

Blue Ridge PRISM

2017 Annual Activity Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

AWARDS, GRANTS AND HONORS

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

 - RCPP-Specific Events

 - RCPP Implementation Overview

 - Natural Resources Conservation Service's Report Summary

 - DuPont Settlement Grant

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Quarterly Meetings

- Events Where PRISM Exhibited

- Speaking Engagements

- Educational Events

- Consultations with Landowners

- More Educational Materials Created

- Public Relations Campaigns

- New Quarterly Newsletter

- Social Media Presence

SPECIAL HONORS

- The Governor Visits

- Garden Club of Virginia Award

EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID RESPONSE

- Volunteers for Shenandoah National Park Work Days

- Elk Run Park in Elkton

- Target: Kudzu in Greene County

PREVENTING THE SALE OF INVASIVE PLANTS

RESEARCH ON INVASIVE PLANTS

PRISM MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

THE YEAR 2017 proved to be significant for the Blue Ridge PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management), Virginia's first Cooperative Weed Management Area. The PRISM facilitated 95 landowners in securing funds to control invasive plants on their land (collectively more than 2,000 acres), secured grants to control wavyleaf grass at six sites in Shenandoah National Park and in Elk Run Park in the Town of Elkton, distributed 13,250 factsheets, trained 200 landowners, motivated volunteers to participate in invasive plant control days, received notable publicity and awards, raised funds for operating costs, and established a continually-growing presence in the environmental community. The PRISM was even honored with a visit by Virginia's Governor McAuliffe and other officials to a PRISM member's land to see firsthand how they are returning their forests and fields to health by controlling extensive infestations of invasive plants.

Having marked its third birthday during the summer of 2017, the PRISM is no longer in its infancy and is implementing the goal stated in its mission statement.

“OUR MISSION IS TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF INVASIVE SPECIES IN OUR TARGETED GEOGRAPHY”

The PRISM's key tactics for achieving that goal are to:

- ❖ Offer education-and-outreach programs to the general public and landowners to increase awareness of the damage caused by invasives and to train them in identification and control.
- ❖ Produce and distribute free, high-quality literature about invasive species and their control.
- ❖ Assist landowners in securing funds and grants to help pay the cost of controlling invasives.
- ❖ Encourage neighbors to work together in controlling invasive plants so that areas of invasive-free land grow in contiguous size and thus reduce incidences of reinfestation.
- ❖ Prevent the sale and importation of invasive plants in Virginia.
- ❖ Keep our membership abreast of research and the latest information dealing with our targeted species, including development of effective biocontrols.
- ❖ Grow our partner organizations to include all major conservation organizations operating in our geography, and increase the number of landowners and other parties on our mailing list and at our events.
- ❖ Collaborate with the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation and other agencies in implementing an early-detection-and-rapid-response program to quickly deal with new invasive species.
- ❖ Consult individually with landowners about the invasives problems on their properties.
- ❖ Drive an on-the-ground attack/response upon strategically important invasive plant infestations in the region.

AWARDS, GRANTS AND HONORS

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The Blue Ridge PRISM received a major award from the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The award, in the amount of \$894,000 provides for three-year contracts to assist private landowners in controlling invasive plants. The PRISM and the NRCS collaborated on designing this new landowner assistance program. The PRISM contracted with the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) for the needed administrative and technical assistance.

Of these funds, 20% is retained by the NRCS to cover their costs and roughly \$50,000 goes to the VDOF for costs involved in evaluating applications, determining the control work to be done, and administering the contracts made with the landowners. The remaining \$643,000 is designated as payments to landowners for their actual control work. The Blue Ridge PRISM, which received no funds from this award for its expenses, is responsible for coordinating all marketing and education-and-outreach for the RCPP award. The PRISM is also responsible for providing quarterly status reports for the five-year duration of the program.

The PRISM was notified it had received the RCPP award in January 2016. The NRCS signed the contract for this award with the Shenandoah National Park Trust (the Blue Ridge PRISM is a project within the Trust, and the Trust provides administrative support for the PRISM) on September 22, 2016. The PRISM's preparations for promoting this program began in 2016 before the contract was executed, and the rollout began in October 2016 and continued well into 2017. The PRISM is required to match the entire award with monies spent and/or in-kind work to fulfill its financial obligation. Hours spent on invasive-control-related work and educational activities by the PRISM's members and their partner organizations count toward the match.

The rollout of the RCPP program began at the end of October 2016. The expectation was that the grants to landowners would be awarded over the course of the program's first two years, and each landowner would agree to do the required work each year for three years, so as to achieve adequate control of targeted plants. The program proved so popular that all funds were allocated within the first five months of the program's rollout, though it took longer for some contracts to be signed. Most of the grant recipients began the invasive control work on their land during the spring and summer of 2017; some delayed beginning the work until 2018. NRCS District Conservationists and VDOF Area Foresters monitor each landowner contract to determine if the work has been completed and to then authorize payment.

The RCPP award created an excellent opportunity for the PRISM to deliver its message about the threats invasive plants pose to Virginia's natural landscapes and to offer concrete assistance by helping to fund landowners' efforts. The program was a win-win-win for the PRISM, the landowners, and the NRCS. RCPP drove much of our publicity and educational events during 2017 and helped the PRISM attract more attention and reach a larger audience, validating us as a successful organization with a voice and presence within the environmental community.

RCPP-Specific Events

In collaboration with the NRCS and VDOF, the PRISM created and offered various events



Forester Joe Rossetti leading a contractors' workshop.

around our ten-county region concerning RCPP, including a training workshop to prepare NRCS and VDOF staff for rolling out the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. We also offered workshops for contractors to prepare them for an influx of invasive control work by training them on invasive plant management and explaining the RCPP rules to them. And we conducted information sessions for landowners to inform them about the program and offer them an opportunity to ask questions.

RCPP Implementation Overview

The PRISM enjoyed a positive working relationship with NRCS and VDOF during planning and implementation of the RCPP award. All parties collaborated in planning training events. NRCS and VDOF adapted to and implemented changes, as needed, based on PRISM feedback. By the end of the first quarter of 2017, it appeared that all the funds had been assigned to landowners whose applications had been approved within the PRISM's ten counties. Some of the contracts with these landowners were signed in a timely manner, others took longer. By September 2017, 96 contracts had been signed and one applicant dropped out, leaving 95. These 95 landowners, whose combined acreage is over 2,000 acres, are now under three-year contracts to remove specific invasive plants from designated portions of their properties. The following data summarizes the results at the end of 2017.

Natural Resources Conservation Service's Report Summary

Status as of December 31, 2017

- ❖ 95 signed contracts
- ❖ 2,170.10 acres
- ❖ Total Obligation - \$638,956.42
- ❖ Total Payments Made - \$106,495.84
- ❖ Remaining Funds - \$4,958.58

RCPP Status by County

County	Contracts	Total Acres	Obligation	Payments	Cancellations
Albemarle	22	563.8	\$120,915.37	\$27,767.37	
Augusta	10	143.6	\$43,442.40	\$5,057.47	1
Rappahannock	16	513.5	\$189,307.48	\$17,504.83	
Nelson	5	91.6	\$28,174.18	\$11,694.18	
Rockingham	12	194.4	\$47,826.48	\$2,541.48	
Greene	8	220.7	\$70,447.16	\$16,416.16	
Madison	7	139.1	\$47,361.87	\$1,266.87	
Page, Warren	7	159.3	\$47,107.10	\$16,104.10	
Clarke	8	144.1	\$44,374.38	\$8,143.38	
Totals	95	2,170.10	\$638,956.42	\$106,495.84	1

Payments Made in 2017

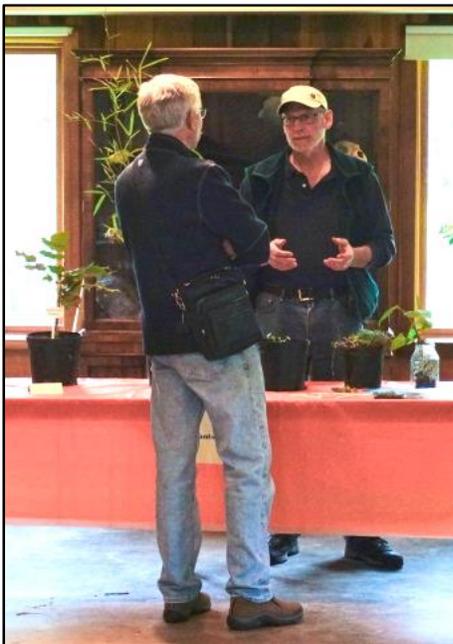
Certified Practices for Payment	Acres	Payments
Herbaceous Weed Control	326.3	\$14,412.29
Forest Stand Improvement	146.3	\$29,141.61
Brush Management	548.5	\$62,941.94
		\$106,495.84

The report summaries above were prepared by Todd Groh, DOF Coordinator, and Patrick Vincent, NRCS Farm Bill Specialist.

DuPont Settlement Grant

In October 2017 the PRISM submitted a proposal to the DuPont Settlement - Land Protection Program for \$907,000 of funding to pay for treating wavyleaf grass at various sites in the Shenandoah Valley. In December 2017, the award recipients were announced and the PRISM received an award of \$250,000 to fund the proposed work at six sites in the Shenandoah National Park and one in the Town of Elkton. Contracting documents were still in process at the time this report was written. The funds from this award will pay for treating wavyleaf grass at these sites each summer for five years.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Quarterly Meetings

The Blue Ridge PRISM holds quarterly meetings that are open to the public. In 2017 these meetings included the usual updates on PRISM's activities and the status of the RCPP awards, but the business portions of the meetings were shortened and guest speakers on topics of interest to our members were added. For example, one meeting offered a question-and-answer panel during which landowners could ask the experienced panelists questions about invasive plant management. We also began offering a plant ID clinic where participants could bring in samples of plants they suspected of being invasive to have our experts identify them.

Events Where PRISM Exhibited

Events such as county fairs, harvest festivals, etc. where the PRISM can set up its display table and hand out factsheets expose the PRISM to new audiences around our ten-county region. These tabling events are used to spread the message about RCPP funding and our message about invasive plants. Many of the landowners we encounter at tabling events sign up for our email announcements and newsletter, which at the end of 2017 had approximately 750 subscribers.

TABLING EVENTS in 2017	Date(s)
Virginia Association of Forest Health Professionals	January 30 - 31
Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards Invasive Plant Training	January 27
Piedmont Landscape Association Seminar	February 17
Woods and Wildlife Conference	February 25
Greene's Mountain Heritage: An Open House at Cecil Mission	April 22
Earth Day at Ivy Creek Natural Area	April 22
Kites and Critters in Staunton	April 23
Rivanna Master Naturalists Volunteer Day	March 21
PRISM Display at Augusta County Library	July 11 - August 13
Augusta County Fair	August 1- 5
Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association Field Day	July 21
Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello	September 9
Virginia Outdoors Foundation Festival	September 9
Harvest Gathering in Clarke County	October 21 - 22
Albemarle Ciderworks Heritage Harvest Festival	November 4

Speaking Engagements

The PRISM provides free speakers from our leadership team who can give presentations tailored to specific audiences, such as Master Naturalists, garden clubs, Virginia Native Plant Society, etc. Speaking engagements offer an excellent way to deliver our message to a larger and more varied audience.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS in 2017	Date	Attendance
Charlottesville Tree Stewards	February 20	15
Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy	April 24	40
Virginia Forestry Association Annual Conference	May 4	50
Waverly Homeowners Association	June 1	50
Albemarle Farm Bureau	August 8	80
Southwest Virginia CWMA	September 11	22
Renaissance School presentation	September 28	30
Pure Water Forum	October 5	30
Dogwood Garden Club	October 17	25
Meeting with Governor McAuliffe in Greene County	December 15	25

Educational Events

After the launch of the RCPP funding opportunity, the PRISM changed its efforts to focus on providing training in invasive plant identification and control for landowners. These training sessions are designed to focus on seasonally appropriate invasive plant identification and management work, and are offered in spring, summer, and autumn/winter. Each session is given several times in different locations within our ten-county region. Also included in the workshops are an equipment demonstration, plant identification clinic, and invasive plant walk. The first of these workshops were offered in the summer of 2017.

In addition to the training workshops, several continuing education courses were offered by PRISM leadership members. These included a five-week course at Rapp U in Rappahannock County, and a two-hour class session (offered twice) at Albemarle Public Schools.

PRISM SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL EVENTS	Date	Attendance
Summer Invasive Plant Training Session at Blandy	June 7	21
Summer Invasive Plant Training Session at Ivy Creek	June 20	22
Invasive Plant Symposium at Rockfish Valley Community Center	June 25	75
Summer Invasive Plant Training Session at JMU Arboretum	June 29	10
RappU Invasive Plant Class: 5-week course - Week 1	September 22	24
RappU Invasive Plant Class: 5-week course - Week 2	September 29	24
RappU Invasive Plant Class: 5-week course - Week 3	October 6	23
RappU Invasive Plant Class: 5-week course - Week 4	October 13	23
RappU Invasive Plant Class: 5-week course - Week 5	October 20	24
Fall Invasive Plant Training: Rockfish Valley Foundation	October 8	9
Fall Invasive Plant Training: SCBI	October 28	15
Fall Invasive Plant Training: Ivy Creek	October 30	13
Albemarle County Public Schools Continuing Education	October 24	7
Albemarle County Public Schools Continuing Education	December 5	5



Consultations with Landowners

In addition to the outreach activities described above, during 2017 PRISM leadership members consulted with more than ten individuals and homeowners' associations that were interested in managing invasive plants. Homeowners Associations can be a challenge because the numerous members often do not share the same views about the value of controlling invasive plants, especially if they have to pay for it. Nevertheless these were successful endeavors, especially if the board of directors were environmentally minded.

More Educational Materials Created

One of the most important educational functions the PRISM performs is the distribution of factsheets about the identification and control of invasive plants. Factsheets focused on each of the “Terrible Twelve” invasive plants that we feel are of greatest concern in our ten-county region were developed during 2015 and 2016. In spring 2017, three additional factsheets dealing explicitly with control measures were created. These are titled: *How to Control Invasive Plants: Manual, Mechanical, and Biological Methods*; *Herbicide Basics*, and *Controlling Invasive Plants Safely and Effectively with Herbicides*.

During spring 2017, the PRISM worked with VDOF to publish a chart that summarizes pertinent information. The chart contains treatment methods and gives herbicide choices and concentrations for the PRISM’s Terrible Twelve. The purpose of the chart is to make control information easily accessible, but also to place responsibility for herbicide recommendations with the VDOF. The chart was printed for dissemination in June 2017 and has become one of the most popular materials that PRISM provides for landowners. An additional advantage of

presenting herbicide recommendations in separate chart form is that any changes in recommendations are easily made.



Non-Native Invasive Plant Species Control Treatments			
		Timing, Methods and Herbicide Rates	March 2017
GRASSES	Japanese Stiltgrass	Prior to seed maturity Early summer Late spring – late summer	Manual – hand pull Foliar spray Foliar spray
GRASSES	Woollyleaf Grass	Prior to seed maturity Late spring – fall April – June	Manual – pull small areas Foliar spray Foliar spray
HERBACEOUS	Garlic Mustard	Late spring – early summer; prior to any seedheads maturing to brown March – June, before seedheads Late fall – winter is best, but susceptible any time	Manual – hand pull and remove taproot Mechanical – mow or cut Foliar spray on evergreen leaves
HERBACEOUS	Giant Reed	All year when soil is moist	Manual – hand pull small vines
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	June – October, through winter for evergreen species June – February June – August June – February, late summer – fall ideal	Manual or mechanical – cut to “treatable” height Foliar spray Basal spray Foliar spray Cut stump Foliar spray
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	Before seed formation	Foliar spray
HERBACEOUS	Japanese Stiltgrass	Prior to seed maturity	Manual – hand pull
HERBACEOUS	Woollyleaf Grass	Prior to seed maturity	Mechanical – mow/cut repeatedly
HERBACEOUS	Garlic Mustard	Late spring – early summer; prior to any seedheads maturing to brown	Manual – hand pull and remove taproot
HERBACEOUS	Giant Reed	All year when soil is moist	Manual – hand pull small vines
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	June – October, through winter for evergreen species	Manual or mechanical – cut to “treatable” height
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	June – February	Basal spray
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	June – August	Foliar spray
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	June – February, late summer – fall ideal	Cut stump
VINES	Japanese Honeycreepers	Before seed formation	Foliar spray

In fall 2017, another factsheet, titled *Garden Escape Artists*, was added to the repertoire. Because many of the worst nonnative, invasive plants plaguing our natural and agricultural areas began their careers in home gardens or landscape settings, this factsheet serves as a warning to homeowners to avoid planting and/or to remove potentially troublesome trees, shrubs, and annual or perennial flowers. The most common garden plants to avoid are listed in chart form on the factsheet. Some of the worst invasives were – and still are – sold in nurseries and garden centers.

We estimate that in 2017 approximately 13,250 factsheets were distributed. Additionally, all factsheets are available to be downloaded on the PRISM’s website. Two other groups in Virginia asked to use and distribute our factsheets, and we gave them permission to do so.

Public Relations Campaigns

In addition to the public relations campaign specifically for the RCPP launch, PRISM publicizes all of the events we host through our Facebook page, website, email blasts, and through our partners' mailing lists. We were also given valuable publicity through numerous magazine and newspaper articles about the PRISM's work.

In June 2017, the PRISM shifted email platforms from Microsoft Outlook to MailChimp, a web-based email marketing platform. Shifting platforms introduced a variety of benefits, which includes: analytics of our mailings, a more visually appealing format, links to external platforms, and the capabilities of capturing member information and stratifying email communications by county. Below is a snapshot of the analytics from our emailed announcements and newsletters since switching to MailChimp. While MailChimp Learning Center reports that nonprofits typically average a 24.98% open rate, the PRISM currently exceeds the average with a 39% open rate.

Email Internal Title	Date	Recipients	Unique Opens	Open Rate
Upcoming Events	June 28	590	264	46%
July Newsletter	July 18	580	137	24%
October Newsletter	October 3	679	291	44%
Upcoming Events	October 16	664	277	42%
	Total	2513	969	39%

New Quarterly Newsletter

In July 2017, we emailed the PRISM's first newsletter. (Previous to that, we emailed only announcements of upcoming events and the RCPP funding opportunity, etc.) The newsletter alerts those on our list who have email addresses (750 as of the end of 2017) to upcoming

PRISM and partner organization events, and also provides short pieces about newsworthy topics related to invasive plants. A recent newsletter included a link to the latest research about the safety of glyphosate, an alert about a new invasive of concern, incised fumewort (*Corydalis incisa*), a warning that sales of so-called American bittersweet are most likely actually the highly invasive Oriental bittersweet, and an announcement about the PRISM's DuPont grant for controlling wavyleaf.



Social Media Presence

We created a Facebook page in November 2016 and that grew during 2017 to 86 followers through moderate activity (average of 1-2 posts a month). Our followers are 58% women and 42% men between the ages of 25 and 64. The goal for our Facebook page is to a) engage with our current audience b) use Facebook as a means of offering timely updates and c) connect with a younger audience while steadily growing our following.

SPECIAL HONORS

The Governor Visits

Governor Terry McAuliffe, along with Basil L. Gooden, Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, and Bettina Ring, Virginia's State Forester, who subsequently became the next Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, came to Greene County in mid-December to hear about the PRISM's work. They, along with several Greene County officials, RCPP grant recipients and other guests, toured a portion of a member's land to see the encouraging results of effective invasives control measures. Despite the cold, blustery weather, the governor seemed engaged and receptive to the PRISM's message.



Left to right: *Lori Chamberlin (Forest Health Program Manager VDOF), Robbie Talbert (Regional Forester VDOF), Jim Hurley (landowner & Blue Ridge PRISM), Michael Downey (Technician VDOF), Susan Roth (landowner & Blue Ridge PRISM), Basil L. Gooden (VA Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry), Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe, Maggie Walker (Blue Ridge PRISM), Rod Walker (Blue Ridge PRISM), Bettina Ring (VA State Forester).*

Garden Club of Virginia Award

In October 2017, the Garden Club of Virginia honored the PRISM with its annual Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation. Rod and Maggie Walker received the award and briefly spoke about the PRISM's work and mission at the club's 59th Conservation Forum at the Paramount in Charlottesville on October 27.

EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID RESPONSE

The PRISM’s early detection and rapid response efforts have focused on wavyleaf grass and kudzu as described below.

Volunteers for Shenandoah National Park Work Days

Shenandoah National Park currently has one of the largest infestations of wavyleaf grass in Virginia. This serious, invasive threat to forested areas in Virginia is a relative newcomer to the



Jake Hughes of Shenandoah National Park gives instructions to volunteers during a 2017 work day in the park.

commonwealth. Due to budget constraints, the park is limited in its capacity to manage wavyleaf, and the invasive grass has escaped from the park to adjacent private land and continues to spread within the park. The highly shade-tolerant grass spreads readily because sticky seeds attach to hikers’ pant legs and to the fur of animals, such as deer and bear, and can be transported long distances.

The PRISM began working with Jake Hughes, Exotic Plant Management Biological Science Technician with the park and a PRISM leadership team member, to organize volunteer-driven

work days to control the plant. Through email blast notices to Master Naturalists, VNPS, and our partner organizations, the PRISM recruited volunteers to either hand pull or spray a grass-specific herbicide on wavyleaf infestations. The control work involved maneuvering through bramble-filled woodlands in hot, humid weather. Nevertheless, the volunteers persevered and some returned a second time. Jake estimates that more than nine acres of park land were treated for wavyleaf by the volunteers.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS	Date	Attendance
Shenandoah National Park Wavyleaf Management	July 8 2017	9
Shenandoah National Park Wavyleaf Management	July 9 2017	11
Shenandoah National Park Wavyleaf Management	July 20 2017	cancelled due to rain
Shenandoah National Park Wavyleaf Management	July 30 2017	15
	Attendance Total	35

Elk Run Park in Elkton

In addition to the above-listed work days, two members of PRISM’s leadership team discovered and treated wavyleaf grass in Elk Run Park in Elkton in Rockingham County, where the grass had spread from the national park. Believing the infestation was limited, they volunteered a day and a half applying herbicide, with the permission of the town’s facilities manager, who had



Trail map at Elk Run Park shows extensive network of trails along which wavyleaf was spread by park visitors.

been unaware of the problem. They stopped the work when they discovered that much more of the park was infested than they had first observed and they realized effective control was beyond their capabilities. The park is crisscrossed with trails where residents walk and jog and also walk their dogs. This creates a serious scenario where seeds can easily spread out of the park. The volunteers created and posted warning signs at the park’s entrance, alerting visitors to the park to avoid the invasive grass and its sticky seeds, in hopes of creating awareness and limiting the grass’s spread until more extensive measures could be taken. (This is the county park that will be treated with the DuPont award.)

Target: Kudzu in Greene County

A PRISM leadership member discovered kudzu growing in two locations in Greene County. Until then, kudzu infestations were known in the county at only one other location, which is on both sides of the Conway/Middle River on the Madison County/Greene County border.

One infestation was on Swift Run on a farm owned by an elderly man whose personal circumstances did not allow him to pay for controlling the rampantly spreading, invasive plant. The PRISM member worked with The Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy to cover the entire cost of treating this invasive over the course of three years. The PRISM member is managing the work for the owner, who is grateful for the assistance.



Contractors attacking kudzu on Swift Run in Greene County.

Intrigued by finding the above infestation, the PRISM member scouted further upstream on Swift Run and found a larger, worrisome infestation on several contiguous properties. He contacted the three landowners and after extensive outreach was able to help them each secure an RCPP grant for kudzu control, knowing that if all of these landowners do not work to control the kudzu it would be a losing battle for the others. Neighbors cooperating with each other is at the heart of PRISM’s philosophy.

PREVENTING THE SALE OF INVASIVE PLANTS

Several members of the PRISM leadership team are also active members of the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee for the Commonwealth of Virginia. This group makes recommendations to the Board of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) on changes to the noxious weed regulations and which plants to add to the official noxious weeds list. In 2017, the Committee drafted the new regulations to go along with the changes that had been made to the Noxious Weed Law in 2016. The next step is to start adding more plants to the noxious weed list, which will restrict the sale, intrastate movement and importation of those plants. Up until 2016, no plant that was “widely disseminated” could be added to the noxious weed list. This restriction prevented virtually all of the nastiest invasive plants from being listed as noxious weeds, because they were indeed already widely disseminated. With the changes to the law and the regulations, it should now be possible to add many of the worst invasives to the noxious weed list and start restricting shipments of them into Virginia.

RESEARCH ON INVASIVE PLANTS

PRISM leadership team members try to keep up to date on research on invasive plants and publicize any important news to their members at the quarterly meetings and/or in the newsletters. Four members attended the two-day Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plants Conference (MAIPC) in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, in August at their own expense. Leadership also monitors the MAIPC list-serve, which posts timely and interesting discussions about invasive plant control. Other members read scientific journals such as *Weed Science* and the *Journal of Invasive Weed Science*, published by Cambridge University Press.

PRISM MANAGEMENT

The PRISM is a volunteer-driven organization with one paid fulltime employee who has been employed since June 1, 2016. We rely heavily on a few dedicated members of our leadership team with help from time-to time from other reliable volunteers.

The steering committee, which meets twice a year, is made up of men and women from prominent environmental organizations, state agencies, and private landowners. To date, there are nine members of the steering committee.

Beginning in the summer of 2017, the PRISM leadership team began engaging in conference calls every three weeks, rather than trying to schedule in-person meetings. This has been useful and profitable because members are scattered across several counties.

We look forward to even more success in growing our membership, disseminating our factsheets, and training more landowners in invasive plant control during 2018.