

## **Recommendations to the initial Board of Directors, from the Ohio Invasives Council Steering Committee.**

The OIC Steering Committee respectfully offers the following recommendations to the first Board of Directors of the Ohio Invasives Council. This report documents the rationale behind the other documents prepared for the initial Board, including the recommended name, mission, purpose, and code of regulations. Further detail is available in the minutes of the steering committee meetings.

### Name, Mission, and Purpose.

The steering committee acknowledges that the recommended name, “Ohio Invasives Council” is ambiguous about whether the council is focused on plants only, or all taxa. There is a division of opinion within the Ohio Invasive Plants Working Group about whether to expand to include vertebrates, insects, pathogens, and the like. The working group has focused on terrestrial plants which invade and degrade Ohio’s natural ecosystems and native plant communities. There is some discomfort about abruptly broadening the group’s focus to species or taxa which are beyond the current membership’s expertise, particularly when there are other agencies and organizations addressing the issue. In addition, there is strong support for a group focused on plant communities and plant ecology. On the other hand, Ohio’s natural ecosystems are facing growing threats from non-plant agents such as beech bark disease and the emerald ash borer, which have the potential for ecosystem-level disruptions on a much wider scale.

The committee chose to omit the word “plants” from its suggested name, but intended to clearly state in the mission and statement of purpose that the council’s focus is on the biological diversity and health of Ohio plant communities and ecosystems.

### Organizational Structure (Oct. 6, 2004 minutes)

The proposed structure is typical of nonprofit organizations. The elected board of directors adopts and upholds the corporate regulations, sets strategic direction for the council, and manages the governance of the corporation. It is especially important that the board represents the diverse spectrum of stakeholders making up the council at large. A balanced composition of board members representing different professional sectors and geographic regions of Ohio is strongly recommended, if it can be reasonably accommodated.

The steering committee recommends three-year, staggered terms for the board, with a quarter of the board terms expiring each year. The committee recommends a limit of two consecutive terms with a minimum one-year hiatus for directors, with the intention that the momentum and energy of former board members could be transferred to the advisory committees.

Membership in the council is intended to be open to any interested person or organization. The board of directors can set a scale of membership types or dues. For the most part, membership dues for similar councils help defray administrative costs, and the registration fees for an annual symposium provide the majority of the council’s operating budget.

The technical advisory committees, or council committees, are open to any council member, and are the arena in which the programs and projects the council take place.

### Committee Structure

There are many examples of invasive plant council committee structures. Most fall within two types: standing administrative committees (executive, nominating, membership, finance) and technical advisory, or program committees (outreach, symposium, communications, list, etc). The steering committee recommends that the board review the committee structures of similar invasive plant councils to adopt suitable models. It is advisable that the board of directors have a representative on each committee, although the steering committee does not recommend a requirement that each program committee be chaired by a council director. The current standing committees of the Ohio Invasive Plants Working Group are 1) education, communication and public relations, 2) research and science, and 3) control and restoration.

### Meetings

The steering committee has left the scheduling and nature of meetings to the board's discretion, but it recommends three types of meetings for the council:

- 1) an annual business meeting for board elections and general reporting;
- 2) technical advisory committee meetings or general forum meetings, probably similar in nature to those held by the Ohio Invasive Plants Working Group;
- 3) an annual symposium which addresses a topic or theme, and is intended for a broad general and professional audience.

### Communication

A voluntary, statewide organization has strength in the diversity of its members, but there are also challenges to keeping everyone well-informed. The steering committee recommends using all available means of communication, including electronic list serves, a web site, web links, mailings, press releases, and other forms of publicity through its member organizations and professional associations to reach the widest audience possible. To this end, a primary role of the board of directors should be to develop the identity and publicize the council as broadly as possible.

### Strategic Planning

The steering committee recommends that the board of directors work closely with the program committees of the council to develop a statewide strategic plan for dealing with invasive plant issues, including strategies for funding.

February 24, 2005

Eddie Dengg  
Bill Hendricks  
Nora Hiland  
Jennifer Hillmer  
Carrie Morrow