

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

16 May 2016

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Holly Estes

Adam Burnett

Also attending:

Celia Silinonte

Meeting Activity:

- The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The first item of business was a general update on membership.

- Celia Silinonte attended the meeting and expressed interest in joining.
 - She has lived in town since 1995. A Garden Club member, Celia comes across lots of invasives around Groton, including bittersweet on her own property.
 - She is on the Riverfest committee

The second item of business was presentation by and discussion with Art Prest, Alex Woodle, Bill Strickland, and Jim Luening on aquatic invasives.

- Art Prest presented to the committee:
 - Goals were to talk about possible synergies with the Invasive Species Committee, including possible efforts together in future.
 - Mr. Prest is also on the Finance Committee, Lakes, and other Lake-related organizations.
 - The lake communities have been dealing with aquatic invasives for a long time.
 - All 4 presenters have long histories with committees in Groton.
 - There are at least 3 organizations in town all working on the aquatic invasives problem.
 - The idea is to do more than just kill weeds; you must prevent regrowth.
 - There was a major effort >15yrs ago to kill weeds in Lost Lake; by about 2012, they were able to show there were no endangered plants in lake, put in a resource mgmt. plan, and got town/state to approve.
 - Before/after pictures of lost lake were displayed.
- Adam Burnett asked whether the treatment used Sonar?
- Art Prest indicated this was correct. They treated two kinds of milfoil. An additional major problem was fanwort, which Destroys native plants. They also found water chestnut. Mr. Prest also mentioned that:

- They were working to keep it from becoming a swamp.
- Now, as part of the Lost Lake advisory comm., they were researching what nutrients were present in Lost Lake, at what levels, and where did the nutrients come from --- how to control weeds long term. The effort is just getting off ground now. A consulting company is coming in now.
- The questions: Are the nutrients coming in from septic tanks, and/or from Martins Pond brook? (specifically, high phosphate levels)
- Knops pond is mostly spring fed; phosphate there is 15-20 ppb.
- In Lost Lake, phosphates go up as you get closer to Martins Pond.
- Adam Burnett asked: Where's the dam? How many feet elevation?
- Art Prest presented the history of the dam(s) and pond making:
 - 1850s the first pond formed for icemaking
 - 1897 the rest of the meadow was flooded to make Lost Lake.
- Adam Burnett indicated that the soil was probably very high in nutrient levels ... now those levels are recycled in perpetuity.
 - Art Prest mentioned that most nutrients seem to be coming through Martins Pond brook; fertilizer and nutrients seem to be coming in from there
- Alex Woodle mentioned that two studies since 1980s found that brooks contribute 67% of nutrients.
- Art Prest said that the Lost Lake/Route 40 wetlands function to remove a lot.
- Art Prest described a new study: they're going to put in a couple dozen seepage testing points around lake, along with sediment testing.
- Adam Burnett mentioned that many studies show day/night cycles in anoxia → when water becomes anoxic, phosphate dissolves.
- Olin Lathrop asked, what about inflow of new water?
- Brian Bettencourt asked: So if nutrients are coming in through the creeks, what can you do about that?
- Alex Woodle indicated that we can work on fertilizer practices at Lawrence Academy, and Gibbet Hill, etc.
 - Minimize the amount of phosphorus that's coming in
 - Lost Lake is shallower, and warmer
 - Can't treat with alum due to boating activity
 - No dredging
- Art Prest described how the whole program is going with ESS Consulting Firm --- applied for 604b grant.
 - Then, they will apply for a 319 grant.
- Alex Woodle – part of the study will look at stormwater runoff.
 - 319 funds to augment Tom Delaney's town funds perhaps.
- Brian Bettencourt mentioned that wetlands between point sources and your lake are necessary for nutrient removal.
- Alex Woodle agreed, and indicated that increased beaver activity is helping.
- Art Prest described how they are working on identifying upstream sources.
 - For example, Scarlet Farm is working on manure handling.

- Brian Bettencourt asked, what about residential fertilizing?
- Art Prest mentioned that resident education is part of long-range plan
 - He thought that last year, phosphates were banned in lawn fertilizer in MA?
- Brian Bettencourt asked: how can the Invasive committee help/get involved?
- Alex Woodle said: don't forget Baddacook Pond.
 - Jim Luening – Baddacook is 35 acres of Cabamba --- they are running a study now; this summer will try mechanical harvesting (surface and below).
 - Alex Woodle mentioned the state boat launch at Baddacook –many invasives enter there. Boats come out loaded with plant material ... law is not enforced.
- Brian Bettencourt again asked: how can we help?
- Alex Woodle indicated: we just want you to keep considering aquatic plants.
- Adam Burnett said: We've been talking a lot about Phragmites.
- Olin Lathrop asked: What would you LIKE us to do?
 - Art Prest said: Get acquainted with what we're doing. First study completed by fall.
 - Alex Woodle – The big study (319 grant) trying to initiate will examine stormwater remediation.
 - Art Prest said: Please look at our webpages --- we can cross-pollinate each other's public materials via web links.
 - Alex Woodle mentioned that water turnover seems pretty good, according to a study done in 1980s.
- Brian Bettencourt described proposed activities for the Invasive Species Committee, including crosspollination of activity. He agreed to stay in touch with Art Prest.
- Adam Burnett proposed to make an aquatic weeds brochure (focus on what folks can do to help).
 - Adam Burnett also felt that an important focus was on the public lands around Baddacook pond: beavers and wetlands management were worthy of further study.
- Art Prest indicated that in the past, they'd not had much luck with Conservation Commission because of a lack of funds.

The third item of business was the bittersweet brochure.

- Adam Burnett described his checking of many different locations for printing: Even at semi-commercial places, setup fee was ~\$175-250. He also contacted the town.
 - He indicated that the Committee could do what they were doing with the Greenway Committee:
 - Use town copier – run off there, pay for nothing but our time
 - The cost is high at commercial places for small batches.
 - Many wouldn't do less than 500.
 - Staples was 10-20cents/page (self service); if they did it was very expensive.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: How many do we need?
- Adam Burnett said he would occasionally will go in and run off 100; the town says that's acceptable use of the town copy machine, since it's town business.

- Olin Lathrop said: A couple hundred is more than adequate for now.
- Adam Burnett agreed to copy a couple hundred by RiverFest, and bring them to the booth (June 19th).

The fourth item of business was Riverfest.

- Riverfest is June 19th; Fathers Day.
- The Trails Comm. has a booth: Olin Lathrop indicated he would be there.
 - The Trail Comm. agreed to let the Invasive Species Comm. distribute materials.
- Adam Burnett also indicated he would be there in multiple capacities (organizing boat tours).

The fifth item of business was the special meeting with Tim Simmons.

- Olin Lathrop described how Tim Simmons was changing official positions.
 - Olin Lathrop reviewed Tim Simmons' position and history at MA Fish and Wildlife.
 - Simmons is an expert on Phragmites
 - Has been difficult to get on phone
 - Latest developments: Simmons is a "Retired or Independent Restoration Ecologist" now, but was encouraged via email to still come to a special meeting.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that June 20th at 7 pm at Legion would be the special meeting.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to check with town to see if Legion is available – Town Hall rooms or Sibley are 2nd choices.
- Holly Estes asked: Is there any expectation of payment?
 - Olin Lathrop indicated he didn't believe so.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: What about publicity? The committee discussed:
 - TAG email list
 - Trails Committee outdoor list
 - Press Release to the Groton Herald – Olin Lathrop agreed to ask Dave Minot.
- Brian Bettencourt indicated the regular Committee meeting on the 13th would be used to prepare for the special meeting.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: what are Simmons' AV needs?
 - Olin Lathrop said that he was in communication with Simmons and would take care of that interfacing.
 - Action Item: Brian Bettencourt agreed to let Art Prest know about the meeting – good publicity for aquatically minded folks.
 - Action Item: Brian Bettencourt also agreed to make sure it's posted as a regular Invasive Comm meeting.
 - Action Item: Olin Lathrop agreed to think about structure of the event/meeting.
 - The committee discussed having a public presentation followed by a regular meeting with Simmons present (discussion).
- The Committee agreed that they needed to have the regular meeting on June 13th, followed by the special phragmites-only meeting on the 20th.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: what about refreshments?

- Olin Lathrop agreed to pick up a few things.
 - Celia Silinonte indicated not to worry about it.
 - Celia Silinonte asked: What about in a town room, can we have food in Legion?
 - Olin Lathrop mentioned that he had seen food in the room before.
- The committee agreed: Brian Bettencourt would reserve the room, Olin Lathrop would confirm the speaker and material, then the committee as a whole could handle publicity.

The sixth item of business was any other Phragmites material.

- Brian Bettencourt indicated that this item was Adam Burnett's Action Item – gathering Phragmites information.
- Holly Estes described how she felt the “what you can do about it” piece for Phragmites is complicated.
- Brian Bettencourt agreed, but indicated that he felt that's why the committee was learning about it now.

The seventh item was Any Other Business.

- Tim Simmons responded to Olin Lathrop via email (live) and confirmed that June 20th was okay for him.
- Brian Bettencourt and Olin Lathrop reported that neither had seen Phragmites down by Carvers' Guild (Squanacook river). Olin Lathrop also didn't see any in LostLake/Route40 marsh. He also didn't see it in the Hawtree/Raddin marsh.
- Olin Lathrop described how he sent a note to TAG about Woolly Adelgid; he'd already got a response from David Black asking about what to do about an Adelgid sighting in Groton School.
 - The committee recommended to reply, saying we're evaluating different applications.
- Holly Estes mentioned how she'd like the Committee to produce guides for Invasive ornamentals.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: How do you want to proceed Holly?
- Holly Estes felt she needed a focus, and would get ideas/material to Brian Bettencourt for study by the committee.
 - Celia Silinonte felt a good focus might be: How about don't plant this, plant THIS instead – present alternatives.
- Olin Lathrop described how he'd been asked to take pictures; he displayed pictures taken around town, including:
 - Adelgid in Rocky Hill; he's tracking range expansion.
 - Burning Bush in Sorhaug woods off a trail.
 - Bittersweet in Sorhaug woods.
- The committee reviewed minutes from the previous meeting.
 - Olin Lathrop and Holly Estes recommended some small changes.

- The changes were made live on screen to the document.
 - Olin Lathrop moved to accept the minutes as amended; Adam Burnett seconded.
The motion to accept passed by unanimous vote.
- Action Item: Brian Bettencourt agreed to email the town IT department, and ask for Minutes to be linked on the web page (will have to send all the files again if they don't already have).
- Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn; Adam Burnett seconded. The motion to adjourn passed via unanimous vote.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.