

## **Biodiversity Committee of Hanover Conservation Commission**

**Minutes: May 27, 2014**

### ANNOUNCEMENTS – see below

Attendees: Nina Banwell, Michel Lunter, Gail McPeck, Barbara McIlroy, Vicki Smith

Minutes: Minutes from March were reviewed and approved as circulated.

### **Review of DRAFT Invasives Control / Herbicide Policy**

Members reviewed the draft document and decided the following:

- The document should be divided into two parts: a cover letter for the Conservation Commission, and a policy document for 1) a general strategy for invasives control and 2) a strategy for use of herbicide.
- The document should refer to the NH invasives list.
- The document should define 'invasive plant'
- The document should mention where to find plant-specific information.
- The document should mention coordination with DPW where appropriate.

The documents will be submitted to the Conservation Commission to be included in packet before the June meeting, so that it can then be given sufficient discussion at that time. It may play into plans for funding herbicide work later in the year.

### **Tick Update**

The website is complete. We should see that a notice is circulated on the town's list-serve -- that the webpages exists and folks should take measures to protect themselves outdoors.

### **Garlic Mustard Update**

A summary report from Muster is now in circulation. Work is progressing on garlic mustard populations in various neighborhoods, and we have permission from Dartmouth College to try the pulling experiment for visitors on the Girl Brook Trail. A similar experiment will run on Mink Brook West trail, and several roadside populations.

Two articles on garlic mustard have appeared: The Valley News ran an article that got top billing in the Close Up section by Henry Homeyer and Northern Woodlands has circulated an *Outside Story* on garlic mustard by Li Shen [see below for where to find these].

### **OTHER ITEMS**

**Hayes Preserve** – For some reason, the Conservation Commission determined at its May meeting that the herbicide work scheduled for Hayes should be replaced with mechanical control work. Gail's volunteer team for the Hayes parcel has lots of machines -- chain saws, brush hog, extra tough mower and even brush chipper, thus funds are not needed for mechanical control work there -- *we did discuss the idea of using the funds to hire someone to experiment with flame control on barberry*. Michael noted that this has been done in CT with great success. While it may require a second treatment, this would end up killing the plant, and does not involve herbicide or repeated mowing. It was noted this is a really good approach for difficult areas like stonewalls or where invasive plants are embedded among other native plants that we want to protect. With the high correlation of barberry and increased deer ticks, this helps raise barberry control to the top of the list.

*For other invasive plants at Hayes, we should mark the difficult trees to plan for cut stem or basal bark treatment in the fall such as common buckthorn, large shrub honeysuckles.*

**Biodiversity Website** – We will not have help this year on the ‘biodiversity’ portion of the website from HHS AP Environmental Studies students. At the very least the ‘biodiversity’ part of the website should have links to good web resources, such as *Go Botany* (New England Wildflower Society), *Xerces* (native pollinators), birds, Doug Tallamy’s research, etc. And some discussion about what biodiversity means. We need a subcommittee to coordinate this work.

**Fall Educational Program:** Vicki noted that the Commission often has an educational program with featured speaker(s). The group felt that it would be a good idea to have someone address the problems with deer and forest health/regeneration. Since we now have the deer enclosure data gathering on Balch Hill, we can determine something about impact of deer. Several contacts were listed as sources for names of good speakers, including Jon Bouton (Windsor Co forester). We noted the recent article Jon circulated:

<http://earthsky.org/earth/overgrazing-by-deer-is-changing-the-face-of-u-s-forests> that mentions work at Cornell on this topic.

**Next Biodiversity Meeting** – The committee will not meet over the summer, but will meet next in September.

**Questions about meeting times:** Does early morning time work for you, something like 8am or 8:30 am? What day(s) of the week work?

## UPDATES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Right now, we are in midst of garlic mustard control efforts.** The planning for garlic mustard work has been done by a separate subcommittee, with members from three towns. Our main educational efforts were new handouts and related documents that are going up on roadsides and trails. AND the well attended Garlic Mustard Muster was held on April 24. A summary for a regional garlic mustard strategy is a result of the input at the Muster meeting is now ready for wider distribution. This JUNE we will be experimenting with stations where walkers / runners can take a break and lend a hand at garlic mustard control. Two trails in Hanover (Girl Brook and Mink Brook) and the Lebanon Rail Trail will have this experiment in place, and several of Hanover Streets may also have this experiment. Our website homepage has calendar of events planned. Help is most welcome, esp trail / road monitors for this experiment. We’ve learned of several previously unknown escapes of the plant (Granger Circle, S Main, Balch Hill Lane). A challenge is to reach more neighbors of existing populations.
- In case you missed it, Henry Homeyer’s excellent story on garlic mustard is here: <http://www.vnews.com/lifetimes/home/garden/12046136-95/wanted-dead-garlic-mustard> the Valley News gave it a blaring headline and top placement in the Close Up section.
- Li Shen wrote an Outside Story for Northern Woodlands, which can be found here: [http://northernwoodlands.org/outside\\_story/article/garlic-mustard](http://northernwoodlands.org/outside_story/article/garlic-mustard) It isn’t clear that the Valley News will run this story in addition to the one by Homeyer, but we can hope. Her story is more ‘science-based’ than Henry’s -- she got in some notes about how the plant spreads and the history of its spread -- Henry wrote for gardeners, and both articles were terrific at making the case that this plant is a real menace to forest health....Li’s made that case more strongly, perhaps.
- Also, Jeff Evans (speaker at our garlic mustard MUSTER) was featured in a MI Stewardship Webinar to discuss the dynamics of GM populations and associated challenges in control. The webinar can be heard here, at your convenience: [https://www.livehuddle.com/event/client.php?event\\_id=5e2750249](https://www.livehuddle.com/event/client.php?event_id=5e2750249) Let the whole thing download, so you can skip of the lengthy intro about Network.
- The AP Environmental Study students will be helping with the invasives work at the Trescott Company’s land (near water company reservoirs) -- there are several treatments that Gerry Hawkes (Forest Savers) has proposed, and students will establish baselines for the many different sample plots for mechanical control of buckthorn. Gerry says that the plots will not be planted with grasses, just seeded in from surrounding hardwood trees (ash / maple). So kids won’t be working on our Biodiversity portion of our website this year - maybe we can have it addressed in the next year .
- Over the summer - it would be terrific if we can set up a subcommittee to outline / build content for pages about ‘biodiversity’. Help most welcome on this - can be done by email, much of it.

- June 11, 3-6pm: Kari Asmus and Rich Howarth, 2 Sausville Rd, Etna invite visitors to view their woodland path to observe what has happened since their removal of invasives plants some years ago. They have been watching as 30+ different plants have appeared in place of honeysuckles, barberries, buckthorns. Sponsor: Hanover Garden Club. Co-Sponsor: Biodiversity Committee.