

Douglas Tallamy, Bringing Nature Home (available at the Howe Library)

*"...To me the choice is clear. The costs of increasing the percentage and biomass of natives in our suburban landscapes are small, and the benefits are immense. Increasing the percentage of natives in suburbia is a grassroots solution....."*

*To succeed, we do not need to invoke governmental action; we do not need to purchase large tracts of pristine habitat that no longer exist; we do not need to limit ourselves to sending money to national and international conservation organizations and hoping it will be used productively.*

*Our success is up to each one of us individually. We can each make a measurable difference almost immediately by planting a native [or removing an invasive] nearby. As gardeners and stewards of our land, we have never been so empowered and the ecological stakes have never been so high."*

## **BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE, Hanover Conservation Commission**

**Minutes:** Wednesday, January 16, 2013

Present: Susan Edwards, Pete Helm (UVLT), Helene Hickey, Michael Lunter, Barbara McIlroy, Gail McPeck (Hanover Conservancy), Elizabeth Tobiasson, Vicki Smith (Town Staff)

Visitor: Don Lacy (Lebanon Conservation Commission)

Minutes from October meeting: Minutes were approved as circulated, including corrections by Adair Mulligan.

### **PLANNING FOR 2013**

#### **Education**

Schools: Some schools may have Earth Day events. At Hanover HS an invasive plant ID and control day will be done on April 26, and will be coordinated by the Environmental Club with help from students who mapped last year. Elizabeth offered to help with ID help. AP Environmental Studies students will be free in mid-May and plan for invasives work on HHS lands.

Richmond: It isn't clear that we will have help from 7<sup>th</sup> grade biology students with garlic mustard this year. Gail felt it a bit early to approach the teachers there. We can try to set up garlic mustard displays at the three schools and alert the teachers to make use of the mapping. If we contact principals about this, we may be able to get a message out to parents, and possible helpers.

Ray / Marion Cross: Gail reported that she is working with school staff, and hopes that some invasive plants in the school landscapes will be replaced by native shrubs.

Public: The regional garlic mustard project may serve as a starting point to engage the public on the problems of invasives. We hope to open eyes to keep one noxious plant from gaining an unwanted foothold. This project is ongoing with help and interest from several towns in the region. Details are in reports from ad-hoc steering committee with representatives from several towns. Lebanon and Hartford will join us; possibly other towns as well.

Role for Hanover Garden Club: There will be some expenses for work on garlic mustard campaign. And we can use the help of folks good with shrub pruning and good design skills, in moving shrubs from the holding beds into the Rinker Tract, Hayes tract and elsewhere to help fill the holes left by 2012 control efforts. Susan observed that the Garden Club can certainly help promote work days.

Biodiversity Website: The main focus this spring will be the regional garlic mustard campaign. The Tallamy quote above (located by Alan) is relevant but the group felt it a bit too long to post on the already crowded homepage. Helene offered to work with the quote, to shorten it, or to locate another with similar content. We hope to have workdays organized well in advance, and posted on the website. We also plan

to post associated garlic mustard background materials. Doug Tallamy's expertise is worth a few pointers as well as the VTinvasives.org website. Eventually there may be a page devoted to biodiversity issues, and Tallamy is good start.

### **Restoration Efforts**

Hayes: The brush piles need treatment. Burning is not recommended. Either the brush should be chipped and applied to the bare areas to discourage new invasive seedlings, or just spread over the bare areas. Shrubs should be moved from the holding beds to Hayes. We need help on the what-goes-where.

Rinker / Steele: We also need a planting plan for the flat area where work was done on the Rinker land, and hope to move many plants from the holding bed. The new brush piles could be distributed in the understory since chipping is not feasible. We should plan a workday to remove the burning bush in the Steel portion of this Natural Area. Possible approach: Jeep/chain for the larger plants and handwork for the thousands of smaller plants.

Mink Brook entrance: Work was deferred in 2012; many of the existing plants need pruning, and some holes needs to be filled. It would be ideal to push back on the adjoining invasives in hedgerow though some may be on power company lands, a possible source of help. The bed needs weeding and mulch. Can use volunteers for much of this work. Spring is the ideal time for work here, but there are a number of competing events. Mink Brook west is in need of further attention.

Holding Bed & Policy: Need to remove most plants this year, and place a fall order for spring planting in 2014; the Hazelnuts probably won't be large enough to move. It was felt that these shrubs should go to town (not school) owned lands, and rarely only for other purposes. Gail observed that Balch Hill could use some shrubs for the old Grasse Road section that is now closed; that proposal met with approval.

### **Special Campaigns / Challenges**

Garlic Mustard: *see separate reports on strategy sessions*. Representatives from several towns in the Upper Valley met a few times to outline a broad strategy of outreach and coordinated control efforts. Vicki suggested that we also engage Matt Stevens of the Lyme Conservation Commission since there are several known garlic mustard colonies in Lyme. Elizabeth raised the matter of gaining interest in the Rivendell school community. She has grandchildren in the school, and is aware of the teacher who spurred the terrific student letters to VN editor (some of them about invasive plants), and she will follow up with this district. The group will reach out to other Upper Valley Conservation Commissions.

Buy-in from institutions (see Oct minutes): The sustainability committee was mentioned in this regard, and suggested that we seek its help. Susan replied that their current focus is on recycling and energy. This topic is a challenge, and the garlic mustard challenge is also trying to address this, an agenda item for the next meeting.

Deer Control – a public meeting for fall? There seemed to be interest in this idea, but there was not enough time to discuss this. We could plan on setting up a steering committee to operate in the next few months.

Herbicide and Road Crews: Another continuing discussion... Barbara offered to speak to Julia Griffin to explain limitations on restoration as hampered by the excessive costs of hiring an outside herbicide-licensed person. Some sort of in-house expert would be ideal.

**Next Meeting: Monday March 11, 4pm, Rotary Room**