**Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes**

**15Nov2021**

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Charlotte Weigel

Jonathan Basch

Olin Lathrop

Ron Strohsahl

Ben Wolfe

Other Attendees:

Deb Fountain

Amelia (remote)

Agenda:

1) Review of minutes from last meeting

2) Action Items review

3) Wild and Scenic Rivers grant program

4) Mapping subcommittee progress and intern project planning

5) MOU with Conservation Commission - progress

6) MBTA land at Squannacook - report on discussions

7) Invasive species legislation and support letter

8) The next brochure

9) Open Discussion

The Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

The first order of business was Review of Minutes from last meeting.

* The minutes were reviewed
* Olin Lathrop moved to accept.
  + Jonathan Basch seconded.
  + The motion to accept the minutes passed by unanimous roll call.

The second order of business was Review of Action Items from last meeting.

1. Jonathan Basch to draft a letter of support for state legislation for review by the invasive species committee
   * Done- see agenda item below
2. **Brian Bettencourt to follow-up with middle school contacts** **regarding invasive project at Champney rd alley**
   * Tried and so far, unsuccessful, will continue follow-up
   * Charlotte to talk to science teacher at school
3. Committee members to visit Carol Wheeler Park to survey site and add to list of sites for prioritization
   * Jonathan Basch visited site
     + Not an extensive area that requires treatment
     + Could be addressed with a joint Invasive Species Committee and Groton Garden Club effort in the spring,
     + Once treated, a native planting plan and maintenance is recommended
   * **Action item:** **Brian to report to garden club. Agree we can work on this site together. Plan a day in the spring for a joint effort between Garden Club and Invasive Species Committee. Will also contact Donna Main**
4. Olin Lathrop to file RDA for treatment of Carol Wheeler Park site
   * Propose to wait until MoU is in effect. Tabled
5. Brian Bettencourt to follow up with Donna Main to communicate/coordinate with Parks department regarding Carol Wheeler Park site
   * See above
6. Olin Lathrop to schedule treatment of large bittersweet vines at Petapawag
   * Weather not cooperative. Will be postponed until next year. Tabled
7. Charlotte Weigel to provide Adam Burnett Deborah’s email address, Adam Burnett to become verifier in EDDMaps
   * Charlotte Weigel provided email address to Adam Burnett.

The third order of business was the Wild and Scenic Rivers grant program

* Brian Bettencourt: read from grant program notice
  + Interested in invasive species project
  + Ron Strohsahl: MBTA still exploring treatment for Knotweed. Will charge committee for us to treat
  + Charlotte Weigel: Can use prioritization list. Petapawag would be a good project
  + Deb Fountain: Want to have some contribution from the groups requesting the funds. Pepperell has had success
  + Jonathan Basch: Propose grant for Knotweed treatment along the Nashua
  + Olin Lathrop: First thing is to have a survey of the extent of Knotweed along the river
  + Amelia: Has some time this winter to work and survey
  + Deb Fountain: There is a lot of private property along the Nashua
  + Brian Bettencourt: Might be better to have a pilot program to document what is there and treat what we can and communicate with landowners. Contact to the adjacent towns, i.e., communication plan to adjacent towns in scope
  + **Action Item: Jonathan Bash: to contact Ben Wolfe regarding proposal**
  + **Action Item: Ben Wolfe/Jonathan Basch: Write outline for proposal**
  + Olin Lathrop: Second backpack for spraying and application training proposed to be included in grant

The fourth order of business was Mapping subcommittee progress and intern project planning

Charlotte Weigel: Subcommittee agreed to meet again in first week in December. We are going to look at the list and prioritize together

* Amelia Lee: Looking to convert the EDDmaps data to ArcGIS
* Brian Bettencourt: Can Survey123 be used?
* Amelia Lee: Yes can be used, but trying to use newer applications
* Amelia Lee: first item is pilot mapping Knotweed. Create a mapping application for the town for invasive species. Attend meetings. Track treated and untreated parcels. Obtain permissions for treatments on parcels
* Charlotte Weigel: We have a spreadsheet of sites treated and to be treated. Have pictures for example of EAB. Looked at iNaturalist – just not practical. Either in EDDmaps or something else.
* Ron Strohsahl: Have kmz files that correspond to the treatment sites.
* Amelia Lee: EDDmaps only exports a point
* Charlotte Weigel: started a list of prioritized species, but need help
* **Action item** **Subcommittee to meet in December and update committee**

The fifth order of business was MoU with Conservation Commission (ConCom) – progress

* Olin Lathrop: see what this committee thinks, and then propose to the ConCom
* **Action Item: Olin Lathrop to present MoU to the ConCom**
* Brian Bettencourt: Another term suggested for “non-plants”?
* Brian Bettencourt: What are examples of ConCom permissions that would be overriding?
* Olin Lathrop: Priest hill is a good example (i.e., in scope of separate plan)
* Olin Lathrop: Explained that pesticide encompasses herbicide and insecticide
* Jonathan Basch: I move to approve the memo as written
* Olin Lathrop: seconded
* Motion passed unanimously

The sixth order of business was MBTA land at Squannacook - report on discussion:

* Ron Strohsahl: Need a license to access the property. There is a charge of $1000 for access. Wheeler rd has a spot of Knotweed. Knotweed along Townsend rd. Can see the change over time on Google maps view
* Brian Bettencourt: Is this on town right of way?
* Brian Bettencourt: What do we do?
* Charlotte Weigel: Does it go between the road and the river. Can we treat from both sides?
* Brian Bettencourt: No we won’t be able to access from that direction
* **Action Item:** **Ron Strohsahl to follow-up to see if treatment can be arranged without paying the licensing fee**

The seventh order of business was Invasive species legislation and support letter

* Edits were made and agreed upon
* Olin Lathrop moves to approve letter as edited
* Ron Strohsahl seconded
* Passed unanimously
* **Action Item:** **Jonathan Basch to make edits and create a pdf and distribute a signature for signing**

The eighth order of business was the next brochure

* Brian Bettencourt: We have traditionally made brochures in the winter – have seven currently. Brian Bettencourt proposes a Spotted lantern fly brochure.
* Charlotte Weigel: have you addressed this in Pepperell?
* Deb Fountain: No just working on plants so far
* Ron Strohsahl: What were the previous brochures?
* Brian Bettencourt: All online, burning bush, autumn olive oil, barberry, disposal
* Brian Bettencourt**: Action Item Committee get list of most wanted for things to keep your eyes open. Could be about ~ 5 species – Send lists to Brian- things that we want people to keep an eye out for: e.g., mile a minute weed**
* **Nominate a species for a full-blown brochure or things to be looking for**

The ninth order of business was open discussion

* Deb Fountain: Can we get a copy of the MoU?
* Ron Strohsahl: roadway at town Forest entryway is full of buckthorn and honeysuckle -add to the list
* Brian Bettencourt: Kailey’s way along the fence is Wisteria
* Charlotte Weigel: Ordinance in Somerville requiring the use of native plants on public lands. Southborough also has ordinance for native trees along roads
* Olin Lathrop: ConCom always uses native plants in plantings
* Deb Fountain: ConsCom in Pepperell does the same thing. Design plans will specify the landscaping plans
* Olin Lathrop: Order of conditions for native plants can be specified, but usually not

Olin Lathrop Moved to adjourn.

* Jonathan Basch seconded.
* The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.