

Environmental Studies
Senior Seminar 2003

The class of 2003 was the first to graduate with Environmental Studies degrees from the University of Richmond. At that time, the Senior Seminar was a two-semester class, ENVR 391 and 392. It was taught by a pair of professors; Stephen P. Nash, Journalism, and Peter D. Smallwood, Biology. Students chose the problem of invasive species for their focus. With tremendous help from the staff of the Virginia chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and from Delegate James Dillard, the students proposed legislation to help Virginia deal with this environmental problem. Students wrote opinion pieces for local papers throughout Virginia in support of the bill, and spoke to several organizations (e.g., Virginia Master Gardeners Club, Virginia Master Naturalists). Students and faculty lobbied members of the Virginia General Assembly for this bill, eventually securing its passage. It was signed into law by Governor Mark Warner in April 2003.

After the bill was passed, the class spent the rest of the semester researching volunteer programs for early detection of invasive species. One of the more pernicious problems of invasive species is that once they have spread far enough, eradication becomes extremely difficult. Thus the best hope for controlling invasive species is to detect them as early as possible. Each student found a particular volunteer program, investigated its strengths and weaknesses, and wrote up their findings in a manual, meant as a resource for land managers in Virginia and other states. As of this writing, the manual is still available through the National Invasive Species Council ([here](#))

Included in this folder are:

Virginia Code Chapter 433 (the text of the act as signed into law by Governor Warner)

Virginia Invasive Species 2003 (a poster describing the work to pass the bill)

Early Detectives – Invasive Species 2003 (the manual describing volunteer programs for early detection of invasive species).

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