

**BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE
MINUTES: February 21, 2012**

Present: Alan Saucier (Hanover Conservation Commission, Chair), Nina Banwell, Susan Edwards (Hanover Garden Club, Sustainable Hanover), Pete Helm (Upper Valley Land Trust), Barbara McIlroy (scribe), Adair Mulligan (Hanover Conservancy), Vicki Smith (Hanover P&Z staff)

Approval January Minutes: *The minutes of January 2010 were approved as submitted, moved by Nina, seconded by Alan.* It was noted that the January meeting suggested that the Conservation Commission contact the NH Fish&Game Department, and request that hunting regulations for our area be reviewed, to permit a longer doe season. *Alan and Vicki will bring this to the Commission's next meeting as an agenda item.*

Old Business

Conservation Commission Gathering, sponsored by the UVLT, held on Jan 31. Pete Helm reported that there was a good turnout, good conversation. Ruth Bleyler spoke at this meeting about our proposed educational series, Pete supplemented this and the topic was received with interest. A signup sheet was circulated and some names were added; however, the sheet may not have completely around the room. Pete will send Barbara the list of attendees and commission contacts, so that we can gain further evidence of interest in the series. Other educational topics discussed at the meeting focused on how to engage and inform people (including children) about natural areas. There was also an interesting report by someone who works part time for the Corinth Conservation Commission to connect with younger kids in schools. Barbara has copy of the minutes from this event. Also, Pete reported that a naturalist training program is being planned at UVLT by a new staff person, Maggie Stoudnour; Pete will let us know more about this series when finalized. It will be later in the spring, involve 4 weekend series, and is similar to the NH coverts program.

Garlic Mustard Effort for 2012 – for UVLT, Hanover, possibly the Upper Valley. We must set date(s) in May when plant is in flower. The tentative date is the week of 6th of May. It was noted that our mild winter may advance the emergence of the plant. There was a report about an experiment with use of herbicide spraying of the plant, just after the first frost in the fall, using two applications of dilute roundup foliar spray. The experiment needs to be checked before spring. It was suggested that a week of garlic mustard pulling might end with a party for the volunteers. The Black Center and the parking lot at UVLT were suggested as possible venues. Barbara will do outreach to all leaders now, to see if still they are still available for 2012. If needed, ask their help in finding replacement leaders, notifying helpers, and recruiting more helpers.

Meeting with Richmond School: Susan, Nina, Barbara and Helene Hickey met on Feb 7th with 7th grade biology teachers Ginger Wallis and Chris O'Brien, as well as Jonathan Brush (SAU 70 Plant/Facilities director) and shared educational materials about garlic mustard that might make a useful addendum to curriculum, as the school has serious population of the plant. The result: A possible workday for the students, parents and neighborhood. Susan has a list serve for neighbors, to help share information about this. A possible mapping effort in April; Pete suggested this mapping might involve Richmond students using GPS to then post the results on a

google earth map. Jonathan Brush is keen to commit his crew for something like a half day of work behind the school, and indicated we can use the school dumpster for disposal of garlic mustard (after counting bags!). Vicki suggested that it might make better sense to put the crew to work on buckthorn and barberry, and let the kids do garlic mustard. The subject of deer ticks arose here. We did not discuss the dumping of grass clippings and other landscape waste in this area.

At this meeting, there was also mention of the HHS inventory and plan of action for invasives on the high school property, a possible project for some of Jeannie Kornfeld's AP Environmental Studies students in May. Jonathan Brush was keen to have this happen, as it would help with his care of the property. Perhaps the HHS students could consult with Pete about how he organized the UVLT work on the Gateway property in Norwich. He is using Hypertherm volunteers for this work. It is good to document areas of concern for future monitoring to determine success / problems over time.

Replanting at Mink Brook - Adair reported that this is the third and final year of invasives control at Mink Brook, working with Ehard Frost and a NRCS grant. Most of the affected is in floodplain, with some upland habitat. Work was done on the buckthorn, knotweed and honeysuckle that had dominated the area. The preserve's stewardship committee settled on plant species....such as silver maple, (not box elder). There will be some volunteer help with this project. Adair will let us know when this workday is scheduled. The plan is to make it educational as well. Mesh protectors for the new plants will be used to discourage deer and rodents until the plants are established. A question arose about the surface of ground between plants, since that is pretty bare as yet; Adair will investigate this, as there may be some native grasses or other herbaceous plants that are part of that ecosystem and might help prevent invasives from moving back in.

Education Project: Alan and Barbara shared the *draft* proposal about Valley News educational series. It got a few edits. The list of resources for this series is growing, with help from area foresters, and the TNC-VT, UVLT and others. The proposal could be used as a formal letter of request for discussion of proposal. It was agreed that the education subcommittee could help contact relevant sources that we've collected to help gather materials if we get the go-ahead for the series. Barbara will get the list of Conservation Commission chairmen (and annual reports) from Pete Helm, and survey these people. We didn't discuss who should go to the meeting with editors of V/N, but Alan is nearly ready to talk to Krista Langlois about how best to proceed. Ideally, we would work with a reporter at the Valley News. *If we can't work with reporter, then we will have to reconsider the structure of this project.*

Website for Biodiversity Committee: Alan and Barbara met to discuss this, and shared a draft outline. Vicki will be contact person for the committee. This is just a rudimentary start. The group made a few suggestions in format. It would be nice to have links and photo(s) on our webpage. Barbara will take this to Beth Rivard to get initial setup.

Work Day Efforts for 2012:

Holding Bed: We now have a key volunteer to help maintain the beds. Vicki will order 50 bare-root hazelnuts from the state nursery (or Grafton conservation district), to use for openings in the holding bed. The funds will come from the special Ledyard Tree Fund. Beds need a bit of cleaning up.

Tanzi Tract – This will require some half day of work to remove invasive saplings (mostly buckthorn). Can the Garden Club Co-sponsor this? [deferred to March meeting]

Entrance to Mink Brook West – clean up / prune / replant? Nina, Susan and Judy Reeve? [deferred to the March agenda]

Rinker Proposal: A draft proposal listing various options for the invasives at Rinker-Steel was discussed. The report will have thorough consideration at the March meeting, with final draft circulated in advance of the meeting.

Other Business

CISMA meeting – CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) This topic has been postponed until March meeting.

Next Meeting: 3rd Tuesday, March 20 at 4:30 pm at the Howe Library Rotary Room