

Town of Groton  
Invasive Species Committee  
16 December 2024  
Meeting Minutes



Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt  
Jonathan Basch  
Olin Lathrop  
Ron Strohsahl  
Ann Carpenter

Committee Members Not Present:

Ben Wolfe  
Richard Hewitt  
Adam Burnett  
Charlotte Weigel

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Agenda:

1. Review minutes and action items from November meeting
  2. Plans for 2025
  3. All other business
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The Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Note: there was not a quorum to start the meeting.  
At 7:06 members arrived to complete a quorum.

1. The first order of business was: Review minutes and action items from the November meeting
  - a. Minutes:
    - i. Minutes amended for accuracy
      1. Olin Lathrop moved to approve the minutes as amended
      2. Brian Bettencourt seconded the motion
      3. The motion passed by roll call vote
        - a. Abstains: Ann Carpenter

- b. Action Items:

- i. Assigned Previously:

1. Jonathan Basch to:
  - a. check with Town Accountant regarding balance within Invasive Species Committee account - **Completed**
  - b. ask whether we can get monthly updates from the accountant regarding the account balance - **Completed, but not all members received email.**

**ACTION ITEM: Jonathan Basch will check email accounts listed on the account to ensure accuracy.**

2. Olin Lathrop to purchase jug of Garlon 4 Ultra for Committee use - **not completed, waiting for approved funds to be transferred from Conservation Commission**
3. Ron Strohsahl to add GPS locations to Committee's ArcGIS map - **not completed**
4. Any interested members encouraged to visit Fitch-Best Woods, and West Street to view potential treatment sites discussed at the meeting - **Completed**

- ii. Standing Action Items:

2. The second order of business was: Plans for 2025
  - a. Proposed Treatment Locations

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Town of  
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Massachusetts

- i. Fitch-Best Woods (Parcel 225-31) - off Longley Road
  1. The area of discussion has a very heavy infestation of Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and using only Committee members volunteer time would probably make eradication difficult because of the volume of time/work needed. We would likely need assistance.
  2. The Committee can slowly work on it by treating large vines, etc. and ask Boy Scouts or other willing volunteers for assistance
  3. Anna Eliot (neighbor to the property who brought it to Committee's attention) can probably solicit support from other neighbors in the area to get volunteers. Boy Scouts and Cub scouts could be useful, too, but not when spraying is involved.

**ACTION ITEM: Olin Lathrop to relay Invasive Species Committee discussion to Anna Eliot; Committee is willing to treat the area but will need assistance. Find out if she can gather support from neighbors.**

- ii. West Street - At dead end of West Street, near Nashua River Rail Trail
  1. We can perform the same treatment method we used at other Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) sites in Town, which includes a cut-and-drip method in the spring (so that the stems are shorter and leaves easier to reach in the fall) and perform a foliar spray treatment in the fall
  2. The neighbor to the south is a leader of Groton Conservation Trust and may be willing to assist with treatments
- iii. Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) Pull Event
  1. Jonathan Basch: I sent a photo of the Littleton brochure as an example of what we can do. It is more narrow in scope than Pepperell (no prizes, etc.) but still encourages removal.
  2. Possible locations for a garlic mustard removal event:
    - a. Williams Barn; likely has multiple invasives, and enough parking for large groups, and people can spread out
    - b. Cow Pond playing fields; they also have a large parking availability
    - c. Prescott Center playing fields
  3. Ann Carpenter: I can write and submit an article to the Groton Herald regarding treatment methods for garlic mustard prior to the event, to highlight the event

**ACTION ITEM: Jonathan Basch to scope out locations for garlic mustard pull event**

**ACTION ITEM: Ann Carpenter to write article to publish in Groton Herald about garlic mustard pull event and general identification and removal techniques**

**ACTION ITEM: Brian Bettencourt to create previously discussed brochure regarding Japanese stiltgrass, to free up time for Ann to write garlic mustard article**

4. Garlic mustard is easy to treat and this would be performative as a learning experience but not necessarily very useful for controlling invasives throughout the Town
5. Jonathan Basch: it gets people involved with invasive removal and encourages people to identify invasives on their own
6. Brian Bettencourt: I make pesto every year from the garlic mustard in my yard. It's possible we can get a chef (personal friend) to try to do a live demonstration of

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- homemade pasta and pesto from the garlic mustard that is pulled from the property
7. It can be pulled any time of year if you're not planning to eat it, but best time to host the event for maximizing the flavor is to do it in early spring, before the plant flowers
    - a. Are there any food licensing requirements?
      - i. A demonstration of how to make pesto is okay, but we cannot sell any without a Servsafe certification
  - iv. Japanese barberry in Lawrence Grove/Hemlock Woods
    1. We should do work while the ground is still moist in the early spring. Using shovels was most effective for the barberry in Town Forest
  - v. Grants to apply for:
    1. Wild and Scenic grants will be available in 2025
      - a. Jonathan Basch: We could request a grant for an entire town survey of invasives. Would involve hiring contractors for locating and possibly treating areas outside of our ability
      - b. Brian Bettencourt: we could scout areas with a drone, if we had one
        - i. Ron Strohsahl: it is possible to create orthoimagery from drone photos using free software. Images can be imported into ArcGIS and used to identifying invasives extent or document the effects of our treatments
        - ii. Jonathan Basch: could also use a drone to fly over Nashua River banks, without having to kayak or walk the river edge
        - iii. Unsure of why drone herbicide spraying has not yet been approved. Would Likely need to be approval by MDAR in addition to statehouse
  - vi. Japanese knotweed patches along Nashua River bank in Town Forest
    1. Jonathan Basch: I have GPS pins of locations. They are located upstream from the Dead River
    2. Olin Lathrop: That area might already be treated by MA Fish and Wildlife Department. Access might be difficult with a heavy backpack sprayer depending how far away it is from the parking area
    3. Ann Carpenter: We could use a kayak/canoe to get to the locations to spray
  - vii. Continued Treatment Locations:
    1. Groton Electric and Light Department
    2. Hayden Road
    3. Surrenden Farms
3. The sixth order of business was: all other business
- a. Japanese knotweed article sent by Brian Bettencourt
    - i. Olin Lathrop: We should note they did not try triclopyr, which we have observed is effective when diluted more than recommended on the label

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- ii. We also find the cut-and-drip method in the spring helps accessibility to the plants in the fall by reducing the height of the leaves for foliar spraying
- iii. Ron Strohsahl: they also used more herbicide doing stem injections than foliar spraying
  - 1. Olin Lathrop: they used 8ml per stem for stem injections, which is a large quantity. We use  $\frac{1}{4}$  that amount during our cut-and-drip method.
- iv. Interesting note: it may create resistance to glyphosate
- b. Giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*) observed by Brian Bettencourt on Cape Cod
  - i. Not seen in Groton, yet
- c. "Lingering ash"
  - i. Olin Lathrop: lingering green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) breeding program in Ohio has shown success, but black ash (*F. nigra*) may have more inherent resistance

**ACTION ITEM: Olin Lathrop to reach out to MDAR about efforts to identify "lingering ash" throughout Massachusetts**

- 4. Meeting Adjournment
  - a. Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn
  - b. Brian Bettencourt seconded
  - c. The motion to adjourn approved by unanimous roll call vote

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

**OLD ACTION ITEMS + NEW:**

1. Jonathan Basch will check email accounts listed on the account update.
2. Olin Lathrop to purchase jug of Garlon 4 Ultra for Committee use, pending fund transfer from Conservation Commission
3. Ron Strohsahl to add GPS locations to Committee's ArcGIS map
4. Olin Lathrop to relay Invasive Species Committee discussion to Anna Eliot; Committee is willing to treat the area but will need assistance
5. Jonathan Basch to scope out locations for garlic mustard pull
6. Ann Carpenter to write article for Groton Herald for publishing in the spring about garlic mustard
7. Brian Bettencourt to create brochure for Japanese stiltgrass
8. Olin Lathrop to reach out to MDAR about efforts to identify "lingering ash" throughout Massachusetts