**Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes**

**19Dec2022**

**Via zoom**

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Charlotte Weigel

Jonathan Basch

Olin Lathrop

Ben Wolfe

Adam Burnett

Other Attendees:

Anna Eliot

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes and action items from November 28th meeting
2. Discuss invasive species alert from town citizen: Hoary Alyssum ([Hoary Alyssum Plant Guide (usda.gov)](https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg_bein2.pdf))
3. Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp and Town Forest
4. Update on meeting with Town Forest committee for requesting MOU
5. Discuss any updates on insurance for applicator
6. Review and vote on content submission for Destination Groton website
7. Discuss progress and plan for upcoming work for grant: report status
8. Review prioritized parcel list with updated mapping from Ron
9. Discuss possible committee-sponsored spotted lantern fly lecture
10. Discuss returning to in-person meetings

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

The first order of business was review of minutes and action items from November meeting

* The minutes were reviewed and edited
* Brian Bettencourt moved to accept.
	+ Charlotte Weigel seconded.
	+ The motion to accept the minutes passed by unanimous roll call.

**Action items:**

* Olin to file RDA for treating invasives species within 100 feet of a wetland in Town Forest
	+ Olin to file RDA once further information is available (i.e., from meeting with the Town Forest Committee)
* Action for Ron to prepare a map of town land for prioritization discussions
	+ Tabled to the next meeting as Ron was not in attendance
* Action for Brian to visit Carmichael in the winter when frozen to observe the area more closely
	+ Not yet frozen
* Action for Charlotte to go to Town hall to sign receipts- any other reimbursement related actions?
	+ All receipts signed by Charlotte
* Action for Charlotte to work with Amy on presentation on findings in Town Forest.
	+ Amy has completed the presentation, meeting schedule pending
* Olin to talk to Michele Girard from Wild and Scenic Rivers Council to see what they think about taking on insurance for applicator
	+ Michele contacted, waiting to hear back
* Charlotte to Request to attend Town Forest Committee meeting to report invasives found in Town Forest
	+ Ongoing
* Adam Burnett to become a EDDmapS verifier
	+ Started looking into it on the EDDmaps site

The second order of business was Discuss invasive species alert from town citizen: Hoary Alyssum (Hoary Alyssum Plant Guide (usda.gov)

* Anna Eliot: Hoary Alyssum identified on her property. Hand-pulled what she could, but major cluster remaining. Toxic to horses. Would be good to prevent it from becoming established in the town. Propose burning the pile. Most pulled while still blossoming.
* Adam Burnett: Did it seem like it took over from other plants? Did it outcompete other plants?
* Anna Eliot: Intermingled with other plants
* Brian Bettencourt: Is it easily recognizable?
* Anna Eliot: Yes, once you see it you know it is there.

***Discussion continued on identification of Hoary Allysum***

* Brian Bettencourt: If a farmer was treating with a broadleaf herbicide, would control, but not ideal if you want nutritious forage. If you catch it before it flowers it would be best. When does it seed?
* Anna Eliot: It flowers all summer
* Adam Burnett: Multi-year effort required
* Brian Bettencourt: Would need to treat with a broadleaf herbicide and then use a pre-emergent treatment the following year, will be tough on the field. If it really a quarter of an acre, would need to treat it hard, plow and then reseed
* Olin Lathrop: Is it limited to a quarter acre? Could spot treat it with a backpack sprayer
* Anna Eliot: Concern is where else it might be in town
* Charlotte Weigel: There are several observations on Inaturalist, one across from the Groton school. Would be good to familiarize ourselves with it, does not seem to favor forests or wetlands, but anywhere there is a field it seems to take over. Has anyone else worked on this?
* Ben Wolfe: it is great to have on our radar, do other horse farms have awareness of this species?
* Anna Eliot: Could be an issue for hay farming in town
* Adam Burnett: hard to differentiate based on the black and white picture, would be good to see the actual plant.
* Brian Bettencourt: Great to have a field trip and observe it
* Anna Eliot: We could a arrange a trip during the growing season
* Olin Lathrop: Should reach out to the agriculture commission eg Charlotte
* Anna Eliot: Have reached out to the Ag commission and other contacts eg Jessie McGregor, have not heard back
* Adam Burnett: Is there a county extension?
* Brian Bettencourt: U Mass. extension
* Charlotte Weigel: Could see what U mass has for reccomendations specific for the area
* Brian Bettencourt: Nearest location is Worcester or Newton
* Charlotte Weigel: Are there any identifiable features in the winter?
* Anna Eliot: No, there is not much to see in the winter
* Olin Lathrop: Can you let us know when it is visible again, next year?
* Brian Bettencourt: Would be good to treat it early to minimize collateral damage and seed set
* Anna Eliot: Have you done prescribed burns? There is pile that contains a lot of seeds
* Brian Bettencourt: Mustards don’t make tough seeds, they make a lot of seeds. Worthwhile to try burning- (one private land owner to another)
* Adam Burnett: As a committee, we can visit private land and provide reccomendations
* Charlotte Weigel: Don’t know what the regulations are for burning, but avoid windy days
* Anna Eliot: Yes, would be good to get a permit- available January to May
* Adam Burnett: Biennial would be good to treat with Tricoplyr

 ***Anna Eliot to contact committee when the plant is observable***

* **Action for Charlotte Weigel to reach out to Agricultural commission and U Mass extension regarding Hoary Alyssum**

The third order of business was Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp and Town Forest

* + Olin Lathrop: Waiting for the discussion with Town Forest first and then determine how the RDA could move forward
	+ Olin Lathrop: Waiting for Brian Bettencourt visit to the Phragmites site at Carmichael

The fourth order of business was Update on meeting with Town Forest committee

* Ongoing, working on it. Likely sometime in January

The fifth order of business was Discuss any updates on insurance for applicator

* Olin contacted Michele Girard at Wild and Scenic and Rivers council and communicated what we are trying to do. Waiting to hear back

***Brief sidebar discussion on process of obtaining renewal for applicator insurance. Olin Lathrop provided information to Adam Burnett***

The sixth order of business was Review and vote on content submission for Destination Groton website

* Proposal text:

*The town of Groton has prioritized land conservation and balanced commercial and residential development with protection of the natural heritage of a region rich in biodiversity. Counter to these efforts is the impact of invasive species, which are displacing native species and reducing the conservation benefit of this land preservation. The Invasive Species Committee is a group of volunteers dedicated to addressing this challenge.*

*Actions taken by this committee include surveying and removal of invasive plants on town property, preparation and distribution of resource brochures, and speaking at public schools. The Committee also serves as a point of contact for this issue within the town and for our regional town and state partners. In 2022, the Invasive Species Committee applied for and was awarded a grant from the Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council for treating invasive Japanese Knotweed plants along the Nashua River and reseeding the area with native plants.*

* + Olin Lathrop moved to accept the statement as written
	+ Ben Wolfe seconded
	+ Passed by unanimous vote
	+ **Action for Charlotte Weigel to email the approved statement to the Destination Groton contact**

The seventh order of business was Discuss progress and plan for upcoming work for grant: report status

* Charlotte Weigel: Update sent out yesterday. Prepared an interim report. In the grant there is a statement that all work should be completed by December 31st, 2022, that is a small discrepancy. The work will continue to June or July of 2023. Want to update to make it clear. Provided an update on the status of the funds.
* Ben Wolfe: I read it – looked great.
* Olin Lathrop: I thought it looked good.
* Brian Bettencourt: Vote of confidence in what was prepared. Important to keep in good standing with these agencies
* Ben Wolfe: They were aware that this is a multi-year effort
* Charlotte Weigel: Caught the error in the date and want to update proactively. Also updated Olin’s expenses.
* Olin Lathrop: It is more of a clerical aspect, no need to vote
* **Action for Charlotte Weigel to send the interim grant update to the appropriate contact at Wild and Scenic Rivers Council**
* Charlotte Weigel: We have used the funds we have available so far. Will have to outlay the costs for the seedlings.
* Ben Wolfe: Should plan in March to purchase the seedlings
* Olin Lathrop: We will also do some stem counts in our plots
* Charlotte Weigel: There is also a line item in the grant for another treatment for July
* Charlotte Weigel: I was looking through the pictures of that site, there was a lot of Knotweed. Imagine what it would have been like in several years if we did not treat

The eighth order of business was Review prioritized parcel list with updated mapping from Ron

* Charlotte Weigel: Asked if Ron Strohsahl could create a new map of just Town of Groton properties, will move to a future meeting

The ninth order of business was Discuss possible committee-sponsored spotted lantern fly lecture

* Olin Lathrop: It is time again to do some in person lectures. Talked to the library, Sibley Hall is appropriate for this type of lecture. The Senior center hall would also be available. There is a better parking lot. Sent an email to Professor Tawney Simisky (at U Mass Extension) to invite her to speak. Would be a few hundred dollars fee to the University. The Senior center is the preferred location, we could accommodate more people
* Brian Bettencourt: Back in the early days of the committee we hosted a number of speakers. It’s a good way to get publicity for the group and signups for the mailing list. It is an important part of our mission.
* Olin Lathrop: We could take her out to dinner the evening of the talk
* Brian Bettencourt: Moved that Olin Lathrop be authorized to officially request Professor Tawny Simisky to come and speak about Lantern Fly, to invite neighboring towns to participate and request funding from the commissioner of trust funds
* Olin Lathrop seconded
* Passed by unanimous vote
* Charlotte Weigel: Thank you Olin!
* **Action for Olin Lathrop to officially request Professor Tawny Simisky to come and speak and request funding from the commissioner of trust funds**

The tenth order of business was Discuss returning to in-person meetings

* Charlotte Weigel: How do people feel?
* Brian Bettencourt: Have attended lots of in person events – some people wear masks. We can use hybrid meetings. Would be great to see each other
* Charlotte Weigel: Hybrid is difficult, is better if we are all there
* Brian Bettencourt: It is better to use the community room and use the Owl system. The AV system is better
* Olin Lathrop: Just the Owl did not work great for the ConCom meeting. The town hall is now set up with microphones at every video source
* Brian Bettencourt: Who do we contact at town hall?
* Olin Lathrop: The town clerk would schedule, there is probably a lot of competition for the main room
* Olin Lathrop: Would prefer if people wear masks
* Charlotte Weigel: Will try legion hall for January meeting
* Adam Burnett: Don’t mind wearing masks
* Brian Bettencourt: Happy to ask the library if we can use the upstairs room – works well for hybrid
* **Action for Brian Bettencourt to contact the library regarding the use of the upstairs room**

Other discussion:

* Charlotte Weigel: Noticed Phragmites on Broadmeadow jumped across the rail trail. Walking towards Ayer ~ several 100 feet. Small stand. Might be state land
* Olin Lathrop: There are many different landowners at Broadmeadow
* Brian Bettencourt: The Phragmites at Broadmeadow is on private land
* Charlotte Weigel: Now the Phragmites has jumped the rail trail. The area is small, if we could treat it would prevent spreading to the land next to the library
* Charlotte Weigel: **Will tag the GPS location of the Phragmites along the rail trail and bring to the next meeting [Action].** Is it something the state would have to give us permission to treat on state land?
* Olin Lathrop: We would have to ask them, it is a process. Matt Amidon is the contact.
* Brian Bettencourt: Thank the chair and the vice chair for an efficient meeting

Charlotte Weigel: Middle school invasive species sessions went really well, might be invited back again

Brian Bettencourt Moved to adjourn.

 Olin Lathrop Seconded.

 The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.