



National Association of EPPCs Update

By Nancy Loewenstein and Doug Johnson

To paraphrase an old adage, “all weeds are local.” However, it pays to tackle weeds at the landscape scale. And some approaches work best at the national scale. These big picture efforts are the focus of NAEPPC.

NAEPPC, often mistakenly referred to as the National Exotic Pest Plant Council, is actually the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils. The SE-EPPC and all state chapters of SE-EPPC are members. In total, some thirty states are currently represented by member EPPCs. See the NAEPPC website for more information (www.naeppc.org).

NAEPPC has been active in the last year, working on everything from a national standard for listing invasive plants to revising our internal bylaws. As highlighted in the recently revised bylaws, the newly crafted mission statement of NAEPPC is “...to increase awareness about plants invading natural areas in the United States, to support member organizations and partners in their efforts to prevent, eradicate, and manage invasive plants, and to provide a unified voice on invasive plant issues that have national significance.”

At the Natural Areas Association (NAA) annual conference held in October in Chicago, NAEPPC co-organized a well-attended session on innovations in invasive plant management. Dialogue is underway to determine NAEPPC involvement in this year’s NAA conference which will be held October 15-17 in Dayton, Ohio (see announcement on page 5).

Perhaps most importantly, NAEPPC has taken a lead role in the process of developing an American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard for invasive plant listing. This effort, which was initiated about a year ago, is being coordinated by Susan Gitlin with the Codes, Standards and Sustainable Design Division, Office of Sustainable Communities, US Environmental Protection Agency. The goals are to create a standard that 1) describes the criteria and procedures to develop an invasive plant list for a defined region, and 2) will be useful as the foundation for creating lists of invasive plants to support building codes and related applications. NAEPPC’s involvement focuses on assuring that the proposed standard is scientifically sound and rigorous, and that the standard has wider application than informing building codes, lending validity to current invasive plant lists. To that end, an important consideration during development of the standard was that current EPPC lists be able to meet the standard criteria without a lot of extra work. Board members of the SE-EPPC and state chapters are actively involved on the task force and chapters have had ample opportunity for comment along the way. A draft standard was completed in December and the process for ASTM approval is underway. This is a lengthy and complex process that could take a year or more. If you would like to review a copy of the draft standard, please contact Nancy Loewenstein.

NAEPPC board members are also involved with the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species (NECIS), National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) and the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC). While NECIS currently tends to focus primarily on invasive animals, it has drafted comments to the Healthy Habitat Coalition Draft Bill that aims to put federal weed dollars “on the ground” for actual management efforts. Due to federal budget cuts associated with sequestration, NISAW activities in Washington, DC were severely curtailed in 2014. Budget cuts also impacted ISAC, which was unable to hold regular meetings in 2013, meeting only once via conference call in December.

Another change to the bylaws is clarification of expectations of member groups, specifically that an organization can be removed as a member of NAEPPC if it has not participated in any NAEPPC meeting by phone or in person within one year, or if its work is not consistent with the mission of NAEPPC.

NAEPPC continues to serve as a forum for topics of interest. Discussions have included biofuel regulations, best practices guidelines for preventing weed spread, coordinated mapping and early detection, and dialogue with the Arbor Day Foundation about their continued use of potentially invasive species. By bringing together the leadership of EPPCs across the country, NAEPPC plans to push forward on work of national importance. As the ASTM standard project moves forward, we will keep you informed. And when we see opportunities for funding on-the-ground work to address priority invasive plants, we are positioned to help coordinate a grassroots campaign to communicate the conservation benefits of such investments. Visit the website often for updates: www.naeppc.org

For additional information on the organizations mentioned in this article, see:

American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) – www.astm.org

Natural Areas Association (NAA) – naturalareas.org

National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species (NECIS) – www.necis.net

Healthy Habitats Coalition –

www.healthyhabitatscoalition.com

Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) – www.invasivespecies.gov

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