

SE EPPC Planning Meeting Minutes  
Nashville, Tennessee  
October 29, 2004

PRESENT

Jim Allison  
Brian Bowen  
Jim Burney  
John Byrd  
Jim Miller  
Johnny Randall  
Keith Tassin  
Joyce Bender – acting secretary

The following notes constitute our meeting minutes. There was no strict adherence to an agenda; more of a free flowing, brainstorming event ensued. Ideas and issues appear mostly in the order brought up, but I did move a few things around for better flow.

With a quorum present, the meeting began at 9:20 a.m. Business was suspended so that the Board could devote the entire meeting to strategic planning.

**Today's Goal** – defining SE EPPC's direction. Brian handed out an agenda with some points for discussion and asked us to **1)** consider how we define SE EPPC's role as a regional organization and determine what SE EPPC can do to support state chapters; **2)** identify priority targets and actions which will focus SE EPPC to support and complement the state chapters in meeting the organization's mission most effectively; and **3)** discuss how SE EPPC shall interface with other non EPPC agencies, organizations working on non-native invasive species.

Brian wants us to present today's directions at the 2005 symposium for membership feedback.

Current status of organization – Brian states we're in "neutral". Mentioned that our revenue source is based on conference proceeds and growth has been flat for several years. Tony didn't send current balance for this meeting, but as of August 28, 2004 it was \$23,159.83. This was the balance for that time and it didn't include money from the Florida conference and didn't include payment to Florida for Wildland Weeds.

Brian indicated and Mike and Jim concurred that the ball park number for the Florida meeting should be \$5,000.00. USFS still owes sponsorship for \$2,500.00.

Robin is now liaison to SE EPPC from USFS. SC will provide a new delegate to SE EPPC board.

Outreach to members .... Communication to membership is a critical need for this organization.

Wildland Weeds as the SE EPPC newsletter is not working as well for use as a regional means of getting info to our membership.

—Brian suggested that twice a year we use the chapter updates as a basis for a newsletter that would then be sent out as an email attachment to all members. Announce the newsletter's availability in an email with a link to the SE EPPC web page. Need to be sure to get members to include their email addresses when they become members to facilitate this. He would like to try to do this before the end of the year. States that did not send info in time for the NAA meeting need to send info *now*.

Brian suggested having one annual mailing to membership - could be a flyer or something else brief just to keep in contact, especially for those without internet access.

Jim Miller asked for access to membership contact information. Concerns were raised about having this info available directly on the web due to Spammers. A suggestion was made to provide membership info to chapter secretary/treasurers and announce in the email newsletter its availability to members if they go through the chapter secretary/treasurer.

One last word about WW – Jim Burney talked about the balance of news items in the magazine. We need more out of state advertisers to help pay for more pages so that there can be more info.

### **What can the regional organization provide to state chapters that they cannot do alone?**

- Provide tax exemption to the states – how much lobbying can we do? We can legally only spend 10% of total time focused on legislation and actually speaking to legislators.
- Aid members in actions to support legislation and other advocacy. Put out example letter on web to members and encourage them to use it to contact legislators.
- Provide assistance from successful programs/savvy experts to aid other states to plan strategies to for use at state level to pass legislation. Possibly have training sessions at annual symposium.
- Marketing our symposium each year – expand the focus to make it more regionally relevant; include high profile invitees – senators, governors, etc.
- Serve as an outlet for research results – develop proceedings from the symposium. Do as PDF and put on the web or as CD? Get underwriting for this.

This all takes money. All agreed that we need to reinstate the coordinator position. Use Pulling Together money for this? Ask TNC how they are paying salary for Midwest Coordinator. We should use the term Executive Director instead of coordinator. Since Brian was most recently our coordinator, he will draft a job description and try to identify some possible funding sources for this position.

Brian asked: What can SE EPPC do for the states?

Jim Burney offered the first four items:

1. Research and education grant program findings must be presented at symposium.
2. Clearinghouse on invasive plants (identify universities that are working on invasives) – research, policy etc.
3. Unified voice on funding, other aspects of the issues
4. Act as liaison with nursery and horticulture industry (for example Johnny will represent SE EPPC at a PBS television filming – he is doing a power point poster for use by their Board members).
5. Create poster for use by Chapters at meetings/make logo available for use for endorsements.
6. Support regional risk assessment for ornamentals that everyone will abide by. We need a standard protocol; facilitate this process rather than conduct it by suggesting species. Nurseries in NC & GA are asking their own – what species are most invasive.
7. Participate in alliances for all invasive species initiatives.
8. Award annually a company who has turned from the “dark side”

John Byrd reminded us that we need to work more with the Southern Weed Science Society – how to get more coordination for meetings, joint publications, etc. More participation with them at our meetings and us at theirs.

Jim Miller suggests state councils fill in the gaps for lists that don't cover natural area weeds, i.e. NRCS, WHIP program requirements, BMP's, etc. Have the SE EPPC be responsible for assessments. Develop two lists: one for management concern plants and one for ornamental/economically valuable plants. Compile county level voucher info for pest plants to document their spread (good for assessments).

John Byrd mentioned that the Mid South Invasive Species Alliance of AL, MS, TN, AR, and LA is starting up now for all invasive species (plants and animals). They plan to prioritize species of interest and focus on funding research, education and outreach. Their thought is to bring these states together so that D.C. policy makers hear from larger group than a single state. Try to be more competitive with Western states for money available for the invasives issue.

**Education/Outreach** – currently, the budget committee recommends \$5,000.00 for this each year.

Jim Miller suggested that we get economists and social scientists involved in looking at the impacts of the invasives issue and have them help get the message out to those who don't look at this as an ecological issue first and foremost. NAFTA and the increase in plant importations were his examples of how the issue touches us beyond the purely biological.

Our SE EPPC web page has been static. It needs more attention. This could be a focus for the clearinghouse aspect discussed in number 2 above.

Other groups to make connections with include Master Gardeners Programs – speak to them about invasive species and gain their support.

At the end of the day and our brainstorming, the question was asked: How do we begin? Keith suggested starting small, focusing on the connections to the membership.

Our conclusions were:

- We will be a clearinghouse – disseminate info on all aspects of the invasive plants issue

To do this we will need:

- a state of the art web page with links to all state chapters
- a compilation of invasive plant lists in the SE
- to maintain the vegetation management manual
- to promote research
- to promote the St. Louis Codes of Conduct

Do now:

- add the state chapter info as a newsletter before the end of year
- develop job description for Executive Director
- find funding for Executive Director
- States need to decide about requiring \$5 more for dues

Brian brought up the Lowe's Initiative and told us the status of the project. They agreed to stop selling 44 species on Florida's list. Now we need to look at NatureServe's list of 300 species, Florida's 44 and any other assessed lists and approach Lowe's and the other big box stores to stop sales in other areas as well. Get these species onto state weed lists too for consistency's sake.

Johnny provides information about the St. Louis Codes of Conduct at all events where he displays. NC EPPC is approaching all groups involved to ask for their compliance. We need to put a link to this on the SE EPPC web site.

We talked with Alabama about preparations for the upcoming SE EPPC meeting. Sounds like a good meeting is being planned.

Johnny said that in 2006, Raleigh NC will be the next SE EPPC meeting location. The meeting will be held in conjunction with St. Louis Declaration group's next meeting.

Brian asked for a motion to approve the April 27 minutes. Joyce moved to accept them with corrections. Johnny seconded. Kristen will need to correct the last sentence in the minutes and correct the spelling for Keith's name; it is Tassin. Motion carried.

The outcome of the NA EPPC meeting at NAA conference October 16 was discussed. The voting body approved NA EPPC coming under SE EPPC's blanket exemption for 501(c)3 status pending SE EPPC board approval.

Brian asked for a motion to approve adding NA EPPC to our group exemption.

John Byrd moved

Johnny Randall seconded

Motion carried.

The Board's next meeting will be a teleconference in February (Brian will set the date) and the next face to face SE EPPC Board Meeting will be May 3 in the afternoon in Birmingham.

Brian asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joyce moved to adjourn.

Jim Allison seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.