

**BIODIVERSITY MINUTES:** February 1, 2011

[corrected, April 12, 2011]

Sub Committee of the Hanover Conservation Commission

**ATTENDANCE:** Ruth Bleyler (ConsCommisson), Nina Banwell (HGC), Susan Edwards (HGC), Peter Helm (UVLT), Larry Litten (Sustainable Hanover), Barbara McIlroy, Gail McPeck (HCCouncil), Doug McIlroy (ConsCommisson).

**HISTORY OF EFFORTS** – handout –

Barbara outlined both educational and control projects that have evolved since initial efforts in 1999 of a few members of the Hanover Garden Club. Nina noted that the Hanover Garden Club has helped to fund many of the educational projects, it has helped locate volunteers for control efforts, and the group has helped to obtained grants from CRJC and EPA. Initial control work on Balch Hill was funded by a Mooseplate grant, with help of this group. The effort needs a more structured foundation in going forward. Historically the group met only once/year to outline action plan for that year. Over the years, the group's thinking has evolved to focus on landowners, to encourage them to 'take ownership' of the invasives on their land. The 2010 Plant Swap was result of this thinking.

**STRUCTURE OF THIS COMMITTEE** –handout of Purpose/Structure –

*Action Plan:* Larry Litten liked the idea of an Action Plan, and asked if we mean 'annual' or 'multi-year'. To date the plan has been Annual (but often was carried forward for subsequent years—see Tanzi and Balch Hill efforts – the long slog approach). Larry felt Plan should try to cover a multi-year focus, a long-range Action Plan.

*Models elsewhere:* Larry asked about other models in upper valley. There is the approach of Lake Associations in Mascoma and Goose Pond for milfoil and/or purple loosestrife, and the Tree Committee in Hartford (which works with town's ConsComm). [addendum: Ottauquechee Watershed CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association), started last year with leadership from VINS]

*Should we bring other groups into this committee:* Larry has contacted Frank Roberts of FOM at Dartmouth about the committee. Larry thinks we need someone from Dartmouth involved in a formal way. Barbara reported that Vicki Smith was also going to speak with the Outdoor Program.

Some concerns expressed by the group:

*Role as subcommittee of the Cons Comm:*

- Addition to 'purpose': The committee can serve as a clearinghouse for groups in Hanover, by assisting with coordination among groups.
- Further role of this committee: Larry suggested we broaden the purpose: To set priorities for town action, to check with other groups, to see what is falling through the cracks, to allocate resources, to maintain a list of what other players are doing and to maintain a list of volunteers for such work.
- What about non-plants: such as aquarium fish, a question raised by Ruth. Our policy should be clear on this.
- The Hanover Water Company & Trescott Company: Gail noted that the water company lands are badly invaded, and the Council is now helping in developing a management plan for this territory. Further, deer are threat to biodiversity in the area. Both invasives and deer are under discussion for that land.

- How this committee will function as subcommittee of Conservation Commission. Doug outlined the process by which the Trails subcommittee moved from a loose volunteer association to more formal structure currently. The Trails subcommittee works independently, only member from Commission is the Chair, and only time subcommittee needs approval from full Commission is outlined in policy statement. The Chair of that committee reports regularly to full Commission, and minutes are available to public.
- The 'procedures' section created some concern: The phrase "all actions, publications expenditures and programs will need approval by the full Commission at a publicly noticed meeting" raised some concern and the group suggested that this needs some clarification. Doug mentioned a policy statement that the Trails committee has with the ConsComm and will share that with us. Barbara noted the fact that chair is a member of the Commission, and this should suffice to keep the Commission informed, and seek approval when needed. Our minutes will be shared with the Commission. Consensus is that our group will formulate some statement of clarification for the Commission, to define the degree of autonomy that we have.
- UVLT and owners: Gail asked Peter what ULVT does. Peter explained that owners are shown invasives if they turn up in monitoring reports. UVLT has started to deal with invasives on its fee-owned lands, and recruits help from groups (Scouts, Dartmouth, Hypertherm)

**BUDGET** details Hanover Conservation Commission and other (5 minutes)

Barbara shared information from Vicki Smith about the Conservation Commission's special Tree Fund, which now has \$1100; Ledyard Bank adds \$1 for every account that goes paperless. The fund has been established as a reserve to be used for trees and has been used to purchase native seedlings now at holding beds. This fund could be used to purchase some more mature shrubs if needed for any of our projects. The Commission typically allocates a few hundred \$ for licensed herbicide work. The garden club may have funds for shrubs or outreach effort, but it is now totally responsible for the Julius Mason Fund and the funding town gardens and hanging baskets, since Improvement Society has backed off. The Biodiversity Comm could provide additional opportunities for sharing / grants, as we are natural allies.

## **PLANNING FOR 2011:**

### 1) POSSIBLE EDUCATION EFFORTS:

- One project that the Garden Club might be interested in is the barberry plants at town hall. A replacement project could be done with HGC help. It could serve as educational project as bonus, as the town would be setting an example on its own land.
- Another project is to be present at Annual Meeting (as before)
- Have 'display' at February 26 meeting for Sustainable Hanover. New poster is needed for this. Information will be posted at known hot spots for black swallowwort.
- Ruth felt that we should repair the Great Alternatives handout, since Viburnum leaf beetle is now in the area (this insect likes arrowwood and high-bush cranberries especially). Maybe we need a fact sheet for this insect (control measures, how to ID, etc).

### 2) POLICY EFFORTS

Discussion of planting policy at Hanover's buildings. At town hall, Barbara has counted 35 barberry plants. A policy could be formulated by this committee, and sent up to the Conservation Commission for review. Nina wondered if we are in 'delicate' position in

suggesting this policy. We will ask the Commission to sponsor the proposal. Susan, Nina and Barbara will approach the Garden Club to determine interest in this, and have feedback before next meeting. The Bio-D Committee can formulate policy/letter by email. The Garden Club could be part of this effort, as it has both educational and action components. Asked if other towns have such a policy, we know for certain that Hartford is removing burning bush at town offices this year, part of multi-year campaign. Others will look for funding sources.

## 2) CONTROL EFFORTS

What are other groups doing?

- The Hanover Cons Council is working with grant for invasives control at Mink Brook, and has long-standing effort to push invasives back on Balch Hill. The neighborhoods of both preserves are somewhat engaged; it is important that Balch Hill neighbors are aware of garlic mustard to prevent its spread into the forest. Council currently has a big multi-year grant-funded effort for knotweed control at Mink Brook.
- We might ‘share’ herbicide person to cut down on the travel overhead. Homeowners might participate this way, say for an hour’s worth of time. Peter liked the idea of sharing use of licensed person.
- UVLT will continue with its efforts on its own land.
- At least two new town-wide initiatives: (Besides the usual work at Mink Brook and Balch Hill):

A) Garlic Mustard Town-Wide Effort [For inspiration, see [www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org) -- garlic mustard challenge. There is an excellent 13-minute video there.]. One project that the Garden Club might be interested in is the barberry plants at town hall. A replacement project could be done with HGC help (volunteers and funding for plants). Barbara will contact Jeff Evans (Dartmouth Biology Dept, expert on control of this plant), to see about an April meeting for public informational meeting (background) about this plant. In advance, we need to get GPS readings and create map of GM eruptions in town. Doug asked is garlic mustard the ‘bully of the year’? Between now and next meeting, we will formulate campaign, and circulate ideas on how to make major effort. *Peter thinks we shouldn’t overlook buckthorn.*

B) The town hall planting initiative. The group directed the Cons Comm members to put policy on the Commission’s next agenda. Gail: Ask the Commission to recommend a town policy on planting (e.g. Norway Maple). This BioD Committee will try to write policy proposal in advance to send to Commission for discussion, to be vetted by committee in email form. Gail: does the state offer a planting policy / Barbara UNH has advice. [Update: there is a town-recommended list of plants (most are native) to use in landscaping – not sure if ‘recommended’ or part of site plan regulations.] Before our next meeting, will touch base with the Garden Club (Nina, Susan, and Barbara) and Peter Kulbacki (Larry) about the proposed policy.

## 3) NEIGHBORHOODS

We didn’t really have time to explore this topic; it will probably arise with the garlic mustard initiative. It seems we have the beginnings of a ‘neighborhood’ in Greensboro and Balch Hill areas.

## 4) MISCELLANEOUS THINGS FOR THIS YEAR OR FUTURE:

- Locate a volunteer to ‘adopt’ the holding beds.

- Install poster at two sites where blackswallow-wort was found, to alert neighbors.
- Talk with grounds person at the Hanover Golf Course about control of Wild Chervil on Girl Brook.
- Locate a helper with PR matters.
- Locate / share / create flier for aquarium disposal. (Maybe a school project)
- Invasives work at Steel-Rinker Natural Area. Vicki is concerned about shrub honeysuckle at this site, and Doug is concerned about buckthorn. Work there may require state permit, since near water (needs inspection – possible to break down job into two parts, one needing permit, one without permit). It might be a part of workday with some work done elsewhere in town, as we may need licensed person.
- Work with schools: Susan has been removing invasives at Ray School. Jonathan Brush is the grounds person and contact there. Gail talks to the teachers there. Barbara has contact with Jeannie Kornfield at HHS. John LaCross at Richmond school came with student to help with restoration work in Spring 2010. Several folks noted that it is sometimes difficult to ‘pin down’ student help; other matters often arise.
- Recruit volunteers – at the February 26 Sustainable Hanover events, at Town Meeting, at Garden Club meetings, other?

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**Next Meeting --- Tuesday, April 5, 10 am, Howe Library Rotary Room**

Not discussed; possible future agenda items:

Region, coordination with other towns.

CISMA (cooperative invasive species management areas) -- funding exists.

NH ISC considering the creation of a plant database/map on sites for invasives in NH.