

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

17Jun2019

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Adam Burnett

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Report on Nod Rd. knotweed control efforts
- 3) Petapawash ash trees - report on Emerald Ash Borer treatment
- 4) Emerald Ash Borer elsewhere in Groton
- 5) Shattuck Homestead update
- 6) Other black swallowwort infestations in Groton
- 7) Status report on Eliades land
- 8) Thank-you letter to Commissioners of Trust Funds
- 9) Membership / volunteer drives
- 10) Any Other Business

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

The first order of business was review of minutes from the May meeting.

- The draft minutes were reviewed live on screen.
- Minor changes were made.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve the minutes as amended.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
 - The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The second order of business was Nod Rd. Japanese knotweed treatment.

- Brian Bettencourt mentioned that the Committee conducted the cutting and drip treatment on May 25th, and asked how the site was looking.
- Adam Burnett said that he'd been by to take a look at it; he saw some sprouting. The knotweed was not totally dead yet. He noted that it'll take time.
- Olin Lathrop agreed, stating that some new ones will sprout around the stalks.
- Adam Burnett said – we will give it more time.
- Brian Bettencourt asked – isn't Roundup is supposed to kill quickly?
 - Olin Lathrop replied that it has to get down into the roots and kill from there.
- Adam Burnett said he might swing by after this meeting and look again.
- Brian Bettencourt asked – the next treatment visit is Fall?

- Olin Lathrop said yes, but he still hadn't sprayed plot 1 (Foliar spray only treatment).
 - Brian Bettencourt replied that should be done ASAP, for fair comparison.
- The Committee reviewed what was done at most recent visit:
 - Cut 5 out of 10 plots; all were treated with a few milliliters of Roundup, dripped into cut stem. All will be treated again in fall, with varying followup treatments.
 - Olin Lathrop said that he has a detailed log of treatments.
 - The log was reviewed live on screen; it's available for review by Committee members.
 - Adam Burnett and Brian Bettencourt asked: Please email the log to Committee.
- Adam Burnett said that the Committee will go look at the site again prior to fall, too.
- Olin Lathrop said that we would complete foliar spray of Plot #1 ASAP.

The third order of business was ash tree treatment at Petapawag.

- Olin Lathrop said that the treatment was complete. His notes got a bit confused, but should be okay overall.
- Adam Burnett mentioned that they'd gone around, following Olin Lathrop's map of ash trees. They found all the ashes that were identified previously.
 - They also found some elms. Treated two of them too (the pesticide should kill the insect vector that spreads the fungus).
- Olin Lathrop said the Committee was thus done with Petapawag; the treatment should last for 2 years.
- Adam Burnett said he felt that they'd learned some good techniques.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: What worked the best?
 - Adam Burnett said that when the trees have thick bark – inject directly. They held the needle and material well. With thin bark – they used the little plug injection tool.
 - Adam Burnett added that Elms were easy to inject!
- Adam Burnett added that one tricky thing was discriminating hickories from ashes... It got easier with practice
- Adam Burnett said that there are three mature elms in that site that would be worth treating.
 - Brian Bettencourt replied: The Committee would have to ask permission to do that. Also, he was hesitant to apply more neonicotinoid pesticide when not necessary; he would rather try fungicide (for Dutch elm disease). The same equipment could be used.
 - Adam Burnett took an Action Item to research how/when/whether to use insecticide and/or fungicide (injection) on elm trees.

The fourth item of business was Emerald Ash Borer treatment elsewhere in Groton.

- Olin Lathrop said he'd received an email from a homeowner in the Deerhaven development (off of Rte. 40, near Burntmeadow). He went and checked out an EAB infestation there, and took pictures.
 - The trees were on public right-of-way
 - The Committee reviewed pictures of the site live on screen.
 - The trees featured dead crowns, sprouts off trunks, woodpecker damage, and beetle tracks in S shape.
 - Olin Lathrop said he didn't observe any exit holes.

- Olin Lathrop reported that he's walked around with one of the property owners; they saw granite markers for a right-of-way in the development. He treated 10 trees. He was not sure how many trees were too far gone. Time will tell.
 - Adam Burnett commented that it's sad news that EAB is here. It's typical to find it in developments- they bring in the contaminating material.
 - Brian Bettencourt agreed that it's too bad, but understandable.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Did you let the state know?
 - Olin Lathrop replied - Not yet.
 - Olin Lathrop added that there were several trees on private side of line that he did not treat- The homeowners have to call an arborist.
 - Brian Bettencourt said that if they don't treat those trees, it will serve as a control for the ones that were treated.
- Brian Bettencourt mentioned that he'd received an email from another homeowner on Old Homestead Rd., nearby. He wrote to him; Olin Lathrop did as well.
 - Olin Lathrop said that he'd been there; he took pictures. The ash trees are on the back of the property. Some large old ash trees had been cut down – beetle tracks were visible in the logs. He wasn't sure if it's EAB, but observed lots of tracks. The tree(s) died because of that beetle(s). He also observed D shaped exit holes, but he wasn't completely sure (the tracks alone are not diagnostic).
 - The Committee reviewed some pictures live.
- Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to notify the state of EAB in both Rte. 40 developments.
- Olin Lathrop said: In the future, don't tell the homeowners to directly contact the state. The Committee should be the educated "gatekeepers".
 - Brian Bettencourt and Adam Burnett agreed. The Committee shouldn't waste the state's time with anything less than high-probability observations.

The fifth item of business was a Shattuck Homestead update (black swallowwort control).

- Olin Lathrop said that the Turtle sweep / mowing was called off, because the turtles were earlier than thought.
- Olin Lathrop indicated that now, the Turtle Sweep was planned for July 6th, if the Conservation Commission can get enough volunteers. He added that Brian Bettencourt should talk to the Boy Scouts about volunteering.
 - Brian Bettencourt emailed Evan Morse (Cub Scout leader) live.
- Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to email the Talk About Groton list re/ the Turtle Sweep on July 6th.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: is Darcy Donald involved?
 - Olin Lathrop replied - Yes.
- The Committee discussed the timing of turtle nesting ... general consensus is that it's okay to mow the field after egg laying is complete.
- Olin Lathrop added that he also wants to give the swallowwort some time to grow up after mowing, to have more effective spray with triclopyr. So – he wants to get the mowing done. He wants to spray plants before seed pods are viable.
- Adam Burnett asked: Which turtles are nesting at Shattuck?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: Blanding's and several others.

- Olin Lathrop reported that the Conservation Commission has some money left in budget. They are going to spend some to have a company to come in and spray selective herbicide to spare the grass.
 - The Committee discussed the timing of interventions.
 - Olin Lathrop said the ultimate goal is to get a farmer in there to manage the field.

The sixth item of business was other black swallowwort infestations in Groton.

- Olin Lathrop reported that the Conservation Commission was doing a site walk over by the Senior Center; they found several swallowworts there by the small pond. He pulled several by hand, but there's more.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Did you notify the GEMS folks that own the parcel?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: No, but we're going to have spray there maybe soon.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: is it public land?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: it's quasi-public. He wasn't sure if Groton Emergency Management is considered fully public.
- Adam Burnett added: The Committee should also look at the big field at Groton Place (bird sanctuary).
 - The Committee discussed other objectives re/ milkweed; NEFF owns that parcel – they're supposed to manage that.

The seventh item of business was any other progress at Eliades.

- Olin Lathrop reported regarding the area out front with Autumn Olive: The Conservation Commission is committed to cutting the whole area. They will brush mow and check for sprouts the next year.
- Adam Burnett added: Any mature autumn olives – The Committee should go cut and spray.
 - Drop them and leave them in place.
 - Olin Lathrop added that hitting fresh stumps with glyphosate worked really well.
 - Adam Burnett asked: Maybe the Committee should just cut some branches and treat – maybe that would kill the whole tree?
 - Olin Lathrop agreed – it would be a good experiment to try.
- Adam Burnett took an Action Item to propose a date this summer to go cut and treat some Autumn Olive. The Committee would:
 - Leave slash behind.
 - Try a couple methods.
 - Also scout for Phragmites treatment (likely a different day, different method).

The eighth order of business was a thank-you note to the Commissioners of Trust Funds.

- Brian Bettencourt said: I have to write this thing. Who exactly are the Commissioners?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: A good group of people.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to contact Richard Hewitt, get contact info for Commissioners, and write a nice thank – you note for funding the brochures.

The ninth order of business was Membership / Outreach updates.

- Olin Lathrop reported that at RiverFest, he'd gotten some folks to leave their email addresses.
 - Brian Bettencourt added them live to the Announce invite (google group).
 - He added that the invite was no guarantee that they'd sign up.
- Olin Lathrop replied: We should just advertise the regular meetings on Talk About Groton.
 - Brian Bettencourt agreed.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to advertise the next regular meeting on Talk About Groton.

The tenth order of business was Any Other Business.

- Olin Lathrop reported that he'd brought copies of the Committee's brochures to the library. He left them with a note to the right person (as per the person working at the desk). He'd not heard back from them yet.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that the Conservation Commission will pay for another couple gallons of glyphosate for Committee purposes, as they have some funds that need using before July 1.

Adam Burnett moved to adjourn.

Olin Lathrop seconded.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.