

Biodiversity / Education Subcommittee November 21, 2011
Brainstorm ideas for education in Spring 2012

Present: Nina Banwell, Jon Bouton, Helene Hickey, Larry Litten, Barbara McIlroy, Gail McPeck, Joyce Noll, Elizabeth Tobiasson. Jon is our Vermont liaison, as a resident of Hartford, the Windsor County forester and a link to the newly formed Ottauquechee Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (OCISMA), now housed at VINS.

The purpose of this special meeting was to create a wider and more coordinated educational effort for the Upper Valley, initially about the invasive plants that threaten the health of our forests, but also the native plants that get displaced by the invaders and why we don't want to lose them; ie promote biodiversity. Our intent is to persuade folks to inventory and consider the plants on their own land, with a goal of helping to promote/protect the health of our forests. If individuals can be encouraged to work with their neighbors, we think this is the most useful approach, as it provides company and incentive for action. Our recent garlic mustard initiative is a model.

At the end of these notes are some upcoming and related educational efforts in the region. Here is an outline of what we would like to see. We will work on a detailed outline, to take to the Valley News.

General campaign to educate the public about invasive plants –

The group felt the education of the public has been a bit haphazard, and we wish to develop a proposal to bring to the editors of the Valley News. We felt that an educational campaign on invasive plants should have the following components:

- 1) Focus on one plant at a time, as a regular feature. Once a month seems right.
- 2) We shouldn't overwhelm the audience with too many plants. Folks need to start small.
- 3) Stories / articles should be similar in format, and run as a series.
- 4) Plants should be featured when the time is right. Example, May for garlic mustard when it is in flower, October/November for Burning Bush when it is easy to spot seedling escapees.
- 5) For each plant, there should be a detailed, concise and clear sidebar, with detailed photos for identification purposes.
- 6) For each plant, there should be an accompanying article, with photos, that tells some interesting stories about the plant-of-the-month and the folks who struggle to control them...including some experiments, research and success stories. Success stories might help motivate action. Lists of alternative plant to replace invasives is also good idea (example: those with red berries, fall color, wildlife value, etc).
- 7) The group will begin to fill in details on a spreadsheet-type document, so that early next year we can go to the Valley News with a fairly complete outline of sequence, content and examples that might work for the stories.

Resources for this project: We can call upon many local resources for examples and expertise. We should coordinate this work with both the Valley News and with Henry Homeyer, as Henry is willing to help out with his own articles and is probably able to coordinate with our proposed educational series. We can find help with NH and VT foresters, White Mt National Forest, Green Mt National Forest, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Army Corp projects in area (Thetford and Hartland), VT Institute of Natural Sciences (Hannah Putnam is contact there), Montshire Museum (Joan Waltermire – on Tuesdays, is one contact there), Northern Woodlands magazine and Chuck Wooster, area Conservation Commissions, the Hanover Conservancy, Native Plant Study Group, UVLT, the new Ottauquechee CISMA and nearby national parks (St Gaudens, Marsh/Billings), garden clubs, Upper Valley Trails Alliance. All of these groups have on-going invasive plant control efforts and have stories to tell. Local residents have stories to tell as well.

A Single Website is Needed for the Upper Valley: We need a one-stop home for a regional website, where folks can go for links for more information, for help with ID and control. There is a developing

mapping effort in both NH and VT that we might tie into as well. Who will host this? Some 501.c.3 makes best sense. We could investigate upgrading the Purple Loosestrife Coalition's site – it still exists.

KNOWN Upcoming Environmental Education Events (partial list)

Hanover Conservation Commission: Tom Wessels – Reading Forested Landscape. Jan 31 Tuesday, 7 pm at the Howe Library. Jon suggested that we ask Tom to talk about 'anticipating the future of our forests', role of invasives in shaping that forest, if left untended.

League of Women Voters: Program under discussion, called *Following Nature's Lead: Creating a Healthy Landscape*. Series with three components: Non-toxic lawn care in March (lawn chemicals and non-chemical lawn care); stormwater conservation; and gardening with 'nature' (reducing lawns, removing invasives, and increasing the use of native plant materials).

Healthy People, Healthy Planet – six-part discussion series based on Northwest Earth Institute booklet. Discussion groups all over region.

Hanover Garden Club: Jan 3– sustainable gardens (John Forti, of Strawberry Banke Museum), and March 6– (Wild?) flowers and Birds (representative from Fairbanks Museum).

Hanover Food CoOp: Annual meeting and Expo, date TBA, will have two sustainable themes: energy conservation and land stewardship. We could have display at this expo, to explain our interests. Larry suggested that we plan to make use of the Sustainable Hanover's new kiosk (movable) – could be used at Town Meeting and elsewhere.

Other possible educational events (partial list)

Green Fire film about Aldo Leopold. Gail is exploring with the Hanover Conservancy the possibility of obtaining a film that can be used here in Upper Valley for showings up to 150 people; we understand that this could be for multiple showings to large audiences. The Howe Everyone's reading series for fall 2012 is considering Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* as text; many complementary events could accompany such an exercise. Elizabeth suggested that the text be used in Upper Valley schools. Web resources on this exist [1]

Road Crew workshop – UNH has for-credit outreach program for road agents on identification and maintenance methods to prevent the spread of roadside invasives. There may be interest in having this happen as a field exercise, with Hanover as host town. If this happens, it should probably just be for road crews in the region.

Repeat garlic mustard effort by neighborhood – we should use this as a 'story'. It was a good experiment, and should continue.

Other possible / similar neighborhood efforts –

Piper's Lane neighborhood, with Helene as contact person, coordinator for that neighborhood. Have volunteers from Garden Club to help, lend tools, expertise in ID, etc. Helene and Nina will explore the possibility of setting up ID help and workday. Helene will consult with her neighbors.

Wolfeboro Road – focus on autumn olive that has escaped in that neighborhood.

Role for Garden Club – offer to train volunteers to help with ID. Coordinate with some of the projects and workdays. Joyce will discuss this with Susan Edwards.

Mapping invasives on the AT: Larry Litten has proposed this for Trails Day project (June?). More than just Hanover for this? *NOTE: We have an offer from Upper Valley Trails Alliance to help educate users of trails and recruit their help with ID / GPS locations of invasives.*

This topic of education will be on the agenda for the **January 10th meeting of the Biodiversity meeting (4 pm at Howe's Rotary Room)**. This ed- group will continue to stay in touch, at least by email, maybe adding other items to the draft spreadsheet, as ideas occur.

[1] Aldo Leopold resources: <http://www.aldoleopold.org/>

Leopold's land ethic: <https://www.aldoleopold.org/AldoLeopold/landethic.shtml> Discussion Guide for Sand County Almanac (via Northwest Earth Institute): <https://www.aldoleopold.org/AldoLeopold/ASCA%20Discussion%20Guide.pdf>