



Greg Long Recognized for Longstanding Efforts with Invasive Species Issues

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Governor's Council on Invasive Species honored Greg Long, long-time Wisconsin Green Industry Federation and Wisconsin Nursery Association member, on June 2 at the state capitol. Long was presented with an Invader Crusader award for his long-standing work and representation of the nursery and green industry with regard to invasive species. Co-owner of Needles and Leaves Nursery in New Berlin, Greg Long was nominated by various state and private industry representatives familiar with his involvement with the DNR and DATCP on various committees dealing with invasive plants.

June was Invasive Species Awareness Month, and as part of the activities that were occurring throughout the month, the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species presented the fourth annual Invader Crusader awards, honoring Wisconsin citizens and organizations for their significant contribution to prevent or eradicate invasive species that harm Wisconsin's lands and waters.

According to Kelly Kerns, Invasive Plants Specialist with the WDNR, "Greg was President of the Wisconsin Nursery Association when we began working with industry and others to start revising state policies in regards to invasive plants. In the six years that the Noxious Weed Technical Advisory Committee met, Greg was a consistent and very helpful participant. He was able to bring the industry perspective to the group and help to form a more realistic and pragmatic approach to the issue."

In 2001 Governor McCallum appointed Greg to the first Governor's Task Force on Invasive Species as the only representative of an industry. Again, Greg's experience allowed him to help mold the legislation that came out of that task force (23.22, WI

Statutes) and led to the creation of the Governor's Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species. When Governor Doyle appointed the council in 2004, Greg was the only representative from the task force that was appointed. He has served on the council for the last four years, chairing the Regulations Committee.

"His quiet leadership has been instrumental in getting broad review and support for the proposed invasive species classification rules," said Kerns. In order to best represent the nursery industry, Greg worked with the WNA to develop an invasives committee to help review policy proposals. WGIF and WNA Executive Director Brian Swingle added, "Without Greg's involvement, the nursery and landscape industries would not have been as involved with these issues over these many years. In all this time Greg has taken hundreds of hours away from his own business to volunteer his time on these efforts. Although he is a professional in every way, his time spent on this issue was completely voluntary. The industry owes Greg a great deal of thanks."

Greg has been the main liaison to the nursery and green industries for over ten years, according to Kerns. In that time he has helped move those industries from being concerned about the impacts of invasive plant policies on their business to now being key partners. Although he works primarily with the nursery industry he has

also been a key liaison with other green industries including landscape architects



Greg Long (center) is presented with an Invader Crusader award by Peter Murray, Chair of the Governor's Council on Invasive Species (left), and DNR Secretary Matt Frank (right) at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

and landscape contractors. There are thousands of companies and hundreds of thousands of individuals in those industries in Wisconsin.

Due to Greg's involvement, Wisconsin's nurseries and garden centers are becoming partners in the effort to curb the sale and distribution of many invasive plants. The long-term ecological results and economic stability to the industry will be significant.

Award recipients have also been announced in the news media and on the Invasive Species Awareness Month Web site: www.invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness. You can watch a video interview of Greg and the other award recipients on Wisconsin Eye www.wiseye.org video archive titled, "DNR Invasive Species Awards Event 6/2."