**Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes**

**21June2023**

Committee Members Present:

* Charlotte Weigel
* Jonathan Basch
* Ron Strohsahl (Remote)
* Ben Wolfe
* Brian Bettencourt
* Ann Carpenter
* Olin Lathrop
* Richard Hewitt
* Adam Burnett

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes and action items from May 1st meeting
2. Review response from letter to Zoning Board of Appeals re: Groton Farms development landscape plan - see attached response
3. Update on RDA approvals for Carmichael Swamp, treating Phragmites near the rail trail
4. Discuss plan for restoration work for Campbell Well/Surrenden knotweed and update from Wild and Scenic Council on changes in grant work
5. Review recent work:

* Town Forest - Committee work and UMass Lowell student work
* Campbell Well/Surrenden - Committee work and UMass Lowell student work
* Groton Country Club
* Riverfest

1. Plan for upcoming work - all ongoing projects
2. Invasives at the police station
3. Review signage to use for upcoming work
4. Brian hand-off samples from Carmichael Swamp to Ben for genetic testing.

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

The first order of business was review of minutes and action items from the May meeting:

* Olin Lathrop moved to accept the minutes as amended. Brian Bettencourt seconded
* Richard Hewitt and Ben Wolfe abstained. The minutes were approved unanimously by the remaining members.

Action items:

New:

1. Jonathan to send email to plan treatment at Groton Country Club -Done
2. Action item to visit the site at the police station - see below
3. Charlotte to schedule a site visit to Town Forest with Mass Wildlife -pending

Standing:

1. All: Review prioritized parcel list and begin planning treatment schedule at the next meeting - see below
2. All: Send Brian material for a Tree of Heaven brochure- ongoing, some material received, but more needed. Charlotte sent Brian Bettencourt a link to information.
   * Charlotte Weigel to send pictures of Ailanthus to Brian Bettencourt.
   * Don't have pictures of seed clusters
3. Adam Burnett to become a EDDmapS verifier
   * Making progress

The second order of business was review response from letter to Zoning Board of Appeals re: Groton Farms development landscape plan - see attached response

* + Reviewed the statement in the meeting. See statement below:

“Applicant: There will be no species planted on the project that are considered invasive according to the MA Prohibited Plant List. In consideration of the Committee’s suggestions on species, we propose that we add a greater density of native plantings to our plant schedule, but still retain the flexibility to use non-native species that will not have negative impact on local ecosystems and will promote biodiversity. We can commit to having a plant schedule that will consist of 70% species native to the Northeast U.S. In addition, having stated the above, we propose eliminating *Pyrus calleryana* (Callery Pear) and *Liriope muscari* (Lilyturf) from our list due to their potentially invasive habit.”

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

* Olin Lathrop: RDA is approved [rail trail]
* Charlotte Weigel: Will we do PCR before we file the RDA?
* Brian Bettencourt: Yes
* Brian Bettencourt: It is not easy to get out there. Would have to use a kayak. All interspersed. Will be work to treat. Still need to go back to Orion’s way and check on the site that was treated
* **Action item for Brian to visit the site of last year’s treatment at Carmichael swamp**
* Adam Burnett: An extension on the applicator would be useful for treatment of Phragmites

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

* Grant amendment was accepted- will extend project to spring of 2024
* Charlotte Weigel: Charlotte described the 4 plots established last year and results after treatment
* Charlotte Weigel: The other issue is that other invasive species are moving into the area that was treated.
* Ben Wolfe: Will need to treat through this summer and then plant in the fall and spring. Surprising how little has grown in the treatment area
* Jonathan Basch: Visited the site with the UMass Lowell students to survey the species present. Students to develop a treatment plan as a class project.
* Charlotte Weigel: What are the goals? Primary goal is to control the knotweed. What about the other invasive species?
* Ben Wolfe: We are accomplishing the primary goal with treatment of knotweed
* Charlotte Weigel: Second half of July for knotweed treatment. Will send email to coordinate
* **Action for Ben Wolfe to go back to visit the site at Campbell well**
* **Action for Charlotte to send an email to coordinate July treatments of knotweed**

The fifth order of business was Review recent work:

* Town Forest - Committee work and UMass Lowell student work
  + Ben, Charlotte and Jonathan went to the Northeast side of the Town Forest and removed barberry from the river facing side of the wetland. The area that was treated last year was mostly free of Barberry
  + Charlotte went back with U Mass Lowell students and pulled barberry in the area past the site the committee treated
* Campbell Well/Surrenden - Committee work and UMass Lowell student work
  + see above
* Groton Country Club- knotweed was treated with Glyphosate without the surfactant. Swallow wort on the other side of the rd was also treated.
  + **Action for Jonathan to return to the GCC site and empty the invasive plants from the bags**
* Riverfest
  + Very successful event, scavenger hunts, lots of interest, handing out brochures

The sixth order of business was Plan for upcoming work - all ongoing projects

List of active treatment sites:

1. Petapawag and Deerhaven - Emerald Ash Borer
   * Due for treatment next year
   * Olin Lathrop: Can continue to use the pesticide we have used historically
2. Eliades - Phragmites
   * plan for September treatment
   * **Action for Charlotte Weigel to visit Eliades site and survey the Phragmites**
3. Shattuck- knotweed/swallow wort
   * treat sometime before end of August
4. Hayden rd -knotweed
   * treat sometime before end of August
5. Country club- knotweed
   * empty bags - no additional treatment
6. Town Forest - 2- 3 visits stilt/grass/barberry
   * last weekend in June for stilt grass and barberry
7. Carmichael swamp- Phragmites
   * plan for September treatment
8. Priest -Phragmites
   * plan for September treatment
9. Rail - trail Phragmites
   * plan for September treatment
10. Campbell well site - knotweed/ other invasive plants (e.g., barberry, bittersweet and buckthorn
    * Plan for second half of July
11. Farmers and Mechanics

**Action: Adam to visit the Framers and Mechanics site for treatment - foliar spray. Will email Nic Gualco and cc committee. Will obtain signs from Ron**

1. Nod Rd.
   * **Action: Adam to visit Nod Rd site to treat knotweed, Will email Nic and cc committee**

The seventh order of business was Invasives at the police station

* Charlotte Weigel: The garden club reached out to the committee. Charlotte visited the site and noted the bittersweet, but not terrible. There has been work in the area already to remove the bittersweet.

Consider offering to work with them for herbicide application

* **Action for Charlotte Weigel to get back to the Garden Club on site assessment at the police station**

The eighth order of business was Review signage to use for upcoming work

* Ann Carpenter presented a proposed sign that would provide information on the Invasive Species Committee during site treatments
* **All: Action to review wording for sign and respond back to Ann**
* **Action for Ann to determine the cost for the printing/laminating of the signs**
* Charlotte Weigel: Can we create a “bitly” link ?- QR codes expire.

The ninth order of business was for Brian to hand off samples [of Phragmites] from Carmichael Swamp to Ben for genetic testing.

* Completed at the meeting

Other discussion:

* Brian Bettencourt visited Anna Eliot’s property to see the hoary alyssum
* **Action for Brian Bettencourt to send an update the committee on the hoary alyssum via email**
* Pepperell had a very successful garlic mustard pull event. Gave out bags, gloves, ID sheets - prizes. Coordinated with Department of Public Works to establish a location for invasive species drop off - keep on radar for future project
* Ben Wolfe: Could we get our town to establish a drop off spot?
* Charlotte Weigel: Do we want to participate in Groton Fest? Last year we had brochures at the Garden Club table. We will likely do the same this year. Action to check with Brian that this would be acceptable this year as well.

Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn the meeting

Ben Wolfe seconded.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:29 PM.