

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

16 July 2018

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Greta Marks-Strouble

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes from Jun. 18th meeting
2. Status report - Nod Rd. Japanese knotweed
3. Status report - Petapawag ash trees
4. Eliades land followup and/or plans
5. Action Item review
6. Any Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

The first item of business was review of minutes from the June 18th meeting.

- Olin Lathrop said that Adam Burnett took notes by hand at that meeting.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to ask Adam Burnett for scan of hand-written notes; he will type them up.

The second item of business was management of the Nod Rd. knotweed stand.

- Olin Lathrop said that the brush mower had been repaired; Paul Funch brought it over. Olin and Paul tried mowing, but it kept getting stuck. The terrain is too uneven.
- Olin Lathrop felt that the Committee really can't really cut the knotweed.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: Would the town use their mower on an arm, the one that's mounted on a truck?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: It probably doesn't reach far enough back, although still might still be useful.
- Olin Lathrop described an issue with lots of Virginia creeper.
 - Brian Bettencourt indicated that that is a native species.
 - Olin Lathrop described the situation: A big gap in the knotweed, filled with Virginia creeper on the ground.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble said – Interesting – is it excluding?
 - Olin Lathrop said he wasn't sure what's cause and what's effect --- is creeper causing knotweed not to be able to grow?
 - Brian Bettencourt said it's possible – Virginia creeper is tenacious stuff.

- Greta Marks-Strouble asked: Is it allelopathic?
 - Brian Bettencourt replied – not sure ...
 - Olin Lathrop indicated that it does tend to take over!
- Brian Bettencourt asked: So, we can't do anything till Fall?
 - Olin Lathrop said: Correct, so the Committee might try some cut-stem treatments on tall ones in the fall.
 - Brian Bettencourt wondered aloud: Perhaps the Committee could ask nearby homeowner Marie who works at the Army Corps of Engineers if she wanted to help.
 - Olin Lathrop replied: And/Or, ask Jack Petropolous about his tractor (he offered in the past).
 - Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to talk to Tom Delaney (re/ the arm mower) and/or Jack Petropolous (re/ the tractor) about alternative mowing methods.
- Brian Bettencourt and Olin Lathrop discussed their experiences controlling knotweed on their own properties.

The third item of business was Petapawag ash trees.

- Olin Lathrop described a recent outing: He, Greta Marks-Strouble, and Adam Burnett cataloged ash trees and marked them with numbers. They measured diameter, photographed and recorded GPS locations, and uploaded to iNaturalist project.
- The Committee reviewed the iNaturalist data live onscreen; the website showed locations of ash trees on map of Groton, including throughout the Petapawag Canoe launch site.
 - Olin Lathrop said he thought this was good data on how many there are and where.
- Olin Lathrop said he'd reached out to the Emerald Ash Borer speaker Javier, and asked about pesticides.
 - Javier is a better source than the internet. He sent a paper written by several professors in the Midwest. Bottom line is: Most effective thing is trunk injection of a neonicotinoid.
 - Brian Bettencourt and Greta Marks-Strouble led discussion re/ collateral damage caused by that class of pesticides.
 - Olin Lathrop said that it's a tough step but a necessary one. It works for up to 2 years. He described researching companies that apply neonicotinoids. The cost is about \$500/liter.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked - What's the dosing?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: 1 L treats 20-40 trees depending on diameter, etc.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked - what about apparatus for injection?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: It appears to be a special apparatus.
 - Brian Bettencourt said: You usually have to bore a hole, inject under really high pressure.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed, and added that it takes several minutes per tree.
 - Brian Bettencourt described watching the process being done at Penn State.
 - He had assumed it would be beyond scope/charge of the Committee.
 - Olin Lathrop replied: No, the Committee can absolutely ask Mark Haddad. The argument is: Cost of ~\$20-50 tree to treat, vs. hundreds to remove them. Good economic argument.

- Olin Lathrop stated that the next topic to consider was when to treat. Evidence says, don't wait till damage is there. The research paper recommended – if EAB is within 10-20 miles, treat now. Healthy trees are needed to circulate the chemical, and healthy trees are worth saving. Additionally, you want to treat right after leaf out.
 - So, the Committee would present arguments to town now, get chemicals, treat next spring.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: And we'd have to ask to pay for apparatus? Could we borrow?
 - Greta Marks-Strouble added: The Committee could also use the injection apparatus for fungicides for elm, chestnut.
 - Brian Bettencourt said: That's a good argument for apparatus cost.
- Olin Lathrop said: There are some issues re/ restricted use of pesticide. The potent stuff is sold by the liter. The diluted stuff is sold by the quart. His applicator permit doesn't cover that yet. But some formulations are not restricted.
- Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to outline proposal to town manager re/ control of Emerald Ash Borer with systemic pesticide; he will circulate draft to the Committee.
 - At the September meeting, the whole Committee will review. Olin Lathrop will then file for approval with Conservation Commission (wetlands) and other groups as necessary.
 - Brian Bettencourt said: This is a big deal; let's do it the right way.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble added: There is an alternative – neem oil injection. Probably not as effective as neonicotinoids but worth checking out.
 - Greta Marks Strouble took an Action Item to research neem oil for Emerald Ash Borer.
 - Olin Lathrop: Remember, since we would have to file an RDA on this (Conservation Commission), there would be a public hearing.

The fourth item of business was Eliades land followup.

- Olin Lathrop stated: We are too late, between mud season and turtles.
 - Efforts from last year were effective; some Phragmites is coming back.
 - The Committee should plan a foliar spray earlier in the fall. Also, follow up the Autumn olive. The Conservation Commission plans to mow in the fall.
- Brian Bettencourt said: The Committee should take this up at the next meeting, for plan to treat again in Sept/October timeframe.

The fifth item was Action Item Review.

- Brian Bettencourt asked: Were there any from the last meeting?
- Greta Marks-Strouble said: Hers was to look for Grant support. She'd sent that information along. There is a decent amount of grant mechanisms out there.
 - Olin Lathrop asked: Could a grant pay for the Emerald Ash Borer efforts? Isn't there a Fish and Wildlife application in the fall?
- Brian Bettencourt and Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to review GMS' grants information, plot likely targeted applications. Olin Lathrop will look at the previous Fish and Wildlife materials, talk to Javier about it.
 - Brian Bettencourt said he has experience in grant writing.

- Olin Lathrop said: he would love a grant for Shattuck homestead work.
- Olin Lathrop added: The program he's thinking of mentioned invasives ... will ask Javier.

The sixth item was Any Other Business.

- First, the Committee heard a report on Black Swallow wort Shattuck homestead:
 - Olin Lathrop felt that the effort was akin to "Bailing the Titanic with a teaspoon".
 - Greta Marks-Strouble stated: Perhaps the reason why it regrew so much was that so much was not hit from the roads last year.
 - Olin Lathrop disagreed: The heaviest concentration was right along the road. They tried to treat everything along the public right of way.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble said that there is lots of regrowth along the wall and in the field.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed, stating that there is tons in the field. Control will require a boom sprayer on a tractor, like was done 2 years ago.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: Are there any plans to do that again?
 - Olin Lathrop replied that he couldn't find a company to do it.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: Will he bring this up with the Conservation Commission again?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: Yes. Also, they'd realized that mowing seems to help – it reduces seed production and reduces density, allowing better access for backpack spraying. The Commission might also look into a denser mowing schedule; they will research. The idea is - spend more money on mowing, less on herbicides!
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Could the Committee have a Membership Drive.
 - Wants to "pull his weight" a bit more. He asked – could he publicize the Committee on Talk About Groton etc., asking for more members/volunteers?
 - Olin Lathrop and Greta Marks-Strouble both replied: Yes.
 - Olin Lathrop moved that the chair be authorized to advertise for more members and volunteers.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to advertise on Talk About Groton/Groton Herald for new members and highlight recent efforts. He will talk to the Groton Herald about the Committee's projects. Basically, Outreach.
- Greta Marks-Strouble reported that the Red Mulberry seedling had a little growth spurt and is growing nicely.
 - The Committee had a discussion re/ care of the plant.
- Greta Marks-Strouble next reported on Chestnuts: 2 trees, both doing well. She'd sprayed neem on them for insect damage. Both are a few feet tall and growing well.

Olin Lathrop Moved to adjourn.

Greta Marks-Strouble seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.