

Hanover Biodiversity Committee

Minutes: Thursday October 15, 2015

Present: Nina Banwell, Helene Hickey (Hanover Garden Club), Michael Lunter, Barbara McIlroy, Vicki Smith (Town staff), Elizabeth Tobiasson. Hanover Conservation Commission: Ed Chamberlain and Jim Kennedy (for part of meeting)

GARLIC MUSTARD FOR 2016:

Looking ahead to spring, we need a better coordinated and comprehensive garlic mustard strategy that involves other players including school properties (near Ray and Richmond), Dartmouth properties (town and golf course lands), UVLT, Conservancy, Kendal and town / neighborhood properties. We have touched base with Dartmouth forester on the problems behind Dartmouth Daycare, and manager Mike Pollard of the golf course and Jonathan Brush about problem behind Richmond School. Educational efforts should start much earlier than in 2015, with displays up well before Town Meeting Day in May. Doug Brown at UVLT suggested fall use of herbicide, but we will have problems in this approach this fall. A planning session for all parties will happen early in 2016 – Jan or February, and herbicide (used in early April well before other plants emerge) will probably be a part of the discussion. An update on garlic mustard for 2015 season will be circulated.

We had some success with use of a battery operated weed whacker as one approach for extensive patches of invasive herbaceous plants (garlic mustard, wild chervil, wild parsnip, burdock, dame's rocket), but this works only *if done before flowers emerge*. Early May is probably the time for this approach, and would probably need followup in late summer. This machine is light, the battery charge lasts about an hour, and is useful for areas that a mower can't reach.

Rinker workday: Barbara and Michael will install 5 winterberry shrubs that have been removed from the holding bed (2 female, 3 male plants). These will be placed near the wetland area that gets regular flooding from the Wilder drawdowns, and any buckthorns in vicinity of these plants will be removed. [UPDATE: this happened Oct 18 – report on this and other observations will follow]

Norway maples at Tanzi Barbara will flag suspected Norway maples and the buckthorns that we missed in previous workdays at Tanzi Natural Area. Now that leaves are falling, the Norway maple leaves should still be green and easy to spot. Jim suggested that these be girdled in spring, as sap is rising then. There probably are not many of these plants there.

DEER UPDATE

Town Lands:

Mink Brook West: Since our restoration work near the upper parking area two years ago, deer have discovered the dogwood shrubs in that bed, most leaves were gone by late summer.

Hayes: Vicki says that this parcel cannot be hunted. Where there were numerous tall Canada lily plants in 2014, the plants have disappeared in 2015, and the field was full of deer beds and trails.

Tanzi Tract: The deer-proof cages are still in place, there were some Trillium and Clintonia found inside and outside two of the three cages. We need a better system of counting trillium in May 2016, as we may have inadvertently counted small Jack in Pulpit instead of Trillium. There is no doubt there were hardly any Trillium that bloomed; it is possible that sunlight (full canopy) may be a consideration here. The steep banks near Storrs Road is totally disturbed

by deer trails, with deep churning by hooves. Native vegetation seems limited to very few species and a large quantity of nettles that have colonized the space opened by browse.

Hanover needs a Deer Team (Committee). Vicki noted that the town has no staff person for this, and that the Conservation Commission didn't want to take this on (as determined at Sept meeting). There was consensus that the Select Board needs to be involved in helping make this happen, and Barbara will approach Julia Griffin about this. We need something in place before the next deer season, and also need to be prepared to submit input about changes in the NH rules, scheduled for update in 2016. We may need some adjustments to existing NH deer hunting rules to help us get the Hanover deer herd under control.

Forest Health and Deer Management -- our deer website is now completed and posted on the Hanover town website. Check it out.

Deer deterrents: It was suggested that we use Milorganite on browsed shrubs. Perhaps some of the Milorganite placed in net bag (say made with old stockings) might deter deer when snow is on the ground. Liquid fence might work if leaves are on the shrubs.

Deer Hunting memo (blurb): Triggered by Jeanie McIntyre's note in the UVLT October newsletter, we will put a 'Host, don't Post' memo out to town on Hanover's listserv, along with message on the Biodiversity Home page and a similar letter to editor which Michael offered to submit. The letter might be geared toward Upper Valley, not just Hanover, but it can point to our newly updated deer webpages – it helps here that Michael lives in Lebanon. Jim suggested that we mention the NHFG Operation Land Share program for landowners who permit hunting. [UPDATE: Done, now on Biodiversity homepage, with many helpful edits]

NEIGHBORHOOD STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES.

This topic was raised as a possible extension of the neighborhood groups that are tackling garlic mustard. If we would like observers to spot / monitor deer damage, or help with restoration work on town / neighborhood lands, then perhaps a neighborhood stewardship committee might make sense. Vicki observed that such a committee would need town staff / conservation commission leadership (as a chair). So that put a damper on this idea.

OTHER:

There was a long list of possible action items, including poison ivy problems on Mink Brook West (and elsewhere), town staff help with moving the larger shrubs in the hold bed, dog waste, and problems with the dumping of yard waste on town land.

Dumping yard waste: Vicki reported that no-yard-waste signs will be re-installed on the Pleasant Street overlook.

Poison Ivy: Elizabeth said that she recalled seeing that lime spread on poison ivy will kill the plant. She will look to see if we can learn more about this idea and its efficacy.

Staff help in moving shrubs: It is unlikely that we can obtain help from town staff in digging and moving the larger shrubs from the holding beds. One area where we need help: Mink Brook West, which might make sense for the three large button bushes in holding beds.

Next Meeting: The next Biodiversity meeting will focus on a garlic mustard strategy, sometime in January or February. Barbara will circulate possible dates after the New Year. Be thinking about this, as we will invite other organizations, neighborhood leaders and landowners to be involved.