

Illinois Invasive Species Management
Terrestrial Plants Committee
January 10, 2022
1:00PM

Present: Chris Evans, Kellie Schmidt, Evan Barker, Aaron Hager, Kelly Neal, Dan Connelly, Clair Ryan, Philip Cox, Cathy Ward, Mark Jirik, Marc McCormack, Kim Shearer, Brian Aaron

This is Claire Ryan's last meeting, as she is taking another position. We are thankful for all of Clair's contributions to this effort!

Agenda

1. Recap of Annual Council Meeting (12/7/21)

- Kellie reported that the annual meeting was informative and attended by approximately 25 people
- Committee chairpersons provided updates to the larger group
 - o Kellie presented a handout from the Terrestrial Plants Committee
 - o Tricia Bethke presented on behalf of the Pests and Pathogens Committee
 - o Reuben Keller presented on behalf of the Aquatics Committee
 - o The Wildlife Committee has not yet been formed
- Jennifer Windus, President of the Ohio Invasive Species Council gave a presentation on the challenges and opportunities they have faced in Ohio since 2005 when they began this work.
 - o Her presentation can be accessed at the link below:
https://igia.memberclicks.net/assets/Invasive_Species/Jennifer_Windus_OIPChistoryDec2021.pdf

2. Species Assessment Protocol

- a. Thanks to the subgroup that included Chris Evans, Evan Barker, Marc McCormack, and Brian Aaron. They met since our last larger committee met to do work on the species assessment
- b. Notes from their subgroup meeting can be found at the link below:
https://igia.memberclicks.net/assets/Invasive_Species/Species-Assessment-AdHoc-Meeting_Dec2021.pdf
- c. The subgroup also created this important reference document – *List of Plants Regulated in the Midwest*
https://igia.memberclicks.net/assets/Invasive_Species/Midwestern_regulated_plants.pdf
- **What is the ultimate goal of our species assessment? Is it aiming to add to the exotic weed list? Or, is it to develop a non-regulatory list of invasive plants?**
 - o Initial effort should be focused on education/awareness before it becomes a regulatory effort
 - o “Early detection” list should be a priority also so that industry can plan ahead
 - The early detection list will influence educational materials
 - o A good starting point may be to start with the plants that are already regulated in surrounding states but not yet in Illinois
 - o White paper would be developed and released to all stakeholders so that input could be gathered prior to any regulatory efforts
 - This will be the opportunity for the industry to come to the table and offer input, additional research, etc.
 - Announcement of intent to review species; people could send data on specific species and it would give the green industry advanced knowledge that we are planning to review the plants
 - o **GOAL:** Start with a list of invasives that is non-regulatory that will influence educational efforts
 - o The group discussed whether it was important that the list take into consideration native, non-native, IL native, US native? Is a plant just moving because of climate change, or is it invasive?
 - What are the consequences of the arrival of the species? Does it become a component of the community or does it drastically disrupt the ecosystem?
 - o Want to be sure that we have the information to backup why we are suggesting something be regulated, so it's too soon for us to recommend anything for regulation.

- List could have different levels of priority to indicate level of risk – need to look at how other states word this; will be tricky based on Ohio’s experience
 - As part of the committee’s process, could we have a list of plants we are planning to assess in the future – publish at the beginning of the year, so that the industry has a chance to plan ahead with production?
- **Do we want to use an objective quantitative or a qualitative assessment?**
- If another state worked really hard on a protocol, we should learn from that and build on it
 - Scoring or weighting of each question will be very difficult and may not be defensible; some questions will be binary (yes or no)
 - Will need to have a group review the quantitative scoring to make some decisions relative to economic impact and other factors that are hard to quantify
 - Using numeric scoring will be a weight of backing up the decision, but won’t be the sole basis for making a decision about regulating a plant
 - Three midwestern states use numeric scoring method – IN, OH, MI
 - We will likely want to model our approach off of a state that uses a numeric approach, then use qualitative review to support the score
 - As more states work together using a similar approach, they can support each other and the effort gets stronger
 - If a species has been regulated in multiple adjacent states, that should be an indication that we should put it on our radar for review
 - Quantitative review (score) should indicate red flags and then a qualitative assessment should be conducted by an intern or someone, followed by committee review
 - Who manages these interns?
 - Teresa Culley (Ohio) conducting a literature review for states to use so we don’t have to start from scratch
 - We would want to provide resources for anyone doing the assessment
 - Can use the reviews other states have conducted to help inform our process
 - DNR is doing a review of their procedures and reviewing cover crop plants – could be some plants that are used for land management; want to be sure that use is considered
 - Perhaps we should run the existing noxious weed list through whatever protocol we decide on to demonstrate the strength of the process
 - In the last iteration of the council in Illinois, the public had an opportunity to review the assessments so they had time to gather input before the council reviewed and voted. Can we allow for this in our process?

3. Proposed Update to the Exotic Weed Act

- Phillip Cox proposed that we come up with language that would be proposed to the Invasive Species Council, so revise the Exotic Weeds Act so that plants could be added/changed without having to go through the full legislative process. Instead. Updates could be made through the JCAR process.
- Phillip has researched potential options and worked with the DNR legal contacts and proposed adding the following sentence to section 3 of the Act: “The Department of Natural Resources may designate additional exotic weeds by administrative rule.” to section 3.
- There was discussion about the JCAR process and how stakeholders are notified of changes and allowed to comment.
- This would mirror the language in the Noxious Weed Act.
- With this change, any plant could be added to the list by DNR through the JCAR process.
- The industry representatives on the call voiced concern with the language as proposed. Kellie Schmidt and Phillip Cox will discuss possible alternatives to determine a path forward.

Next committee meeting to be held in Early April

Reference Documents

September Meeting Notes

https://igia.memberclicks.net/assets/Invasive_Species/Committee_Meeting_Notes_September2021.pdf

Terrestrial Plants Committee List

https://igia.memberclicks.net/assets/Invasive_Species/Terrestrial_Plants_Committee_Members.pdf

Assessment Protocol Data from Other States (compiled by Clair Ryan)

[VIEW THE SPREADSHEET ON GOOGLE DRIVE](#)