**Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes**

**21Mar2022**

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Charlotte Weigel

Jonathan Basch

Olin Lathrop

Ron Strohsahl

Ben Wolfe

Adam Burnett

Other Attendees:

Amelia Lee

Agenda:

1. Review of Minutes from last meeting
2. Action Items review
3. Gearing up for spring treatments
4. New herbicide applicator setup / allowable locations for use
5. Invasive Plant Prioritization List
6. Amelia Lee's project status
7. Grant progress
8. Priest Hill update
9. Groton Greenway River Festival
10. Membership / Roles / Responsibilities update

The Meeting was called to order at 7:08 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.

New Action items:

1. Olin Lathrop to reach out to Tom Dulaney about access to treat MBTA property for knotweed
   * Did not reach out to Tom, realized his applicator insurance does not cover treatment of MBTA property
2. Brian Bettencourt to reach out to Richard Hewitt if he would be willing to contact Sheila Harrington regarding treatment of MBTA property
   * complete
3. Adam Burnett to send Ben Wolfe seed mixes to include in the grant
   * complete
4. Brian Bettencourt to pdf the most wanted brochure and post to the town the website and approach library
   * complete
5. Subcommittee to present on priority list for species at the next meeting

* On agenda (see below)

Standing Action items:

1. Adam Burnett to become a EDDmaps verifier

* Has the link and plans to complete soon

1. Ron Strohsahl to continue follow-up with MBTA to see if treatment can be arranged without paying the licensing fee for land access (this specific action might be considered complete and are now exploring other avenues of achieving this objective)

* No further progress – item tabled

The third order of business was Gearing up for spring treatments

* Brian Bettencourt: We could hit places on dry ground,
* Jonathan Basch: Groton town forest was high on the parcel prioritization and we have not treated previously
* Charlotte Weigel: Amelia and Charlotte visited Groton Town Forest. Found Barberry along the river. Could be hand-pulled. Lots of Buckthorn
* Brian Bettencourt: Can we distinguish buckthorn early in the spring? May be hard to identify
* Adam Burnett: Can identify Buckthorn definitively, would be good to set it back
* Brian Bettencourt: Schedule a Sunday stroll in the Groton town forest– attack targets of opportunity
* Charlotte Weigel: Pepperell has a weed wrench we could use
* Ron Strohsahl: There are weed wrenches at work we could borrow
* Brian Bettencourt: **Action item to Charlotte to plan a treatment visit to the Groton Town forest**.
* Charlotte Weigel: Target points of access/entry, would also be able to map additional areas
* Olin Lathrop: We wouldn’t use herbicides – kids welcome
* Adam Burnett: Opportunity to find vernal pools
* Amelia Lee: Would be good to get the entries approved in Eddmaps before returning
* Olin Lathrop: State is reclassifying pesticide emmamectinbenzoate for treatment of Emerald Ash Borer ([link](https://www.mass.gov/doc/mdar-summary-of-neonicitinoids-for-massachusetts/download)). Plan another treatment of Deerhaven and Petapawag before June, when the reclassification takes effect.
* Brian Bettencourt: Does it matter what season to treat?
* Olin Lathrop: No
* Brian Bettencourt**: Action item to Olin to schedule a treatment for Deerhaven and Petapawag by mid may**
* Charlotte Weigel: Hoping to go back to Priest and see the effectiveness of the treatment
* Brian Bettencourt: If there is evidence of spring and fall was more effective, we would want to continue that treatment scheme
* Charlotte Weigel: **Action item to Jonathan Basch to write to Alison requesting student assistance for evaluating effectiveness of treatment at Priest Hill.**
* Adam Burnett: Should evaluate the Ailanthus that was treated in the Farmers and Mechanics site for effectiveness of treatment. Continue to look for Ailanthus in Groton to keep Lantern fly under control. **Action item for Adam to visit Ailanthus site that was treated at the Farmers and Mechanics site**

The fourth order of business was new herbicide applicator setup / allowable locations for use

* Olin Lathrop: this is the time of the year that the applicator courses are offered
* Olin Lathrop: I will send you [Adam Burnett] an email. Going to the course is useful. Keep receipts for reimbursement. Will have to determine how to submit for reimbursement of the grant
* Adam Burnett: Will attend this spring

The fifth order of business was Invasive Plant Prioritization List

* Brian Bettencourt: Shared the meeting minutes from the prioritization meeting – see attachment
* Charlotte Weigel: well established species and early detection species. Classification: Map, watch or neither
* Higher Priority Knotweed, swallowwort, Phragmites, Bittersweet, Tree of heaven, Mile a minute
* Charlotte Weigel: Yearly review of prioritization parcels and species
* Explained Coarse vs fine mapping
* Olin Lathrop: as long as the treatment is more than 100 feet from a wetland, we can treat on concom land
* Charlotte Weigel: List started as MIPAG list and added the Pepperell, NYS list, links added to comprehensive data sheets for each species
* Brian Bettencourt: **Action item to group to review list and make edits and any comments for the next meeting**
* Charlotte Weigel: just plants on the list – water plants are out of scope
* Olin Lathrop motioned to commend the subcommittee in developing this resource
* Jonathan Basch: Seconded.
* Motion passed unanimously
* Charlotte Weigel: Subcommittee moves to suspend active meetings, motion passed unanimously

The sixth order of business was Amelia Lee's project status

* Brian Bettencourt: Thank you Amelia from the committee! We would not have gotten the grant if we hadn’t had your support
* Amelia Lee: Presented the project at the Groton school. Trying to get some younger students interested in continuing the project

The seventh order of business was grant status

* Brian Bettencourt: Got a call from Diane Carson about getting back on the grant proposal. Some issues with email communication
* Brian Bettencourt presented the email on the comments on the grant proposal
* Committee discussion on responses:
  + Brian Bettencourt: Explain treatment approach in more detail. We appreciate your concern we will not be digging up any plants or cutting. Will only be treating with Glyphosate prepared without surfactant for use in wetland.
  + Brian Bettencourt: We share the council’s concern with mechanical treatment that could fragment and spread knotweed which is why we will use an application that is licensed for treatment in wetland
  + Olin Lathrop: we are going to spray both times not going to cut treatment
  + **Action for Olin to provide the information for the status of the Campbell well site**
  + **Action Ben to write response for treatment of knotweed along the river providing further information of how we would treat**
  + Brian Bettencourt: Concern appears to be use of herbicides along the river
  + Ben Wolfe: will start a google doc for response and share

The eigth order of Priest Hill update-

* Olin Lathrop: Right now logging the meadow area and cutting trees above a certain diameter for a “feathering” at the edge of the meadow.

The ninth order of business was Groton Greenway River Festival

* Olin Lathrop: Get one table and a few chairs to hand out brochures – June 12th
* Adam Burnett: starts about 11 – setup at 10
* Olin moves to sign up for River Festival
* Jonathan seconded
* Motion passed unanimously passed

**Action Olin to write to Pete Carson to reserve a table at the Festival**

The tenth order of business was Membership and Roles

* Brian Bettencourt: Shirley is starting a Shirley invasive species committee, exciting to see neighboring communities establish committees. Squannacook river is a shared watershed
* Brian Bettencourt: Committee started in 2015/2016 and have served as the chair since then
* Brian Bettencourt: nominated to Charlotte and Jonathan as co-chairs
* Olin Lathrop: Recommend Charlotte as chair and Jonathan as vice chair. More appropriate to have one chair
* Olin Lathrop: I nominate Charlotte as chair and Jonathan as vice chair
* Ron seconded the motion
* Charlotte and Jonathan were elected unanimously as chair and vice chair, respectively
* **Action item for Brian to notify town clerk of new assignments**

The final order of business was open discussion

* Olin Lathrop: prescribed burn tomorrow at Shattuck homestead
* Ron Strohsahl: Herbicide training scheduled for next week.

Olin Lathrop Moved to adjourn.

* Ron Seconded.
* The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.