

Meetings, Meetings and More Meetings

The past few months have been the season for meetings with gatherings of NIWAW, NAEPPC, SE-EPPC, FLEPPC, and others. To find out what these mysterious acronyms mean, and what happens at these functions (*besides coffee and doughnuts*), read on ~

NIWAW 7

National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week 7 (NIWAW 7), hosted by the Invasive Weed Awareness Coalition (IWAC), took place February 26th – March 3rd in Washington, DC. The mission was to raise public and legislative awareness of the invasive weed problem, and it was a whirlwind week for anyone and everyone with an interest in exotic pest plants. NIWAW focuses on sharing invasive weed information with government officials and collaborating with experts to address what has become a national and global environmental concern.

Participating federal agencies included the Department of Agriculture, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Interior, the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) and the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). FICMNEW is a partnership of the EPA and 15 federal agencies from the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Defense, Energy and Transportation. The NISC is an interdepartmental council that helps to coordinate and ensure complementary, cost-efficient and effective Federal activities regarding invasive species.

A weeklong invasive weed exhibit was set up at the U.S. Botanic Gardens with a special “Kid’s Fun Day” that was attended by approximately 800 children and their parents. Amelia Exotica, Lucy Loosestrife, and other characters were



Amy Richard, a/k/a Amelia Exotica, University of Florida-IFAS, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants

on hand to raise awareness and distribute information, and there was even story telling and a sing along with live music for entertainment and education. An evening reception for attendees and invited guests also was held at the Botanic Gardens later in the week.

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Many participants used the national gathering as an opportunity to hold board meetings, including the North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA), the National Exotic Pest Plant Council (NAEPPC)(see below), and the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation (AERF). In addition, the estimable Ecological Society of America (ESA) presented their Invasive Species Position Paper, **Biological Invasions: Recommendations for U.S. Policy and Management** at a National Press Club breakfast on the final day. The ESA is a non-profit, non-partisan society of professional scientists with more than 9,000 members. Part of their mission is to ensure the appropriate use of ecological science in environmental decision-making by enhancing communication between the ecological

community and policy-makers.

Since the federal agencies held their respective briefings at their home buildings in Washington, there was much running around on the quick and efficient METRO system. In addition, attendees were encouraged to visit their legislators on Capitol Hill to help members of Congress and their staff to understand the economic and environmental threat of invasive and noxious weeds at the national level.



Presentations held at the host hotel included speakers from the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, the Department of Defense (Army-Civil Works), the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Pesticide Programs, The Nature Conservancy, the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), and others. The Department of Interior briefings consisted of director's reports from the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Geological Survey and Bureau of Indian Affairs. An afternoon session was devoted to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a morning session coordinated by FICMNEW covered Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) development.

A CWMA is a partnership of federal, state, and local government agencies, tribes, individuals, and various interested groups that manage noxious weeds or invasive plants in a defined area. The basic characteristics include a steering committee, a commitment to cooperation, a comprehensive plan to manage or prevent one or more invasive plants, involvement or representation of the majority of private landowners and natural resource managers in

culturalists and conservationists, with outreach programs reaching more than 88,000 people; and attendance by almost 7,000 people at regular weed management meetings throughout the state. CWMA's are common in the western U.S. and aid in the distribution of federal funding for weed management programs. Eastern regions are being encouraged to develop similar partnerships in order to take advantage of cooperative management efforts and funding possibilities when they become available.

NAEPPC

A National Exotic Pest Plant Council (NAEPPC) meeting took place during NIWAW7 and was attended either in person or by conference call by representatives from Florida, Georgia, California, the intermountain states, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Wisconsin, Kentucky, New England, and New York councils, associations, networks and groups. All of the organizations have a website and most, but not all, have acquired non-profit status (501c3). An Intermountain EPPC may form consisting of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Canada to help protect natural areas in those states.

The objective of NAEPPC is to communicate with one voice on issues and policies of national importance relating to exotic pest plants threatening natural areas and wildlands in the U.S.

The original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing NAEPPC was signed in 1995 by California, Florida, Tennessee, and Pacific Northwest EPPCs. In 2003, another MOU was developed to incorporate new EPPCs and to update goals and provisions. NAEPPC members have been meeting annually at the national Natural Areas Association (NAA) conference where successes and failures have been shared. At this most recent meeting, it was decided to meet twice a year, once at the NAA conference and once by conference call. A draft mission statement was dis-

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a defined geographical area with a common geography, weed problem, community, climate, political boundary or land use. In other words, CWMA's facilitate the partnership of multiple stakeholder groups whose common goal is the control and eradication of noxious and invasive plant species. Steve Schoenig from the California Department of Food and Agriculture gave an excellent presentation on CWMA's and listed the statewide accomplishments of CWMA's in California. These included over \$6 million distributed to California CWMA's over 5 years; work towards eradication of over 2,000 high priority weed infestations (more than 128,000 acres); over \$7 million in matching funds from outside grant funding and in-kind donations and services; new local partnerships between public agencies, private landowners, agri-

cussed, with the following being tentatively agreed upon: “To serve as a national organization representing member councils in order to speak in unison on national issues regarding invasive plants in natural areas of the U.S.” Combined EPPC membership totals 3,000 – 4,000 individuals, enough to have considerable impact on policy.

Projects discussed during the NAEPPC meeting included establishing committees for data management and standards to enable information sharing, shared projects such as mapping, working with green industries, ecological modeling and forecasting, participating in updating North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) standards, and more. Also discussed was an invasive plant management network/clearinghouse similar to

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the western Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) in Bozeman, Montana but focusing on the Midwest and East. This type of information clearinghouse might qualify for federal funding similar to the CIPM.

A NAEPPC.org domain name has already been retained and a website was discussed which will function as a national portal with links to all EPPCs/IPC's and include a mission statement, an overview of exotic pest plant problems, and a national listserv. Another recommendation was that NAEPPC "position papers" should be generated; for example, to support the funding of weed management areas. Also, weed management areas in the eastern U.S. need a definition similar to that of the western areas of the country since future federal funding may be allocated using weed management areas as recipients.

Officers were elected with Tony Pernas serving as Chair, Brian Bowen as Vice Chair, Mike Bodle as Secretary, and Nancy Fraley as Treasurer (although no dues will be collected). All agreed to serve until at least the NAA meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona September 20th – 23rd, 2006. For a copy of the minutes, bylaws, and MOUs, contact Tony Pernas at Tony_Pernas@nps.gov.

SE-EPPC

The 8th Annual Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council symposium was held in conjunction with the 4th Annual North Carolina EPPC Meeting May 23rd – 25th at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. Concurrent sessions were held for biological control; best management practices; assessment, monitoring and mapping; environmental education and volunteer success; non-chemical control methods; invasive plant ecosystem effects; restoration of invaded ecosystems; and stopping new weed infestations. Dr. Lee Van Wychen, director of science policy for the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) discussed eastern invasive species management initiatives. Other special presentations included herbicide resistance and gene flow by Dr. David Mortensen, University of Pennsylvania, and invasive weed assessment by Dr. Randy Westbrooks, Bureau of Land Management. Dr. Alan Weakley, Herbarium Curator for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, described new non-native additions to the southeastern flora, and Dr. Alison Fox, University of Florida, discussed risk assessment and the Florida nursery industry. Several hands-on workshops and field trips also were offered. Tony Pernas has taken over as SE-EPPC President from Brian Bowen, and Lee Patrick is now Treasurer.

FLEPPC

FLEPPC hosted their 21st annual symposium April 24th – 26th in Gainesville with the amusing theme, "Little Crop of Horrors." Dr. Lloyd Loope from the USGS Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center, Haleakala Field Station in Makawao, Maui, Hawaii presented the keynote address. He discussed the management of invasive species in Hawaii since the 1993 Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) report to U.S. Congress, which devoted a chapter to Hawaii and Florida as two case studies due to the severity of their invasive species problems and their experience in addressing those problems. Dr. Loope made the

important point that agricultural and natural areas bear the brunt of invasive species impacts, while those responsible for the presence of those species do not bear the associated costs.

More than 200 people attended the meeting, which included 35 oral presentations, a panel discussion, 25 poster presentations, and numerous field trips. Approximately 18 vendors lent their support and displayed their wares in the exhibitor space. The evening social included musical entertainment by *The Weeds* with plenty of poolside dancing. FLEPPC's first annual Photo Contest was held with awards given in the following categories: natural area landscape infestation; Category I or II close-up; before/after control; weed workers working; humorous; and artistic. The winning photos in each category are shown throughout this issue.

The FLEPPC symposium included the annual business meeting where four new board members were elected to replace outgoing board members Roger Clark, Drew Leslie, Cressida Silvers and Jim Duquesnel. Alison Fox took over as Chair from Jim Burney, and Dianne Owen (pictured) was presented with the **Member of the Year** award for her tireless, and always cheerful, work as FLEPPC secretary. Congratulations, Dianne!

— KB, Ed.



Pop Quiz!

Spell out the following acronyms:

IWAC _____

FICMNEW _____

ISAC _____

FLEPPC _____

WMA _____

NIWAW _____

NAWMA _____

NGO _____

NA-EPPC _____

WSSA _____

SE-EPPC _____

AERF _____

OTA _____