

**Town of Groton
Invasive Species Committee
2 February 2026
Meeting Minutes**



Town of
Groton
Massachusetts

Committee Members Present:

Jonathan Basch
Olin Lathrop
Adam Burnett
Ron Strohsahl
Ann Carpenter

Committee Members Not Present:

Brian Bettencourt
Charlotte Weigel

Agenda:

1. Review minutes and action items from last meeting
 2. Update from the Groton Town Forest Meeting
 3. Vegetation Management Plan
 4. Upcoming events and treatments
 5. All other business
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The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

1. The first order of business was review of minutes and actions items from the last meeting.
 - a. Review of the minutes:
 - The minutes were reviewed and edited contemporaneously
 - Olin Lathrop moved to approve the minutes as amended
 - Adam Burnett seconded the motion
 - The amended minutes approved by unanimous vote
 - b. Review of the action items:
 1. **Jonathan Basch** to purchase up to four lanternfly traps for up to \$25- completed
 2. **Olin Lathrop** to discuss placing the traps on the Olivia Way homeowner property, who is now a Stewardship Committee member
 - a. Will follow-up with the stewardship committee tomorrow evening
 3. **Jonathan Basch** to research Category 40 Rights of Way management treatment
 - a. Completed - will provide a summary for the meeting notes - **New Action item:** Jonathan to reach out to the (Department of Public Works) DPW head- Brian Callahan
 4. **Ron Strohsahl** to edit Vegetative Management Plan (VMP) for additional accuracy- on hold pending discussion with Brian Callahan
 5. **Olin Lathrop** to visit Groton Hills to estimate Japanese barberry coverage and required efforts for removal

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- a. Olin shared pictures from site visit- extensive barberry - acres of barberry - beyond treatment capability of groton committee
 - b. Could be a good location for experimentation with lowest levels of herbicide that are effective on barberry
 - c. Also visited Lawrence woods - no evidence of barberry regrowth
6. **Adam Burnett** to submit reimbursement receipt to Town for sprayer extension purchase
 - o Adam brought his receipt - receipt was signed by the committee members present. The purchase had previously been approved by the committee and documented in the meeting minutes

2. The next order of business was the update from the Groton Town Forest Meeting-
 - o Jonathan met the new Town Forest committee members at their meeting (04/08/26). They are working with Mass Audubon on some habitat improvement projects.
 - o Jonathan shared our ongoing treatment activities and previous surveying of invasive plants in the Town Forest with the committee members and also alerted them to the presence of Japanese stiltgrass at the parking area that could spread with disruption
3. The next order of business was the Vegetation Management Plan- topic tabled until discussion with DPW can be arranged to gauge support and interest
4. Upcoming events and treatments
 - o Removal of Barberry at the Town Forest planned for the upcoming weekend (04/25/26 and 04/26/26).
 - o **Action** for Jonathan to send email to schedule
 - o Ann has availability Saturday afternoon
5. All other business
 - o Update on Williams Barn volunteer activity (Adam Burnett and Ann Carpenter)
 - Adam: Ryan Hennrikus from NRWA coordinated the activity with the Groton school students 10-12 students and one teacher. Recommended leaving the bittersweet until we could treat it with herbicide. Focused on barberry and honeysuckle. Estimated 50 barberry plants removed
 - Ann: Could have used more shovels and a few rakes. Discussed proper Tick etiquette and how to recognize poison ivy
 - o Ron Strohsahl: Passed the applicator license exam - Insurance is through employer
 - o Olin Lathrop: Careful reading of the law for pesticide insurance indicates that we do not need insurance since we are performing on behalf of the town
 - o Ron Strohsahl: Removed burning bush with a reciprocating saw to cut roots - quick and effective
6. Meeting Adjournment
 - o Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn
 - o Ron Strohsahl seconded
 - o The motion to adjourn approved by unanimous roll call vote

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM

New and running action items:

1. **Olin Lathrop** to discuss placing the Lanternfly traps adjacent to the Olivia Way homeowner property, who is now a Stewardship Committee member
2. **Adam Burnett** to submit reimbursement receipt to Town for sprayer extension purchase
3. **Jonathan Basch** to reach out to the (Department of Public Works) DPW head- Brian Callahan
4. **Jonathan Basch** to send email to schedule barberry removal at Groton Town Forest

333 CMR 11.00 Core Framework

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources has regulatory jurisdiction over herbicide application in rights-of-way (ROW) areas. 333 CMR 11.00 governs the use of herbicides as part of vegetation management in support of the functioning and use of ROWs, while minimizing potential impacts on human health and the environment. [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

The regulation's stated goals include ensuring an **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** approach to vegetation management, establishing standards to prevent unreasonable risks to humans and the environment, and providing opportunity for public and municipal agency input on herbicide applications in environmentally sensitive areas. [Justia](https://www.justia.com)

Who Must Comply

An "Applicant" is defined as any person representing any federal, state, or local government or agency, utility, railroad, or pipeline that intends to maintain a right-of-way in the Commonwealth by application of herbicides. [Legal Information Institute](https://www.legalinformationinstitute.com)

Standard Requirements (VMP + YOP)

For routine herbicide use in ROWs, applicants must prepare and obtain approval for two key planning documents:

- **Vegetation Management Plan (VMP)** — a long-term plan for the ROW
- **Yearly Operational Plan (YOP)** — an annual plan detailing specific herbicide applications

The YOP must be available at the work site at all times during herbicide applications and made available to the Department and municipal officials including the Conservation Commission and Board of Health upon reasonable request. Applicators must also be appropriately certified by the Department. [Legal Information Institute](https://www.legalinformationinstitute.com)

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Limited Application Waiver (LAW)

For one-time treatments without a full VMP/YOP, a **Limited Application Waiver** is available:

The Department may, at its sole discretion, issue Limited Application Waivers to applicants wishing to apply herbicides to clear or maintain rights-of-way without VMPs or YOPs, but only when: (1) the application will not occur more than once in a five-year period, or (2) the application is necessary to protect public health or safety. The applicant must still adhere to all public notification requirements and provide the Department with a letter establishing the concurrence of the chief elected official or board of selectmen of the municipality where the application is to be made. [Legal Information Institute](#)

Sensitive Area Restrictions (333 CMR 11.04)

These are the most operationally significant constraints for Groton-area work:

Wetlands & Water: No herbicide shall be applied on or within **10 feet** of a Wetland, Water Over a Wetland, the mean annual high-water line of any River, or any Certified Vernal Pool. [Legal Information Institute](#)

Drift restrictions: No person shall apply herbicides in a manner that results in drift to any area within **10 feet** of standing or flowing water in a wetland; within **400 feet** of a public drinking water supply well; within **100 feet** of any Class A surface water used as a public water supply; or within **50 feet** of a private well. [Legal Information Institute](#)

State-listed Species Habitat: No herbicide may be applied within State-listed Species Habitat unless approved by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. [Legal Information Institute](#)

Approved herbicides in sensitive areas: Only herbicides specified as acceptable for use in sensitive areas under the Cooperative Agreement between the Department of Agricultural Resources and the Department of Environmental Protection may be used in sensitive areas. [Legal Information Institute](#)

Groundwater Protections

No person shall apply any herbicide identified as a Potential Ground Water Contaminant (pursuant to 333 CMR 12.00) to a right-of-way. Applicators must also obtain a current list of identified private wells within 100 feet of the right-of-way from the Board of Health before treatment. [Legal Information Institute](#)

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Practical Implications for Groton's Knotweed Work

Given that Groton has numerous wetlands, streams, and private wells, the key practical constraints are likely:

1. **10-foot no-spray buffers** around all wetlands and waterways
2. **50-foot buffers** around any private wells
3. **Applicator certification** required — work must be done by or under a certified applicator
4. **Municipal concurrence** needed for a Limited Application Waiver (selectboard/town manager sign-off)
5. **Conservation Commission notification** at least 21 days before proposed application near wetlands/waterways