

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

19Aug19  
Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt  
Olin Lathrop  
Richard Hewitt  
Adam Burnett

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Garden Club outreach efforts
- 3) Nod Rd knotweed report
- 4) Additional knotweed stands around town
- 5) Eliades land - efforts in the Fall
- 6) Seminar series at the library
- 7) Update on Emerald Ash Borer efforts around town
- 8) Any Other Business incl. Action Items Update

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

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

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

The second order of business was Garden Club outreach.

- Brian Bettencourt reviewed recent correspondence from Lisa Murray.
- Olin Lathrop agreed that the email back and forth covered the description of minutes and accuracy thereof adequately and fairly.
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed.
  - Olin Lathrop noted the last paragraph of his email response extended an invite to come to a meeting, offered to discuss there.
    - The email spelled out several items where we could collaborate and/or discuss things together.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Do we do anything else?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: You could say the Committee was hoping they'd come to a meeting.

- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to write to Lisa Murray and ask if they'd like to come talk at a Committee meeting.

The third item of business was the Nod Rd. Knotweed report.

- Olin Lathrop said he'd been around and marked off the edge of the Virginia Creeper/knotweed border in Study Plot 8
  - The stakes are hard to find, but they're still there. In winter, they will be easier to see. He flagged a few.
  - His general impression is that the Virginia Creeper is expanding.
- Olin Lathrop reported that he took more photographs today.
  - The Knotweed is starting to bloom.
  - This is the right time to spray with herbicide (foliar application).
  - Richard Hewitt asked: Do we spray it all?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Yes, but remember that different plots have different chemicals, different rates etc., according to the experimental design.
- Richard Hewitt asked: Is the method cut and drip on some plots?
  - Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt replied: Yes.
- Olin Lathrop said that the cut-only plot is back and bushy. It's pretty high – it will be tough to spray some of it!
  - Olin said he would be taking lots of time off the next week or two; he will spray in that interval.
  - Brian Bettencourt said: Contact us if you need help.
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Okay, but there's not much you can do!
- Adam Burnett said that cutting+treating did seem to work somewhat; he'd looked at that plot last Saturday.
- The Committee reviewed pictures live on screen.
- Adam Burnett indicated that the cut-first plots should respond to spraying.
- Adam Burnett also said that the cut-and-drip plots look "nicely dead".
  - Some escaped treatment; the chemical apparently didn't connect plant-to-plant.
  - Brian Bettencourt said he'd wondered about that myself.
  - Adam Burnett and Olin Lathrop replied: Subsequent treatment should be very effective.
- The Committee reviewed pictures of the Virginia creeper in some plots live on screen ...
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: Does Virginia creeper make allelopathic chemicals?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Not to my knowledge. Knotweed might, actually!

The fourth item of business was other Knotweed stands around Groton.

- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd gone and measured / took pictures of Japanese knotweed at the end of Hayden Rd.
  - The plot is 90-100 feet long.
    - ~15 feet deep
  - It has jumped to the other side of the path.
  - It's creeping its way out of the path and into the culdesac.

- The Committee reviewed the map of the site and pictures of the Knotweed stand live on screen.
- Brian Bettencourt reported on the steepness of the terrain at the site:
  - It's manageable; actual stand is mostly flat, then the land drops off behind it.
- The Committee had a discussion about Knotweed effort; the consensus was to learn from Nod Rd. results, then commence treating Hayden next year.
- Brian Bettencourt said that the other stand he'd seen is on Townsend Rd across from St. James Ave.
  - This is a much smaller stand, on roadside.
- Olin Lathrop said that there are hundreds of similar patches all around town.
  - Adam Burnett agreed, and said that the Committee should watch for ones that have spreading potential.
    - Knotweed doesn't like to spread under shade trees.
    - Focus on cleared areas.
  - Brian Bettencourt said that the Hayden stand is escaping to more cleared areas.
- Adam Burnett said that he'd also found some knotweed in the old Nod Rd. Dump site.
  - Down by the creek.
  - The Committee should treat that as well, if we're effective with the main Nod Rd. site.
  - Will have to manage that as an open site; can't allow trees to grow there.
  - The old dump was capped with a thin cover.
- Brian Bettencourt said that he just wants the Committee to keep a list of potential Knotweed sites to treat if Nod Rd. is successful.
- Olin Lathrop agreed, and said that another really obvious site is Lost Lake Dr. / Route 40.
- Adam Burnett said that the Town of Concord is spraying from the road.

The fifth item of business was Eliades plans for fall.

- Adam Burnett reported that he'd taken some time this afternoon, and taken pictures of the site.
- The Committee reviewed the pictures live on screen.
- Adam Burnett said that there was thick Phragmites growth in/around the bundled/cut/treated ones from 2 years ago.
  - Brian Bettencourt said he suspected the Committee acted too late in the season last time.
- Adam Burnett said the dimensions of the stand were 108' by 10-15'.
- Olin Lathrop asked: It's a very tall reed! How best to treat?
  - Adam Burnett replied: Still bundle.
  - Olin Lathrop agreed, but said perhaps not to drip treat though this time.
  - Brian Bettencourt and Adam Burnett asked: what if we bundled and bent it over.
  - Adam Burnett said: Or perhaps, just flatten it first, then spray.
    - The Committee agree to try: Knocking it down to waist high.
    - Olin Lathrop said some care will have to be used, since the reeds break easily.
- Brian Bettencourt said: Okay that's a good idea. So, when to treat it?
  - Olin Lathrop said he was worried that breaking the stems will prevent herbicide translocation underground.
  - Adam Burnett said: There should still be enough foliage to treat.

- Brian Bettencourt said: The Committee will try a couple methods, and see what's effective.
- Adam Burnett said: Bring some cutting device.
  - Olin Lathrop said he could bring hedge trimmer. That worked well.
  - Brian Bettencourt said he would bring a machete.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: When!?!
  - Adam Burnett replied: As close to beginning of September as possible.
  - Brian Bettencourt emailed the committee live to choose/discuss dates.
- Adam Burnett said that the resident who talked to Olin Lathrop last time the Committee was there came back out and talked with him. He didn't like the piles of dead Autumn Olive brush.
  - The Committee agreed that this time, material will be left mostly in place (dead), rather than piled up.
  - Adam Burnett reported that he offered the neighbor the opportunity to volunteer and help us, and that
    - The Committee welcomes volunteers to help us out.
    - The site is public land, the Committee receives official permission to cut.
    - The neighbor is welcome to come to a Conservation Commission meeting to help discuss.
- Adam Burnett showed the Committee a sample of another reed-like plant. He said that it was very tall but doesn't seem to be Phragmites. Perhaps it was a smaller type of reed?
  - He was not sure what it is.
  - He was Wondering if it was native Phragmites.
  - He found it in a different spot in Eliades land; not where the Committee will/has treated.
  - Brian Bettencourt said that Adam Burnett should give the material to Dennis Magee for identification.

The sixth item of business was the Library seminar series.

- Olin Lathrop reported that he'd talked more to the library. They asked for a brief syllabus.
  - Olin Lathrop Sent along the following:
    - Three talks. Start Wed. Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 7 PM, and repeat every 3 weeks after that.
    - Topics:
      - 1) What is an invasive – general overview, importance, and the Groton angle.
      - 2) Three invasives: Japanese knotweed, Asian Bittersweet, Emerald Ash Borer.
      - 3) Remaining species not covered in (2), more briefly, and how you can help.
- Richard Hewitt said: Be sure to be sensitive about glyphosate. It's on people's mind about health concerns.
  - Brian Bettencourt said he totally agreed. The Committee can't be seen as endorsing a method or product. Stay neutral on health concerns. Attendees will likely ask.
    - Olin Lathrop agreed and said he should be prepared to answer.
    - Richard Hewitt indicated that at a recent CPC meeting, someone asked about glyphosate usage.
  - The Committee discussed and agreed to be prepared for questions.
    - Olin Lathrop said he would cite a recent article by a UMASS professor.

- Richard Hewitt said to make sure to mention that it's a necessary last resort in many cases.
      - The antibiotic analogy holds; not something to be used indiscriminately.
      - Adam Burnett said: It's to be used in sensitive way
      - Brian Bettencourt said that an unnatural situation (invasive species) requires an unnatural solution.
        - The Committee discussed being very sensitive in where, when, and how much herbicide is used.
    - Richard Hewitt said: The Committee only uses herbicides on certain species.
      - Adam Burnett agreed, and added that the Committee has wetland-safe versions of glyphosate for example.
        - Olin Lathrop said he would come prepared to discuss these issues.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: Will the Committee be able to review/approve your slides?
    - Olin Lathrop said: That would be difficult.
    - Brian Bettencourt asked: Are you speaking in your official capacity? Just give the Committee an opportunity to review.
  - Olin Lathrop: We should have multiple members be there.
  - Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to prepare slides and share with the Committee. Also, he will make sure to advertise and let the Committee know about the talk(s) so all can attend.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to advertise the seminar series on TAG, on the Sunday or Monday before. Olin Lathrop will remind Brian Bettencourt, and send a blurb for inclusion in the advertisement.

The seventh order of business was Emerald Ash Borer efforts around town.

- Olin Lathrop reported he'd gone that day and taken more pictures of treated trees at Deerhaven.
  - One tree looks worse than it did in spring (it was treated then). It was tough to apply to that one (it was already pretty far gone).
  - The other trees are in better shape.
  - Another tree that was almost gone and wasn't treated now looks almost dead.
  - The Committee reviewed pictures live on screen.
- Adam Burnett showed a picture of a large dead ash with lots of beetle exit holes, found on NE Forestry Foundation property at Groton Place.
  - Olin Lathrop said: Some of that might be public property.
  - Adam Burnett agreed, and said it was a large stand of ash. Some of the trees are worth saving.
- Olin Lathrop said: If some are worth saving, and on public land, the Committee should treat them. It's a prime opportunity.
  - Adam Burnett said the trees would be NEFF land or on the 225 right-of-way.
  - Adam Burnett showed a picture with lots of dead ash trees, in the median area of the parking lot.

The eighth order of business was Any Other Business and action items update.

- Adam Burnett reported that while he was on the NEFF property, he grabbed the plants that he previously thought were black swallowwort.
  - The Committee looked at samples Adam Burnett brought in.
  - The sample consisted of a mixture of creeping plants; not black swallowwort.
    - Bindweed and something else that almost looks like forsythia leaves.
  - Adam Burnett said he was not sure what's invasive or not.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to introduce Adam Burnett to Dennis Magee for help in plant identification.
- Adam Burnett brought in a confirmed swallowwort sample from Connecticut for comparison.
- Brian Bettencourt said the Committee had discussed the Knotweed on Hayden.
- Brian Bettencourt said: My other action item was the thank-you note to the Commissioners of Trust Funds. He delivered it to Town Hall by hand.
- Richard Hewitt asked: What about the Parks Commission meeting?
  - Adam Burnett replied: The appearance was cancelled. The Committee was too late to get on the agenda.
  - Olin Lathrop said: The Committee needs to be at the next one.
  - Adam Burnett said: There is nothing on the Parks Commission web site.
  - Richard Hewitt said: Just call them.
  - Adam Burnett said he would continue to try to go.
  - Richard Hewitt indicated that if you send items and/or pictures to Maureen Adema ahead of time, she will distribute to the members.
  - Adam Burnett took an Action Item to contact Maureen and get the Committee on to the Parks agenda. He will let the Committee know if/when we should attend.
  - Olin Lathrop mentioned that he'd talked to Anna Elliot on the Parks Commission; she was noncommittal.

Olin Lathrop Moved to adjourn.

Adam Burnett seconded.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.