

Plants Out of Place – Issue 1

December 2001

What's IPAW been up to?

People attending the March 2001 Plants Out Of Place conference in Eau Claire, Wisconsin decided to create the Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin (IPAW) and appointed an initial board of directors charged with getting the organization started. Since March the volunteer IPAW board and members of IPAW have accomplished several of the organizational tasks required to ready IPAW for the fight against invasives.

- IPAW has been incorporated in the State of Wisconsin, has a Mission Statement, Articles of Incorporation and a set of Bylaws that define membership and how the Board of Directors will be elected.
- IPAW applied for and received 501(c)(3) Non-profit status from the IRS, making memberships and donations to IPAW tax deductible.
- IPAW has a web site with information on the organization, information on invasive plants, and links to other sites with invasive plant information: ipaw.org.
- The board has created a committee structure for IPAW (described in this newsletter). These are the working committees charged with accomplishing the main goals of the organization.
- IPAW has created and distributed a brochure describing the organization, and inviting membership.
- IPAW has assembled a display concerning invasive plants and the organization, and has presented the display at

several meetings and conferences concerned with aspects of the natural resources of Wisconsin.

- The IPAW Science Committee has drafted a set of working definitions for how IPAW will define Invasive Plants, Weeds, Potentially Invasive Plants, and Sometimes Invasive Natives.
- The IPAW Science Committee is cooperating with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to conduct a survey of invasive plants experts to define and rank a list of invasive plants of Wisconsin.
- IPAW is working with the Governor's Task Force on Invasive Species to provide information and direction with regard to invasive terrestrial species and the proposed weed law.

IPAW Working Committees -or -How You Can Become Involved!

In order to accomplish its mission, there are a number of areas in which IPAW must be active. These tasks include education, assembling and disseminating scientific knowledge related to invasives, promoting stewardship by helping to get people involved in local groups, and influencing public policy in Wisconsin, to name just a few. It is pretty obvious that IPAW will not have a large paid staff any time in the near future. That means that it will require the volunteer efforts of the IPAW membership (you) to make this effort successful.

IPAW needs your help! A brief description of the charges of each IPAW committee is presented here. If you are interested in

providing some volunteer labor for any of these tasks, please contact the board member liaison or the committee chairperson listed below. All committees need help. Please consider working on at least one committee. If you have already volunteered to help -thank you!

Communications

Contact: Rolf Utegaard, (715) 834-0065, bigute-hort@prodigy.net
Promote membership, maintain membership list, and generate a list of potential members

Produce and distribute a brochure and a periodic newsletter

Make press releases and promotional materials describing the organization and raising awareness

Design and maintain a high-quality 1PAW Website

Maintain a List-Serve of members and people interested in invasives

Education

Contact: Kent Van Horn, (608) 266-7596, vanhok@dnr.state.wi.us

Develop educational materials and programs related to invasive plants

IPAW will have use for educational materials and program targeting all education and interest levels

Science and Stewardship

Contact: Eric Parker, Committee Chair, (414) 266-9041, eric.parker@gasai.com

Survey/Monitoring: Survey Wisconsin for problem species, assemble existing information and monitor current distribution and extent of spread.

Assemble and provide information on pending or potential invasive plant problems. Work with regional groups to assemble and disseminate this information

Invasive Species List: Review status of current invasive plant lists. Develop a list of species of highest concern to IPAW.

Prioritize list and work with the Government Relations Committee on control strategies

Control Method Research: Evaluate, and promote appropriate control methods and generate funding for research

Regional Groups

Contact: Kelly Kearns, Committee Chair, (608) 267-5066, kearns@dnr.state.wi.us

Maintain contact with regional groups working on control of invasive plants

Determine how IPAW can best serve the Regional Groups and provide support to those groups

Keep IPAW membership informed of the activities of regional groups

Government Relations

Contact: Gene Roark, (608) 238-5349

Track actions of government agencies and make recommendations that advocate for invasive plant control when appropriate

Track public policy and legislation on invasive plant issues

Educate IPAW members and decision-makers on invasive plant policy issues

Plant Industry Relations

Contact: Rolf Utegaard, (715) 834-0065, bigute-hort@prodigy.net

Develop relationships with industry (Horticultural, Landscape, Forestry, Agriculture, etc) and work to promote IPAW goals

Fundraising

Contact: Nancy Braker (608) 251-8140, nbraker@tnc.org

Solicit gifts and grants from private and public sources to further the mission of IPAW

Plants Out of Place Conference 2003

Contact: Kelly Kearns, (608) 267-5066, kearns@dnr.state.wi.us
Plan all aspects of a conference to be held in February or March
2003

Nominating

Contact: Dan Undersander, (608) 263-5070,
Djunders@facstaff.wisc.edu

Propose a slate of candidates for each election that ensures that members of the Board of Directors for that term represent the wide range of interests of members of the organization. Interests should include: 1) private landowners, 2) commercial interests such timber, nursery production, agriculture, and the herbicide industry, 3) land managers and resource professionals, 4) private conservation organizations, 5) local, state, federal and tribal agencies, 6) education, and 7) research. Directors should also represent interests in a diversity of habitat types and geographic regions of the state.

Monroe County Invasive Plant Species Working Group

Invasive species do not recognize land ownership or political boundaries. Partnerships are absolutely essential for education, management, and control of invasive plants. The Monroe County Invasive Plant Species Working Group (MCIPSWG) first met in 1998 and has been very active since then. The MCIPSWG **Mission Statement** is: **(1) To educate public and private interests in Monroe County on the impacts of invasive species and (2) To conduct and promote the control/eradication of**

invasive plant species through interagency cooperation. The partnership is comprised of the following agencies, organizations, and individuals:

Fort McCoy Conservation Department	Monroe Co. Land
WI Dept. of Transportation Department	Monroe Co. Forestry
WI Dept. of Natural Resources Office	Monroe Co. Extension
Monroe County 4-H Cons. Service	USDA Natural Resources
Sparta School District Department	Monroe Co. Highway
University of WI-LaCrosse Volunteers	Private Landowners and

Since its inception, the MCIPSWG has become a subcommittee of the LaCrosse-Bad Axe River Basin Partnership Team. The **first project** that was undertaken by the MCIPSWG was developing informational brochures (fliers) that addressed six invasive plants found in Monroe County: spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, garlic mustard, glossy buckthorn, purple loosestrife, and Canada thistle. The brochures were printed in September 2000. **Other projects and activities** that are currently in progress or being planned include: identification of purple loosestrife sites in the county and obtaining biocontrol agents for controlling the plants; student research projects with the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; continued efforts for controlling spotted knapweed between Fort McCoy and WI DOT; continued involvement with the LaCrosse Bad-Axe Partnership; glossy buckthorn control project with landowners bordering Fort McCoy; projects with Sparta High School students involving purple loosestrife; educational and informational outings with local schools; surveying for invasive plants on county lands; having a training

session for science school teachers; and coordinating an invasive plant survey along county roads.

If you would like more information, or want to find out how you can become involved with MCIPSWG, please contact: Kim Mello, (608) 388-5766, email: kim.mello@wmh2.mccoys.army.mil

Get Involved in Regional and County Groups!

The following groups are actively working at invasive species control around Wisconsin. They can use your help! Contacts are listed.

Central – Mike Engel
Mike_Engel@fws.gov
(608) 221-1206 ext 21

Western – Rolf Utegaard
bigute-hort@prodigy.net
(715) 834-0065

Northwoods Weed Initiative --
Quita Sheehan
msheehan01@fs.fed.us
(715) 479-2827

Northeastern -- Gene Tiser
tiserg@dnr.state.wi.us
(920) 492-5836

Southern – Coordinator needed
Southeast – Coordinator needed

Milwaukee County Weed Out -
Ken Solis

ksolis@drjump.com
(414) 423-1709

Southwest – Coordinator needed

Door County -- Jamie Corbiser
jcorbisi@co.door.wi.us
(920) 746-2214

Greater Sauk County -- Jim Welsh
jwelsh@tnc.org
(608) 251-8140

Monroe County -- Kim Mello
kim.mello@emh2.mccoy.army.mil
(608) 388-5766

Brown County -- Paul Hartman
paul.hartman@ces.uwex.edu
(920) 391-4610

A Primer on Weed Laws in Wisconsin

S. Kelly Kearns, Plant Conservation Program Manager
Endangered Resources Program, WI Department of Natural
Resources,
Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921

With regard to invasive plants, we are fortunate to live and work in Wisconsin. Our cold winters and shorter growing seasons have spared us from many of the plants that are wreaking havoc on the forests, prairies and lakes in the southern states. Our location in the center of the continent has given us a respite from many of the foreign plants that seem to gain entry at the coasts and gradually spread inland. This lag time before many invaders enter our state allows us the opportunity to look to the other regions of the country and predict what plants could become troublesome here in

the future. With global warming bringing higher winter temperatures and extended growing seasons we may see several southern weeds moving our way. In fact, they are already on the move -kudzu has spread as far north as Peoria, Illinois, 100 miles from Wisconsin.

The types of agriculture practiced in Wisconsin have not encouraged aggressive weed laws in the state. Our deep prairie soils planted with row crops are fairly easily tilled. Along with the use of herbicides, tilling keeps agricultural weeds to a minimum. In western states, where grazing lands are significantly impacted by weeds, farmers have taken their plight to their lawmakers, procuring laws, funding and staff to deal with weeds at the state, county and local levels. Because there has not been a strong show of need by farmers in Wisconsin our antiquated weed laws have not been significantly revised in many years.

There are currently a number of weed laws in Wisconsin:

The **Noxious Weed Law (66.0407 WI Stats)** requires landowners statewide to control three common agricultural weeds for which control is very difficult and eradication is nearly impossible - Canada thistle, leafy spurge and field bindweed. Enforcement measures are generally taken only when neighbors complain. Frequently efforts to contain the weeds, such as mowing when they are in bloom, results in further spread of the species. Local municipalities have the ability to add plants to their local noxious weed lists, sometimes resulting in plants such as Kentucky blue grass and the generic 'goldenrod' being made illegal. This law is often misapplied at the local level, where the issue of truly invasive weeds gets confused with aesthetic concerns, leading to often unreasonable height limits for vegetation, such as native prairie communities. The law requires that each municipality appoint a weed commissioner to enforce the law, however, less than a third of municipalities have appointed someone in this position.

The **Nuisance Weed Law (23.235 WI Stats)** prohibits the sale and distribution, planting or cultivation of multiflora rose and purple loosestrife. The law has been fairly effective at stopping sales of these plants. However, it does not outline any authority for enforcement at the local level. Few municipalities will ask landowners to remove these plants from their landscapes.

Both the **Noxious Weed Law** and the **Nuisance Weed Law** are state statutes. Even a small change to either of these laws, such as adding a species to the list, would require that the change go through the entire legislative process. Changing a state law involves bill drafting, legislative committees and discussion and voting by 99 Assembly representatives and 33 State Senators, very few of which have any understanding of the problem of invasive plants.

The only Wisconsin legislation that gives any state agencies specific authority to work with invasive plants is the **Purple Loosestrife Law (23.23 WI Stats)**. It authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to perform research and control work on purple loosestrife and to provide grants to other agencies for control work. However, no funding or staffing has ever been authorized to implement this work. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is authorized by the federal government to restrict the sale and distribution of federal noxious weeds. Otherwise, DATCP has no responsibility or program to work with agricultural weeds. Currently there is no authority, staff or funding for any state agency to work with agricultural weeds or invasive plants. There is also no process available for reviewing or making additions to the law.

There are two other existing state laws relating to weeds. **The Agriculture and Vegetable Seeds Law (94.38 WI Stats)**, as part

of a more extensive law, lists 'prohibited and restricted' noxious weed seeds. The maximum amount of noxious weed seed that can be found in any seed lot is limited. The **Weed Seeds in Commercial Feed Law (94.72(3) WI Stats)**, outlines the amount of noxious weed seed allowable in commercial feed. It does not clarify if hay is included.

There are also laws that apply to aquatic nuisance weeds. **The Control of Aquatic Nuisance Weeds Law (30.1255)** requires persons who cut aquatic weeds in navigable waters to remove them from the water. It defines 'aquatic nuisance species' and requires that DNR periodically submit reports to the legislature on the impacts of aquatic nuisance species, potential strategies for their control, and areas and activities that need technical or financial assistance.

In the 2001-03 state budget, DNR was given rule-making authority for designating 'nuisance plants', for the purpose of protecting native aquatic plants, and for controlling aquatic plants that cause nuisances. The new law defines and lists 'nuisance plants', prohibits, launching of any watercraft, trailer or equipment with any aquatic plant attached to its exterior surface, and requires posting of publicly owned boat landings. It grants rule-making authority to DNR for managing aquatic plants in waters of the state. The law also directs the DNR to implement a statewide program for education, research, control, and containment of nuisance plants, and for aquatic plant protection.

Revisions to Wisconsin Weed Laws

In Wisconsin, we have long recognized the need to completely overhaul our state weed laws. In 1998 a Weed Law Technical Advisory Committee was established. Composed of representatives from affected industries and concerned organizations, the committee reviewed regulations in effect in other states, and studied the needs in our state. A proposal for a

new Wisconsin weed law was drafted by the committee and then sent to the public for review and input. An attempt to make the proposal part of Department of Natural Resources 2001-2003 budget resulted in only the aquatic weed portion being retained. Those who worked to draft the proposal are hoping the rest of the proposal will be introduced into the legislature as a separate bill.

The proposal sets up four statewide, and two local, categories of weeds, with varying levels of restrictions. Anyone could submit a petition for a species to be designated in one of those categories. An appointed Noxious Weed Council would make recommendations for placing specific plants in each of these categories based on scientific findings. This proposal is based on limited enforcement, assistance by state and local agencies, voluntary cooperation by landowners, and extensive training and public education. It also requests minimum staffing (3) and funding to be divided into three agencies. Additional funds would be needed for financial and technical assistance to landowners.

To obtain a copy of the draft recommendations for weed law program revisions:

Call (608) 266-7012
write WDNR, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
to obtain an e-mail with attached documents
contact: kearns@dnr.state.wi.us.

A New Survey of Purple Loosestrife Distribution

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) is working with the Department of Natural Resources and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to update Wisconsin's purple loosestrife distribution map, which can be viewed at www.glifwc-maps.org. WWA is recruiting volunteers who will be trained next

summer before they are sent out to the highways and waterways to gather data on the distribution of purple loosestrife. WWA anticipates funding to implement the project in counties adjacent to the Great Lakes in 2002, and in the rest of the state in years to follow. If you may be interested in participating in the survey, assisting in volunteer recruitment and training, or any other aspect of this important project, please call Derek Strohl, WWA program director, at (608) 250-9971 or e-mail derek@wiscwetlands.org.

IPAW Call for Photos

Photographs are very important educational tools. As a service to our members, and as an effort to support education related to the problem of invasive plants, IPAW will assemble a collection of photographs related to invasive plants. IPAW will share these photographs, which will be credited to the photographer, with our members and others who can use them for presentations or graphics related to invasive plants. IPAW is seeking the donation of photographs of invasive plants, their effects on native plant communities, invasive species control, and other related topics. If you are willing to share your best photographs of an invasive plant problem, please send them to Jim Reinartz, PooP Editor (jimr@uwm.edu, 3095 Blue Goose Road, Saukville, WI 53080). IPAW will digitize photographs that are not already digitized, and maintain a collection of digital images. We hope to make many images available on our website. Please include photo credit information and a brief description of the photo subject with any donated photographs. We will publish some of the most interesting photos we receive in future issues of this newsletter.

IPAW Working Definitions: What are we going to

call them?

Jim Reinartz, IP A W Board and IP A W Science Committee

One of the tasks of the IPAW Science Committee is to develop a working list of the invasive plants of Wisconsin. The committee is reviewing the status of current invasive plant lists, and will develop a list of species of highest concern to IPAW. The committee hopes to prioritize or categorize the species based on their level of threat to Wisconsin native plant communities. The IPAW Science Committee is collaborating with GLIFWC, The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, to develop a survey of people who have experience with invasives. The survey will solicit input from a wide "panel of experts" to determine the relative threat posed by the invasive plants of Wisconsin. This approach is similar to the concept of developing an index of conservatism for native plants by averaging the opinions of a panel of experts about the ecological properties of the species. The survey is part of a process through which IP A W will develop an "Index of Invasiveness" analogous to the indices of conservatism that are being developed for the native flora.

As the committee began working on the survey, it was immediately apparent that one of the keys to development of a useful survey would be to precisely define the terms that IPAW would use to describe the invasive plant problem. Here is a DRAFT set of working definitions that the IPAW Science Committee has written, and some notes describing why the committee is recommending these definitions. Most words have multiple definitions" Our goal is, therefore, not to come up with the absolute true definition of a term, but rather to write definitions that serve the goals of IPAW well.

***Invasive Plants** are non-indigenous species or strains that invade natural plant communities and wild areas and replace native*

vegetation.

The mission of IPAW is "to advance understanding of invasive plants and encourage their control to promote stewardship of the natural resources of Wisconsin". IPAW is an organization that serves the people who care for, and care about, the natural plant communities of the state, and helps them do as good a job as they can at preventing the spread of introduced species that are reducing the quality of those communities. The main focus of the members of IPAW is really on plants that are "out of place" and destructive of our native communities. We use the word non-indigenous here in the narrowly defined sense of not belonging to the plant community in which it is a problem. For example, a species may be native to the state but not the specific geographic area or even plant community in which it is problematic. In this case the species is non-indigenous to a specific locality or plant community (say prairies), and could be called invasive in prairies.

Weeds are undesirable and troublesome plants growing in disturbed areas, especially cultivated ground.

Weedy is a term used by ecologists to describe plants having life histories that allow them to very rapidly colonize and reproduce in recently disturbed sites. A good, simple definition of this meaning of weeds is "Aggressive invaders of disturbed habitats". Many native plants (e.g. the ragweeds) are weedy in this ecological sense of being early colonists. The main focus of IPAW may not be on weeds other than those that are also invasive. For example some weeds of pastures are also invasive in prairies. The definition of weeds that may be most useful to IPAW is the standard definition of weeds as "bad", troublesome plants mainly associated with agriculture. IPAW can then use that definition to be clear that as a whole class, weeds are not the main concern of the organization.

Potentially Invasive Plants (for Wisconsin) are species that are invasive in parts of North America having similar climates and plant communities, and that are thought to have the potential to

colonize and become invasive in Wisconsin.

Sometimes Invasive Natives are native plants that can become overly abundant in a plant community to which they are indigenous, often in response to a change in the disturbance regime.

Sometimes Invasive Natives (or perhaps some better term) is proposed as a category of plants that are indigenous to the plant community in which they sometimes become overly dominant. For example, in the absence of fire, there are several species of shrubs, native to prairies, which can become dominant and destroy the structure of the prairie. The Science Committee feels that part of the IPAW membership managing native plant communities may be interested in the organization's help with these species. However, these plants are not covered in the proposed definition of Invasive Plants. There are practical reasons why we would not want these native species lumped with non-indigenous species on a list of invasive plants.

The IPAW Science Committee would value your comments on these draft definitions. Direct your comments to this newsletter editor (Jim Reinartz, jimr@uwm.edu, 3095 Blue Goose Road, Saukville, WI 53705).

IPAW Annual Membership Meeting

9 March 2002 — LaCrosse, Wisconsin

The first Annual Membership Meeting of the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin will be held on 9 March 2002 during the Spring 2002 annual conference of The Prairie Enthusiasts to be held at the UW-LaCrosse campus (<http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/conference/welcome.htm>). The annual IPAW meeting will take place during the lunch hour (12:00-1:30 on 9 March 2002). IPAW members are also encouraged to participate in the TPE conference, but it will not be necessary to register for the conference to attend our Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting of IPAW is prescribed in our by-laws.

The **agenda** for Annual Meeting is as follows: Financial report, Membership report ***Report of activities to date:***

Incorporation Committees: establishment and work Communication with members ***New Business:*** Election of Directors Next annual meeting and conference Members input on future direction and efforts