

Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council Meeting – General Membership Meeting

Date: Saturday January 22, 2005, 10:00 am

Location: Indian Springs State Park

Members Present: Brighton West	Chris Evans
Cilla Cartwright	Jim Allison, Past President
Helen Brown	Cindy Reittinger
Gary Wade	Elaine Nash, Treasurer
Mark Derenthal	John Taylor
Jimmy Rickard	Connie Gray, President

Introductions & News: Connie Gray, President called the meeting to order at 10:20 am. After the members introduced themselves, the President presented Jim Allison, who is relocating to another state, a token of the Council appreciation of his hard work in helping found the Council.

Presentation: Brighton West, Trees Atlanta, gave a short presentation on where to find volunteers and how to keep them. Trees Atlanta plants 2000-2500/year with a volunteer labor force.

Where to Find Volunteers:

- Community Service workers—50% are good help;
- High school & college students;
- Scouts;
- Sierra Club members;
- Direct recruiting at community meetings;
- Volunteer websites, especially www.volunteermatch.org

How to Keep Volunteers:

- Everyone signs a liability waiver
- Choose appropriate tasks for each group. i.e.... Community service in floodplains, Sierra Club members in better areas. Give everyone an overview but don't bore them with details.
- Make it easy with regular volunteers days.
- Provide a cell phone # for those who get lost.
- Keep them warm; on cold days keep them moving.
- Go to lunch afterwards and encourage socializing. Help tie them into a social network.
- Reward regular volunteers with T-shirts or hats for so many volunteers' hours or jobs.
- Provide instruction for poison ivy prevention and provide Tecnu skin cleanser. If volunteers get bad poison ivy they probably won't return.
- Bring tools and chemicals.
- Thank them profusely.
- Learn the specific address of where you are in case you need to call 911.

Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report: Elaine Nash stated those members with a dues anniversary date in January and February were coming in well. A 3rd reminder would be sent in February. The bank balance as of 12/23/04 was \$5965.65. Adding the 2005 dues, the balance is \$6356.30. In answer to a question, the bulk of the money was brought forward from the SE-EPPC symposium in 2001. The September workshop added a small amount to the bank balance.

To increase membership, a letter inviting participation in the Council by university biology and botany departments and DNR land managers was suggested.

Election of Board Members: Two board members, Wayne Morris and Alex Levy, stepped down due to changed job responsibilities. Jim Allison resigned as president because he is moving out of the area. Connie Gray assumed the role of President and the Board elected Malcolm Hodges as Vice-President,

leaving three board vacancies. **Brighton West**, Trees Atlanta, **Dr. Gary Wade** of Extension Service, Horticulture Dept. and **Mike Owsley**, USDA, Plant Materials Center in Americus, agreed to join the board. **Cindy Reittinger moved the slate be elected; Helen Brown seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.**

The President asked that the members endorse the election of Malcolm Hodges as Vice-President. **Elaine Nash moved Malcolm Hodges' election as Vice-President; Brighton West seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Committee Reports:

- Connie Gray reviewed the decisions made at the August general meeting and GA-EPPC past efforts from 1999 onward. It was agreed in August that GA-EPPC would concentrate on the invasive list, workshops and other education and policy. She pointed out that other organizations had stepped forward to provide brochures about the invasive plant problem.
- Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance and Chris Evans and Chuck Barger, of the Bugwood website, were listed as two outstanding brochure contributors.
- GA DOT has a program to tackle invasives on their rights-of-ways. GA-EPPC might approach GADOT about assisting with a training program for their people.
- Nash agreed to get in touch with the SWCC, custodians of the "Green Book", about concerns.

Comprehensive Invasive List/ Research needs:

- Gray reviewed the need to develop a clear process for creating or adding plants to the official GA-EPPC list. The Committee will develop criteria and be explicit and factual about it.
- The TN-EPPC list published in the Fall 2004 issue of Wildland Weeds is a 3-tier list with a 2-tier watch list.
- The committee members are Jim Allison, Malcolm Hodges, Richard Reaves, Helen Brown and Jimmy Rickard.
- Gary Wade works with the nursery industry. Some cultivars of invasive plants may be seed sterile; the committee needs to do careful research including communication with growers. Wade suggested Doug Baker, a grower of cultivars of *Miscanthus sinensis*, as a useful resource.
- Alternatives lists are also complicated because designers want the same effect or look as the invasive. Cilia Cartwright wanted alternatives to include wildlife value.
- Wade stated GGIA was working on an alternatives list as well as recognizing there were plants with invasive potential. There are a lot of stakeholders that need to give input.
- Jim Allison reminded the group of the objectives of the GA-EPPC included in the by-laws and questioned whether developing an alternatives list was among the goals of this organization. Gray agreed and suggested that Cilia Cartwright and Wade work together and solicit input from organizations such as GNPS.
- John Taylor pointed out the need to work on the existing problem with training and gather data on emerging problems.
- Jimmy Rickard said an exotics list is essential because the Executive Order left it up to individual state EPPCs to define their pest plants.
- Surveys done by GGIA and State Parks, one of the largest land managers in the State, found at least half or more of those responding couldn't identify invasive plants in their area.
- GA-EPPC needs to interact with land managers about recognizing invasive plants and their control. A list is something to send out so the problem can be recognized.
- Dr. James Miller's CD is a very useful tool to be given away.
- Connie Gray asked the List/Research Committee to meet and have a progress report by the next GA-EPPC Board meeting in three months. Gray will ask Hodges to chair the committee.
- Jim Allison objected to the term "comprehensive" regarding the list if that meant all naturalized plants, which would be a considerable number. Rather, the list needs to focus on major pests of natural areas. The group agreed on this objective.

- The list committee set a tentative March 4 date to meet.

Workshops:

Chris Evans stated a workshop in **Tifton is tentatively set for April 13**. It will follow the basic outline of the September workshop with some modifications. Evans will report to Gray in early February on a workshop agenda. Some of the plants featured will be different such as tallow tree, cogon grass and Japanese climbing fern.

The fall workshop will be in the Metro Atlanta area on a weekday so city and county land managers, public works and parks employees can be targeted. Gray didn't think there needed to be as many speakers as before and perhaps speakers could cover more than one topic.

Education

Cindy Reittinger is working with Gary Wade on a 15-20 minute overview general presentation on the invasive problem and what can be done, much like the one she presented to Parks personnel and the Environmental Educators Association. Step two is a web page announcement that GA-EPPC speakers are available with 6 weeks notice. Garden Clubs and Master Gardeners are targeted audiences as well as land managers. Connie Gray did presentations for GGIA and LA organizations. There was a discussion of the existing presentations that need to be reviewed. Gray ended the discussion saying the goal for this year was to educate people about the nature of the problem. Education Committee members are Cindy, Gary Wade, Cillia Cartwright and John Taylor. The committee will meet March 1.

Poster

John Taylor is working on this project. Size and cost were discussed. Fewer than 100 will be printed for distribution to nature centers and state parks. If there are extras, Extension offices will be offered posters.

Policy

Gretchen Musser chairs this committee and was not in attendance. Policy is on the backburner for right now but something the organization should work on in the future.

Website Improvements:

- Add a calendar for volunteer pest plant control workdays.
- Add names of plants as they cycle through on the website.
- News and events should be upcoming news, articles, etc. and separated from meeting minutes.
- Minutes, by-laws, etc. should be put under a heading of "archives".

SE-EPPC Update: Jim Allison presented a yearly report to SE-EPPC on **GA-EPPC 2005 objectives**.

1. 2 workshops: Tifton –April 13; metro-Atlanta – September.
2. 15 minute PowerPoint general presentation on the invasive problem to educate the public.
3. Continuing communication and dialogue with GGIA.
4. Draft list—develop and reach consensus on an expanded tiered list of exotic plants in natural areas.
5. Speakers bureau volunteer list.
6. Volunteer calendar added to the website.
7. Georgia land manager strategy.

SE-EPPC annual symposium will be held in Birmingham the first week in May. Connie Gray will represent GEPPC and the Council will pay her expenses.

Outreach Committee

John Taylor and Jimmy Rickard volunteered for this committee. The objective is to insure GA-EPPC has representation of land managers, policy makers, and federal agencies, NPS, DOD, DOI, FHA and GA DOT & DNR as active members.

Other Issues

Connie Gray reminded everyone about the SE-EPPC symposium in May 3-5 at the Birmingham Botanical Garden. Go to the SE-EPPC website for information.

Gray established a meeting schedule for the rest of the year. She proposed a general membership meeting twice a year and board meetings 4 times a year with 2 board meetings to coincide with the 2 general meetings. The general meeting format will be on Saturday, will feature a speaker and maybe a short workday.

Specific dates are:

Board meeting: Friday April 22, 2005

General meeting: Saturday, July 16, 2005.

Board meeting: Friday, October 14, 2005

The next Board of Directors meeting will be April 22, 2005. Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned about 1:00 to look at an invasion of oriental bittersweet at the entrance of Indian Springs State Park.