

## **2011 WSSA Committee Report to Members Summary for 2011 and Action Plan for 2012**

**Committee Code and Name:** E13 – Public Awareness Committee

**Committee Chair:** Carol Somody; **Members, 2011:** Janis McFarland (WSSA), John Jachetta (WSSA), Joyce Lancaster (ex-officio), Anne Légère (CWSS), Dwight Lingenfelter (NEWSS), Greg MacDonald (SWSS), Don Morishita (WSSA), Jesse Richardson (WSWS), Judy Shearer (APMS), Sarah True Meadows (WSSA/Graduate Student Representative), Lee Van Wychen (ex-officio), Bryan Young (WSSA), Dave Johnson (NCWSS)

**Board Coordinator:** Mike Barrett

**Committee Members Rotating Off:**  
Dave Johnson, Greg MacDonald, others in discussion

**Appropriate Replacements:**  
JD Green, others in discussion

### **2011 Summary of Activities (through December, 2011)**

What were the committee's goals for 2011? Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact, and management through press releases and website information. Bring attention to proposed budget cuts impacting important weed control – related programs. Prepare the groundwork for a WSSA Ambassador Program.

List the committee's accomplishments in 2011: 1) Prepared and distributed 15 press releases and one technical paper. 2) Continued to utilize Master Media Lists using Cision and MediaAtlas and segmented by coverage area, including gardening & horticulture, agribusiness, farming, environment, lawn care, etc. Continued to complemented our current distribution (PR Web and 80 daily newspapers in key markets) to include trade publications, smaller daily and weekly newspapers, broadcast news outlets and online publications. 3) Conducted research and prepared a proposal for a WSSA Ambassador Program. 4) Organized Weed ID and Poster Contests at 2011 WSSA Meeting. 5) Had positive impacts on the goals of the Science Policy Committee.

Membership involvement (person-hours): 700+

What information was posted on the WSSA website? 15 press releases with links to associated photos. The PSEP technical paper, 17 videos, and 6 myths were also posted on the website in 2011. In addition, due to WSSA's strong support of the PSEP program, the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE) allowed their PSEP survey to be posted on the WSSA website.

How much funding was requested? How much was spent? The PA Committee received \$18,000 from the Board for the activities of the Weed Science Subject Matter Liaison to the EPA and \$19,000 to achieve public awareness goals. A fund-raising letter raised an additional \$32,000 for the committee's public awareness activities. Cost of the EPA Liaison was \$8,123.50. Public awareness activities cost \$21,121.80 (hired communication expertise, press release distribution charges, and WSSA Meeting booth expenses). Thus a total of \$29,245.30

was spent for the EPA Liaison and for public awareness, using none of the Society's funds. A net profit of \$2754.70 was returned for the Society's use.

What was the impact of the committee activities/accomplishments on the following: membership, publication, policy, legislation, and/or education?

- In 2011, over two-thirds of the press releases issued by the WSSA Public Awareness committee directly benefited and promoted the policy and education initiatives set forth by the Science Policy Committee. The most influential policy-related press release issued during 2011 was "Budget Cuts Would Eliminate The Nation's Only Federal Research Program for Aquatic Weed Control", released on April 4, 2011. This Public Awareness Committee piece kicked off a strategic campaign by the Science Policy Committee to get Congress to restore the \$4 million in funding for the Aquatic Plant Control Research Program (APCRP) that was zeroed out by the Army Corps of Engineers. The odds were stacked against success, but in the end the Science Policy Committee was able to convince Congress of the value of the APCRP and the conference committee appropriated \$3 million to continue funding of the program.
- Another important press release that advanced WSSA's missions and goals during 2011 was "Scientists Point to Precarious State of Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP)" on September 12, 2011. As the nation's primary pesticide applicator training and education program, PSEP is responsible for ensuring the safety of applicators, other workers and the public, for protecting the environment and for providing guidance in the proper use and security of pesticides. The WSSA Public Awareness Committee also produced a detailed PSEP issues technical paper, which has been used in national and regional discussions by a variety of stakeholders.
- There were at least eight WSSA press releases in 2011 that increased national, state, and local government official's awareness about the importance of managing invasive weeds. This has been a long term goal of the Science Policy Committee, and certainly of the WSSA Publications Board with the new Invasive Plant Science and Management journal.
- We issued a total of 15 press releases that were accessed by various media and the public and featured on websites and in spinoff stories. Noteworthy were coverage by the *Boston Globe*, *Channel 6 News* in Kansas, the *Hampton Roads Daily Press*, *National Public Radio*, *Farm Futures*, *I Can Garden*, and *Indiana Prairie Farmer*. Further examples of the many media contacting the PA Committee for further information and/or carrying our press release content in 2011 appear in Appendix 1.
- Confirmed full page reads for our releases ranged from 796 to 1859 each, while headline impressions on the Web ranged as high as 172,985.
- We launched a quarterly "syndicated" column series in the fall, with the initial offering picked up by the National Gardening Association (an organization having 235,000+ members/readers).
- We also have 21 regular followers on Twitter, including the USDA National Invasive Species Information Center, Ag Network News, an extension specialist, a garden blogger, an agricultural PR specialist in Queensland, a team of agricultural consultants in Canada, and university researchers and students at Auburn, North Carolina State, Oklahoma State and the University of Saskatchewan.

The 2011 press releases addressed a wide range of topics that were of membership (M) interest, of educational (E) value to a wide audience, or were related to policy issues (P). Many served more than one purpose.

WSSA APPLAUDS USDA FUNDING OF VITAL WEED SCIENCE RESEARCH (Feb 3, 2011)	M	E	P
2011 WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA'S ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM (Feb 8, 2011)	M		
NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK TO FOCUS ON HARMFUL NONNATIVE SPECIES (Feb 23, 2011)	M	E	P
WEED-AND-FEED YOUR LAWN RESPONSIBLY TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT (Feb 28, 2011)	M	E	
BUDGET CUTS WOULD ELIMINATE THE NATION'S ONLY FEDERAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR AQUATIC WEED CONTROL (April 4, 2011)	M	E	P
STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN FIRST NATIONAL WEEDOLYMPICS (May 11, 2011)	M		
EDIBLE WEEDS: A TASTY REVENGE FOR HOMEOWNERS! (July 11, 2011)	M	E	
COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN THE CAROLINAS TURN THE TIDE AGAINST 'BEACH KUDZU' (Aug 3, 2011)	M	E	P
TOP STUDENT WEED SCIENTISTS RECOGNIZED DURING FIRST WEEDOLYMPICS (Aug 29, 2011)	M		
SCIENTISTS POINT TO PRECARIOUS STATE OF U.S. PESTICIDE SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM (Sept 12, 2011)	M	E	P
WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA LAUNCHES FREE TRAINING PROGRAM ON THE CAUSES AND MANAGEMENT OF HERBICIDE RESISTANCE IN WEEDS (Sept 27, 2011)	M	E	
WEED SCIENTISTS TO FOCUS ON LATEST RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES DURING 52ND ANNUAL MEETING OF WSSA (Oct 5, 2011)	M	E	
UNLIKELY STOWAWAYS: WEED SEEDS TRAVEL TO FARAWAY PLACES ON CARS, TRUCKS AND ATVS (October 19, 2011)	M	E	

WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA SAYS THERE'S NO PLACE FOR WEEDS AT THE HOLIDAYS! (November 8, 2011)	M	E	
WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA SAYS FLOODING ALONG OUR NATION'S RIVERS WORSENERD BY INVASIVE WEEDS (December 5, 2011)	M	E	P

What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities? Possible press releases for first quarter, 2012 (titles subject to change) include a) Why Good IPM is Not Pesticides as a Last Resort, b) Arabidopsis – Lab Rat of the Plant World, c) What GPS Does for Weed Control in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, d) WSSA Award Winners, and e) National Invasive Species Awareness Week. A two-page Weed Fact Sheet is underway for various audiences.

## 2012 Plan for Committee Activities

### Goals for 2012:

- Continue to develop press releases and other materials for use by the Policy Board in increasing weed awareness with the administration and other government officials.
- Assist the Educational Committee with an ambassador program utilizing WSSA committee members and other experts to enhance public awareness of weeds and to support our public outreach.
- Continue to broaden our outreach strategy on promoting the topic of weeds through different media.
- Finalize a Weed Fact Sheet for use in outreach.
- Proposed press release topic areas include:
  - 1) *Allelopathic plants*
  - 2) *Aquatic weed management*
  - 3) *Carbon sequestration – the critical role of weed control*
  - 4) *Challenges of non-chemical weed control*
  - 5) *Characteristics of a good biofuel crop*
  - 6) *Critical role of weed control in sustainable agriculture*
  - 7) *Economic benefits of weed control*
  - 8) *Economic losses due to weeds*
  - 9) *Farm Bill impacts on weed research and management*
  - 10) *Herbicide stewardship*
  - 11) *Homeowner weed challenges*
  - 12) *Human health issues/allergies*
  - 13) *Invasive algae*
  - 14) *Invasive species impact on endangered species*
  - 15) *Key weed science research grants*
  - 16) *Potential impacts of climate change on weed management*
  - 17) *Protection of natural habitat/biodiversity*
  - 18) *Research topics of interest from regional or national weed science meetings*
  - 19) *Tillage/carbon footprint*

- 20) *Tillage/erosion*
- 21) *Urban/school weed challenges*
- 22) *Weed management in biofuel crop production*
- 23) *Weed resistance management*
- 24) *Weed Science and Weed Technology journal updates, in summary format*
- 25) *Weed seed banks*
- 26) *Weeds in wildflower mixes*
- 27) *Why Join the Weed Science Society of America*
- 28) *WSSA Academic Subject Matter Expert*
- 29) *WSSA and regional meetings – meeting details*
- 30) *WSSA award winners*

Plan of Action: Conduct biweekly committee work teleconferences; solicit WSSA members to draft press releases; produce educational and other press releases. More details are included in the Strategic Plan.

What is needed to further the goals of the committee/project? Informative and timely press release topics and contact name(s) submitted on an ongoing basis by WSSA members.

### **Recommendations for Board/Society Action:**

Funds requested for 2012: \$18,000 from the Board for the Weed Science Subject Matter Liaison to the EPA and \$19,000 to achieve public awareness goals. This represents a flat budget compared to 2011. We will try to match the Board's resources by raising funds through the sustaining members and will provide an update at the summer board meeting.

Other requests for the Board: Assist the PA Committee by 1) reviewing selected press releases, 2) soliciting ideas for raising awareness of weeds from the membership and committees, 3) identifying volunteers to draft press releases and other information, 4) sending a letter soliciting funds for public awareness outreach, and 5) further strengthening the interactions between the Public Awareness Committee and other WSSA committees, especially the Professional Development Committee, with the goal of engaging broader member participation, especially by students.

Proposed Committee MOP:

### **E13- Public Awareness Committee**

The Public Awareness committee shall:

1. Consists of a Chair appointed for a 3 year term and 10 other members representing the WSWS, NCWW, SWSS, NEWSS, APMS and the CWSS, each appointed for a 4 year term; additional Ex-Off members include the WSSA Science Policy Director, the WSSA Executive Secretary and the WSSA Graduate Student Organization President. Additional members may also be appointed to this committee at the discretion of the Chair. The E13 liaison to the Board of Directors is the WSSA President.
2. Raise public awareness of weeds, their impact and management by enhancing media awareness and coverage.

3. Identify and work with an outside contractor to develop a coordinated approach to increase public awareness – e.g. press releases, web content enhancements, Reporters Notebook
4. Build relationships with key media contacts that can write, adapt, or accept articles prepared by WSSA and place them in publications targeted to important public and trade audiences.
5. Champion public policy positions that promote weed awareness and enhance decision-making by regulators and policy makers on issues related to national, state, and province agricultural and pesticide policy.
6. Increase media coverage of regional/national Weed Science Society meetings and conduct press conferences on topics of high interest.
7. Coordinate press releases with identified partners (e.g. Entomology Society of America, American Phytopathological Society, and the American Institute of Biological Sciences).
8. Support and contribute to the WSSA website as the premier source of web-based weed information.
9. Support the WSSA/EPA Subject Matter Expert to increase interaction of WSSA with the Environmental Protection Agency, key government agencies such as the USDA Office of Pest Management Policy, and other stakeholders involved with and/or impacted by weeds.
10. Seek outside funding through a number of contacts including a Presidential letter to Sustaining members in order to supplement Society E13 resources. Funding may be used to support an outside contractor to assist in developing and writing press releases and to support the WSSA WSSA/EPA Subject Matter Expert.

#### APPENDIX 1. MEDIA DISPLAYING RELEASES OR WRITING ARTICLES IN 2011

About.com	Association of Fish and Wildlife
Advanced Restoration	Agencies Athens Banner-Herald
AgNews Center	Auburn Turf Tweet
Ag Professional	Audubon Action
Ag Weekly	Auto-Moto Forum
AgraNet	Banks.com
Agricultural Engineering Portal	Barn OnAir and OnLine Blog
AgriHunt	Beautiful Wildlife Garden
AgriMarketing	Benzinga
AgriView	Beyond the Dow
Agrolinker	Biofuels Carbon Capture Report
Al Schwartz Tweet	BioMedReports.com
Alberta (Canada) iNet	BioPortfolio
All News Group	Biotech Blog
All Voices	Birds and Bloom Blog
Alpine Meadows online	Biz Colors
American Consumer News	BizWire Express
American Council for Accredited	Blogged.com
Certification Americas Society	Boston Globe
Applied Turfgrass Science	Boston Merchant Financial Services
Aquatic Plant Management Society	Breaking News Network
Aquatic Plants	Brian Allmer Radio Network
Arkansas News Press	Bryant's Maritime News
	Bug Lady Suzanne Tweet

Bugwood Blogspot  
Bukisa  
Business Insider – Online  
Business Insurance  
Buzz Box  
Calgary Herald  
Cali Weed Review  
Calibration How To  
California Invasive Plant Council  
Facebook Canada Seek.com  
Canada Sprayer Guide  
CBS – Minnesota (online)  
CBS MoneyWatch  
Cell DNA  
Channel 6 News, Lawrence, Kansas  
Charleston University of Arizona  
Cooperative Extension  
Cincinnati Enquirer – Online  
CIO – Online  
Coir Green  
Columbus Dispatch - Online  
Compliance Kings  
Congoo.com  
Cornell Fruit  
Crypto Zoology News  
Dallas News Topics  
Daily Herald – Online  
Daily Press  
Dave's Garden  
Daylife  
Delaware Division of Fish and  
Wildlife  
Delaware Invasive Species Council  
Delaware Online Blog  
Department of Interior News  
Digital Journal  
Digital Media  
Digital Media News and Technology  
Digital Producer  
DMN Newswire  
Dover Post  
Earth Knowledge  
EcoCentric Blog  
Ecofriendly Mind  
EcoZilla  
EIN News  
Encyclopedia.com (Botany, Lawn &  
Garden sections)

EnviNews  
Enviro Library  
Environment  
Environment Guru  
Environmental Expert  
Environmental News Today  
Environmental Protections  
Environmental Science Headlines  
EOS Alliance  
Erosion Control  
Examiner.com  
Farm Futures  
Farm and Livestock Directory  
Farming Forum  
Farming Magazine Tweet  
Farming UK  
Farms.com  
Feed Raider  
Fish and Wildlife Org  
Florida Aquatic Plant Management  
Society Florida Native Plant Society  
Blog  
Free Info News  
Friend Feed  
Fuse TV  
Garden and Lawn Weed Control  
Garden Décor Tips  
Geo Engineer  
Golden Map  
Great Witchita Falls Blogspot  
Green Conscience Tweeted  
Green Media  
Green Technology News  
Green Temple  
Growing Magazine  
Hawaii News Press  
Headlines  
Health Buz.com  
HealthNews.org  
High Beam  
Hoard's Dairyman Facebook Page  
Houston Chronicle – Online  
Hub Pages.com  
I Can Garden  
Illinois News Press  
India Times  
India Gazette  
Indiana Prairie Farmer

Individual.com  
Info Pig  
In Press Release  
INet Giant Portal  
Interceder  
International Pest Control Mid-South  
Farmer  
Into Mobile  
Invader Updater  
Invasive Info Tweet  
Invasive Notes Tweet  
Invasive Plants Association of  
Wisconsin  
Invasive Plant Council of BC  
Invasive Plant Council Facebook  
Invasive Plant Council of BC  
Facebook  
Invasive Species  
Invasive Species Info.gov  
Invasivore  
Iowa State website  
Ison Vineyards Blog  
James Dietrich blog  
Jax Air News  
John Peter Thompson Tweet  
Kansas News Press  
Kapseln Nespresso Blog  
Keep Austin Beautiful  
KCNC-TV – Online  
KDKA-TV – Online  
KGO-AM – Online  
KMAX-TV – Online  
KPIX-TV – Online  
KTRK-TV – Online  
KYW-TV – Online  
KTV – Online  
Landscape Irrigation  
Lawn and Garden Magic  
Lawn-Garden Blog  
Lawns Guide  
Life Science Log  
Live the New Day  
Lycott Environmental News  
Macon News  
Madison Florida Voice  
Markets  
Maryland Department of Agriculture

Melbourne School of Land &  
Environment newsletter  
Metro DC  
Miami Herald – Online  
Mid-South Farmer  
Midwest Producer  
MinyanVille  
MoneyShow.com  
Montana State University Online  
Montana NormL  
MOSO Technology  
Mother Nature Blog  
MyNewsDesk.com  
National Invasive Species  
Information Center  
Native Earthworks Preservation  
Nature  
NECIS News  
New York Times Blog  
News 4 Us (Australia)  
News Club  
News Journal Online  
News Now (UK)  
Newsday – Online  
News Junky Journal  
NewsOK.com (Oklahoman) – Online  
News Zone  
NewzBuff  
NISAW Facebook  
NMSU.edu  
North Inlet (S.C.) Beach Vitex Task  
Force News NPR  
Nu Leadership Guest Blog  
Ocean Engineering portal  
Ohio State University Online  
One Ag Voice  
One Blogs  
One News Page  
One Source  
Ontario INet Giant  
Optimum Online  
Oregon State Crop and Soil  
Penn State Live  
Pest Web  
Planetary Ruin  
Plant Management Network  
Pollution.net  
Potato Grower



Potomac Highlands Cooperative  
Weed and Pest Management Area  
Potomac Highlands Blogspot  
PR Business  
Prairie Ecologist  
Press Enterprise  
Press Release Junction  
Press Release News Today  
Press Release Watch  
Products Good for the Environment  
Hub Page  
Progressive Forage  
Protect Your Waters  
Purdue Alumni publication  
Purdue University News  
Ramberg Media  
ReallyFirst.com  
Red Orbit  
RenewableEnergyWorld.com  
River Charts  
RoadRunner/Time Warner Home  
Page  
Rodale.com  
Rural Marketing News  
San Diego Union-Tribune – Online  
San Jose Mercury News – Online  
San Francisco Chronicle – Online  
Sci Answers  
SciPress News  
Science  
Science for Citizens  
Science News Daily  
Science Now  
Science Portal  
Science Stage  
SciTech Report  
Scott McElroy Tweet  
Scott Trade Research  
Securities Technology Monitor  
Seed Quest  
SenseoWorld Blog  
SiloBreaker  
Small Business for Women  
SocialPicks  
Southeast Wisconsin Sustainable  
Development  
Southern Agricultural Pesticides  
Facebook

Southwest Farm Press  
Sports Turf Online  
Squidoo  
Stormwater Solution Center  
Swamp Things Blogspot  
Syngenta Crop Protection Alert  
Texas Gardener  
Texas Invasives  
The Alternative Press  
The Denver Post – Online  
The Flower Garden  
The Salt Lake Tribune – Online  
Things You're Missing  
Timber Frog  
Topix  
Travel Distances News  
Treehugger.com  
TruGreen  
Trove (a govt. site in Australia)  
TweetBuzz  
TweetMeMe  
University of Maryland AGR News  
UC Davis ANR News  
Uncommon Ground  
Understand Society Sciences  
University of Arizona Examiner  
University of Idaho  
University of Illinois Plant Clinic  
Blog  
University of Maryland  
University of Michigan  
UPI.com  
U.S. Forest Service  
US News Online  
USA Today.com  
USDA Invasive Species Blog  
Vancouver Sun  
Vermont EDU List Serve  
Vital Signs  
Wallace's Farmer  
Washington State University  
Water Online  
Water Plants Blog  
WBBM-TV Online  
WCBS-TV Online  
WCCO-TV – Online  
Web Chronicle  
Weed Center

Weeds Gone  
Western Farm Press  
Wiki Answers  
Wildlife Professional  
Wild Obs Wildlife  
WJRT-TV Online  
WLS-TV – Online  
World Book and News  
World Citizen

World Market Media  
World News  
Worth.com  
WTVD-TV – Online  
WTVG-TV online  
Yahoo! News  
Zimbio