

## Hanover Biodiversity Committee

**NOTES:** Thursday, February 20, 4:30 pm

**Present:** Nina Banwell, Barbara McIlroy, Jeannie Kornfeld (HHS science teacher)

Jeannie was present to share ideas about how members of the Biodiversity Committee might work with HHS students this spring on biodiversity issues. Since no quorum, we just focused on schools. Here are some of the topics we covered:

### **Garlic Mustard Display and Challenge:**

Students in the Environment Club will put up and plan to promote display, hopefully in the front hall near main entrance. They will monitor the display, and see that supplies and plant are OK. There was discussion about student posters for the school and other public places, and how students might get others to pay attention. Maybe they can create a competition, to see who can locate an unknown garlic mustard colony, make the best poster, etc – with prizes or recognition of some sort? Jeannie would like to have the display up right after the April vacation, so this means Monday April 21. Earth Day will be held on Earth Day April 25. Students sign up in advance to participate in earth day and are excused from their regular classes.

We will get materials to kids on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup>, and give them information for making the case

### **Work on School Grounds in 2014:**

Garlic Mustard: The students will help pull garlic mustard on school grounds (on Barrett Road) as an Earth Day event on Friday April 25, from 1:10 to 2:55. The plants for the display that week may be pretty small, and we can use some adult help there – perhaps start them early and store in the HGC greenhouse to speed them up before April 21.

Other invasives: Some students will also work on pulling invasive shrubs on HHS land where work was started last year. This will happen on Earth Day or this on-going project (started in 2012) might get done by some Earth Day students in the morning, from 9:15 to 11:45. We can use some volunteers to help students with ID. Possible that some of the APES (AP Environmental Studies) students may continue this work after their exams in mid May. We will lend them several weed wrenches for this work.

### **Mink Brook Canopy Study – on going:**

Jeannie reported that APES students studied canopy trees and seedlings in two forested plots along Mink Brook – one in the Tanzi Tract, and one across the stream on Hanover Conservancy Land. This is the 8th year for the study. Restoration work has been done in both locations, but Tanzi has a very different history from the Conservancy land. Jeannie will share the student 2013 survey data with the Biodiversity Committee and with Adair Mulligan at the Conservancy. Jeannie summarized the results – there could be implications for future management efforts on Conservancy land. The Tanzi Tract is pretty stable for now.

**Possible Student Survey on Water Company Land:** Jeannie has been investigating the possibility of APES students setting up some sort of plots to count re-appearance of invasives on land that is now being controlled by Gerry Hawkes (of Woodstock – ForestSavers LLC), who is doing a massive cutting / flame treatment for invasive buckthorns and their re-sprouts. A long term study by students is under consideration, but this is contingent on some sort of funding by the town to support this.

**The Hanover Biodiversity Committee Website Ideas -** Can the students help to make it better?

Home Page Factoid: place interesting details about one particular **native** plant or animal. At the moment there is a factoid about the cold weather adaptations of the Christmas Fern. Such student work could be placed on the homepage with student's name, and we can rotate them in occasionally. We could give awards, or some sort of recognition for most interesting. This might be a project for HHS biology students. To be explored later.

Biodiversity Page: *Biodiversity* is a word that is difficult to get your head around or explain in few words, but *protect biodiversity* is a good way to describe the work we are doing. Our website needs some sort of discussion about what biodiversity is all about and why it is such an important concept. Right now it is a sketchy file on an old Etna computer, with a jumble of random notes about the problems of invasive plants, assorted notes on importance of pollinators, importance of using native vegetation and Doug Tallamy's message, etc. Jeannie said that this theme underlies the APES course she is teaching, that they touch on it at points throughout the year, and that she is keen on giving this as an assignment to the APES students near the end of the year. She is thinking she will put both classes to work on it and then let them merge results. TOTALLY AWESOME.

**SAU 70 Policy on Invasive Plants on School Property:**

The topic needs to be addressed at a higher level, such as Superintendent and / or School Board. It isn't clear if we can engage teachers and students in helping with this. BUT, once a policy is in place, then the grounds crew and teaching staff have a clear indication of official support for efforts / education with focus on invasives and restoration efforts for school property.

**Next Biodiversity Meeting:** March 27 at 4pm [note earlier time]