



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

ENVI • NUMBER 014 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, December 1, 2011

—
Chair

Mr. Mark Warawa

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Thursday, December 1, 2011

•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC)): We'll call the meeting to order.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming as we continue our study on invasive species.

We have three groups of witnesses today and we're going to begin with the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association. You have up to ten minutes. I believe our presenter is Owen Vanstone, is that correct?

Mr. Owen Vanstone (Manager, Sales and Marketing, Vanstone Nurseries; Board Member, Canadian Nursery Landscape Association): That's right, yes.

The Chair: You can proceed and you have up to ten minutes.

Mr. Owen Vanstone: Thank you very much.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Owen Vanstone and I'm here today on the behalf of the ornamental horticulture sector, specifically representing the Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association, or the CNLA. I'm a member of the CNLA through Landscape Manitoba, as my family owns and operates a wholesale nursery in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and has done so for 30 years. It's something I've grown up with; I've been around plants forever. I also serve on the CNLA board of directors as the chair of Growers Canada.

The CNLA is a not-for-profit federation of nine provincial green industry associations, representing over 3,700 member companies in the ornamental horticulture sector. This includes wholesale nursery growers; landscape construction, design, and maintenance contractors; retail garden centres; and other related industries. In concert with the provincial associations, CNLA develops programs, undertakes initiatives, and forms alliances in order to achieve sustainable prosperity for members and stakeholders engaged in the green industry.

The CNLA's vision for our sector is "A prosperous, professional and ethical industry that is recognized, valued, and utilized by the public, as a result of the environmental, economic, and lifestyle benefits provided by our members' products and services".

As professionals within our industry, we collectively see ourselves as stewards of the environment, and we encourage and promote sustainability and environmentalism at a grassroots level.

A recent study conducted by Deloitte in 2009 on the ornamental horticulture sector as a whole, which also includes the greenhouse

floriculture industry, estimated the sector's total economic impact to be \$14.48 billion, comprised of \$6.98 billion in output and \$7.5 billion in value-added impacts. The ornamental sector overall generates \$3.8 billion in employment income and another \$1 billion in end user taxes. Ornamentals is the only sector within agriculture to pay GST, I might add.

Human resource skill development and capacity-building are priorities. Ornamental horticulture provides over 136,000 full-time jobs to Canadians. It's estimated that for every two jobs in the industry, another job is created in the economy at large. Invasive species that impact the overall success of the CNLA members have potential to impact our sector, with the consequences being a direct and very real effect on continued prosperity and job growth in the industry.

My presence before this standing committee today is as a result of a very last-minute invitation; as such, we have not had as much time as we would have liked to do all of our homework. Therefore I come here today maybe more to ask questions than to provide answers.

As an association, we wish to understand, for instance, the specific objectives of the study being proposed by the committee. How will the outcomes relate to the work on prevention and management that is undertaken by CFIA as a critically important part of their mandate? What's the role of this committee, and what are the connections to the management efforts that are being undertaken by the various provincial agencies, such as environment and natural resources ministries? What will be the connections to the provincial invasive plant or invasive species councils, which exist in every province, to coordinate the many complex issues associated with the control and management of invasive alien species?

The invasive alien species strategy for Canada, developed by Environment Canada and released in 2005, indicates a four-step approach to the management of invasive alien species, namely: prevention, early detection, rapid response, and finally, management of established and spreading invaders, including containment, eradication, and control.

The objective of this standing committee is to study the fourth point—the management of established and spreading invaders—for nine very specific weed and insect invasive species. Clearly, this is the most expensive option of the four. Many studies clearly indicate the millions, if not billions, of dollars that have been spent by various levels of government on both sides of the border in attempts to manage already-established invasive alien species. The success of these management programs varies significantly from species to species.

CNLA concurs with the Environment Canada strategy that prevention should always be goal number one. To that end, our association, in particular the wholesale nursery growing sector, continues to work very closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Beginning in 2004, when sudden oak death—another invasive pest classified by both CFIA and the USDA as a quarantine pest—was first detected on the west coast of North America, quick, proactive measures were undertaken by the industry. A best management practices program was put into place for B.C. nursery growers. Although this was an industry initiative, there was close collaboration with CFIA throughout. Recognizing that increased economic activity with other parts of the world, especially Asia, could well lead to other similar situations, CNLA members took the initiative to develop a phytosanitary systems-based approach to manage the possible spread of further pests, now known as the clean plants program.

The difficulty with prevention is the inability to state conclusively the actual benefit. Did the millions of dollars spent on any particular initiative save our government thousands of dollars, millions of dollars, or even billions of dollars in eventual management and cleanup costs? We can only speculate.

The CNLA represents companies in the entire value chain of the ornamental horticulture industry. The chain begins at the producer level and reaches the ultimate consumers, including home owners, developers, municipalities, and other government agencies, through our retail garden centre and landscape maintenance contract members. As such, we have the ability to reach many thousands of Canadians, who all must be engaged in any proposed management program. For instance, many garden centre members across Canada are already engaged in “Grow Me Instead” initiatives.

Landscape contractors have the ability to be similarly engaged in educating consumers. Our provincial associations are keen to work with provincial agencies and provincial invasive plant councils or similar bodies.

In closing, we wish to thank this committee for the opportunity to participate in this process, and we wish to express our commitment, as an industry, to developing and maintaining a sustainable and profitable industry while doing our utmost to mitigate the ongoing threat of invasive species.

I welcome any specific questions and comments on the weeds and insects identified within that list, and I thank you again for the opportunity to be with you today.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vanstone.

Next we have Gail Wallin, with the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia. Gail, you have up to ten minutes.

Ms. Gail Wallin (Executive Director, Invasive Species Council of B.C.): Merci. Thank you for the time here today.

I serve as executive director for one of the oldest councils in Canada. Terrestrial invasive plants have a major impact on the environment and economy. That's been documented worldwide. So a

proactive approach on the part of the Government of Canada is critical.

When we take a look at the impact of invasive plants or species to Canada, one of the things our council recognizes is that plants are not the problem; it's the people who spread plants or invasives. It's a real issue. When we take a look at how plants or species are spread, we often talk about the pathways or vectors by which they're spread. Many of the species were in the horticulture trade at one point. Gardeners planted those at one time. So rather than focusing on the species, we'll be talking about the pathways and how to close the borders so that no further plants come in.

In Canada over 60% of all invasives are intentionally spread. We intentionally plant them or put them in our aquariums, or whatever. So if we're taking a look at how to reduce that, we know we need to look at the pathways.

We looked at feedback on your listing of nine, and we thought about where the focus could or should be. We're responding to your recommendations and your terms of reference. We strongly encourage the federal government to be active as a key partner and lead agency in working on federal lands across the country, whether it's dealing with reserve lands, lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Defence, or transportation corridors. These plants will spread from those federal lands outwards. So it's critical to be tight on both the borders coming into the country and along the lands managed by the federal government.

You've proposed eight or nine species to focus on. Being from the west coast, our species of concern are totally different from those in the Maritimes. We know there's some politics across the country, such as we see with giant hogweed, which has been in the press a lot, east to west coast. And through the work of our council and what others have done, we know it's much more highly established in Canada than what we thought it was three years ago.

When we look across Canada, we know that the priorities in the Maritimes will be different from the priorities in B.C., and that priorities don't exist right now in Alberta, the territories, or Yukon. Prioritizing species on a national basis requires linking into the priorities in the different regions, because they vary from one area to the next. From our council's perspective, it's difficult to set priorities on species that are already in the country, when the geography varies so greatly from place to place.

Our suggestion is that the focus on the species, which builds on the invasive alien species strategy, should be on prevention, early detection, and rapid response. The priorities need to be set locally and regionally for species once they've arrived. But closing the borders and working on how to prevent the entry of alien species is critical. The focus on prevention will certainly make a difference. Once they're in the country, if we find them and respond really quickly, we'll save the environment and save our dollars.

One of the ways to do that is to identify the most critical species that aren't in Canada, and to learn how we can stop them from becoming established. For example, there are different ways of having citizen science. Different departments could identify plants or species when they first arrive and then respond quickly. All the different federal agencies could have a role in this.

• (1115)

One of the visuals you have here is something that has been called for on a national basis, called a spotters network. That's having people from B.C. to Newfoundland to the Yukon all engaging citizens who are out there on the land base to look for and report on invasive species when they first arrive. If we could all have many more citizens and many more groups all working together, we'd have a much better chance of identifying what's on the landscape.

I spoke to this a little already, but the percentage of federal lands varies a little province by province. But those are often seen as seed beds or source points for the spread of invasive species to the surrounding land. So it's critical, when species don't respect administrative boundaries, that the lands managed by the federal government, including reserve lands—and we know there's debate about whose lands those really are—be areas that are targeted for management because they already will have invasive species on them. Sometimes they have species at risk on them and the invasive species are having an impact on the species at risk, but the only land agencies that have responsibility for that land are with the federal government. So we encourage that.

It's been really interesting that there is a whole range of federal agencies involved in invasive species, and invasive species cross a number of economic, environmental, and social factors. Environment Canada had a coordinating role in the past, and the need to have a stronger, more coordinated role, led by Environment Canada is something that our council calls for. One of the first points in your terms of reference was the roles of Environment Canada and Parks Canada. From our council's perspective, we see that coordinating role within Canada as being critical as a first part.

Another part we think is critical is, if Environment Canada is the lead for coordination and there's an interdepartmental or whatever process in place to have federal agencies working together on invasive species, there's a whole range of other partners across the country. It can't be done by any single agency. It needs to involve, across the country, both the provinces and the territories because they're going to be the ones that have the most specific knowledge in those areas about the data for that.

There are also now, either established or in the process of being established, invasive species councils—I think there are two plant councils at this point—all across the country. The only place where that might not exist is in Nunavut, and that conversation is still under way. The invasive species councils across Canada are generally inclusive of all the governments. They're another player that can really assist with getting that citizen science and information out.

Wrapping up, we think that the listings of plants and insects are important to Canada. They're more important in one area than the next, but they aren't focusing on the key role of prevention and early response. Most of them are well established. The giant hogweed, from the plant side, has been probably the most politically sensitive

one across the country in the last three years. There have been a couple of CBC radio national programs about it. I don't know how many people we've dealt with, parents who had kids in the hospital because of giant hogweed. It is a highly political one, although it might not be the right ecological one that's of the most significant impact to Canada.

It's a balance of trying to manage politics and environmental needs. From our council's perspective, determining how to manage things within the country needs to be done in collaboration with the land managers and provincial and territorial governments. But in order to have a coordinated approach, closing the borders federally or resolving and managing them on federal lands is key. We all know that even though we may all have administrative boundaries that separate B.C. from Alberta or whatever, invasive species have not been effective at respecting those administrative boundaries. As a result, from our council's perspective we're calling continually for the need for improved collaboration. We totally believe that working together is fundamental to making a difference. Our council is in the process, as of last week, of moving from a plant council to a species council for one particular factor. The particular factor is prevention.

Whether people coming up from the States with their boats are bringing zebra mussels or bringing spartina or milfoil into Canada, it matters not. What we're looking for is people coming into Canada with clean boats free of invasive species. When we go to target prevention and checks at the border, which we're working on both with federal and provincial agencies, the focus is going to be on changing the behaviour and working together, whether it's plants or species. As a result, over the next week our council will join the family across the country on a species council.

• (1120)

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Next we'll hear from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Then the Ontario Invasive Plant Council will be available for questions.

Mr. Terry Quinney, you have up to ten minutes.

Dr. Terry Quinney (Provincial Manager, Fish and Wildlife Services, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I am Terry Quinney, provincial manager of fish and wildlife services for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. With me is Rachel Gagnon. Rachel is the program coordinator for the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, which is hosted by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

Firstly, thank you for inviting us to speak on this important topic of Canada's efforts toward controlling harmful invasive terrestrial species. I am making this presentation on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' invading species awareness program partnership, established in 1992, and the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, which I already referred to as being hosted by the OFAH. We would invite you to please visit the websites, invadingspecies.ca and ontarioinvasiveplants.ca, for further valuable information.

Our environment and ecosystems supply multiple important benefits for the quality of life and economic well-being of Canadians. For example, about three million Canadians go fishing every year, and federal government statistics show that recreational fishing is worth over \$7 billion annually in Canada. An additional one million residents go hunting, contributing over \$3 billion to our economy every year. That's over \$10 billion in economic benefits every year resulting from recreational fishing and hunting alone. These billions of dollars, by the way, are particularly important to rural and northern Canadian communities.

An important role for governments—local, provincial, territorial, and federal—is to ensure that the supply of benefits I have referred to is optimized, not compromised and decreased.

The introduction and spread of harmful invasive alien species to Canada affects our environment, economy, and society. This threat is increasing at an alarming rate as current invaders spread, requiring management and control with limited resources. New invaders continue to arrive as a result of insufficient prevention and detection measures. You've already heard from the previous presentation that the economic cost of just 16 non-indigenous species is estimated to be between \$13 billion and \$34 billion annually to the Canadian economy.

The Government of Canada has been working towards a collaborative response to invasive species by developing various strategies, frameworks, recommendations, and action plans, such as an invasive alien species strategy for Canada, authored by Environment Canada in 2004. That has already been referred to this morning.

In addition, there is an action plan for invasive alien terrestrial plants and plant pests, authored by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in 2008; "Planning for a Sustainable Future: A Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada", authored by Environment Canada, in 2010; and in 2011, an invasive plant framework, authored by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

These are just a sample of the strategic documents, frameworks, and action plans that the federal government has been formulating over recent years.

Through the development of these key documents, it is apparent that the Government of Canada has described and understands the steps needed to ensure an effective approach to managing invasive species. These include prevention, early detection, rapid response, and management of established and spreading invaders, which are major themes that you've heard each of the presenters mention this morning.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has long recognized the threat of invasive species. As a result, it has delivered the invading species awareness program in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for nearly 20 years. This program seeks to communicate the invasive species issue to the public directly to engage their support in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species in Ontario.

● (1125)

The OFAH also supported the development of, and is currently hosting, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, which was formed in 2007. The Ontario Invasive Plant Council is a coalition, in fact, of government, non-government, first nations, and academic institutions that are working together to respond to the growing threat of harmful invasive alien plants in the province of Ontario.

Both the invasive species awareness program and the Ontario Invasive Plant Council ensure that the goals and approaches of each program meet the objectives outlined in the Canadian national strategy and action plan I referred to earlier in the presentation.

Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species is listed as one of the objectives of an invasive alien species strategy for Canada. The OFAH and OIPC are actively engaged in prevention initiatives through public education and awareness. Many of our programs target the pathways of introduction of these invasives.

The strategy I just referred to has identified approximately nine examples of threats, some of which are addressed by the two programs we host, which I've mentioned. We're currently working on expanding our education and awareness approach for terrestrial invasives. Instead of being species-specific, the approach would deal with pathways, such as horticulture. By targeting pathways, as you've heard, we can prevent the introduction and/or spread of multiple invaders that share a common pathway of invasion. This approach can be more cost-effective than prioritizing efforts based on specific individual species.

An invasive alien species strategy for Canada also lists early detection and a rapid response as objectives. Both ISAP and OIPC are actively engaged in early detection and monitoring initiatives. As a protocol for coordination and collaboration, we'd like to see all organizations share a common knowledge base through a nationally shared database to which information and sightings of invasive plants are contributed. This would enable all organizations and affiliated skilled individuals to contribute information and to identify the specific geographic locations of those invasive plants. The OFAH and OIPC have been developing and promoting an invasives tracking system, a web-based reporting tool. Both the public and professionals could use it to report invasive species and to obtain information.

The invasive species awareness program is currently receiving funding from Environment Canada's invasive alien species partnership program to establish an early-detection network. Working in partnership with organizations such as the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, this project seeks to create a network of public and industry volunteers who will conduct on-the-ground, community-level monitoring and surveillance of invasive species through key pathways.

Invasive species awareness program staff answer the invading species hotline, a province-wide, toll-free phone number for receiving reports of invading species in Ontario directly from the public. The Ontario Invasive Plant Council is also working in partnership with the National Invasive Species Council toward developing a national spotters network. Both the OFAH-hosted program of OIPC and the invasive species awareness program have a developing network of weed inspectors and other volunteers who help with these initiatives.

An active, effective network for monitoring, surveillance, and sharing of information to identify newly arrived priority species is also being developed.

●(1130)

The ultimate goal of these programs is the early detection of invaders in order to assist lead government agencies with the implementation of rapid response. Although early detection and rapid response are listed as key objectives in the national strategy, we suggest to you that there needs to be greater investment toward the development and implementation of rapid response plans.

The Chair: Mr. Quinney, unfortunately your time has expired. You're actually a little bit over, but we look forward to your answers.

At this time we'll be switching over to questions for the witnesses.

We'll begin our questioning with Mr. Sopuck. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Thank you very much.

I appreciate the presentations very much.

My first set of questions I'll direct to Dr. Quinney.

I'll just make an editorial comment here. I'm just delighted to see the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters presenting to our committee. I don't think there's enough expertise from the hunting and angling community presented to us as a committee.

Dr. Quinney, not only do I appreciate your presentation now, but also I would recommend that you and your colleagues in the hunting and angling community be part of our deliberations more often.

You were very careful when you talked about invasive species to talk about harmful invasive species. Does that imply that you make a distinction between harmful invasive species and harmless or beneficial invasive species?

Dr. Terry Quinney: No. Thank you for the question, though.

We would emphasize that we fully understand the context of limited resources available to governments, whether they be local, provincial, or federal, when faced with numerous competing but worthwhile funding programs. Clearly, governments are obliged to prioritize. Through our presentation and given the strong framework approach that the federal government, for example, has developed, we have, I hope, identified some areas that require additional investment by the federal government in order to maintain those multiple benefits from the environment to which I've referred.

●(1135)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: In terms of the actual invasive species themselves, I would think of alfalfa, for example. That's a non-native species brought here by human beings. Surely that wouldn't be considered a harmful invasive species.

Dr. Terry Quinney: I wouldn't consider it invasive. It is non-indigenous, but it's not harming people or society.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Again, I think these distinctions are really important, because we often tend to make blanket statements. I'm not saying you did, but overall there's this approach that a non-native species is automatically a bad thing to have on the landscape.

I appreciate that you're basically saying that ecological integrity is what's really important.

Dr. Terry Quinney: Yes, and again, I appreciate the question, because there are examples where, for whatever reason, an ecological niche may become open. It's quite appropriate to examine filling that ecological niche.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I think the introduction of Pacific salmon into the Great Lakes would fit that category.

Dr. Terry Quinney: It's absolutely been a win-win all around, environmentally and for society.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Dr. Quinney, should we also be looking at invading native species that have expanded their ranges due to human landscape modifications? I'm getting away from plants for a minute, but let's take a look at some of the mammals—the skunks, foxes, racoons, opossums, and so on—that are really expanding their range and have done great harm to the reptile and amphibian populations in southern Ontario, for example. They're native species, but they have expanded beyond what was their traditional range. Should we be controlling them?

Dr. Terry Quinney: Yes, and in fact Environment Canada needs to complete the action plan for invasive alien terrestrial animal species. The federal government has been providing a number of very good resource documents, leadership documents, but we're not done yet.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: When there is human management of landscapes, I think we have an obligation, as a species, to step in and “restore the ecological integrity”.

Ms. Wallin, I have just a couple of questions for you. Aren't invasive plant species more of a problem on disturbed landscapes, as opposed to native natural landscapes?

Ms. Gail Wallin: It's a general question. I would say there is a more rapid spread of invasive plants on disturbed landscapes. It's a big issue in British Columbia after the fire seasons. But it's not limited to disturbed landscapes. There are a number of species that can overtake healthy ecosystems if you have a really aggressive invasive plant.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Can you just give us a couple of examples of an invading species that has taken over an undisturbed natural ecosystem?

Ms. Gail Wallin: An undisturbed one.... The two examples I was thinking of were on a disturbed landscape, but from an agricultural side. From an agricultural side, a species like an ox-eye daisy, which is coast to coast, can overtake what is considered to be a healthy hayfield or a healthy grazing field and it can overtake that range land and it's no longer palatable to cattle. Another one is orange hawkweed, or the hawkweed family. Those are very aggressive and they don't need to have disturbed lands.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I live next to Riding Mountain National Park, so I have a unique kind of comparison between a natural landscape and an agricultural landscape. One observation is that on the agricultural landscape there are a lot more invading species and weeds than there are inside the national park. The contrast is quite stark.

One comment I'd make, Ms. Wallin, in terms of the agency that you recommend to be involved in this, is that I think Agriculture Canada might even have more of an impact than Environment Canada would, given the invasive plant issues on agricultural landscapes. And again, in prairie Canada there are huge blocks of land that are managed by Agriculture Canada, known as the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration community pastures.

Would you see a major role for Agriculture Canada in this?

Ms. Gail Wallin: There absolutely is a major role for Agriculture Canada and the provincial ministries of agriculture, but it absolutely isn't seen to be the overall coordinating role. Because traditionally weed acts in Canada have been some of our oldest regulations, province by province. Weeds have traditionally been seen to be an agriculture issue, but they're a huge issue to biodiversity and they're a huge issue for parks.

There are so many different agencies involved that it makes sense, when you're trying to look at it from an environmental management and biodiversity, healthy ecosystems standpoint, that Environment Canada is the group to play the lead. The other agencies have to be totally involved. But to have an agricultural business focus, it rules out the majority of British Columbia.

You asked for an example of another one going into ecosystems. We have Scotch broom, which is overtaking natural ecosystems and that does suppress a lot of forestry culture. So definitely agriculture is not seen to be the lead in the west.

• (1140)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I appreciate that.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Madame St-Denis, seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, NDP): I want to talk about public participation. My question is for both Ms. Wallin and Mr. Quinney.

Do you think that a partnership could be established between your federation and the federal government when it comes to fostering broad public awareness?

Ms. Wallin, you talked a lot about the need for prevention and for a proactive approach, but how does that awareness-raising make use of the public?

[*English*]

Ms. Gail Wallin: Thank you.

There absolutely is a role for the public. It has to involve the public. All the councils that are set up across the country are set up with diverse boards. They can't be just government.

In British Columbia, for example, we have federal, provincial, and we have aboriginals right on our board and we have a whole range of citizens' groups, stewardship groups, etc., on our board. They're all involved in our work. The need to have the public involved is heavily supported in British Columbia, as in other provinces, by the federal and provincial governments. So they have a key role. They're the ones who can do a lot more. Youth are involved, and there is a need to be able to work with youth to be able to influence parents. We know what happens. Those are key answers.

I hope I'm answering your question.

Dr. Terry Quinney: Just before I turn the microphone over to Ms. Gagnon, Madam, the answer is yes.

Furthermore, we're encouraged that departments of the federal government, including Environment Canada but also other agencies, such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, are already participating in partnerships with organizations like the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters that directly enlist the help of the public with reference to assisting these collective efforts to control invasive species.

Ms. Rachel Gagnon (Coordinator, Ontario Invasive Plant Council): I would just add to that. We do definitely target volunteers almost all the time with our campaigns, such as cottagers, horticulture groups. And these seem to be the most important people we talk to. So they are the ones who are helping us get the message across and finding the species that we aren't out to see.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Mr. Quinney, your federation is made up of individual members, as well as of fishing and hunting clubs. Is raising awareness about the negative effects of invasive species more or less difficult, depending on the client base?

[*English*]

Dr. Terry Quinney: Excellent question.

With our experience through the programs that we've been offering now for, in one case, almost 20 years, what would pleasantly surprise you, as it has us, is the receptivity of the public, including anglers and hunters, to actually respond to these threats in a positive manner. So, for example, if they're made aware that accidentally they may be contributing to the problem, they're among the first that in fact want to change their behaviours, which you've heard is so important here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Could you describe the impact of invasive species on trapping activities in Canada?

[English]

Dr. Terry Quinney: Thank you very much.

Obviously trapping depends on healthy wildlife—fur-bearing mammals, in this case. So anything that can detrimentally affect not only the animals themselves, not only those fur-bearers, such as beaver or pine marten, but anything that detrimentally affects their habitat, the habitat those animals depend on, is going to negatively impact the animals and therefore negatively impact a trapper's ability to successfully harvest the animals and harvest that quota of animals. Trapping remains a very valuable heritage as well as economic activity in this country, and alien invasive species are definitely negatively impacting the trapping industry in specific locations.

Thank you.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: My question is for all three witnesses.

You talked a lot about what the federal government should do. What do you think about the government's measures to eradicate invasive species in Canada?

Ms. Wallin.

[English]

Ms. Gail Wallin: Thank you.

I think more can be done. There's work in the last couple of years that has started around stronger regulations, particularly for the borders and importing and exporting. There's an opportunity to do much more in that area. So in order to keep them out of Canada, I think that's a really key role for the federal government, and taking a look at the importing and exporting—well, shipping them out—watching the importing of many different products, of how they come into our country.

So there's more to be done: stronger regulation, clearer regulation, and clearer monitoring.

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I would say that we would appreciate a network of some sort to communicate nationally, so problems in different regions are communicated properly through some forum. We appreciate what is being done.

In horticulture we work a lot with CFIA. Maybe a lot of that has to do with insect species rather than weeds, but I think there is a role that can be developed more and more. I guess your question was not so much what can be done, but what do you think of what is being done? We would want to express our thanks for any involvement that is happening now.

Dr. Terry Quinney: I would just add this. Hopefully we've demonstrated that there are a lot of positive initiatives occurring right across the country. Partnerships, of course, are one of those successful examples. If there's something missing, in our opinion, at this time, it would be the investment by, for example, the federal government to fully implement those plans that are providing strategic direction and guidance. Further investment in that regard of implementation by the federal government would be most helpful.

The Chair: Thank you so much. Time has expired.

Next, Mr. Woodworth for seven minutes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Thank you very much.

My thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

I just want to say at the outset that seven minutes, or even the hour or two that we have, is barely enough to scratch the surface, and I'm painfully conscious of that.

I'd like to get into the question of prevention a little bit, and the prevention of unintentional introduction of species. I'll just pick one that happened to catch my eye that may have some relevance to British Columbia, and it's white pine blister rust. I'll look directly at Ms. Wallin about that. You're shaking your head, so may I assume you're familiar with it, or not?

Ms. Gail Wallin: I'm familiar with it. I'm not sure I'll have the depth of knowledge you want, but go for it.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: We were told that it contributes to decimating stands of white bark pine, which are a key species of alpine forest ecosystems. I can't imagine how white pine blister rust would have been introduced to our country if it wasn't native. I'm assuming it must have been unintentional.

What I'd like to understand, if you can help me, is how did something like that happen, and what might we have done to prevent it from happening?

Ms. Gail Wallin: First of all, I don't know exactly how it was introduced. I know we've done a lot of research, and have brought about a stronger white pine that can be resistant to blister rust. I can't tell you exactly how it was introduced. I can say that there are a number of tree diseases or pests that are brought in unintentionally, often with imports of trees or pallets.

The pallet industry is a major way that nematodes or fungi can come in. So you're seeing on the forest industry side—and I just know that because I have another life in the forestry world—there are way more protocols about what's required from the phytosanitary rules about how to bring in products that have wood wrappings or wood pallets in order to avoid that. So that's the unintentional side of invasive species, but the majority do come in intentionally, not unintentionally.

• (1150)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: On that note, I'd like to switch to Mr. Vanstone, because your industry is engaged in the intentional importation of plants, among other things, I suppose. You've mentioned that you deal somewhat with insects.

Can you tell me if you're familiar with the procedures that one of your industry members would have to undertake if they wanted to intentionally introduce a new plant species to Canada? Do you know how that goes, and can you describe it for me?

Mr. Owen Vanstone: Yes. Our company is not actively involved with it, so I haven't done a lot, but I've worked in the process. Maybe just before I jump into that, could I comment briefly on your previous question about how it might be done?

Rusts in particular are carried on alternate hosts to the primary target. The way I'm familiar with it is not with the pine problem, but with wheat stem rust that is carried through *Berberis thunbergii*, an ornamental shrub that we grow. Traditionally, it's able to host that rust. The symptoms are not seen in that alternate host, but it can be brought into the landscape and it is able to be transmitted to a crop or a forest.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: If I can just pursue that then, because it's really the same question, if somebody wants to bring in a plant of that nature, what processes are currently in place to ensure that it's not infected with such a disease or a phylo...whatever organism?

Mr. Owen Vanstone: It doesn't happen with *Berberis*—that example. Once it is known that a species can be an alternate host, it does not come in. This one in particular has been a bit of a project of mine, because there are new genetics within that species that are proven to not be a host. But CFIA says no, nothing more, we don't want risk like that.

And so it is with any new species: they undergo a pest risk analysis and—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: By CFIA?

Mr. Owen Vanstone: That's right. Some of that is undertaken as well by the USDA. There is collaboration there, so within North America there's a little bit more freedom.

Certainly for something from off continent, we need to have extensive work done on it, and often that just does not happen, because it's quite onerous. It is a long process.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I assume that you would be required to obtain an import permit of some sort in order to bring in an alien plant species, and that CFIA would determine whether or not that permit is to be issued. Is that generally correct?

Mr. Owen Vanstone: Often you can't even apply for it if it's not on their list. We need to apply for import permits on a wide range of plants that have had some environmental impact in some local context, and they won't issue them in certain parts of the country.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Ms. Wallin, does your agency have any collaboration with CFIA in relation to these kinds of matters?

Ms. Gail Wallin: Our agency has no power or authority, but we do bring parties together. CFIA is on our board of directors. On things like imports, we're working with the horticulture industry on the right way to reduce the introduction of both plant and pest invasives.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Does your agency have any specific recommendations regarding the kinds of regulations you mentioned a few minutes ago for controlling the import and export of invasive alien species?

Ms. Gail Wallin: We're starting the collaboration input on that, but the big issues that come up are imports of seeds, often unintentional seeds because they're part of a filler product, and the other one is importing invasive plants that haven't yet been listed on a weed act or something. That is one we're working on with the horticulture industry in the province.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Listing of invasive alien species would be a plus, in your opinion.

Ms. Gail Wallin: It would be, but it has to be regionally specific. The plants that are listed for B.C. are totally different from the plants of threat to Alberta.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: It sounded from what Mr. Vanstone said that CFIA already has some kind of a list. Are you aware of it?

• (1155)

Ms. Gail Wallin: I'm aware of it, but it is not the kind of import list that meets the needs across Canada. It's too generic. They're working through it, but it varies so much for both seeds and plants. The horticulture industry in British Columbia is obviously shipping to Ontario and Newfoundland and vice versa. That information hasn't yet been established in a good working relationship. Not all companies, not all growers, traders, etc., understand what's listed as invasive in B.C. So there's nothing yet to protect B.C. from having accidental shipping of something that's invasive to our province.

The Chair: Time has expired. Thank you so much.

Ms. Duncan, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of you. We very much appreciate your expertise.

Like you, I'm interested in prevention. I'm surprised that one of the issues that has not come up today is climate change. The World Bank-funded global invasive species program reports that in a warmer world, more extreme weather and higher levels of carbon dioxide will give some species an edge, devastating ecosystems at sea and on land. We know that species that have already invaded North America may find new suitable habitats to invade, thereby expanding their range. Moreover, there may be a better match between suitable habitats in Canada and the source homelands. So you may get new exotic species invading and atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide may favour certain species separate from the warming.

Ms. Wallin, could you discuss the potential economic impacts of climate change on invasive species, recognizing of course that you don't know what will invade?

Ms. Gail Wallin: I can't give you the answers on the economic impacts of climate change. Where our council and province have been at is that the changing climate is allowing species.... Even on the horticulture side, they're regrouping the grow zones in the eastern states. The same thing is going to happen in natural ecosystems and to invasives. So the ability of invasives to spread more rapidly....

I come from an interior town. We get minus 30 in the winter. English ivy and giant hogweed don't grow there. But 20 years from now there will be a huge ability for it to grow there. So prevention becomes even more important, because what was invasive in the south of the province can now easily.... Predicting where climate warming could go, we could be expanding the ranges for the aggressive invasive plants to be aggressive in my area.

With cold winters, we rule out a lot of the species. You see that when we're working with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories: they've got 12 or 15 invasive species on their list. That's all they've got because their winters kill off their plants. With climate change, with warming climates, they're going to have the potential for more invasive species having an environmental impact, which then will trigger an economic impact back to the habitat issues for wildlife that you mentioned.

I'd like to add one other comment. The other work on invasive plant impacts is around carbon sequestration, which is a big issue in Canada and B.C. The research is taking a look at the fact that healthy ecosystems, healthy grasslands, sequester more carbon than areas where knapweed or whatever is rapidly growing. That information is also going to be really important as they finalize that. The States are also doing research around the same thing. Those ticket items from the impact of climate change and even carbon sequestration appear to be aggravated by invasive plants, which already have advantages. They're aggressive. they spread rapidly, and people move them. You add those factors, and they'll become a more rather than less serious issue.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you, Ms. Wallin.

You looked after my second question.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Oh, sorry.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: No, it's good.

Do you know if integration of climate change impacts and adaptation was considered in the review of the national invasive alien species strategy, which I believe is up for review in 2009? That has been one of their recommendations.

Ms. Gail Wallin: I know from meeting with Environment Canada that is one of the factors. You're dealing with ecosystem resilience, actually. If you're dealing with ecosystem resilience, whether it's resilient at this zone for 2011 or that zone in 2020, the question still is the resiliency ability to have a broad diversity. That is a concept for which we can't plan exactly for climate change impact, but if resilient ecosystems were considered and dealt with in the development of the strategy, then we're setting up a healthier ecosystem for the future.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay.

Has climate change been incorporated into most invasive species risk assessment and risk management work being conducted within the federal government? Should it be?

• (1200)

Ms. Gail Wallin: I can't say exactly what CFIA has included in their risk assessments. I don't know that. I think it is a factor when they look worldwide because risk assessments do look at worldwide trends. I would assume that this has come up, but it's not a factual answer.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Would you like to see climate change in risk assessment and risk management?

Ms. Gail Wallin: I'm going to say that risk assessment is a science-based process.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Absolutely.

Ms. Gail Wallin: So they're going to have to use.... I come from the interior of B.C., and there is lots of debate around climate change, so it's going to have to look to the science-based impacts of climate change. When they take a look worldwide at risk assessments for invasive plants, they're looking at what has been its potential to infiltrate different kinds of ecosystems. Innately, it will pick it up. I don't know how they'll capture it scientifically, but it needs to capture the scientific potential range.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Ms. Wallin, if you could give your top three recommendations to this committee—this is your chance to give your wish list—to take steps to halt the spread of non-invasive species, what are they? Be as specific as you can be.

Ms. Gail Wallin: One is to close the borders to the intentional importation of invasive species. Two is to support collaborative efforts with provinces and councils for early detection.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: And how can we support those efforts?

Ms. Gail Wallin: Sharing common information so that we can all report on where the newest giant hogweed and yellow star thistle are; where we can all work and share that information across Canada both by database and by people watching for it.

The third way is to have the federal government take a proactive approach to stop the spread from their lands of whatever the species is. Those are my three top items on the wish list.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

I guess I'm done.

The Chair: Monsieur Choquette, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for their presentations, which are very informative. That's always very appreciated.

Mr. Vanstone, you said that our study on invasive terrestrial species surprised you somewhat, and that you didn't have enough time to prepare yourself or your testimony properly. You said that you were wondering about the committee's role and the study's specific objectives.

Do you think that the committee should make public the information on its work concerning invasive species and better inform Canadians about the process, the role and the objective of this study?

[*English*]

Mr. Owen Vanstone: That's a very good question.

I think that might be something beneficial. Maybe because it was short notice, we haven't followed the study as closely as we ought to before we came here. We really didn't know how to present and to be the very best prepared.

Should it go public? I don't know. You might need to guard some of the details for the integrity of the committee. That would be something I'd have to think about. If it was public it might give a little bit more room for contribution by different bodies so the approach can be holistic rather than just what I might say today. I don't mean to be critical of the way the committee is handled or is administered. It was just a comment, maybe, to take the heat off me if I didn't sound very well prepared.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: That was very relevant. We need your comments in order to better prepare for our discussion with you, so that we can ask you relevant questions. Your ability to answer properly is crucial.

We talked about how important fighting invasive species is, but also about the fact that we must prepare for the resulting economic and environmental impact. However, we need to keep in mind that prevention remains the best weapon in the struggle against invasive species.

Of course, fighting climate change remains one of the ways to protect ourselves from invasive species. Any climate changes are also experienced by species and the environment.

Mr. Vanstone, which of the government's efforts against invasive species have been successful? Do you know what the federal government is currently doing?

I know you said that you would like a national network to be set up. Could you expand on that idea?

•(1205)

[English]

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I think some of that might have been addressed as priority number two by Ms. Wallin.

It's establishing some way for provincial councils, invasive species councils, and planning councils to have some sort of national forum so they can share their experiences and effective strategies from different regions, recognizing all the while that things are so different across the country. It's very big. We can't have a national agency that has a blanket recommendation for a certain species; that's not going to work.

Some sort of facilitating between the provinces would be good. Perhaps some funding for some of these agencies, the provincial bodies, would help them do their jobs better. Funding for public education might make it more mainstream, so not just people who are in the know can look for things. And the media could be involved in the process. We need to enable these regional experts to do their jobs.

Sometimes these bodies are not funded well enough to do their jobs as they would like to.

The Chair: Thank you so much. Your time is up.

Mr. Toet, you have five minutes.

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Thank you.

Mr. Vanstone, I want to ask you a quick question regarding ornamental horticulture. You talked briefly about the effect of

invasive species on the industry. Can you elaborate a little on it? I think the horticultural industry is sometimes seen as part of the problem. You obviously see invasive species as being part of the problem to your industry, so I'd like you to expand on that a little for us.

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I will not deny that our industry has been involved in the spread of species in the past. Some of that goes way back, and you can see by looking at me that I might not have been around to see all that happen.

In recent years, with the things I've been involved in, as I've watched them come in—particularly insect pests and diseases—they have not been spread by us. They have been introduced largely through the shipping industry in packing material from Asia, if we want to point fingers. We are the ones who deal with the fallout.

I have a couple of examples. We didn't bring in the Asian long-horn beetle that is known in this part of the country, yet it affects trees across the province and could go wider.

The worst one that I've seen in the last number of years is the emerald ash borer. Again, it was brought in by the shipping industry. It has a huge impact on tree growers nationwide. It's very close to home, because I see acres and acres of beautiful finished trees that are being cut down and shredded at the nursery because there's no market for them any more, if they haven't been killed already. That has a massive economic impact, and now growers are looking for alternatives. What are they supposed to grow?

I don't know if I need to defend myself and our industry. I think we are being very proactive now in preventing that.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: You were talking about the effect invasive species have had on your industry. Are you saying they have had an effect strictly on your image, or has there been a negative effect on some of the native plants you have? You touched a little on the ash being decimated. Is that what you're talking about in that regard, or is it also in completed projects that you're really seeing the effect of some of these things?

•(1210)

Mr. Owen Vanstone: Public image is really closely tied to the economic success of our industry. We sell plants to the public, and if they are critical of a certain kind of plant.... To pick on ash again, nobody is planting them. Municipalities have stopped completely. The diversity in the landscape is going down and down because people hear things and they see things and they don't want it any more.

The image is being hurt, but there are also production challenges. We can't grow certain plants or things that are being targeted as invasive plants; again, we have to cut it out of our production. Not that I should complain about that, because if it's invasive we shouldn't be growing it, but it is a challenge.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Thanks.

Ms. Wallin and also Dr. Quinney, both of you referenced the \$13.3 billion to \$34.5 billion cost factor associated with the 16 species. I am assuming you must be referring to the same study. Is that referring to 16 specific plants? If it is, I am wondering how you can explain the big discrepancy in the price. If we're talking about 16 plants, and we have a range that goes from \$13.3 billion to almost three times that amount, is there an explanation for that? Is it that difficult to pin down the costing?

Dr. Terry Quinney: When you have an opportunity to review a hard copy of my presentation, first of all you'll see the list of those 16 species specifically, and you'll see the authors of that study.

If I understand your question correctly, you may be having some difficulty believing the magnitude of the costs associated with the studies—

Mr. Lawrence Toet: I am not questioning the magnitude, it is just a very broad range. What are they basing these cost factors on to have such a broad range in the numbers? It's huge.

Dr. Terry Quinney: That's a very good question. I would—

The Chair: Unfortunately, time has expired.

Dr. Terry Quinney: The short answer is I would refer you to the authors of that paper. But to remind everybody, whether it's the low end or the high end, we are talking about very big numbers of cost to society.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next we have Ms. Liu, for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all our witnesses.

I know that you were invited at the last minute, but your being here is very appreciated.

Mr. Quinney, you talked about the impact invasive species have on our heritage and economy. Mr. Vanstone, you also talked about the impact of invasive species on our economy. That should clearly always be a key consideration when invasive species are involved. Ms. Wallin, you also talked about the impact of global warming on invasive species, especially in Yukon. I would like you to describe that situation in more detail.

Could you tell us about the economic and social impact invasive species could have on a region where global warming promotes their proliferation?

[*English*]

Ms. Gail Wallin: Okay, I'll do it at a fairly high level. There actually is the formation of a national invasive species council in Canada. That is under way, and that's basically being triggered because there are councils in the provinces and territories.

Generally the economic impacts, which Dr. Quinney just spoke to, are pretty large. If you take a look at the major areas being impacted, B.C. has one of the highest numbers of invasive species that have been identified, and Ontario has the highest. In those two areas, probably related to both trade and ports, it has a major impact. When

you combine it with agriculture, those areas are also heavily influencing traditional zones.

What happens as you move to colder climates is that you get fewer invasives, and as soon as you get fewer people you get fewer invasives. So it's not just the climate; it's fewer people transporting and moving them.

We have not looked at climate change as being the major trigger. We look at the movement of people as being the major trigger, as the majority of invasive species, 60%, 66%, are traditionally moved intentionally by people.

Climate change is a factor. It's not the biggest factor. It will change the zones of many species, including native species, so both will be changed. The bigger impact is more on the pathways for people. People travel more. You mentioned China. There are 13 species of knapweed in Canada now. There are 300-plus in China.

Who are we trading with? What do we have for closing our ports? We have very little.

Those are the kinds of issues we have. I could give you other examples, but you're on your five minutes.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: How is the situation in northern Canada different from that in southern Canada? How does the impact vary in terms of the economy or social matters?

[*English*]

Ms. Gail Wallin: Okay.

There are provincial connections. For example, there is a connection between B.C. and the Yukon, and there are connections that way between the government and territories. B.C. has helped set up the Yukon Invasive Species Council up there, so we're sharing information, and we're actually sharing data. We have cross-border initiatives, both between western Canada and the northern territories, but also between the States and Canada.

The Pacific Northwest is now united around invasive species, because most invasive species coming to B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan are coming up from the States. Again, there's way more cross-border collaboration than there was five years ago, federally, provincially, and council-wise.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: Mr. Quinney, you said that investments in research were necessary. In your opinion, what sectors should be prioritized as far as investments go?

[*English*]

Dr. Terry Quinney: First, may I emphasize that the top priority, in my opinion, with reference to investments from government, would be on the implementation side of the existing action plans that have been authored. They clearly identify the most effective means of successfully addressing this very large problem.

Yes, continued research is an important component, and we should be reminded that there are several federal government agencies that have a very strong research component to their mandate. Off the top of my head, the Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada with reference to forest pests comes to mind.

The Chair: I'm sorry, time has expired.

Ms. Ambler, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you to all of you for coming today, and for preparing such interesting and informative presentations for us.

My question is for Mr. Vanstone. Please know that you didn't actually mention this issue. I'm hoping, though, because this is of personal interest to me and to a couple of dozen of my constituents, that you know something about it, and can shed some light for me, as well as for this study. If not, it's okay, I have another entire line of questioning, so feel free to just tell me that it's not something you want to talk about.

The invasive species I'm talking about, which has a personal impact on ordinary, everyday Canadians in some urban areas, is termites. Does your industry deal with that on a fairly regular basis, or occasionally? No?

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I would have to confess to a great deal of ignorance about termites.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Okay. I wasn't trying to ask a trick question. I honestly just thought I'd try to get some information while you were here. Having made a significant investment into your industry in my 50-foot backyard a couple of years ago, I thought I'd ask you that. I am interested in how the government can help out with that sort of thing, so I'll move on.

I'm wondering specifically about the economic impact of invasive land species. Dr. Quinney, may I ask you, from your viewpoint in particular, what the economic impacts of harmful invasive species in Canada are?

• (1220)

Dr. Terry Quinney: If I may, I would actually use an illustration from the aquatic side, just to further illustrate.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Okay, sure.

Dr. Terry Quinney: As I've mentioned, on the terrestrial side, you will see, when you get a chance to read a hard copy of my presentation, some statistics specifically with reference to economic impacts on the terrestrial side. They are large.

The reason I wanted to use an aquatic example is that, to the federal government's credit, there are many federal government agencies now helping to address this overall problem. One of them is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Just one aquatic invader in the Great Lakes basin—sea lamprey—has cost the taxpayers of Canada and the United States over \$1 billion so far since 1960. It continues to cost the taxpayers of both countries \$25 million per year to successfully manage the sea lamprey at a level that still allows us to have some healthy fisheries throughout the Great Lakes.

That's just one illustration. I don't think I need to go further. Time permitting, for example, I would talk about the impacts of zebra mussels alone on the Great Lakes. For example, the scientists are referring to Lake Huron as almost a biological desert as a result of the destructive impacts of zebra mussels alone.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you for that. That is a great example. In fact, the beautiful riding of Mississauga South is on Lake Ontario. The Great Lakes cleanup initiative is something our government is very proud of and is a high priority.

Let me just switch to the hunting industry. In particular, do you depend on tourists in Ontario? If so, how do harmful invasive species affect the tourism hunting industry?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Dr. Terry Quinney: That's a great question. I referred to the Environment Canada mandate to finish off that action plan associated with terrestrial animals. Let me give you just one example: the harmful effects of mute swans on other native migratory birds. Migratory bird hunting across the country for recreational, subsistence, and heritage purposes still remains a huge activity. I mentioned more than one million hunters in the country. When it comes to wetlands and wetland-related bird species, mute swans are an invasive species that has to be better addressed than it has been to date.

The Chair: Dr. Quinney, I'm going to have to cut you off. I'm sorry. This is all good, but time has expired.

Madame St-Denis.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: My question is for Mr. Quinney, Ms. Gagnon and Mr. Vanstone.

Ms. Duncan asked Ms. Wallin earlier what she would like to see happen. As she did not answer that question, I will ask you the following.

Mr. Quinney, could you provide us with an overview of the legislative and regulatory amendments your federation proposed to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources? Mr. Vanstone, you may keep your answer more general.

[*English*]

Dr. Terry Quinney: Thank you for the question. My answer will be a general one rather than a specific one. By that I mean there absolutely is a need for the federal government of Canada to be taking better advantage of its regulatory and legislative abilities in this regard.

We know, for example, that on the aquatic side, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is actively working on regulations to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species to the country. We trust that Environment Canada, for example, given its mandates, and the likes of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are doing the same.

• (1225)

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I would say one of the challenges we see is adequate funding for the CFIA. I know that's not Environment Canada's responsibility. But they are facing tremendous cutbacks, as is everybody. When we see inspectors come out from there to try to prevent the sort of thing we're talking about—to look at imports and make sure everything's all right—we find them being cut back, so they can't get out on time. We find staff being cut, so they can't have expertise to actually know what they're looking for. That's a big challenge, which our industry is very aware of when it comes to preventing the spread and the import of problems.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Mr. Quinney, if we were to compare the impact of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on biodiversity, how would you describe the impact of aquatic invasive species on terrestrial fauna?

[English]

Dr. Terry Quinney: I will permit Ms. Gagnon to respond also, with your approval, but my short answer is that in both ecosystems, whether we're talking terrestrial or aquatic and whether on the marine side or the freshwater side, we have the documented proof over decades that these invasives can be extremely harmful to the ecosystems, and therefore benefits are being lost to people and our Canadian society as a result.

Ms. Rachel Gagnon: The only thing I would add is that the problem we face is that the invasive plants that are affecting biodiversity are falling through the gaps in legislation. When something like a dog-strangling vine or a giant hogweed affects an area, we are simply left to watch it grow because we're missing a little bit of legislation to help us get moving on these invasive plants.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: My last question is for all three witnesses. It's about pesticides.

Some observers, including CropLife, seem to think that pesticide control needlessly complicates the fight against invasive species.

What do you think about that?

[English]

The Chair: Thirty seconds.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Pesticides is an important tool in the toolbox, and we need it for specific plants in the right location.

Dr. Terry Quinney: Absolutely. As an example, again from the water side, without a specific pesticide we would not be effectively controlling the sea lamprey throughout the Great Lakes.

Mr. Owen Vanstone: A blanket ban of any sort of pesticide, herbicides in particular, would really be devastating from our perspective, not only economically but for the ecosystem.

The Chair: Three answers in 20 seconds—that was great.

Mr. Lunney, you have five minutes.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Thank you very much.

It's a fascinating discussion, and we all wish we had more time.

Being from British Columbia, the west coast, I'll start with a west coast and Vancouver Island perspective. Scotch broom is a big problem on the island. We have teams of volunteers going out, and I am sure engaging volunteers is an important part of your work, Gail.

We have public education campaigns, like Cut Broom in Bloom, because people need to know the best way to get rid of the suckers. Those things are hard to pull out once they get a root.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Correct.

Mr. James Lunney: Anyway, we have low-risk inmates from provincial corrections assisting along highways and ramps and so on, where these things are taking over wherever there's sunshine.

I want you to comment on your organization: what is your mandate, how do you coordinate these people? Do you have enough volunteers?

• (1230)

Ms. Gail Wallin: Two things. The broom-busting isn't linked to us at all. We have provided information around Scotch broom. Actually, the first thing we did was to try to get it stopped from being grown and planted with the horticultural industry in new areas of B.C. That was the first thing we got involved with. It took a while before the growers were onside with that. Now they are. There are many volunteers out there. There's much more that could be done. Scotch broom has the second-largest impact on Oregon's forestry trade. It has a big impact in B.C. also.

What we're doing mostly, as a council, is trying to stop the next Scotch broom from being involved. Some people would argue we've lost the battle in B.C., that it's hopeless to try to make it a zero-present species, but maybe it can be contained to certain areas and not be brought into new areas.

Mr. James Lunney: Okay, thanks. It's a big challenge.

Hogweed was recently declared a noxious weed or invasive species in our area on the island. These monsters really cause a lot of problems, and they are really taking off. It was also mentioned by Mr. Quinney in Ontario. Somebody mentioned that the extent of the spread is way beyond what we originally estimated.

Can you give us an idea, from both a B.C. and Ontario perspective, how extensive is the invasion and how we are doing in containing it?

Ms. Gail Wallin: It's broader in much of Canada, because people didn't even look for it before, and they got it confused with native species—there are some native, close-by species. There's a better knowledge of where it is in B.C.—it's been found in the Nelson area, for example, but it's been eradicated in that area because there were only a few plants, before it became what you have on the island.

There is more work to be done. The local municipalities are getting more involved because of the health risks to their citizens and kids. Some municipalities are just moving into that, because from their perspectives they didn't have a role—or even an interest—in invasive plants before, and they're becoming more active.

It's an example of a perfect.... I love the plant because it's one people can relate to: it hurts kids. It's a good poster plant.

Ms. Rachel Gagnon: The same thing is going on in Ontario. This plant had a lot of push from the public through media campaigns. What was great is that it did push the ministry to put it on their noxious weed list; it didn't necessarily fall right into their mandate, but they were able to do something about it.

Again, as Gail said, through these campaigns and the collaboration that we have through our council, we've been able to find out where, in fact, it is found. We had hotline phone calls to the invading species awareness programs hotline, which gave us an ability to put this in our database and find out where these plants are. We have maps now, and we had no idea where some of them were before. We didn't realize how big this was and how far it had spread.

Mr. James Lunney: Okay, thank you.

Now I want to talk a little bit about pathways. But with hogweed, was it a native species that just got a bigger niche? Where did this sucker come from?

Ms. Gail Wallin: It was an exotic garden plant first found in B.C., first planted in the West Vancouver and North Vancouver areas, and it was still being traded by garden clubs two years ago.

Mr. James Lunney: Really?

Ms. Gail Wallin: Absolutely.

Mr. James Lunney: Yikes.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Yes, so that's exactly a pathway.

Today it's not knowingly sold in garden stores. It's a 15-foot plant, and great big maple leaves this size. If you get the sap on your skin it can cause dermatitis, second-degree burns, hospital visits, and all that type of thing. It has a WorkSafe regulation in B.C. Until it was listed a month ago, you couldn't buy it—there were no places we found that sold it—but there was nothing stopping somebody from selling it. It was definitely trading in the garden clubs because it's so exotic-looking.

The Chair: Next we have Ms. Rempel. You have five minutes.

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): On both sides of the table here today, certain issues have come up with regard to how we can address invasive species: prevention, early detection, methods to raise public awareness, the use of volunteers, research and development, and those sorts of things. One thing you have all brought up is the issue of how to best coordinate these activities and collaborate among provinces.

Ms. Wallin, I think you said that this can't be done by a single agency, so collaboration is key.

My question, very briefly, would be to all of you, and it's twofold. First of all, do our federal government action plans—Mr. Quinney, you've spoken about those already—adequately address the issues related to collaboration between these areas? And secondly, when we're looking at implementation, are there some key things you could recommend with regard to implementation of collaborative efforts from our action strategy?

Dr. Terry Quinney: Yes.

Thank you for the question, because clarity of leadership remains a very important goal that has not yet been achieved. For example, we've referred to several appropriate federal government agencies quite rightly being involved, but we still collectively require clarity—with reference to leadership—on a number of those categories.

• (1235)

Ms. Gail Wallin: To follow up on that, there's no doubt that there needs to be coordination at all levels, including the federal government. Environment Canada is seen from our perspective to be the right lead. They have been extremely supportive of building collaboration at each of the provincial levels, through the council. There is a national council—Canada's national invasive species council—that's just in formation. It will be finalized by next fall, and it will bring together governments, industries, etc., at the national level.

So those are things Environment Canada has been totally supportive of—that all other agencies need to be involved at all levels.

Mr. Owen Vanstone: I would echo those thoughts, and just say that we need to be sure we're giving the right tools to the people who need to do the job. It's good to have the great umbrella put together, but maybe the role of CFIA in all of this—as they're out and about looking—needs some funding and to have involvement in the process, along with some of the regional councils and organizations.

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Ms. Wallin, you have spoken a few times today about Canada's national invasive species council. Could you give the committee some high-level information on that initiative, its genesis, and maybe some of the critical success factors that it's using to measure its activities?

Ms. Gail Wallin: It's formally being formed right now. The history is that there are 11 councils under development or in place across Canada, and there needs to be a government-to-non-government coordination nationally for information for an advisory side. The process that's been under way over the last year is to formalize what formerly was a working group into a national council that would include federal, provincial, aboriginals, the councils from across Canada, industry, academia as a networking source—so no power, no authority, but for the purpose of sharing and linking information.

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Did either of the other witnesses want to speak to your thoughts on the organization and perhaps how it ties in to some of our federal action strategies?

Ms. Rachel Gagnon: I think I agree with Gail here. As another invasive plant council, we are also with the national invasive species council and pushing collaboration across these boundaries. This is really important.

Ms. Michelle Rempel: What are some of the key outcomes the council hopes to achieve with regard to combatting this program?

Ms. Gail Wallin: There will be some further work in February around it, but some of the key areas are to better link and share information across jurisdictions, to avoid duplication and share data—whether Ontario's data can talk to B.C.'s data or how we can even share those has been a key area. And the other area being targeted is what we can do to work together on the horticulture side, across Canada.

The Chair: Thank you so much. Your time has expired.

Ms. Duncan, you have five minutes.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Quinney, I'm going to begin with you. The estimated damage for invasive species worldwide is thought to be about 5% of the global economy, and both of you picked up on earlier the \$13 billion to \$35 billion for 16 species. Dr. Quinney, has there ever been a comprehensive study that's looked at the invasive species in Canada and what the economic impacts have been, or is there just this one study?

Dr. Terry Quinney: My short answer is that I am not aware of a comprehensive Canadian national impact assessment.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay.

Ms. Gail Wallin: There are a number of provincial ones that have been done at the different scales, particularly in the prairies. B.C. has just done one also, but nothing that pulls it together. The references you have here are some of the strongest ones, Canada-wide.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you both for that.

Dr. Quinney, I'm going to start with the broader question, and then I'm going to move in.

What would be the impacts of climate change on wildlife in Ontario?

Dr. Terry Quinney: As a biologist, and evolutionary biologist for that matter, by training, I would remind folks that over geological time, over evolutionary time, over ecological time, climates change.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: That's not what I... I appreciate that. I come from that similar background. I'm talking very specifically: with projected climate change, what are the projected impacts on wildlife in Ontario?

• (1240)

Dr. Terry Quinney: My short answer is it depends on the species, and it depends on the communities of species we're talking about. For example, in our aquatic ecosystems, yes, temperatures are incrementally rising, just as they are in terrestrial ones. In the province of Ontario, over the last 80 years, about three degrees Celsius has been documented.

The point is, that will favour some species, whether they be animal or plant species; it will provide an advantage to them. But it will provide a disadvantage to other species.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Can you tell us what some of those species would be?

Dr. Terry Quinney: Sure. For example, on the aquatic side, it's quite common for anglers, for fishermen, to distinguish between cold-water species and warm-water species. Salmon and trout are examples of desired cold-water species to go fishing for, and on the warm-water side, bass species. You can see in a warmer-water regime that the bass species would be favoured over the cold-water trout or salmon species, as an example.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Have you looked at the economic impacts of climate change on invasive species?

Dr. Terry Quinney: My organization has not directly. But I can tell you this: we would be highly supportive of that type of

quantification. Why? Because we're convinced that when we make explicit the direct cost to society of invasives, plus the potential opportunities lost, it will be clear to people, clear to society, and clear to government the priority this area should have in our collective attention.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Where do you see the three major gaps? I'll ask you to be as specific as possible. We're essentially asking, what is your wish list? What would you like to see in this report?

Dr. Terry Quinney: I can give you two of three. Maybe Rachel can add the third.

I've referred to resourcing of implementation of these plans, number one.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: How much would you need?

Dr. Terry Quinney: Well, jeepers....

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: These are tough, I know.

Dr. Terry Quinney: I can't give you a dollar figure. I would just refer you to the people who are most familiar with those action plans. I am convinced that the budgets associated with the plans and the elements could be made available to you in short order.

The Chair: Unfortunately—

Dr. Terry Quinney: There needs to be a stronger role used by the federal government, given its regulatory and legislative abilities.

The Chair: Thank you. Time has expired.

Mr. Sopuck.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Ms. Wallin, are there any success stories about actually removing an invasive species once it was established?

Ms. Gail Wallin: Depending on what you have as "established", there are definitely examples of successes where the plant has entered British Columbia and has been removed.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Can you name one or two for me?

Ms. Gail Wallin: There is the yellow star thistle.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Okay, so there is hope.

Ms. Gail Wallin: There is debate about Scotch broom, but maybe that's not the right place to put all of our resources. There are habitats to protect, but you might need to protect the new Scotch broom from coming in.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: So early detection of an invasive species is critical. That's what you're saying.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Absolutely.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Dr. Quinney, regarding your research, given that the lampricides that were developed were species-specific and seem to have been used for decades without any negative effect, can we extend that kind of thinking to the possible development of GMO organisms that could attack invasive species? Would that be a fruitful research avenue?

Dr. Terry Quinney: Yes, it would be a legitimate area of research to explore.

In reference to your previous question on whether we have examples of success stories, we could cite the example of purple loosestrife. Biological control has been successful in solving, in many areas, the purple loosestrife problem in southern Ontario.

•(1245)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: In Manitoba, where I'm from, the purple loosestrife was a significant issue a few years ago. While I've seen plants in my travels from time to time, I'm quite pleased with how few I'm seeing now. So somebody is doing the right work there.

I appreciate the panellists' willingness to consider all the tools in the toolkit from possible GMO organisms to the use of pesticides. Native prairie restoration would not be possible without the use of some herbicides.

Ms. Wallin, can you talk about the B.C. group's judicious use of safe herbicides in the control of invasive species? Where are you doing that?

Ms. Gail Wallin: We don't do the operations. We work with partners who do it. It's being used. With giant hogweed, you need to get down to the roots of the plant to kill it or else you have people in safety suits.

There are certain plants that need to be treated with herbicides. If it's safe for people and safely registered through Health Canada, then it could be used as one of the tools. So it depends on the plant, it depends how it reproduces, and it depends where it's located.

Ms. Rachel Gagnon: I was just going to mention that we need to use a few different methods in order to get control of something like dog strangling vine or any plant as well. For us, we work with partners to develop best management practices for specific species.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I have just one last comment, not a question necessarily.

To go back to one of the earlier points that I made, we have to be very careful to distinguish between harmful invasives and some invasives that have settled in and are actually helping things out. Dr. Quinney is very familiar with the introduction of the wild turkey to Ontario, a new species. Again, where I come from, Lake Winnipeg, the smelt invaded from the States via a whole bunch of avenues and has now become a very important forage fish for the economically important walleye there.

So I think it's critical for us to focus on those species that actually are causing human and ecosystem damage.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sopuck.

Time has expired.

I want to thank each of the witnesses for being here. It was very enlightening and informative. We thank you so much for taking your valuable time to be with us today.

My understanding is Ms. Wallin needs to head to the airport and be done by quarter to, and it is quarter to.

Ms. Gail Wallin: Thank you very much. That's appreciated.

The Chair: Thank you, again.

Colleagues, we are now going to give the floor to Ms. Liu. She has a motion that she wanted to introduce.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: I want to thank all our witnesses. We will certainly consider their recommendations.

The notice of motion I would like to introduce to the committee is the following:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee hear Karen Dodds, Assistant Deputy Minister at Environment Canada, no later than Thursday, December 8, 2011, regarding the cuts to ozone layer monitoring initiatives.

This motion may be amended and discussed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

The motion's in order.

Do we have any speakers to the motion?

Ms. Rempel.

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Just to Ms. Liu's comment about being open to amendment, we'd like to move to amend the motion to read:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee hear Karen Dodds, Assistant Deputy Minister at Environment Canada, no later than on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, regarding the plans for ozone layer monitoring initiatives.

The Chair: We can deal with that as a friendly amendment, which doesn't exist, but if we have consensus we'll....

It's exactly the same motion as what we had before. We're changing the dates to Tuesday, December 13.

Ms. Michelle Rempel: And then the last part to read "...regarding the plans for ozone layer monitoring initiatives".

The Chair: So "regarding the plans", okay.

Do we have acceptance of that as a friendly amendment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: We do. Okay.

So that's the new motion.

Any more speakers on this motion? I saw Ms. Duncan's hand.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Am I allowed to remove something?

The Chair: You can speak to the motion as amended.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, thanks.

I'm just concerned about the words "ozone layer monitoring", because we have ozone near the ground and we have ozone higher up. The way this is worded, this would suggest only in the upper atmosphere. So I might suggest that we just do "ozone monitoring".

•(1250)

The Chair: Do we have consensus for that change?

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, done.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: On Tuesday and Thursday of next week we'll be dealing with our CEAA draft, then on December 13 we'll be hearing from Karen Dodds, and we'll see what happens on December 15.

Now, I've heard consideration that we may be done by then. It's up to committee if we want to meet after. People are on their way. My guess is people aren't going to want to meet if the House has risen, but it will be up to committee.

I'm sensing no. I think we have consensus here.

So at this point December 6, 8, and 13 are confirmed for a busy agenda.

I want to thank the analysts, who have been working very hard.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Is there any other business to deal with today? If not, I would accept a motion to adjourn.

An hon. member: I move to adjourn.

The Chair: So moved.

Done. The meeting is adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>