

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

17Dec2018

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Richard Hewitt

Adam Burnett

Also attending: Andy George

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting.
- 2) Update on Petapawag ash trees project.
- 3) Status report on Eliades land autumn olive and Phragmites reed.
- 4) Chestnut grove at Farmers & Mechanics' land.
- 5) Nominations for the next invasive species brochure, work plan, and status of existing brochures.
- 6) Any Other Business

The Meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

The first order of business was Review of Minutes.

- NOTE: The most recent meeting was not an official meeting; no minutes needed to be reviewed.
- Notes from that meeting were distributed via email to the Committee.

The second order of business was the Petapawag ash trees project.

- Olin Lathrop reported that the RDA was approved by Conservation Commission; Permission to proceed was granted.
- Adam Burnett asked – is this State land?
 - Olin Lathrop answered – No. Conservation Commission owns the land. All permits are in place, including proximity to river.
- Olin Lathrop said that the Urban Forestry grant that the Committee was going for was not appropriate. It had no accounting for labor; therefore the money total was below the minimum limit.
 - Brian Bettencourt said - So the next step is go to the town.

- Olin Lathrop agreed, and said he would go to the town via formal presentation. Goals:
 - Show exactly what it will cost to treat, vs. cost to do nothing.
 - Ask Tom Delaney for quote on how much it costs to take down an ash tree (in a public place, with lawn, people using the area).
 - Adam Burnett agreed that they are expensive to take down: The trees start to fall apart; makes it even more hazardous, expensive to trim or remove.
 - Olin Lathrop said he needed hard numbers, but was confident in the results.
- Olin Lathrop reported on his research into stem injection systems. They're still not a commodity; you have to pick a company and stick with them for their system and chemicals.
- The Committee reviewed pictures of systems on screen; Olin Lathrop had researched and provided.
- Olin Lathrop noted that some systems are quite expensive, and additional details:
 - Some are left in for 24 hours; not feasible on public lands, too much public contact.
 - Some have spring-loaded syringe type mechanisms... into drilled holes. Takes minutes to a day, depending on how the tree is taking up.
 - Richard Hewitt asked about the amount of material used – is it calculated per inch diameter?
 - Olin Lathrop responded Yes. 1 mL per 4-6 inches circumference.
 - Some aren't adjustable for amounts of pesticide per applicator.
 - Some are true applicators like a canister on your back, hooked up to a pistol grip machine; require 2000 psi pressure.
 - Popular, but not likely a match for the Committee.
 - Others have connected tubes like maple sugaring.
- Olin Lathrop recommended a system that features a stem injector like a hypodermic, not like a drill. The chemical just sits in a small proprietary jar that pops on the applicator.
 - “The Wedge” system
 - Squeeze handles for 1 mL per squeeze
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: How does the user not bend the needle?
 - Olin Lathrop replied - There's another tool that comes in the kit to help puncture.
 - Richard Hewitt asked if the Conservation Commission approved any of these?
 - Olin Lathrop answered - That level of detail was not covered. The approval covers research and allows the Committee to make the call on which system to obtain.
 - Adam Burnett said he felt the system looks great; in essence, it was “inject and move on”.
 - Olin Lathrop added that the tree's seals the hole in the bark on its own.
 - Olin Lathrop added – basically , you just inject to the cambium. You stop at the wood (by feel).
- Brian Bettencourt asked: So what's the cost?
 - Olin Lathrop replied – the system comes with small bottles OR a high-volume pack (hose to a backpack container) – the price depends.

- Olin Lathrop added: You also might be able to buy 3rd-party pesticide – some are now labeled for use with the Wedgle system. Also, the Committee could try making some of our own equipment for reuse.
 - Brian Bettencourt said – the issue would be just saying the same %age of active ingredient isn't the same across systems – the flow rate, etc. might vary.
 - Olin Lathrop mentioned that these topics are covered in online comments / help.
- Richard Hewitt asked: How frequently do you inject the pesticide?
 - Olin Lathrop replied - Every 2 years (per tree).
 - Olin Lathrop added that the pesticide is stable and should keep on the shelf.
- The Committee next had a brief discussion re/ cleanup, and protocols given by the manufacturer.
- Brian Bettencourt said he felt the Committee should research the stability of the pesticide at active strength.
- Adam Burnett asked: One liter will treat how much?
 - Olin Lathrop replied - 4000 inches in circumference.
 - Brian Bettencourt noted that is far more than the Committee needed for this project.
 - Adam Burnett did rough math and reported that amount of material would treat about 1300 inches' diameter ... about 110 12-inch trees.
 - Or 50-100 trees in total (most are 12-18 inches).
- Olin Lathrop noted that the cost is ~\$2330 for injector, high volume kit, and 1L of chemical.
 - He also found that another vendor has a lower price for 4 x 4oz bottles.
 - Brian Bettencourt said he felt better about the small 4oz bottles; they would keep better.
- Olin Lathrop said he wanted to try both a high-volume kit and a small bottle, to evaluate both.
- Olin Lathrop added that he felt it was important that the Committee get a GOOD system; approval will be there. The idea is to buy it once, use it multiple times for other trees, other chemicals.
 - Adam Burnett said he could find more ash trees around town.
- Olin Lathrop wrapped up: He would make the formal proposal including a budget.
 - Adam Burnett added that the trees were marked and GPS tagged.
 - Adam Burnett asked about expanding to other areas (pending approval).
 - Olin Lathrop replied – the expense will be all taken care of, just approval process (time) for each new area would be separate.
- The Committee held a brief discussion about how the same pesticide can be used for Dutch elm – since a beetle spreads the fungus.
- Adam Burnett asked re/ the pesticide: Is it systemic or not?
 - Brian Bettencourt replied Yes, it's a true systemic that spreads through all tissues.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed: It stays in the tree and is a Broad-spectrum pesticide.
- Adam Burnett MOVED that Olin Lathrop be granted authority to make a proposal to the town on behalf of the Committee, with cost-effectiveness and flexibility as discussed at the meeting, utilizing the Wedgle system, to control Emerald Ash Borer.
 - Richard Hewitt seconded.
 - The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The 3rd order of business was a report on Eliades Land.

- Greta Marks-Strouble was not in attendance; the topic will be raised again at the next meeting.

The 4th order of business was the Chestnut Grove proposal (Farmers' & Mechanics).

- Greta Marks-Strouble was not in attendance; no update was given.
- Olin Lathrop said that the proposal was still awaiting Conservation Commission consideration.
- Olin Lathrop said he felt the Committee should leave it be for now till spring – come back with a specific proposal.
- Adam Burnett agreed and said the Committee would need money to buy some plants.
- Olin Lathrop said he would love to try picking some of the best trees and injecting them with fungicide. The same system discussed above could likely be used..
- Adam Burnett said that fighting the chestnut blight was a much tougher task.
- Olin Lathrop reported that the Conservation Commission was currently in the middle of re-doing all their forest mgmt. plans. There was no big action currently on that stand of trees. The Committee would likely have ample warning if there was going to be any logging (which was not likely regardless).
- Adam Burnett said that he and Greta Marks-Strouble would keep looking for sources to buy plants in the spring.
 - Brian Bettencourt agreed and said to do that in spring time.
- Olin Lathrop said that the Committee would need to ask permission for each specific project.
 - Adam Burnett said - Make sure to ask for protection of the trees after planting.
- Adam Burnett (and Greta Marks-Strouble, *in absentia*) took an Action Item to keep sourcing chestnut saplings.

The 5th order of business was status of brochures.

- Brian Bettencourt said he'd like to nominate the next plant for a brochure: Black swallowwort?
 - Olin Lathrop said it's a good one; We were pretty successful with triclopyr at Shattuck.
 - Adam Burnett agreed – it's a pretty easy plant to control.
 - Olin Lathrop reported lots of dead swallowwort along Martins Pond Rd.
- Brian Bettencourt asked – what about aquatic plants? People are concerned about aquatic weeds, but they're tough because laypeople can't deal with them.
- Brian Bettencourt asked – how about Garlic mustard?
 - Olin Lathrop replied – it's actually not that invasive according to the latest evidence.
- Adam Burnett reported that he was still working on Phragmites.
- Adam Burnett MOVED that the Committee initiate a brochure on Black Swallowwort.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to gather Black Swallowwort material and put in the existing template.
- Richard Hewitt took an Action Item to research the cost of doing a small print run of all the Committee's brochures; also, to take printed brochures to GCT office, Library, etc. for distribution.

The 6th order of business was Any Other Business:

- Olin Lathrop said he was supposed to have met with Jack Petropolous. They talked on the phone instead. Jack had went and looked around the Nod Road area (for Japanese Knotweed control). He wasn't sure if his tractor could do the area (uneven terrain)
 - The Committee had a discussion on the best times to cut Japanese Knotweed.
- The Committee next reviewed old action items.
- The Committee discussed enlisting the help of the Garden Club and Grange for membership and project participation.
- Olin Lathrop said that the Commissioner of Trust Funds might fund a print run of brochures.
 - Richard Hewitt added that Groton Conservation Trust and/or the Nashua River Watershed Association might.

Adam Burnett moved to adjourn the meeting.

Olin Lathrop seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM.