| Committee Members Present: | Committee Members Not Present: |
| --- | --- |
| Charlotte Weigel | Ben Wolfe |
| Jonathan Basch | Richard Hewitt |
| Olin Lathrop |  |
| Adam Burnett |  |
| Ron Strohsahl |  |
| Ann Carpenter |  |
| Brian Bettencourt |  |
|  |  |

**Agenda:**

1. Review minutes and action items from October meeting
2. Review recent work
3. Discuss financial situation and authorize purchases
4. All other business

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

1. The first order of business was: Review minutes and action items from the October meeting
   1. Minutes:
      1. Minutes amended for accuracy
         1. Olin Lathrop moved to approve the minutes as amended
         2. Ann Carpenter seconded the motion
         3. The motion passed by roll call vote
            1. Abstains: Charlotte Weigel
   2. Action Items:
      1. Assigned Previously:
         1. Ann Carpenter to retrieve Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) bag from Groton Town Forest - **completed**
         2. Charlotte Weigel to email IT Department to add Olin Lathrop to Invasive Species email account - **completed**
         3. Olin Lathrop to ask Conservation Commission for $100 to cover additional costs of herbicide for invasive treatment on Conservation-owned lands - **completed, Conservation Commission voted to transfer $100 to Invasive Species account**
      2. Standing Action Items:
2. The second order of business was: Review recent work
   1. No recent field work completed
3. The third order of business was: Discuss financial situation and authorize purchases
   1. Last meeting we discussed we were short on funds for purchasing additional Garlon 4 Ultra herbicide. There was a previously assigned action item to request additional funding from the Conservation Commission, which was completed. The Conservation Commission voted and approved to help fund the purchase of Garlon 4 Ultra by transferring $100 to the Invasive Species’ account. The funds have been transferred, or should be transferred shortly.

**ACTION ITEM:** **Jonathan Basch to:**

**1) check with Town Accountant regarding balance within Invasive Species Committee account 2) ask whether we can get monthly updates from accountant regarding the account balance**

* + 1. Brian Bettencourt makes motion for Olin Lathrop to buy 2.5 gallon jug of Garlon 4 Ultra using the Committee’s funds once they’re available
       1. Adam Burnett seconds motion
       2. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote

**ACTION ITEM: Olin Lathrop to purchase jug of Garlon 4 Ultra**

* 1. Ann Carpenter: Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School (GDRMS) does not use color copies anymore for the GDRMS “Invasive Species Day” worksheets, and it is difficult to see plant details on the worksheets without color. Could we use Committee funds to produce color copies for the 2025 “Invasive Species Day” presentation?
     1. Olin Lathrop: The town has color copier available for Town/Committee use
     2. Ann Carpenter: We could reuse 20 laminated copies, if a laminator is also available
        1. Jonathan Basch: I have a laminator the Committee can use to make copies for next year

1. The fourth order of business was: All other business
   1. Olin Lathrop: Anna Eliot (Community Preservation Committee and Park Commission member) visiting tonight to discuss an Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) population observed on the Fitch Best Woods property (Parcel 225-31), off Longley Road, which is owned by the Groton Conservation Commission
      1. Anna provided photos; the infestation is clearly visible along frontage of road and along existing tree line
         1. Area had previously been maintained and mowed, but left to regrow without maintenance for ~5 years and vines have overwhelmed existing vegetation
         2. Anna suggests if the vines are cut by flail mower ASAP then neighbors could continuously trim/mow the area to maintain it
      2. Adam Burnett: if you cut it, it’ll spread further into the forest until it grows somewhere that is unmaintained. It need to be treated with herbicide to actually prevent it spreading or coming back
         1. cut and treat stems with high concentrate to kill multiple sprouts
         2. Olin Lathrop: I experimented this year with triclopyr foliar treatment (diluted) on O. bittersweet and results were promising
         3. Charlotte Weigel: Prefer to cut and paint and see if it is working before spraying
            1. Adam Burnett: We could wait 2-4 weeks after direct stem application to see results of the cut/paint treatment, then follow up with a foliar spray
         4. Brian Bettencourt: Common advice usually given is that treatment should be applied in the fall, when the plant is actively returning nutrients back to the root system. Should we wait until the fall of 2025 to treat it?
            1. Adam Burnett: we can cut and treat in spring to stop spread and return to treat remainder
            2. Jonathan Basch: we can do two treatment cycles next year: once in the spring and once in the fall, to see how effective it is
      3. Charlotte Weigel: Are there wetlands on the property?
         1. Olin Lathrop: I’ve visited the property before and the wetlands are further than 100 feet away. The approved Memorandum of Agreement with Conservation Commission states we don’t need RDA for work on Conservation Commission-owned properties

**ACTION ITEM: Ron Strohsahl to add GPS location to Committee’s ArcGIS map**

* 1. Within Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area, in West Groton (Parcel 202-14)
     1. Ann Carpenter describes that there is Japanese stiltgrass and burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) along main path, and she has been pulling Japanese stiltgrass by hand
        1. Ron Strohsahl has noticed vegetation with similar characteristics, but he did not think it was Japanese stiltgrass but can reevaluate next time walking through
  2. Within West Groton Water Supply Pump Area property, off Townsend Road (Parcel 206-10)
     1. near the boat launch access road there is an area adjacent to the fence that is overgrown with glossy false buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)
     2. Jonathan Basch asked if there is anything keeping it contained to that area?
        1. Ann Carpenter: they mow around the wellfield, inside the fence
  3. Trail behind GDRMS baseball backstop
     1. Charlotte Weigel: There is Japanese stiltgrass and Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria* *japonica*) along the trail that could be easily treatable. There is also Oriental bittersweet and autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) throughout the property
        1. Ann Carpenter added that there’s also burning bush along the trail
     2. Olin Lathrop: Area that is being described is located on private property, owned by Insco Corporation, and cannot be treated by this Committee
  4. A new Japanese knotweed infestation has been located at the dead end of West Street, east of rail trail intersection
     1. The knotweed population is a decent sized colony, similar to population at the end of Hayden Road
        1. There is a parking area on north side of road, and private property south of roadway
           1. Lat/Long: 42.61151N, 71.57997W

**ACTION ITEM: Ron Strohsahl will add GPS location to Committee’s ArcGIS map**

* + 1. Adam Burnett: the area is heavily populated and has little ecological value, so it should be a low priority to treat
    2. Charlotte Weigel asks whether we need to complete an RDA or notify Conservation if we decided to treat it?
       1. Adam Burnett: there is a maintained ditch nearby, is it considered wetland? It is near beginning/tributary to Gratuity Brook
       2. Olin Lathrop: the ditch is probably not jurisdictional, we’ll have to look into it/visit site
  1. Plans for next meeting: decide next year’s treatments
     1. Brian Bettencourt: historically, winter was time to work on invasive species brochures
        1. Adam Burnett: we still need a *Phragmites australis* brochure and volunteers to start it
           1. Olin Lathrop states that *Phragmites* is difficult for homeowners to treat, usually, and may not be worth making a brochure for
        2. Ann Carpenter volunteers to complete a Japanese stiltgrass brochure
     2. Olin Lathrop encourages Committee to look for “lingering ash” and tell neighbors/friends to identify emerald ash borer resistant ash trees throughout Groton
        1. trying to get people from previously discussed University of Maine “black ash conference” to present in Groton, but no responses, yet
     3. Anna Eliot: Is there a plan for treatment of *Phragmites* along James Brook, west of the library, along Broadmeadow Road?
        1. Charlotte Weigel and Brian Bettencourt discuss that this area has been previously considered for treatment, but it is all private property
           1. Olin Lathrop: Town DPW also tried to do work there, previously
        2. Anna Eliot: could James Brook be re-dredged to remove *Phragmites* but also to help drain the baseball field at Lawrence Playground and Broadmeadow Road?
           1. Wetland plants are growing into the west edge of the field, but saturation is causing undulations throughout the field’s surface, making it unsafe during play. It may also be caused by beaver dams located further downstream.
           2. Charlotte Weigel: Problem could also be caused by excessive nutrient runoff causing eutrophication and organic material buildup adjacent to culvert. You could dredge it, but it will be a problem again in the future until stormwater treatment is addressed.
           3. Olin Lathrop: this wetland was historically ditched and drained, prior to introduction of the Wetland Protection Act and now wetland vegetation is reclaiming its natural extent
           4. Adam Burnett explains there other values to wetlands even if they are filled with *Phragmites* and the area should not be dredged
           5. Anna Eliot: Park Commission intends on completing improvements to the Lawrence Playground field that include, redoing dugouts, building a concession stand/press box, and bathroom structures

It is possible that the dredging/restoration of James Brook could be included in budget to stabilize the field

* + - 1. Committee concludes that *Phragmites* is located on private land, out of Committee's jurisdiction, and the wetland areas previously described would probably require significant restoration costs in addition to invasive removal. Dredging would be unlikely to receive approval at the local or state level.
    1. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) pull for 2025
       1. Is there interest in holding a Town-wide program/challenge, similar to nearby towns?
       2. Charlotte Weigel: Town of Pepperell used Wild and Scenic grant funding, which provided supplies for attendees (gloves, bags, etc.)
          1. Town awarded prizes to encourage involvement
          2. DPW provided a disposal location to prevent spread
       3. Anna Eliot suggested garlic mustard removal is a good Boy/Girl Scout project in the future
       4. Do we want to request funding from the Wild and Scenic grants?
          1. Jonathan Basch: Town of Littleton did something similar, without funding, and just publicized the event and provided location to dispose of plants and was successful
       5. Add to 2025 to-do project list, for consideration

1. Meeting Adjournment
   1. Adam Burnett moved to adjourn
   2. Olin Lathrop seconded
   3. The motion to adjourn approved by unanimous voice vote

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

**OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS + NEW:**

1. **Jonathan Basch to** 
   1. **check with Town Accountant regarding balance within Invasive Species Committee account**
   2. **ask whether we can get monthly updates from accountant regarding the account balance**
2. **Olin Lathrop to purchase jug of Garlon 4 Ultra for Committee use**
3. **Ron Strohsahl to add GPS locations to Committee’s ArcGIS map**
4. **Any interested members encouraged to visit Fitch Best Woods, and West Street to view potential treatment sites discussed at the meeting**