

Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group
June 17, 2003
NRCS Building, R&D office

Attending: Ellen Jacquart (TNC, INPAWS), Ken Collins (NRCS), Dave Burgdorf (NRCS – Plant Materials Center), Dave Stratman (NRCS), Bob Waltz (Div. of Ent. and PPath), Rick Phillabaum (INDOT), Lee Casebere (Div of Nature Preserves), Jason Randolph (IDEM – 401 section), Kirk Larson (Hoosier NF), Larry Nees (IN Seed Commissioner’s office), Mike Cline (INLA), W. David Heckler (Indpls Landscaping Association), Keith Johnson (Coop. Extension Service Agronomy), Glenn Nice (Purdue, Weed Science), Dave Gorden (ASLA)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approved agenda
3. Draft letterhead/logo selection: Ellen passed out five versions of a possible logo for IPSAWG and they were discussed, along with the fact that science-types really enjoy dabbling in artistic projects despite a clear lack of talent in the area. The logo showing roots strangling Indiana and the thistle on top was the favorite, with a caveat that the thistle should be replaced by a generic evil-looking plant that is not too cartoonish looking. We’ll try to have something to send out by email for review/approval before the next meeting. Larry was thanked for his effort in producing a draft letterhead for IPSAWG and getting us close to having something ready for a mailing.
4. Draft letter: as discussed at the last meeting, we need to send a mailing to our partners updating them on our efforts and letting them know we will soon start to publicize and implement our recommendations. Ellen passed out a draft letter (attached) for review. Comments on this letter are due by June 30 to Ellen at ejacquart@tnc.org – she’ll incorporate and finalize the letter. It will be sent to partners after that. Once partners have received and had a chance to respond, it will be time to start contacting agencies and organizations affected by the recommendations we’ve developed to find out how we can help them implement the recommendations.

There was also a discussion of member groups, and whether we are missing important groups from our partnership. It was suggested that the Indiana Chapter of The Wildlife Society be invited, as they represent professional wildlife biologists and have a broader interest in wildlife issues than the sportsmen’s groups. Ellen will talk to Brian MacGowan, current president, about that. Given our concern with sawtooth oak, the Wild Turkey Federation is a logical group to invite as a guest to our meetings for discussion. However, it might be that inviting the Sportsman’s Roundtable to the partnership would capture all of the sportsmen groups – WTF, Quail Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, etc. – each of which is involved in promoting and planting non-native species which some might consider invasive. Bob noted that INLA might have other groups that share an interest in IPSAWG activities; Mike Cline will identify possible INLA affiliate members in their directory.

Mike Cline noted that he had been called by a PhD student from Duke who is collecting information on activities regarding invasive species by nursery and landscape industry members. He was careful to explain just what we are doing in IPSAWG and INLAs role in this effort. Ellen mentioned she had been called by Fine Gardening magazine and they want a list of species Indiana considers invasive. She intends to take the same careful approach Mike did, explaining that IPSAWG has only assessed two species to date and so doesn't have a 'dirty list' to share. She will let them know that INPAWs does have a brochure with such a list, but that it is not based on documented occurrences of invasive species in the state.

We talked about 'dirty lists' and Glenn noted that a national website he had visited didn't show any invasive species for Indiana, though other states had lists. Glenn also told us that he spoke to the state meeting of township trustees on weed laws in the state, and that many weren't aware that they have a responsibility to control species on the noxious weed list (which is very short and entirely agricultural – e.g. Johnson grass, Canada thistle, shattercane). Dave Burgdorf complimented IPSAWG on not rushing to produce a 'dirty list', instead taking the time to document and assess each species – rushing to produce a list can cause misunderstandings and mistaken priorities.

Kirk Larson noted that the Eastern Region of the Forest Service is pulling together a list of invasive species by national forest, which should be produced and put out in the coming months. The invasive species listed for the Hoosier NF will come from inventory work that has been done on the forest as well as those species they predict will likely move onto the forest.

5. Next projects – Ellen suggested that the next assessment cover all invasive shrub Lonicera species (this does not include Japanese honeysuckle, which will be handled separately) and Rhamnus species reported from around the state. The group felt that we could probably go through the assessment for all those species in a day. It's recognized that we'll need to do some homework before the assessment meeting so that it goes smoothly. The Rhamnus/Lonicera subcommittee will include Ellen Jacquart, Lee Casebere, Mike Cline, and Dave Gorden, and invitations to join the subcommittee will be sent to Mike Dana, Kevin Gibson, Bob O'Neill, Tom Post, Paul Labus, Don Miller, Marion Jackson, and Don Ruch. Ellen will send out a note to get things started. Mike Cline has agreed to send a list of all the Rhamnus/Lonicera species currently in commerce to the subcommittee for their consideration. Ellen will be sending a note to invasive reporters to let them know this is the time to send in reports on Rhamnus/Lonicera. The subcommittee will likely meet in early to mid-August and report back at the next IPSAWG meeting.
6. Website update – Bob reported that we have a new URL – invasivespecies.in.gov. This will be an all-encompassing invasive site of which IPSAWG will be a part. Glenn, Larry, and Bob will meet with the other groups who will be represented on this site to help determine how to set it up.

7. Opportunities and Focus issues-

Wetland plants – Bob was asked to provide a list of wetland invasives in Indiana by IDEM. It was discussed and we agreed that is outside what IPSAWG is trying to do; instead, IDEM should be referred to wetland managers in the state who can then share which species they routinely see invading their lands. Glenn also suggested having them contact Carol Lembi at Purdue who has information on controlling aquatic species.

Sawtooth oak – Lee noted that Wild Turkey Federation promotes this species; he will contact them to discuss our concern about the species and see whether a meeting with them would be useful. Dave Gorden mentioned that sawtooth oak is also used in landscaping – not a huge seller, but it is raised in Ohio and sold as a yard tree.

Niger seed – Bob distributed for Ken the Niger seed specialty crop writeup. There was more discussion of the use of this species as a specialty crop in west central Indiana. Keith Johnson knows Ellsworth Christmas and Todd Hutson (Vermillion County extension agent) and will contact them to get a little more information and let them know we are interested in their project. If they're willing, he'll try to set up a meeting for a few of us to get together with them and talk about assessing Niger thistle. As Keith noted, if there is no invasive problem with the species, it could be a great benefit to farmers. We just need to make sure it won't have economic/ecologic consequences down the road that outweigh that benefit. Depending on the outcome of that meeting, we may have a presentation on this issue at the August meeting.

8. Thank you to Darrell Brown and Ken Collins for hosting the meeting – great room!
9. Next meeting – August 21, 2003 at 9 am. Location to be announced once we find out if we can meet at NRCS office.
10. Adjourn.

Date

Dear Partner:

We are pleased to share with you recent accomplishments of the Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group (IPSAWG). This group of interested agencies and organizations has been meeting for two years to develop and implement an assessment tool to determine which plant species currently being deliberately introduced into the state may threaten natural areas in Indiana due to invasion. Once such species have been identified, the group then develops recommendations for the appropriate use of the species. Our activities to date include:

- We have developed the assessment tool, which includes sections measuring invasion status, ecological impacts, potential for expansion, difficulty of management, and commercial value.
- To compile the information needed to answer the questions in the assessment we have worked with ecologists and natural area managers around the state and collected survey reports from them documenting the invasion of species into Indiana's natural areas.
- To assure consistency and accuracy in the naming the types of natural areas being invaded, *Natural Communities of Indiana* was drafted and distributed to all ecologists and natural area managers providing survey reports to IPSAWG. This document identifies and describes the fifty-nine natural communities occurring in Indiana.
- We have completed the assessment of two species, reed canary grass and crown vetch, and plan to assess several more by year-end. Each assessment has resulted in a list of specific recommendations regarding the species for government agencies, nursery professionals and landscape architects, the gardening public, botanic gardens and arboreta, and other affected groups.
- A website has been created, indianainvasivespecies.gov?, on which may be found copies of all the documents referenced in this letter.

We want to be sure that you, our partner in this effort, are fully aware of the progress we've made and, particularly, of the recommendations we are making for the assessed species. They are enclosed with this letter for your review. By August 1 we plan to start publicizing IPSAWGs work and these recommendations. If you have any concerns or questions regarding our work to date, please contact Bob Waltz (or Ellen Jacquart?). Thank you for your help in this effort.

Sincerely,

Robert Waltz