**Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes**

**20Mar2023**

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Charlotte Weigel

Jonathan Basch

Olin Lathrop

Ron Strohsahl

Ben Wolfe

Adam Burnett (remote)

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes and action items from Feb 27th meeting
2. Update on Town Forest committee approval of MOU, state approval of work in Town Forest and discussion on MassWildlife activities in Town Forest (TF)
3. Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp, treating Phragmites near the rail trail and Town Forest
4. Discuss any updates on insurance for applicator
5. Discuss plan for upcoming work for grant: seedling purchasing
6. Review prioritized parcel list with updated mapping from Ron - plan for any additional spring invasives management

The Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

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

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

Action items:

New:

1. Action for Ben to send email to schedule Campbell well site visit to plan seedling planting
	* pending - see discussion below
2. Action for Ron to identify signs to post for treatments
	* Ron provided one example, does not have information on the date
	* Adam Burnett: Posting required where there is public access
	* Olin Lathrop: Like the idea of the sign saying something like “stay on trail”
	* Adam Burnett: Recommend Caution, pesticide application - Name and phone number
	* Conclusion Ron to further evaluate options for obtaining signs

Standing:

1. Action for Charlotte to email Randy Prostak regarding treatment of Hoary Allysum with Triclopyr
	1. Done- Triclopyr is weakly effective on Hoary Allysum. Dicamba is recommended. Best timing for treatments is from the initiation of flowering to early fall
2. Action for Charlotte to contact the Agriculture Commission regarding Hoary Allysum
	1. Obtained John Smigelski’s email - offered to attend a meeting if useful. Will visit Anna Eliot’s property in season when Hoary Allysum is growing
	2. action considered complete
3. Action item for Olin to file RDA for treatment of Phragmites along the rail trail
	1. Has been filed
4. Adam Burnett to become a EDDmapS verifier
	1. Ongoing

The second order of business was Update on Town Forest committee approval of MOU, state approval of work in Town Forest and discussion on MassWildlife activities in TF

* Sent the amended MoU to the committee. RDA has been approved. Will notify the state
* **Action for Olin to notify the State of approved RDA and plans to treat invasive species in the Town Forest**
* MassWildlife identified 4 sites for treatment of Knotweed. Did not treat at the Campbell well site where we did the grant work
* Ben Wolfe: Do they have a strategy?
* Charlotte Weigel: They have done multi-year treatments. They had managed to the point they did not need to do any cutting. They did not treat last year.
* **Action: Charlotte to send them our map and keep them informed of our treatment plans**
* **Action: Jonathan to Inquire regarding treatment on MBTA property**

The third order of business was Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp, treating Phragmites near the rail trail and Town Forest

* Town Forest covered above
* Carmichael waiting until we can visit the site more closely
* **Action for Brian to visit the Phragmites location when navigable**
* RDA filed for treatment along the rail trail- will likely be first meeting in April

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

* *Committee discussed options and reviewed the* *property in the town GIS mapping application*
* In the context of the goal of treating knotweed on private property along the Nashua river- no specific additional actions identified- will continue to monitor the site from the Nashua River

The fifth order of business was Discuss plan for upcoming work for grant: seedling purchasing

* Ben Wolfe: Revisited the plan. The wording in the grant indicated that we would spread 9 lbs. of seeds and would purchase 15 seedlings each of several tree/shrub species. Have ~ $1000 dollars remaining. Could also purchase ferns.
* Olin Lathrop: We are not done with knotweed; we don’t want to damage the plantings with future treatments
* Ben Wolfe: Could do a site visit to plan plantings
* Olin Lathrop: Check from the town how much money is left to spend.
* Charlotte Weigel: Tallied what was spent in the interim report to the Wild and Scenic
* Ben Wolfe: Do we need to spend any more on trainings or pesticide for treatments?
* Olin Lathrop: No, we won’t need to purchase any more herbicide
* Charlotte Weigel: wait to plant until we see how much Knotweed reemerges this year?
* Propose Sunday noon for site walk- decide what areas we want to plant

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

* Charlotte Weigel: Propose we do next month - begin planning for Spring
* Olin Lathrop: Boy scout Troop in Acton that is interested in invasive species treatment related activities
* Brian Bettencourt: Groton boy scouts would also be interested
* Charlotte Weigel: Would be good to treat Town Forest early
* Jonathan Basch: Would also like to treat the Country Club site early this year – sometime in May

Any other business:

* Propose Tree of Heaven brochure next. Send Brian material to put into template
* Adam Burnett: How do we get reimbursed for renewal for applicator license?
* Charlotte Weigel: Could include for future grants
* Olin Lathrop: You could submit to the town

Olin Lathrop Moved to adjourn.

 Ben Wolfe Seconded.

 The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.

**Attachment 1:** *Notes from April 10, 2023 discussion of 4 committee members. A quorum of the committee was not present.* *An open discussion was held on all topics, with no decisions made requiring committee votes. The meeting was an open meeting held at the Legion Hall and via Zoom.*

***Attachment 1***

**Groton Invasive Species Committee Minutes from Open Discussion**

**10Apr2023**

Committee Members Present:

Charlotte Weigel

Jonathan Basch

Ron Strohsahl

Ben Wolfe

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes and action items from Mar 20th meeting
2. Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp, treating Phragmites near the rail trail and Town Forest
3. Discuss most recent information from MassFishWildlife on approval process for work in Town Forest and how to proceed (will be forwarded to the group)
4. Discuss plan for restoration work for Campbell Well/Surrenden knotweed and updates for Wild and Scenic Council on any changes in grant work.
5. Plan for spring work, including Town Forest, ongoing projects from last year and prioritized parcel scouting completed last year.
6. Discuss possibility of Committee feedback on Groton Farms plans.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:13 PM.

***Note:*** *There was not a quorum of the committee present for this meeting.* *An open discussion was held on all topics, with no decisions made requiring committee votes. The meeting was an open meeting held at the Legion Hall and via Zoom.*

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

* The minutes were reviewed, approval of meeting minutes was moved to the next meeting

Action items:

New:

1. Olin to notify the state of approved RDA for treatments in Town Forest
	* pending
2. Charlotte to send Mass Wildlife contacts our map and keep them informed of our treatment plans - Done
	* see below
3. Jonathan to inquire with Mass Wildlife contacts regarding treatment options on MBTA property
	* Done- no response yet, will follow-up again
4. All: Review prioritized parcel list and begin planning treatment schedule at the next meeting
	* see below
5. All: Send Brian material for a Tree of Heaven brochure
	* reminder in meeting

Standing:

1. Action for Ron to identify signs to post for treatments
	* Ron will be able to obtain signs- complete
2. Ben to send email to schedule Campbell well site visit to plan seedling planting – Done
3. Adam Burnett to become a EDDmapS verifier
	* move to next meeting

The second order of business was Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp, treating Phragmites near the rail trail and Town Forest

* Charlotte Weigel: met with members of the Conservation Committee (ConCom) on Saturday April 8th at the Phragmites site along the rail trail for a site walk. All questions addressed. The topic will be discussed at the next ConCom meeting.

The third order of business was Discuss most recent information from MassFishWildlife on approval process for work in Town Forest and how to proceed (will be forwarded to the group)

* Charlotte Weigel: Emailed Mass Wildlife the map of the Town Forest with location of invasive species noted. Jesse Leddick responded and included a reminder that any invasive species treatment in priority habitat would need to file for review in accordance with the MA Endangered Species Act (MESA). Ale Acondi can assist with this. A brief summary of what we plan to treat should be provided. Could cover a multi-year treatment plan.
* Ron Strohsahl: Should identify everything we want to treat
* Charlotte Weigel: Highest priority is the stilt grass, there is the knotweed that Mass Wildlife has treated historically, Barberry - not chemically treated - - Buckthorn would need a broader development plan
* Ron Strohsahl: Standard process is to request the information on the priority species.
* Charlotte Weigel: Ideally it would be best to treat the Barberry early in the season

The fourth order of business was Discuss plan for restoration work for Campbell Well/Surrenden knotweed and updates for Wild and Scenic Council on any changes in grant work

* Ben Wolfe: The site visit was very informative. Lots of Buckthorn, we also don’t know how much knotweed will return. One area was flooded. Very sandy soil - likely frequently flooded. Sweet pepperbush would be a good option, Blueberry might be a good option as well. Can we get an extension to plant in the fall?
* Charlotte Weigel: If we are doing the right thing it should be ok to postpone to next spring. **Action: Will email the Wild and Scenic rivers and will describe the observations and plans**. Deadline is July. More information needed: e.g., can we get an extension? What are the best plants to plant? Will continue information gathering and bring the topic to another meeting.

The fifth order of business was Plan for spring work, including Town Forest, ongoing projects from last year and prioritized parcel scouting completed last year.

* Will discuss the Gay property at the next meeting
* Petapawag and Deerhaven EAB
* Eliades - Phragmites
* Shattuck- knotweed/swallow wort
* Hayden rd -knotweed
* Country club- knotweed
* Town Forest - 2- 3 visits stilt/grass/barberry
* Carmichael swamp- Phragmites
* Priest -Phragmites
* Rail - trail Phragmites
* Campbell well site - knotweed/plants
* Plan to treat Phragmites in fall - other treatments in the spring/summer
* Charlotte Weigel: What do with the other areas? - Can start to use scout troops and other volunteer efforts

The sixth order of business was Discuss possibility of Committee feedback on Groton Farms plans.

* Ron Strohsahl: Recused himself from part of the discussion
* Charlotte Weigel: Provided background on the project- Opportunity for public comment. review the list of proposed plants and provide comments. There are some trees like Callery pears we would advise against. Would be great to see more native plants. Could provide some suggestions of other plantings
* Charlotte Weigel: **Action will circulate the plan and discuss at the next meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.