

Biodiversity Committee (a subcommittee of the Hanover Conservation Commission)
Minutes – June 7, 2011

Minutes from April 2011, approved as circulated and corrected by email.

Attendance: Nina Banwell (Hanover Garden Club), Susan Edwards (Hanover Garden Club), Larry Litten (Sustainable Hanover), Barbara McIlroy (scribe), Adair Mulligan (Hanover Conservation Council), Judy Reeve (chair, Hanover Conservation Commission), Vicki Smith (Hanover P&Z staff)

Policies

- Committee structure/purpose : Some members expressed concern that the committee also focus of fauna, as well as plants. The policy document will be sent to members the Conservation Commission for final discussion and formal adoption. [Update: the Commission accepted the final version of structure at its June meeting]
- Town Landscaping Policy on invasives – William Desch wasn't keen on the draft policy as circulated. The subject will be tabled by the Conservation Commission for the time being. Vicki suggested that the Biodiversity Committee should develop a plan to remove / replace invasive plants with focus on town hall and elsewhere, and she suggested that perhaps the Garden Club might help with plan. In winter we could try to meet with William and/or Julia to discuss this. Adair suggested that we try to use the format for Hayes Property. [Update: As of the end of August, William Desch has removed and replaced many of the barberries at town hall, funded from his budget for time and plants. The town had offer of a grant to help get this work started, but it turns out not to be necessary].

Garlic Mustard Effort

- The talk by Jeff Evans, May 18, was considered a great success, the event was well attended, notes are now available, and CATV should have a video available, later in summer.
- Garlic mustard: work day and summary reports – separate report will be circulated to committee.
- Lessons learned from garlic mustard neighborhood sessions –
 - Creating a neighborhood action team is the right way to go, as it helps to educate neighbors, brings the plant to their attention and 'sharpens eyes', and provides motivated workers who 'take ownership'. Particular success in neighborhood of School Street, Kendall, Rip Road and Hollenbeck Lane – each of these sites had teams of at least 5 homeowners who took charge of the effort, distributed info about plant. The Upper Valley Land Trust held many workdays to totally control the plant on its land.
 - Some loose ends: We have major problems at Rivercrest and behind the Richmond School, and need to find some way to address both of these. In addition, an infestation has been reported at the Morton Farm in Etna (off of Laramie Road), but not yet confirmed.

Other invasive efforts planned for 2011 (15 minutes)

- **Wild Chervil** at golf course, will be discussed with Tim McNamara in mid June. He will work with Frank Roberts of FOM (Facilities, Operation and Management) at the college and hopes to help the college address some of the major invasives like this (and

garlic mustard).

- **Work days elsewhere –**

- King Sanctuary at Hayes: Many invasives got pulled: honeysuckle, multiflora rose, barberry, buckthorn, with resulting a pile 12' tall, 30' long (that is shrinking). The invasives work there has inspired some neighbors to do likewise. The plants needed watering, and a brigade was established to keep the plants healthy until established. [Update: generally, the project looks very good; Adair has been up several times to prune resprouting invasives, but the barberry and buckthorn are very thick outside the treatment area.]
- Balch Hill Prescott Towle will do a more intensive work on Balch Hill and Adair is waiting for estimate.
- Rinker / Steele -- tons of barberry , buckthorn , honeysuckle – both sides of pond. Access problem on one side, suggesting foliar application of herbicide. Town is waiting for an estimate on treating these plants. There is some question as to what to do with knotweed patch near Rte 10. And, a special permit may be needed.
- UVLT – Gateway and more. We are encouraged by Pete Helm to see the dramatic clearing that has resulted from the systematic effort at the Gateway in Norwich, mostly done by Hypertherm volunteers using mechanical means (weed wrench mainly).
- Herbicide work will be purchased and coordinated by town and Council for Balch Hill and the Rinker/Steele tract.
- We have an offer for ID space to post on the Upper Valley Trails Alliance website. Hikers should become knowledgeable about invasive plants, and report what they discover on the trails. This might be coordinated with what we put on the town's website.

Dealing with Dartmouth – Barbara will meet with Tim MacNamara about the garlic mustard at Rivercrest and the wild Chervil which has escaped on the golf course. It looks promising that he can help facilitate a control effort on the college lands.

Dealing with road/maintenance crews

This topic had little time for discussion, but it was agreed that some sort of educational effort is probably needed. [Update: in the meanwhile, the UNH Invasives Plant Outreach Group (IPOG) sent a questionnaire to the heads of DPW in state, and Peter Kulbacki did reply for Hanover – Barbara will report on this at the next Biodiversity Committee meeting]

Policy for large landholders¹.

Adair reported that the Quabbin Reservoir (Boston water supply) in MA has dealt with invasives in its watershed, and it needed to use herbicides in this effort. She reported in detail that she and others who are concerned with management of the Trescott watershed lands (new name for Hanover Water Company) spoke on April 25 with Doug Cygan, the NH Dept of Agriculture person who coordinates efforts related to invasive species. She says that Doug is not shy about recommending herbicides. The Trescott advisory group has also put Julia Griffin in touch

¹ Based on a summary report from Adair, 7/29/11, based on her April and July meetings.

with Chris Mattrick, botanist at the White Mt National Forest who coordinates control of invasives there. Adair says that things are moving ahead very positively with the Trescott group - the group accepted that if the buckthorn invasion is not addressed comprehensively, there will be a number of consequences:

1. elimination of what would be the future canopy on the watershed, because of buckthorn suppressing tree reproduction (with major impacts to future water quality and - a very secondary consideration - forest harvesting income)
2. greater sedimentation in the water supply, because no herbaceous filtering layer can grow under buckthorn
3. less water getting into the water system because of buckthorn taking it up

She says that an approach is being devised, which will include a role for citizen volunteers and the BioDiversity committee. The Trescott group saw some horrible thickets of buckthorn quite a varied terrain. Besides the NH Dept of Ag, the group met with experts from NH Fish and Game, USDA and water quality person from NH DES. Adair met in July with others to draft the conclusions listed above. There is understandable concern about use of herbicides in the water company lands; and about the huge cost and logistics involved in any control effort. Several potential sources of funding are being explored. [Update: Barbara attended the first annual meeting on the Trescott Company --- plans are also moving ahead for a controlled deer hunt in those lands]

Website:

Now that town has a new website, the Biodiversity Committee agreed we should post a page there. There was not much time to discuss this, but Vicki says that Beth Rivard can put this up under Cons Comm section of the website. According to Beth, all we need is an outline of what our 'home page' should reference with links, and which materials we should feature there. Barbara noted that it would be good if there were a few folks to help make this happen (don't need to be member of Biodiversity committee).

Other PR, to help with education:

This topic had very brief discussion. Mainly the problem is dealing with Valley News. We need to talk to Krista Langlois and/or Henry Homeyer who have expressed an interest in invasives. It might be good to set up a meeting with them, so that we can plan an educational and action campaign.

CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association)

Is it probably time to start thinking about how to find a coordinator for our region of the Connecticut. The Ottauquechee watershed, and northern NH & VT (northern forest) seem to be moving in this direction. There may funding, and support from Conte Refuge on this. [Update: The NH Nature Conservancy is interested in this topic, and the TNC has a special staff person based in MA who concentrates on the Connecticut River. This might be focus of a future regional meeting on topic; perhaps the Biodiversity Committee can help make this happen.]

Next Meeting:

The September 13 meeting was postponed, since Judy Reeve resigned from the Conservation Commission in September and can no longer chair this group. The Commission will locate a

new chairman, and a next meeting has been set for October 11th, 10 am in the Howe Library Rotary Room.

PS: Raingarden Workshop : Held on June 11, the event attracted both rain and 30 participants from 9 towns (some from Vermont). An engineered raingarden, built according to UNH Stormwater Center's specifications for bioretention cell has been installed by the Hanover DPW, and seems to be working well. This is a retrofit for a catch basin, taking on a good bit more stormwater than would be done for a single home.

Deer Control: You can learn how they conduct a controlled deer hunt at the Quabbin Reservoir here: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/watershed/hunt.htm>

It seems that such hunts have been done since 1991, after many reports on the devastating result of 50-year deer hunting moratorium in the watershed. Overbrowse affected both forest regeneration and it had the potential for long-term consequences of those impacts on water quality. Initially, the hunt was to return deer populations to levels to promote forest regeneration, and then to continue hunts to keep deer at sustainable levels, since with regeneration of the forests, there is improved browse available – further encouraging deer population increases. The watershed has also had systematic removal of invasive plants there (I can't locate report on this program there, but that might be relevant for our purposes). Deer data are astounding – for some of the management areas, before hunting started the deer were estimated to be at 50 deer/sq mile; the herd is now down to about 2 deer / sq mile since deer hunting has been established.