Town of Groton
Invasive Species Committee
19 October 2026
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:	Committee Members Not Present:
Jonathan Basch	Brian Bettencourt
Olin Lathrop	Ann Carpenter
Adam Burnett	
Ron Strohsahl	

Agenda:

1. Review minutes and action items from last meeting
2. Update on Forestry Project/Invasive Species control plan for the Town Forest
3. Review of recent events/ treatments
4. Upcoming events and treatments
5. Plan for Carol Wheeler Park
6. All other business

The Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.

1. The first order of business was: Review minutes and action items from the September meeting
    a. Minutes:
        i. Review of the September meeting minutes was postponed until the November meeting.
    b. Action Items:
        i. Assigned Previously:
            1. Jonathan Basch to contact NRWA and send the link to the existing brochures to NRWA for display inside their office - pending, will recontact NRWA
            2. Committee members should visit the Town Forest to review the cutting location and current vegetative cover type - completed
            3. Olin Lathrop to contact Charlotte Steeves regarding Olivia Way homeowner wishing to mechanically remove invasives on Conservation Commission lands - completed

ACTION ITEM: Olin Lathrop will follow up with Charlotte Steeves to see if the homeowner reached out to begin removal

2. The second order of business was: Update on Forestry Project/Invasive Species control plan for the Town Forest
    a. Ned Cahoon from Town Forest Committee and forestry contractor for the Town attended the meeting to discuss the proposed work
    b. Brief overview of plan for the Town Forest tree cutting
        i. Approximately 1 acre dead red pines (*Pinus rigida*) in Town Forest
            1. The trees are dead and for safety the Town Forest Committee has chosen to remove them
                a. The trees have no commercial value
                b. Decision/vote in Town Forest Committee has already been made to approve the removal

ii. The Forest Stewardship/Resource Management/Cutting Plan was submitted to the State (DCR) for approval, but got letter from Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) under the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) for impact to rare species habitat
    a. NHESP indicated that the work needed to be completed within a time restriction. Specifically, all work must be completed between October 15-March 15

iii. DFW requested that the Forest Stewardship Plan needs to address how they plan to address invasive vegetation before, and after, the removal of the trees, before DFW will grant approval

iv. The Conservation Restriction recorded on the Town Forest property also specifies that any invasive plant treatment must have Invasive Management Plan (IMP) approved
    1. The IMP needs to be reviewed and approved by DFW/NHESP
    2. Forest Stewardship Plan has already been reviewed by DFW/NHESP/DCR and includes what invasives are in Town Forest, what is risk, etc. but the Town Forest Committee does not have an IMP
        a. The Town Forest Committee is requesting assistance from the Invasive Species Committee to produce the IMP
    3. Olin Lathrop: they want you to address how and when you will treat the invasive vegetation, which is why what was submitted was not approved
    4. Jonathan Basch: the IMP should be a separate document from the Forest Stewardship Plan
        a. Our Committee recommends: pre-work survey for invasives, pre-control treatments to reduce invasives, how the equipment during cutting would be managed to minimize introduction of invasive species, a survey of extant invasives post-cutting, and specifying what types of treatments will be conducted to reduce the invasive population
    5. Forestry contractor indicates that all treatments will probably be post-treatment because of the time restriction, and work is already scheduled to occur in the fall/winter of this year
        a. Olin Lathrop: Solely performing post-treatment to invasives will not work
    6. Jonathan Basch: To prepare the document for the Town Forest Committee, our Committee has to approve of methods that will be conducted, and we think pre-treatment is necessary to be effective. If pre-treatment is not proposed, the Committee will not be able to approve the proposed plan.

v. Adam Burnett: cutting site is at risk for Asiatic bittersweet because there is mature source nearby
    1. Forestry contractor insists that removing the trees will not allow any significant increase in sunlight to reach the forest floor because the trees are already dead and there is no leaf cover currently. So, existing populations of Asiatic bittersweet won't suddenly be more likely to sprout with the sun exposure because the habitat is essentially already clear cut
    2. Adam Burnett: add into plan to eliminate additional seed sources surrounding the 1 acre area to be cleared to prevent spread into the forest opening

vi. The Forest Stewardship Plan outlines that they intend to cut the trees this fall/winter (2026-2027), woodchip the existing pines (and remove chips from site), and then plant natives (red/white oak, American hazelnut, viburnums, blueberries, native ground cover species)
   1. Olin Lathrop: You can't control the invasives without damaging the native plants if you plant them immediately after the work is completed
      a. Recommend IMP include that proposed native plantings won't be completed until 2028
   2. Forester: Native plantings will likely be phased and include spot treatments for invasives

vii. Town Forest Committee would like assistance from Invasive Species Committee, and would like us to monitor and conduct the invasive species treatments
   1. Jonathan Basch: The frequency and degree of monitoring in an area this size is labor intensive and requires a level of effort that is greater than the what the Invasive Species Committee can provide
   2. The Invasive Committee recommends that Town Forest Committee include costs to hire contractors to provide the initial treatments in grant requests/habitat management grants

viii. Jonathan Basch: The Invasive Species Committee will not be able to assist with the IMP or conducting the initial invasive management treatments because:
   1. We don't agree with the current proposed methods
   2. We cannot meet the project timeline to produce the IMP document, approve it internally, and get it approved before cutting is proposed.
   3. However, The Invasive Species Committee will review an IMP that Town Forest Committee/forestry contractor prepares and provide comments to be integrated into the document. The Committee can also potentially include future monitoring into our scheduled treatment sites, but not until after the initial post-cutting treatment is conducted first, to lower the density and effort required to complete follow-up spot treatments

3. The third order of business was: Review of recent events/ treatments
   a. *Ailanthus* treatment at Olivia Way
      i. Slash and squirt method was conducted on approximately 30 trees
      ii. The property owner was planning on removing the tree after treatment
         1. Olin Lathrop: he needs to get Conservation Commission approval before removal, and we want to ensure that the tree is dead prior to removal
         2. Invasive Committee will return to check trees in summer 2027 to check effectiveness
   b. Olin Lathrop treated Asiatic bittersweet at the end of Hayden Road and the previous treatments were very effective. He was able to treat beyond the initial treatment area, deeper into the forest
   c. Lost Lake Fire Station
      i. Two small *Ailanthus* plants were treated
      ii. Previous treatments to *Ailanthus* very effective, none surviving previous treatments
   d. One more treatment of all Japanese knotweed locations (5 sites)

i. GELD site is ongoing issue - new sprouts
ii. Treatment at telephone poles along Farmers Row, across from the General Field is effective
iii. Nod Road: Olin observed that the treated areas that are exposed to more sunlight are more effective in killing vegetation than the shaded areas.
    1. There are new sprouts growing, but population has been significantly reduced
iv. Nipmuc Meadows: could not find any additional knotweed (1 stem at previous treatment)
v. Hayden Road (end) - decreasing population but still need to complete additional treatments
    1. Focusing on using dilute triclopyr on Asiatic bittersweet in the same area
vi. Need to revisit the Country Club - slowly pushing it back down the hill

e. *Phragmites* treatments
    i. Eliades - less than last year, but still have growth
    ii. Priest - may have hit last remaining *Phragmites* population

4. The fourth order of business was: Upcoming events and treatments
    a. Middle School presentation was completed on October 13th
        i. Ann sent an update on the presentation via email
            1. Approximately 180 students attended
            2. We will need more laminated handouts for next year

5. The fifth order of business was: Plan for Carol Wheeler Park
    a. Japanese knotweed and bittersweet throughout the Park
    b. We received grant funding for restoration
        i. The Committee will need to make a plan to purchase the restoration plantings, and potentially write to the Stewardship Committee to delay the report until after the invasive treatments are completed, so that overspray damage is minimized
        ii. Olin Lathrop/Adam Burnett are on Stewardship Committee and can relay the information

ACTION ITEM: Olin and Adam to report back on Stewardship Committee meeting

6. The sixth order of business was: all other business
    a. Riverfest will be June 13, 2027
    b. Spotted lanternfly observed in Groton near Lost Lake
    c. Article about American beech tree genetic resistance

ACTION ITEM: Ron Strohsahl to send A. beech article to rest of the Committee

7. Meeting Adjournment
    a. Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn
    b. Ron Strohsahl seconded
    c. The motion to adjourn approved by unanimous vote

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

OLD ACTION ITEMS + NEW:

1. Jonathan Basch to contact NRWA and send the link to the existing brochures to NRWA for display inside their office - pending, will recontact NRWA
2. Olin Lathrop will follow up with Charlotte Steeves to see if the Olivia Way homeowner contacted conservation to begin removal of invasives on property adjacent to their house
3. Olin and Adam to report back on Stewardship Committee meeting
4. Ron Strohsahl to send A. beech article to rest of the Committee