up on October 6, 2026.

Membership terms and open seats

There are open seats for the Association of Minnesota Counties and an Environmental Organization.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on November 10, 2026.

Future Meeting Goals

- Bylaw updates
- Full committee priorities for subcommittees
- Invite a foraging task force member to present on foraging and noxious weeds
- 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
- Lee Frelich on the Cover It Up buckthorn initiative
- MITPPC presentation on the online sales of invasive plants
- Invasive species management along right of ways – reach out to MI DOT
- Stiltgrass presentation
- Future update from Leech Lake Dept of Resource Management about use of steam/hot water for invasive plant control

Adjourn

Hunter adjourned the meeting at 1:31pm.