

2009/10

Ontario Invasive Plant Council Annual Report





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) was founded to facilitate a coordinated and effective response to the threat of invasive plants by providing leadership, expertise and a forum to educate, motivate and empower organizations and citizens.

The OIPC is a coalition of government, non-government, First Nations and academic institutions, which include representatives from the OMNR, University of Waterloo, Hydro One, Plenty Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency along with ten other organizations.

Over the last year the OIPC has made progress in the functionality of the Board by finalizing its terms of reference and electing two Members at Large to sit on the Board.

In the 2009-2010 year the OIPC hosted its 3rd annual general meeting & invasive plant symposium, bringing together more than 130 people involved in invasive plant work to network and learn about projects, new legislations, research, new invaders, etc.

The OIPC continues to distribute monthly updates to a network of over 600 individuals across the province, who receive up to date information about invasive plant research, control projects, educational material, job postings, conferences, etc., that are being conducted.

The OIPC website has been completely revamped over the year with a new url www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca, a new look and much more information including regular updates of with invasive plant information, downloadable educational materials, links to other invasive plant sites, strategic documents, Board and committee activity notes, and more.

The OIPC has, in partnership, created a variety of educational material, including various fact sheets; a field guide entitled “A landowners guide to control invasive plants”; held workshops and participated in a variety of shows and conferences to increase the public’s awareness of the invasive plant issue.

Partnerships

The OIPC is committed to working with a variety of partners across the province and the country by taking part in the National Invasive Species Working Group, which is comprised of representatives from various invasive species councils and working groups across Canada. As well, the OIPC sits on the Board of the Midwest Invasive Plant Network, which is a group formed by a number of Great Lake States and Ontario to reduce the impact of invasive plant species in the Midwest region.

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council also has 85 official members showing their support to the Council and has been fortunate in securing funding from Environment Canada’s Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program, The Invasive Species Research Center Partnership Fund, OMNR as well as sponsorship funds from Hydro One and Dow AgroSciences.

The OIPC is continuing to urge the government to make real change in legislation and this year the Council contacted the Honourable Linda Jeffrey to update her Ministry about the OIPC,

highlight the importance of multi-agency coordination when dealing with invasive plants and present some of the gaps and concerns within our current legislation. The OIPC also offered to meet with the Minister to further discuss invasive plant issues in Ontario.

In light of the Kudzu find in September 2009 the OIPC also connected with the Critical Plant Pest Management Committee to discuss the important work they are doing and to offer the OIPC's expertise if needed.

The OIPC has taken the lead in the development of an Early Detection Rapid Response Program (EDRR) for the province of Ontario. A variety of partners have been identified and the first meeting of the EDRR team was held.

The OIPC participated and attended a variety of workshops, conferences and shows to engage the public on the issue of invasive plants. These events include: *Landscape Congress, Canada Blooms, the National Invasive Alien Species Forum, the Invading Species Awareness Programs Student Training, the MNR's Biodiversity workshop*, etc.

The OIPC has, in partnership, printed and continues to distribute a variety of educational material, including various fact sheets; field guides; and invasive plant identification signs in order to bring awareness to outdoor recreationists.

The OIPC is working hard to ensure that information on invasive plants is readily available to the public and those working in the industry, and that the policy makers are well aware of the issues caused by these plants. The OIPC will continue to grow and pursue its goals of dealing with invasive plants in a collaborative and effective manner.

OIPC COMMUNICATION

In the News

The OIPC attended and partnered in a variety of media events and media releases, as well as conducted interviews and aired news and public service announcements over the past year.



With a first sighting of Kudzu for Canada the OIPC sent out a media release and was interviewed by a variety of tv, radio and news media including: *CBC Radio, the Canadian Press, London Free Press, Ontario Nature Magazine, Windsor radio* and others.

A Victoria Day Long weekend campaign was launched to engage the public about unwanted "hitchhikers" during summer holiday commutes

which included live interviews with *Chex TV* and the *Weather network*.

For a full list of the media events OIPC attended please see **Table 1:Media Events 2009/10**

Public Service announcements

The OIPC was happy to partner with a variety of organizations to air a radio series “*the Adventures of the Green Family*” which highlighted to the public the pathways to spreading invasive plants and how to avoid them.

These public service announcements were aired over 3000 times on a variety of radio stations across the province.



Events

The OIPC attended various events to conduct presentations and network with various groups. Events included presentations for the *Field Botanists of Ontario Celebration*, *Friends of Lemoine Point public meeting*, *Ontario Vegetative Management Association's AGM*, the *Forest Gene Conservation Associations' Convention* and more. The OIPC also set up booth space at various events to engage the public on the subject of invasive species. Some events include *Canada Blooms*, the *Fall Cottage Life show* and *Landscape Ontario Congress*.

For a list of all the events OIPC has attended please see **Table 2: Events, Presentation and workshops attended in 2009/10.**

Table 1: Media Events 2009/10

Event	Date	Media Type
Invasive Hitchhikers event for the Vicotira day long weekend	12-May-09	Weather Network TV
Invasive Hitchhikers event for the Victoria Day Lon Weekend	15-May-09	Chex TV
Public service announcements “Adventures of the Green Family	Summer 09	Radio PSA's various radio stations
Kudzu media release	Sep-09	Media release
Interview	22-sept-09	CFCO Chatham Radio
Interview	22-Sep-09	CFWR Leamington Radio
Interview/Article	22-Sep-09	London Free press
Interview/Article	22-Sep-09	Windsor Star
Interview	23-Sep-09	Owen Sound Radio
Interview	23-Sep-09	CBC Radio the Canadian Press
Interview	23-Sep-09	Windsor Radio
Interview/Article	10-Oct-09	Ontario Nature magazine

Table 2: Events, Presentations and Workshops attended in 2009/10

Event Name	Date	Location
Field Botanist of Ontario Celebration	05-Apr-09	Hamilton, ON
Friends of Lemoine Point meeting	15-Apr-09	Kingston, ON
International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species	19-Apr-09	Montreal, QC
Biodiversity Day- Invasive Species Awareness event	14-May-09	Near Peterborough, ON
Invasive Tracking System- Workshop	08-May-09	Newmarket, ON
Ontario Vegetative Management Association -AGM	28-May-09	Thornton, ON
National Forum on Invasive Species	09-Jun-09	Ottawa, ON
Water Soldier monitoring	02-Jun-09	Trent River, ON
ISAP Summer Student Training Workshop	16-Jun-09	Peterborough, ON
Forest Gene Conservation Authority AGM	18-Jun-09	Pickering, ON
Ontario Horticultural Association Convention	10-Jul-09	Peterborough, ON
Water Soldier monitoring	19-Aug-09	Trent River, ON
Invasive Projects Tour	10-Sep-09	Mississauga, ON
Ontario Invasive Plant Council AGM & Invasive Plant Symposium	28-Oct-09	Cobourg, ON
Fall Cottage Life Show	06-Nov-09	Toronto, ON
Landscape Ontario Congress	12-Jan-10	Toronto, ON
National Invasive Species Councils Forum	20-Jan-10	Vancouver, BC
Sault Ste Marie Home and Outdoor Show	07-Mar-10	Sault Ste Marie, ON
OFAH Annual Fish and Wildlife Conference	17-Mar-10	Toronto, ON
Canada Blooms	17-Mar-10	Toronto, ON
National Forum on Invasive Species	25-Mar-10	Ottawa, ON
Invasive Species Road Rally	29-Mar-10	Uxbridge, ON
MNR- Biodiversity Workshop	31-Mar-10	Elmhurst Resort, Rice Lake

PROGRAM OUTREACH OVERVIEW

Educational Materials

Over the past year the OIPC has been worked in partnership on a variety of educational materials such as the OIPC's most unwanted plants factsheet series which include Garlic Mustard, Buckthorn, Kudzu and Dog-strangling Vine. A web factsheet on wild chervil was created to address the public's concern and links to a variety of other organizations and agency sites and information from the OIPC website have been added for easy access to the user.



A Victoria Day campaign was piloted this year and a further developed campaign is to be delivered for the Victoria Day Long weekend 2010. This campaign will include a poster and information package, booth space to engage the public and tv interviews. The campaign has been created to inform the public about invasive species which can easily hitchhike across the province via summer commuters equipment and material, what to look out for and what to do before leaving for that summer destination.

OIPC DELIVERABLES FOR THE 2009/10 YEAR

1. Sustainability and fundraising plant

Implement the sustainability and fundraising plan which was created in 2008.

This plan was created to perpetuate the Council and its operation into the future. It included a fundraising plan and identified potential foundation support and corporate sponsorship. In order to fill this deliverable the coordinator contacted sponsors and potential sponsors and communicate with stakeholders. Also the communications committee helped to implement the plan and write additional fund raising proposals.

2. Website

Maintain the OIPC website and the monthly e-newsletter.

In order to increase awareness and engage the public the OIPC committed to maintaining and development of the OIPC website as well as sending e-newsletter updates with the most current invasive plant information to the 600+ interested parties across Ontario. The OIPC was able to take it a step further this year by giving our website a new url: www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca a new look and a much more user friendly layout.



Working with the Stewardship Network of Ontario to update our website with information as it became available was key to ensuring that the website became an easy to use tool for the general public, members, practitioners, students, land managers etc.

Success has been tracked through the website analytics which are reviewed regularly, and the number of visitors has steadily risen every month since the new layout was launched. The website analytics also allow easy viewing of the pages and information that users are most interested in and helps the OIPC to make improvements where needed. The future goals of the website are to expand its capacity to allow persons to report sightings, create maps, summarize control efforts, and communicate with experts.

3. Council committee working groups

Continue to develop the committee working groups as well as implement activities identified by committees.

At the beginning of this fiscal the OIPC had 3 committees are *the Communications committee, The Policy Committee Research & Control Committee*. A fourth committee was created midyear to address invasive plants within the Horticultural industry; The *Horticultural Outreach Committee*.

Each committee actively works towards their goals and objectives by holding regular monthly meetings to discuss their priorities and have been successful in working towards their goals over the last year.

Policy Committee

The OIPC Policy Committee review existing legislation to develop council positions, advise members and identify gaps, this committee deal with the legislative and policy aspects and issues that address invasive plants.

Projects that this committee has worked on in collaboration over the past year include:

- Contacting the Minister of Natural Resources about the importance of multi-governmental collaboration when dealing with the invasive plant issue.
- Discussions on the threat of Kudzu and determining the best course of action to deal with this plant provincial and nationally.
- Identification and development of new policies for the Council.
- Identification of the gaps in government policy to deal with invasive plants and working on solutions.
- Early development of an Ontario Early Detection Rapid Response Program
- Developing in partnership with other OIPC committees criteria to create a comprehensive list of invasive plants.
- Addressing challenges faced by landowners with the new Cosmetic Pesticide Ban.

Communications Committee

The OIPC Communications Committee engages public through education, action & information exchange.

Projects that this committee has worked on in collaboration over the past year include:

- Unwanted Factsheets series: Dog-strangling Vine, Buckthorn, Garlic mustard and Kudzu
- Kudzu media release
- Early development of a Victoria Day long weekend media release and campaign
- Adventures of the Green Family radio public service announcements
- Dog-strangling vine trail head sign.
- A landowners guide to controlling invasive plants: field guide
- A survey to determine baseline information of garden shows attendees.
- OIPC outreach give-aways

Research and Control Committee

The OIPC Research and Control Committee identifies pathways, priority species and impacts, coordinates research and monitoring activities, and best management practices

Projects that this committee has worked on in collaboration over the past year include:

- Development of a letter of support for researchers.
- Development of a list of research and control projects conducted across the province by various organizations and agencies.
- This committee works on a species by species basis as developments arise (i.e. kudzu)
- Developing in partnership with other committees criteria to develop a comprehensive list of invasive plants.

The Horticulture Outreach Collaborative

The OIPC Horticultural Outreach Collaborative works closely with the members of the industry in order to reduce the sales of invasive plants and inform gardeners and hobby farmers about the impacts of those species.

Projects that this committee has worked on in collaboration over the past year include:

- The *Grow Me Instead Guide*: a guide to non-invasive and native alternatives.
- Brochure: a smaller version of the guide, explanation of the collaborative itself and identification of some potential invaders and their alternatives.
- A survey to identify the baseline knowledge within the horticultural trade.
- Aquatic and terrestrial banner stands to bring to shows and conferences.
- Attended various garden conferences.

4. Communication

Continue to enhance communication with other similar invasive plant councils across the Canada and the United States.

The OIPC has continued its partnerships with organizations across Canada and the US such as the National Invasive Species Working Group, the National Early Detection Rapid Response Model and, the Midwestern Invasive Plant Network.



The OIPC continues to enhance its communication through the continued sharing of the monthly e-newsletter, the creation of displays and information materials, and networking of council members with their counterparts, encouraging council members to attend events hosted by

their counterparts and inviting other jurisdictions to present and participate at our symposium. The Coordinator is also attending and speaking at a variety of events and audiences about the OIPC and the invasive plant issue.

5. Network of experts.

Development of a network of experts for easy access to invasive plant information, sighting identification and reports.

A variety of experts in the field of invasive plants have been identified throughout the province and those interested and able to participate on the OIPC have committed time into some of the OIPC committees. These individuals come from various backgrounds and provide links to larger groups. Through the committees these experts help with research and public inquiry questions. Experts across the province have made themselves easily available to the OIPC to answer questions and concerns we have received from our membership and the public.

6. Project Coordinator.

Continued employment of the council coordinator.

The Council coordinator aids in the facilitation of the goals and activities of the council. Coordinator responsibilities include; organizing and scheduling OIPC board meetings, distribution of meeting minutes, coordination of the committee working group meetings, facilitation of communication among the various partners, councils, stakeholders, members and the public. Development of a sustainability plan, organizing the OIPC AGM, development of funding proposals, budget management, identifying and approaching potential sponsors, responding to requests for information and conducting presentations at various events.

The Board conducted a review of the council and the work of the coordinator and renewed the coordinator position

7. National Invasive Alien Species Forum

Attend and participate in the multi-agency National Invasive Alien Species Forum.

The National Invasive Alien Species forum proved to be an opportunity for the OIPC and other provincial invasive species councils to voice their opinions about issues and gaps within the government and legislation. Through this multi-agency meeting the councils were able to provide the government with feedback from the public and other non-governmental organizations about the problems faced with invasive plant prevention, control and management.

8. The 3rd annual general meeting of the council in association with an invasive plants symposium.

Hold the 3rd annual general meeting & Invasive Plant Symposium.

The symposium acts as a provincial forum to share expertise and knowledge on the prevention, detection and management of invasive plants. It allows the committees to meet and report on their activities to the broader council membership and the general public. Guest speakers included committee members, members of the other councils, scientists and practitioners.

The AGM & Invasive Plant Symposium was held in Cobourg Ontario on October 28th. The event had more than 20 speakers discussing a variety of topics dealing with invasive plants. There were more than 130 people in attendance. The feedback received from this meeting was very positive. This event proved to be a success.

9. Invasive plant list

Development of a coordinated list of invasive plants that will be used across the province which will set a criteria for information and be linked to other information across the country and in the US.

The preliminary elements have been developed through the Research and Control Committee and the Horticultural outreach committee. The Research and Control committee developed an official definition for invasive plants that the OIPC now uses. This definition serves as the primary criteria for the list of invasive plants. The Research and Control Committee has also compiled various invasive plant lists created by different organizations and regions and will use these lists to help in the development of a provincial OIPC Invasive Plants list.

The OIPC received financial support from the following organizations:



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Thanks to our many Partners!



Canadian Food Inspection Agency

