

# NAEPPC Meeting at NAA

The National Association of EPPC's met at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Natural Areas Conference in St. Louis on October 19, 2000. Representatives were present from TN-EPPC, Mid-Atlantic EPPC, Michigan Invasive Plant Council, Wisconsin (newly forming EPPC), PacNW-EPPC, FLEPPC and CalEPPC. Updates on organization actions were given from state and regional organizations. CalEPPC reported that their invasive species list had been recently revised and published. TN-EPPC reported that their list was being revised and nearly complete. Kelly Kearns reported that Wisconsin would be hosting a meeting in March and that they were in the process of establishing an Invasive Plant Council. Nelroy Jackson, who is a member of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee and a former CalEPPC BOD member, informed everyone about the up-coming 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Weed Awareness Week February 26-March 2, in Washington, D.C. He encouraged all EPPC's participation to become more visible on the national front.

A discussion of national issues gave rise to actions we decided were appropriate for NAEPPC to take. Jil Swearingen (Mid-Atlantic EPPC), who chaired this meeting, agreed to write a letter on behalf of the NAEPPC to the National Invasive Species Council. The letter is to inform the NISC about the purpose of EPPC and to express our support and interest in participating in the implementation of the National Management Plan. There was concern expressed at this meeting (and previous meetings) about how EPPC's have been ignored as the issue of invasive species has risen to national prominence, and how we have not been recognized as a stakeholder by the feds. In writing this letter, we want to bring to the NISC's attention that the Exotic Pest Plant Council has much expertise to provide on all aspects of natural area weed issues and that EPPC wants to be recognized as a cooperating partner at the regional and state level. As a stakeholder, we

should have a voice at the table in state and regional invasive species councils that the feds are trying to institute.

We also decided to revise the 1995 MOU that established the NAEPPC. The revision will emphasize the organization's purpose, and state EPPC's mission goals. The revised MOU will identify NAEPPC's focus on natural area and wildland weed issues. Mike Kelly, President of CalEPPC volunteered to write the revision. It will be sent to all EPPC's for review and approval. The MOU will provide NAEPPC a formal legal documentation that will describe our common interest. The MOU can be presented to the National Invasive Species Council, and it will have all participating EPPC organization's signatures. The mission statement in the MOU will also provide the necessary framework for newly forming invasive plant councils to adopt if they choose to participate as a member of the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils.

The NAEPPC also agreed to host an invasive exotic pest plant symposium at next year's Natural Areas Conference at Cape Canaveral, Florida. As a Natural Areas Association Board member, I had the opportunity to participate with the local planning committee for next year's NAA Conference to arrange our participation. The Natural Areas Association and EPPC have many common goals and should collaborate in our efforts whenever possible.

The NAEPPC meeting adjourned after approximately 2.5 hours. This particular meeting was difficult to schedule and conduct because of conflicting events at the NAA conference. It occurred after daylong field trips. Because they ran late, conducting business at this meeting proved to be very challenging. We will rectify this problem at next year's meeting with appropriate planning. Our symposium next year at NAA should provide much interest and should be a springboard for a productive NAEPPC meeting.

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