

Executive Director of Science Policy Report
Lee Van Wychen
WSSA Annual Meeting – 2021

2020 – 2021 Science Policy Committee Members

1. Janis McFarland	Chair	WSSA
2. Lee Van Wychen	Executive Director Science Policy	WSSA
3. Larry Steckel	Past President	WSSA
4. Bill Curran	President	WSSA
5. Anita Dille	President-elect	WSSA
6. Stanley Culpepper	Vice President	WSSA
7. Greg Kruger	EPA Liaison	WSSA
8. Jim Kells	NIFA Fellow	WSSA
9. Jill Schroeder	CAST rep	WSSA
10. Carroll Moseley	Public Awareness	WSSA
11. David Shaw	At-Large	WSSA
12. Mike Barrett	At-Large	WSSA
13. Chandra Aradhya	At-Large	WSSA
14. Bob Nichols (in memory)	At-Large	WSSA
15. Mark Heilman	President	APMS
16. Rob Richardson	APMS Rep	APMS
17. Stott Howard	President	NCWSS
18. Greg Elmore	NCWSS Rep	NCWSS
19. Art Gover	President	NEWSS
20. Rakesh Chandran	NEWSS Rep	NEWSS
21. Eric Webster	President	SWSS
22. Todd Baughman	SWSS Rep	SWSS
23. Corey Ransom	President	WSWS
24. Rachel Zuger	WSWS Rep	WSWS

<u>Member Rotating Off:</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Replacement:</u>
Mark Heilman	APMS President	Ryan Wersal
Stott Howard	NCWSS President	Harlene Hatterman-Valenti
Greg Elmore	NCWSS Rep	Brett Miller
Art Gover	NEWSS President	Caren Schmidt
Eric Webster	SWSS President	Clete Youmans
Corey Ransom	WSWS President	Sandra McDonald
Larry Steckel	WSSA	Carroll Moseley
Bob Nichols	At-Large	Ray McAllister

Science Policy Fellows

The 2020 Science Policy Fellows are **Camp Hand** at the University of Georgia (advisor: Stanley Culpepper) and **Vasily Lakoba** at Virginia Tech (advisor: Jacob Barney). Instead of trips to Washington DC for meetings and networking, everything has been virtual. Both of them will be finishing their Ph.D. programs in spring 2021.

- We will advertize for the 2021 Science Policy Fellows after the WSSA Annual meeting.

Comments Submitted on Weed Science Policy Issues During the Past Year:

<http://wssa.net/society/science-policy/>

- Weed Science Societies oppose Neguse/Udall “anti-FIFRA” legislation
- WSSA comments on Paraquat Proposed Interim Decision (PID)
- Urging passage of FY 2021 Appropriations and Covid relief bills
- Weed Science Societies comment on Interior’s Draft Invasive Species Strategic Plan
- Submitted Weed Science research priorities for USDA’s Ag Innovation Agenda
- Provided feedback on APHIS’s proposed list of pests and diseases of concern that are likely to pose a high risk to U.S. agricultural and natural resources.
- Supported a \$380 Million Supplemental Appropriations Request for Ag Research, Education, and Extension

Newsletter Reports/Washington Updates Submitted:

WSSA- 4; APMS- 2; NCWSS- 3; NEWSS- 3; SWSS- 3; and WSWS- 3

2020-2021 Weed Science Meeting/Events Attended and Presentations Given

Mar. 2 - 5, 2020: WSSA/WSWS Joint Meeting, Maui, HI

Mar. 11 - 12, 2020: Weed Science Society of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC

May 20- 21, 2020: EPA Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee, virtual

Jun. 8, 2020: NCFAR Capitol Hill Webinar: Slowing the Spread of Harmful Algal Blooms

Jul. 9 - 10, 2020: WSSA Summer Board Meeting, virtual

Jul. 20, 2020: Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) Board Meeting, virtual

Sep. 14 - 16, 2020: IR-4 Priority Setting Workshop, virtual

Sep. 29 - 30, 2020: CropLife America Annual Meeting, virtual

Oct. 6 - 8, 2020: North American Invasive Species Management Association, virtual

Oct. 28 - 29, 2020: EPA Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee, virtual

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2020: North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), virtual

Dec. 1 - 3, 2020: Western Weed Coordinating Committee, virtual

Jan. 4 - 7, 2021: Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), virtual

Jan. 25 - 27, 2021: Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), virtual

USDA-ARS

The Crop Protection and Quarantine program (NP 304) has hired a new National Program Leader (NPL) for weed science: **Dr. Steve Young** (stephen.young@usda.gov). He is a **weed scientist** who was most recently at Utah State University and prior to that served as the Director of the Northeastern IPM Center at Cornell. He has a B.S. in Horticulture from Washington State, an M.S. in Weed Science from the University of Idaho with Don Morishita and Ph.D. in Soil Science from the University of California- Davis with Drs. Vic Claassen and Joe DiTomaso.

USDA-NIFA

Dr. Vijay Nandula (vijay.nandula@usda.gov) was hired as a National Program Leader for Weed Science in NIFA and directs the Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program.

Dr. Carrie Castille (carrie.castille@usda.gov) was named the new **USDA-NIFA Director** on Dec. 22, 2020. The NIFA director position is a 6 year appointment and she will be the first female to serve in this role in a non-acting capacity. She holds a Ph.D. in Renewable Natural Resources and M.S. in Environmental Studies from Louisiana State University (LSU), and a B.S.

degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She has worked at LSU, the Louisiana Dept of Ag and USDA's Farm Production and Conservation mission area.

Recap of Weed Science/Aquatic Plant Management “Virtual” Congressional Visits

We held **22 visits** with staffers in GA, IA, IN, LA, MN, MT, NC, PA, UT & VA. Top issues:

- Opposition to H.R. 7940 and S. 4406, the “anti-FIFRA” legislation introduced by Rep. Neguse-D-CO and Sen. Udall-D-NM. We also joined 300+ societies in a letter to every member of Congress and also issued a separate [press release](#).
- Support USDA IR-4 funding at President’s request of \$17 million for FY 2021.
- Glyphosate is safe. IARC decision is flawed.
- Support funding for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control (APC) research program at the Senate level of \$7 million for FY 2021.
- Support the Senate’s version (S. 3591) of the 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which includes \$25 million for a Harmful Algal Bloom demonstration program and funding for various invasive species pilot programs that the House version (HR 7575) does not contain.

2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Becomes Law

The Senate version of WRDA was included in the massive consolidated appropriations package that Congress passed and was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020. This is a major win for invasive species policies.

- Authorizes **\$25 million** for a **Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB)** demonstration program to “*determine the causes of, and implement measures to effectively detect, prevent, treat, and eliminate, harmful algal blooms associated with water resources development projects*”. The HAB demonstration program will be carried out by ACOE with focus areas in the Great Lakes, the tidal and inland waters of New Jersey, the coastal and tidal waters of Louisiana, the waterways of the counties that comprise the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California, the Allegheny Reservoir Watershed in New York, and Lake Okeechobee, Florida.
- Requires ACOE to add “**prevention**” to its aquatic invasives species research, in addition to its research on the management and eradication of aquatic invasive species.
- Directs ACOE to conduct a **terrestrial noxious weed control** pilot program in consultation with the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) “*to identify and develop new and improved strategies for terrestrial noxious weed control on federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary (of the Army)*”.
- Authorizes **\$50 million per year** for FY 2021 - 2024 for ACOE to “*enter into partnerships with applicable States and other Federal agencies to carry out actions to prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate invasive species that adversely affect water quantity or water quality*” in the Platte River Basin, the Upper Colorado River Basin, the Upper Snake River Basin, and the Upper Missouri River Basin. ACOE shall give priority to projects that are intended to control or eradicate **Russian olive** (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) or **saltcedar** (of the genus *Tamarix*).
- Authorizes **\$10 million** for the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. FWS, to establish a pilot program “*to remove invasive plant species in riparian areas that contribute to drought conditions*” in the Lower Colorado River Basin; the Rio Grande River Basin; the Texas Gulf Coast Basin; and the Arkansas-White-Red Basin; and where

appropriate, to replace the invasive plant species with ecologically suitable native species and to maintain and monitor those riparian areas.

- Authorizes **\$25 million** for the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. FWS, to establish a pilot program “to develop and carry out effective measures necessary to **prevent, control, or eradicate aquatic invasive species in alpine lakes that are not located within a unit of the National Park System**”.

FY 2021 Appropriations Becomes Law

Here is a look at the final FY 2021 appropriations levels for various weed and aquatic plant management research programs compared to FY 2019 and FY 2020:

	FY19 Final	FY20 Final	FY21 President	FY21 House	FY21 Senate	FY21 Final
	-----Millions -----					
USDA-ARS	\$1,303	\$1,414	\$1,368	\$1,452	\$1,510	\$1,492
USDA-NIFA	\$1,471	\$1,527	\$1,591	\$1,574	\$1,539	\$1,570
-AFRI Competitive Grants	\$415	\$425	\$600	\$435	\$435	\$435
-Hatch Act (Exp. stations)	\$259	\$259	\$243	\$259	\$259	\$259
-Smith Lever (Extension)	\$315	\$315	\$299	\$315	\$315	\$315
-IR-4 Program	\$12	\$12	\$17	\$15	\$12	\$12
-Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM)	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20
Army Corp- Aquatic Plant Control research	\$6	\$6	\$0	\$2	\$7	\$7
EPA - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	\$300	\$320	\$320	\$335	\$320	\$330
NOAA – Sea Grant Program	\$68	\$74	\$0	\$71	\$76	\$75
Note- The final FY 2021 appropriations language also directs APHIS to reallocate \$3 million from its Field Crop and Rangeland Ecosystems Pests account to create a pilot program to partner with states for the control and eradication of coongrass .						

Areawide Integrated Pest Management (AIPM) in NIFA

Currently only USDA-ARS funds AIPM projects and we’d like to see NIFA fund projects as well. The House Ag Approps language directed NIFA “to establish within CPPM an organizational framework and funding plan to implement AIPM projects that are to be planned in coordination with ARS, APHIS, and other federal agencies.” However, the Senate Ag Approps bill did not include this language, nor was the House language included in the final consolidated appropriations bill.

National Stakeholder Team for Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) Funding

- PSEP National Stakeholder Team website: www.nst-psep.net
- Offered land-grant programs \$25k/yr for 3 years to strengthen PSEPs; 24 states participated.
- Created new relationships between stakeholders from the universities, state regulatory agencies, associations and private sector, where those were absent, in support of land-grant university PSEPs.
- Pre-Covid, 16 of the 24 state PSEPs strengthened. Due to Covid, some programs are now less stable due to loss of revenues from in-person training programs or other revenue streams. This even includes some states with previously strong programs.

EPA Proposed Interim Decision (PID) for Paraquat

The proposed interim decision (PID) for paraquat is the third step in EPA's four-step process for evaluating a pesticide registration application that EPA conducts every 15 years. EPA proposed the following measures in the paraquat PID:

- Prohibiting aerial application for all uses and use sites except cotton desiccation;
- Prohibiting pressurized handgun and backpack sprayer application methods on the label;
- Limiting the maximum application rate for alfalfa to one pound of active ingredient per acre;
- Requiring enclosed cabs if area treated in 24-hour period is more than 80 acres;
- Requiring enclosed cabs or PF10 respirators if area treated in 24-hour period is 80 ac. or less;
- Requiring a residential area drift buffer and 7-day REI for cotton desiccation;
- Requiring a 48-hour REI for all crops and uses except cotton desiccation; and
- Adding mandatory spray drift management label language.
- More permissive: truck drivers without a certified applicator license are no longer banned from transporting previously opened paraquat containers.

Given the value of paraquat as a unique weed management tool and the updated human health mitigation measures, WSSA is **opposed** to the: 1) prohibition of all aerial applications of paraquat except for cotton desiccation; and 2) prohibition of all paraquat applications using mechanically pressurized handguns and backpack sprayers. Those application restrictions would eliminate many unique weed management options and put undue pressure on other broad-spectrum burndown treatments. WSSA [submitted comments](#) on Jan. 11, 2021.

Triazines and Glyphosate Begin Endangered Species Act Review

On Nov. 5, 2020, EPA released its draft biological evaluations (BEs) for atrazine, simazine and propazine for review and comment. Biological evaluations (BEs) are the beginning of EPA's Endangered Species Act consultation review process for pesticides where they determine if an endangered or threatened species or critical habitat could be affected by the use of that pesticide. The **triazines** are the **first herbicides** to go through EPA's [Revised Method for Species Biological Evaluations of Conventional Pesticides](#). The BEs make effects determinations for 1,795 endangered or threatened species and 792 designated critical habitats. EPA's draft BEs for the triazines predict that:

- atrazine is likely to adversely affect 54% of all species and 40% of critical habitats;
 - propazine is likely to adversely affect 4% of all species and 2% of critical habitats; and
 - simazine is likely to adversely affect 53% of species and 40% of critical habitats.
- [Comments on the draft BEs for the triazines are due Feb. 19, 2021.](#)

Not far behind the triazines, EPA issued its draft biological evaluations for **glyphosate** on November 27, 2020. EPA's draft BEs for glyphosate predict that:

- glyphosate is likely to adversely affect 93% of all species and 96% of critical habitats.
- EPA model assumes **max rate** of glyphosate applied **every year** on CRP and non-cropland
- [Comments on the draft BEs for glyphosate are due Mar. 13, 2021.](#)

If EPA determines a pesticide may affect a listed species or its critical habitat, it will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) who will then issue a biological opinion (BO or Bi-Op) to determine if the population of a species would be adversely impacted and, if so, propose ways to reduce risks (i.e. ban a county or state from applying a triazine or glyphosate because of an endangered species or its habitat.

Monarch Butterfly Listing Warranted but Precluded

On Dec. 15, 2020, the U.S. FWS found that adding the monarch butterfly to the list of threatened and endangered species is [warranted but precluded by work on higher-priority listing actions](#). With this decision, the monarch becomes a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act, and its status will be reviewed each year until it is no longer a candidate.

Biden Administration, Jan. 20, 2020 - List of Agency Actions for Review

- “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 12-Month Finding for the Monarch Butterfly,” 85 Fed. Reg. 81813 (December 17, 2020).
- “Pesticides; Agricultural Worker Protection Standard; Revision of the Application Exclusion Zone Requirements,” 85 Fed. Reg. 68760 (October 30, 2020).
- “The Navigable Waters Protection Rule: Definition of ‘Waters of the United States,’” 85 Fed. Reg. 22250 (April 21, 2020).
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Page (NEPA No. DOI-BLM-WO-WO2100-2017-0003-RMP-EIS) (last updated Jan. 11, 2021).

Interior's Invasive Species Strategic Plan

The National and Regional Weed Science Societies [submitted comments](#) on the Department of the Interior's (DOI) draft Invasive Species Strategic Plan on Oct. 9, 2020. Invasive weeds in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems are estimated to cost nearly \$30 billion per year and our main concern was that DOI invasive species efforts are extremely underfunded. We also supported increased focus on invasion pathways and vectors; supported the formation and use of a science advisory committee for invasive species; encouraged DOI to explore the possibility of working with the insurance industry to develop tools to mitigate the economic impacts of invasive species; stressed the importance of using integrated pest management (IPM) techniques; and supported increased research and training in taxonomic expertise for identifying invasive species. The DOI released its [final Invasive Species Strategic Plan](#) on Jan. 14, 2021. This Plan will guide DOI's work on invasive species for 2021 – 2025.

Unsolicited Seed Packets from China

Lots of press attention, which is good. Don't plant the seeds! [Good PR opportunity for WSSA](#). As of August 31, APHIS collected 8,507 packages from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. They had examined 2,410 of those packets and identified a total of 321 different species of seed, but “nothing of major concern”. Federal noxious weeds identified included dodder (*Cuscuta L.*) and swamp morningglory (*Ipomoea aquatica*). Authorities believe

this was a “brushing” scam and have not identified any link to agro-terrorism. However, it’s still unclear who is behind the scam and a federal investigation is ongoing.

2021 National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW)

- NISAW Part I - Information and Advocacy – is **February 22-26, 2021**. A policy focused webinar series is being scheduled. For more details: www.nisaw.org/nisaw-2021/
- NISAW Part II - Outreach and Education – is **May 15-22, 2021** and will focus on local invasive species prevention, removal, and educational events. The North American Invasive Species Forum is also being held virtually during NISAW Part II. The Forum is an international event encompassing the interests of professionals and organizations involved in invasive species management, research, and regulation across North America.
- **Requesting \$2500** from WSSA to be a NISAW “Outreach” sponsor (same as last year).

Syncing USDA PLANTS Database with WSSA Composite Lists of Weeds

The USDA Plants Database (<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>) is now considered the official source of weed nomenclature and taxonomy. It gets 50,000 hits a day on the internet and is managed by USDA-NRCS in Greenville, NC. The members of WSSA’s Standardized Plant Names subcommittee (P22b), chaired by Karla Gage, are going through the 3,000+ weeds in WSSA’s Composite list of weeds to either suggest changes to WSSA names to match USDA names, or provide a WSSA-sanctioned common name alternative to the USDA PLANTS name. The P22b subcommittee goal is to provide recommendations for an updated, revised list of WSSA-sanctioned common names to the WSSA Board for review and final approval. Some species may require more than one accepted common name such as cheatgrass/downy brome and marijuana/hemp.

National Survey of Common and Troublesome Weeds

The 2020 survey results for weeds in grass crops, pasture and turf are posted at <http://wssa.net/wssa/weed/surveys/>. Camp and I have created and submitted a poster of the 2020 results for the WSSA Annual Meeting. Weeds barely mentioned in 2017 that increased in 2020 include medusahead, ventenata, dogfennel, Scotch thistle, vaseygrass, Lehmann lovegrass, milkweed spp., and *Lepidium spp.* The **2021 weed survey** will focus on weeds in **aquatic and natural areas** and be sent out to weed science members around Memorial Day.

Leadership changes in Congress and Federal Agencies

- The new chair of the House Ag Committee is Rep. David Scott (D-GA). The new ranking member is Rep. Glen “GT” Thompson (R-PA).
- The new chair of the Senate Ag Committee will be Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). The new ranking member will be Sen. John Boozman (R-AR).
- The new ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee is Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR). The chair will remain as Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ).
- The “new” Secretary of Ag nominee is Tom Vilsack who served eight years as the Secretary of Ag in the Obama administration.
- The Secretary of Interior nominee is Rep. Deb Haaland-D-NM.
- The EPA Administrator nominee is Michael Regan, Secretary of the NC Department of Environmental Quality.

2021 Proposed Committee Activities

1. Promote and advocate funding for weeds & invasive plant programs in FY 2022 budget
 - a. Increase IR-4 funding to \$17 million and CPPM funding to \$25 million
 - b. Identify Department of Interior programs that support invasive weed research, prevention and management within USGS, NPS, BLM, FWS, BIA and BOR.
 - c. Support appropriations for the new invasive species pilot programs in 2020 WRDA
2. Research the possibility of expanding the definition of a “Plant Pest” under the Plant Protection Act (PPA) to include “noxious weeds”. Funding for noxious weeds at APHIS-PPQ is severely hampered because noxious weeds are not considered a “plant pest”. Only “parasitic plants” are considered a plant pest in the PPA ([7 U.S.C. 7702](#)).
3. Conduct and report the National Weed Survey for Most Common and Troublesome weeds.
4. Hire and conduct a training program for two Science Policy Fellows
5. Work to support the new USDA-ARS National Program Leader for Weed Science.
6. Work with WSSA-EPA Liaison on herbicide stewardship and other FIFRA regulatory issues.
7. Work with WSSA-NIFA Fellow to promote weed science research and funding.
8. Work with USDA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for Biological Control Agents of Weeds
9. Work with USDA Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) on weed science issues.
10. Support funding for the Aquatic Plant Control Research Program and other APMS priorities.
11. Monitor and provide input to the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR).
12. Support 2021 National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) and strategize for 2022.
13. Monitor and provide input as necessary for Federal Agency activities that are reviewing previous policies including monarch butterfly endangered species status, the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule and application exclusion zone (AEZ) requirements.
14. Continue work with the WSSA Standardized Plants Name Subcommittee (P22b) to sync USDA Plants Database with WSSA Composite List of Weeds.
15. Sell Weed Bingo.

Funds Requested for 2021

The Science Policy Committee’s (SPC) annual budget allocation is **\$6000**. This includes support for any activities that promote the goals and mission of WSSA, such as providing travel support for weed scientists to travel to DC for presentations. I am also asking WSSA for **\$2500** to be a NISAW “Outreach” sponsor. <https://www.nisaw.org/sponsorship-information/> This is the same amount WSSA approved last year for NISAW.

2021-2022 Weed Science Society Meetings

Mar. 1 - 4, 2021 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), virtual www.wsweedscience.org
Jul. 11 - 14, 2021 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), New Orleans, LA www.apms.org
Dec 13 - 16, 2021 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Grand Rapids, MI www.ncwss.org
Jan. 3 - 6, 2022 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWS), Gettysburg, PA www.newss.org
Jan. 23 - 27, 2022 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), Austin, TX www.swss.ws
Feb. 21 - 24, 2022 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), Vancouver, BC www.wssa.net