

BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE, Hanover Conservation Commission
MINUTES: October 18, 2012

Present: Nina Banwell, Helene Hickey, Barbara McIlroy (scribe) Joyce Noll (Hanover Garden Club), Adair Mulligan (Hanover Conservancy), Alan Saucier (chair, Hanover Cons Comm), Vicki Smith (P&Z staff), Elizabeth Tobiasson.

Visitors: Liz King (Kendal), Jeannie Kornfeld (Hanover High School, instructor for AP Environmental Studies and advisor to Environmental Club)

Minutes – Vicki moved, and Alan seconded the motion that September minutes be approved, as circulated. Motion carried.

SCHOOLS EFFORTS:

Hanover High School: Jeannie Kornfeld described the long-term canopy study of Conservancy and Tanzi Tract sample plots. This year, it was clear that buckthorn seedlings > 1 meter tall are a much smaller portion (<3%) of the replacement plants, due to our pulling efforts this past spring. The counts on Conservancy lands were a good bit higher, although Adair reported that 10 bags of seedlings and small saplings had been pulled recently. Jeannie will share this report with Vicki, who asked that it be available for the town's website.

Jeannie also reported that the Environmental Club wanted to ID (and flag and remove) invasive plants on Friday April 26th, the High School Earth Day event. The AP Environmental Study students would begin a program of invasives control in mid-May, based on mapping done by two AP students last year. The Biodiversity Committee can assist in these efforts by helping train students on ID of the invasives and in locating tools to use for removal and possibly helping on some of the workdays. The possibility of student reporters for this project was raised; we hope these efforts might make 'news'. It would also be a way to engage parents and school board – so we have more eyes on the ground.

Ray School: Gail McPeck has made a start for a Ray School restoration effort. No update in October; we hope for a January report.

HERBICIDE POLICY:

Liz King outlined her concerns about the quantity of poison ivy on the Mink Brook Natural Area (W side of Rte 10 south), especially near trail where people and dogs walk; she noted the toxin (urushiol) often gets onto the coats of pets, and affects owners. She would like to see some way to reduce the amount of PI near the trails. It was noted that poison ivy is a native plant. The discussion was reduced to the following – Vicki remarked that the town does not want to get involved with having pesticide licensed personnel nor store the associated products. It was noted that we do need to use herbicide when volunteers are limited due to the size/or quantity of vegetation; it is waste of time if no cut-stem treatment is used to actually kill the plant roots. There was clear frustration in limits imposed by this policy; it should be revisited – with no in-house capacity, then much more money needs to be budgeted, if town lands are to be restored/maintained. It was observed that Lebanon now has two members of DPW who have

non-for-profit license and one public member of the Conservation Commission who has similar license – this person is covered under the City’s insurance for work on City’s land.

Related: Road Crew / DPW: There was some discussion about what to do with the seven copies of Helene’s *Dangerous Travelers* DVD, about how road maintenance measures can help OR hinder the spread of invasive plants. Several copies of the DVD are in circulation with assorted Biodiversity members (Helene kept track); the DVDs will eventually end up with the planning department and at the Howe and Etna libraries. [Update: Helene tracked down the various copies; they are getting shared.] Here is a link to the Forest Service where you can try to download the same material:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/invasivespecies/prevention/dangeroustravelers.shtml>

RESTORATION WORK:

Holding Beds: Barbara distributed a summary of status of the two holding beds at the sewer plant. Currently, many of the plants are getting quite large and need to be placed on restoration sites. The new holding bed needs to be mulched, as weeding is complete. Joyce will ask Susan Edwards to send out a request to Hanover Garden Club members for ‘pop-up’ work party for help with this effort. [update: DONE 10/31 by 7 volunteers – took 45 minutes]

Rinker Tract: Barbara and Vicki reported on the work done by Boy Scout Davie Stocken at the Rinker Tract. He had a total 19 volunteers, worked two days to remove invasive plants on 700 sf, mostly on flat area on N side of pond. Trees too large to pull were flagged (approx 120). The Biodiversity Committee advised that we plan for work project this fall to get a permit and hire a licensed person to do cut-stem work on the flagged trees., this fall when most leaves are down (considered the time to get best results). Barbara has marked about 20 burning bush trees on the Steele land, which should also be removed. There are thousands of tiny seedlings there, which will need many years of control/monitoring. Vicki will arrange to obtain the contractor and state permit for this fall project. [UPDATE: This event happened on November 10; the Steele Tract was not treated at this time]

Hayes Land: There will be no more field work at the Hayes tract this fall; however the trees too large for hand removal need to be flagged this winter for future cut-stem work. We should be thinking about where the next work projects should focus. Plenty of barberries are left; a few multiflora roses.

Planting plans for restoration in 2013: For both Hayes and Rinker, we need to plan for brush disposal (or not) and installation of shrubs from the holding beds for these two (and other) sites is in order during winter planning meetings. We will need some advice as to which shrubs go where.

OUTREACH / EDUCATION:

Website: Draft material for our webpage was reviewed. Alan and Barbara will work on suitable quote for this ‘fall’ page – it features colorful native alternatives to barberry and burning bush shrubs and Norway maple trees. The Committee began a discussion of things to post on the town’s website, such as progress reports, workday invitations, notes on species behavior, website links, selected research papers.

Tanzi Tract: poster will be completed for the large (24"x24") sturdy sign structure just inside the stonewall. Elizabeth and Barbara will work to merge two earlier small format posters into large one for this space. This poster will explain history of the work days (starting in 2002), problem plants and the April 2012 work party, with a particular focus on barberries in particular, since this plant is invading the tract from nearby neighborhoods.

Valley News: This is on-going challenge. We can foresee several future events that might make for a good photo op. We need to explore possibility of op-ed features.

Stewardship Network Proposal: Barbara reported on a meeting held on September 27, organized by Malin Clyde (UNH ext). More than 80 attendees, representing various governmental and non-profits organizations, gathered to learn more from the folks in MI who administer the Stewardship Network there (see www.stewardshipnetwork.org to see what they do). Basically, it is a non-profit umbrella group that enables regional stewardship groups (called clusters) to be trained and put into restoration and outreach projects, by providing a unified calendar of events, training sessions, help with seeking and administering grants, and education. The UNH folks have submitted a grant proposal to the US Forest Service, in hope of 3-years of funding. The Conservation Commission submitted a letter in support for this proposal that was shared at the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ruderal Plants: This term refers to plants that populate disturbed areas or 'waste spaces such as road edges'. Some plants stay just in such areas; others seem to escape into nearby fields. Some examples that seem fairly well behaved are Sweet White Clover, and Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). Those plants that seem new and escaping into fields are: mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), and Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) and Wild Chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), and possibly prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*).

Garlic Mustard Winter Planning Meetings: This should happen in early January, with neighborhood representation to help plan workdays and educational campaign.

'Buy-in' from Institutions:

This topic was inserted at the end of the agenda. If the high school is going to deal with the invasives on its land, perhaps other institutions can be persuaded to follow suit? Vicki noted that she had raised the topic of invasive plants at input session for updating master plan at Dartmouth; Barbara had made similar inquiries. Others noted that the 'heads / directors' of local institution need to be approached to gain real support for adoption of this goal; without direction/support from the 'top', the policy won't be adopted by an institution by staff nor given priority in planning for landscape care. The Conservancy and UVLT have started this process; we began to list institutions that might be approached, and came up with Town of Hanover, Hypertherm, Dartmouth College, power company, Wheelock Terrace, Kendal, Co-Op, etc. How to approach, say with letter and/or visit, is a matter for the January agenda.

Adair reported that National Grid simply contacts land owners and proceeds with vegetation control. It is her understanding that cut-stem work was done this year on Conservancy land on the south side of Mink Brook. She had asked National Grid to notify the Conservancy when spraying was imminent so that trails could be closed; National Grid called as requested and reported that no spraying would be done.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 16 at 4 PM at the Howe Library Rotary Room. Agenda items for this meeting include: Plan work for 2013, news stories and institutional policy on invasive plants, deer control discussion.