

Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee Minutes
September 24, 2010 Meeting Capitol Extension Room E2.018

The meeting was convened by the Chairman Dr. Charles Hart, Texas AgriLife Extension, September 24, 2010 at 10:07 am., Committee members attending were Dr. Earl Chilton, Vice Chair, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Dr. Ron Billings, Texas Forest Service, Katherine Calnan, Texas Water Development Board, Mel Davis, Texas State Soil Water and Conservation Board and Dr. Shashank Nilakhe, Texas Department of Agriculture.

Guests: Johnny Oswald (TSSWCB), Bob Gruner (TSSWCB- TISCC Alternate), Allison Scott (District Liaison -Representative Swinford), Lauren Wied (Legislative Staff -Senator Hegar); Sean Cunningham (Vice Chancellor of Governmental Relations with Texas State University System).

July 16, 2010 Meeting minutes were approved and amended as follows- Dr. Nilakhe suggested that the TWRI acronym be spelled out as Texas Water Resources Institute. Dr. Hart made the change to the wording "spraying salt-cedar along the Pecos." Dr. Chilton made the motion to approve the minutes as amended and Dr. Nilakhe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Sean Cunningham with Texas State University System was present at the meeting to acquire more information on federal and state relations dealing with invasive species.

Dr. Nilakhe nominated Dr. Hart for Chair of the committee and Katherine Calnan nominated Dr. Chilton for vice-chair of the committee. Dr. Hart made the motion to approve the nominations for officer elections and Dr. Nilakhe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Committee Membership request- Dr. Chilton said there is a legislative directive not to add more members at the present time. Mr. Davis said that AgriLife is already represented on the committee. Dr. Hart explained the difference between AgriLife and AgriLife Research. Dr. Chilton suggested tabling the item until the committee checks with legislative staff on intent. Mr. Davis made the motion to table the item and Dr. Billings seconded the motion. Item tabled.

Dr. Billings opened the discussion on the need for a risk assessment of non-native terrestrial plants in Texas. Dr. Chilton mentioned that there is a better comprehensive risk assessment coming out in January that is similar to the one used in California. Dr. Billings would like to identify agencies to start working on non-native terrestrial plant list, possibly forming sub-committee. Dr. Hart suggested forming a task force for developing the risk assessment. Dr. Billings made the motion to establish a task force for investigate the potential of an invasive terrestrial risk assessment with other agencies. Dr. Chilton seconded the motion, motion passed.

Dr. Billings opened discussion on the distribution of the invasive soapberry borer. It is currently in 40 counties in Texas. Dr. Hart requested that Dr. Billings send out the distribution in Texas map out to committee members for their use.

Mr. Davis updated the committee on the biological control of salt-cedar. The beetle currently being used to fight invasive salt-cedar is affecting ornamental trees in public yards in Presidio, Texas. Dr. Billings said that Texas Forest Service has been asked by the Agriculture Research Service to do a survey on defoliation of the trees on both sides of the Rio Grande in Presidio. Texas Forest Service will be distributing an informative brochure on the beetles during the survey. The brochure will be in both English and Spanish.

Committee members were presented with a copy of the TCEQ draft version of the new general permit to implement recent federal court rulings and regulations for pesticide discharges into waters of the U.S.

In discussion of alternate meeting locations, Mr. Davis asked Katherine Calnan if she received approval for out of city travel. Katherine Calnan said she has received approval for out of city travel. Dr. Billings suggested that every 1 or 2 months the committee could meet at a different member agency headquarters or even once a year. Dr. Nilakhe said that the reason for meeting at the Capitol in Austin is for the opportunity for legislators and their staff to attend.

Mr. Davis talked about his findings from researching how the committee communicates and makes decisions in relation to the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Davis suggested only using regular email to communicate instead of the "Google Group" email list.

Dr. Chilton discussed the new Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) regulations dealing with invasive plants with an Approved list rather than a Prohibited list. TPWD is using the definition of any aquatic plant that is a member of Kingdom Plantae using the Integrated Taxonomic Information System. If the plant is deemed low-risk, it is placed on the Approved list. There is a meeting on January 26 and 27, 2011 where the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission will discuss public comments and draft regulations/rules.

Dr. Chilton presented a slide show on Zebra Mussels in Northeast Texas. In April 2009 the first live specimen was found in Lake Texoma. In July 2009, they were found in Lake Lavon. In 2010, new infestations were found and treated in Sister Grove Creek. Dr. Chilton stressed the importance of minimizing inter-basin transfer.

Dr. Chilton gave a preview of the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee website at the meeting. Suggestions for changes to the site were as follows: Create direct links to funding opportunities, create a counter for website visits, put the meeting notice on the front page of the site, insert the Texas State Seal to the front page, organize members on the members page in order of position in committee, create an about page and change related links to become a separate page.

In other business, Dr. Chilton requested that committee member agencies submit any comments on the TPWD draft regulations and rules for the Approved list to him.

The committee discussed having the next meeting in January 2011 with a date to be determined.

Dr. Billings made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Nilakhe seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.