



Invasive & Native Plant Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM, Location: REMOTE

Attendees: Marc Basti, Emily Boeing, Annette Cate, Deb Fountain. Absent: Cricket Boeing
Minutes Taker: Deb Fountain

1. Meeting Minutes Review - Dec 7, 2022 - approved unanimously
2. Action Items Review
 - a. Draft letter for landscapers (Deb F) - on hold
 - b. Update Native Plant Guide (Deb) - due in February-March
 - c. Coordinate website content changes with IT Administrator (Deb)
 - d. Compile possible list of tools to purchase with Grant funding (Marc) - in process
 - e. Culvert Data Analysis (Marc & Deb) - in process - see pages 3-4 for more

3. Committee Organization and events - annual review

Determine organization: Deb Fountain was nominated and elected unanimously as Committee Chair for 2023. The Committee decided that we do not need a Co-chair or a clerk. We will take turns writing up meeting minutes.

Recommendations for new committee members. Discussion focused on whether to try to recruit new members. Some members may contact individuals who they think have an appropriate background and an interest in our mission. We decided to not advertise vacancies publicly at this time.

Meeting frequency - Committee agreed to continue meeting twice a month

4. Request to co-sponsor talk on healthy soils at library

Deb was contacted by Susan Edwards in December to see if INPAC would be interested in co-sponsoring a program at the Lawrence Library, as described below. Members approved this unanimously.

“Hey Soil: What’s Going on Down There?”

Learn how soil microbes make veggies yummy and nutritious AND aid the planet in this fascinating talk by John Duke and Rubén Parrilla of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA). We will hear about soil health principles, look at soil microbes, and learn how soil relates to climate, our water resources, and human health. Tuesday, January 31st at 7PM. In-person at the Lawrence Library *and* streaming live on ZOOM! Sponsored by the Nashua River Watershed Association, Pepperell’s Climate Change Committee, and NOFA.

5. Committee Projects Status

- a. Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council Grant, 2023 - **Applications are being accepted now through February 1, 2023.** Awards will be announced in March, 2023. View [Request for Proposals](#) and [Grant Application](#) for the 2023 program at www.wildandscenicnashuarivers.org.

Discussed ideas about whether to apply this year. Options presented were to purchase some additional tools for members to use on invasive removal projects. Marc expressed safety concerns and limiting who and when the tools would be used to ensure that no one is hurt as either a user, or a bystander. All agreed this is an important consideration.

Tools to consider: pole-saw combi-tool, electric chain saw with two batteries and extra chains, folding hand saws, chaps, helmet, weed whacker with blade, or standard weed whackers and small, hand-held small chainsaws.

Another option was to prepare a town mailer for the Spring advising residents about general points regarding native and invasive plants. While everyone liked this idea as it will enable us to reach a wider audience than our current media marketing allows, no one is aware of costs, and all were concerned about adding more paper to the waste stream. Emily mentioned that there are some recycled papers that have native plant seeds embedded in them.

Actions: Marc - get tool recommendations and price estimates to Deb. Annette - check out brochure mailing and printing costs. to see if this feasible. Deb to fill out the grant application form.

- b. Keyes Parker winter work - Marc is continuing to work with Rob at Keyes Parker as his time allows. The ground there is still wet, so he is focused on cutting down multiflora rose at this point.

6. Public Communications & Events

Discussed what the group would like to do for a spring project this year. We are down to five members and want to do something meaningful, but doable with a small group. We would also like to reach a wider audience. Discussed another Earth Day event at the library. Earth Day is during school spring vacation week and one member would not be able to help. While we feel that last year's event was a successful community outreach project, there was a tremendous amount of coordination involved. Decision is to focus our attention on doing a community-wide garlic mustard pull around Earth Day. Date will be determined around plant growth stage in April. Deb will come up with some ideas and tentative plan.

7. Matters That May be Raised That Were Not Reasonably Anticipated - none

Set next meeting date - Jan 25th. Marc will be the note taker

Future Agenda Items

- January - Garlic Mustard Community Event
- February - EDDMapS - value analysis - Deb
- February- Weed Warriors Program discussion
- January/February - Update Invasive Plant Management Plan

- February - Consider developing Zoom demo for public on winter seed sowing - Emily
- February - Plan for Garlic Mustard Community Pull in Spring

-----Agenda item 2e notes

email to set up meeting with Paula Terrasi and Mike Shrader - 12/27/2022

Good morning,

Last summer, the Invasive & Native Plant Advisory Committee received grant funding to map invasive plant populations along a specific list of culverts in town. Because the seeds from invasives are quickly carried downstream, and their root systems cause bank erosion, we feel that it is in the best interest of the ecological health of the town to determine how to best manage these areas in order to control further spreading. With the inventory completed, we are now in the process of analyzing the data and trying to create a plan to address the issues. The planning of course, will be created with input and agreement from the DPW/Highway Dept.

The first thing we need to determine is property ownership of the areas involved. We understand that the Town owns a certain footage along roadsides, but are not clear on how far in that area goes, or if it varies by location. I have included Maureen in this message in case I need to search her database for ownership of any properties. Also, we need to know if the town already has a regular mowing plan for culverts, and if so, we would like to request a copy so we can see how to best fit mowing recommendations with any existing plans.

For clarity - the culverts of concern are listed below, grouped by severity of invasive density--this does not include all the culverts in town. We are also aware that accessibility is an issue at some of these sites, as some have steep slopes that are not conducive to roadside mowing.

I am happy to come to town hall to meet and discuss this with any or all of you at your convenience and available mornings other than Mondays or Wednesdays.

Thanks in advance for your reply,

Deb Fountain

Chair, Invasive & Native Plant Advisory Committee

Culverts

Densely populated with invasives - 25%- 50%

Reedy Meadow Brook - Leighton St., near VFW

Gulf Brook - near Heald Pond on Heald St

Sucker Brook - Oak Hill St across from entrance to Keyes Parker property

Unkety Brook - Rte. 113 at Dunstable/Pepperell town line

Secondary populations - 5-25% invasive plant populations

Mine Brook - North St

Robinson Brook - Shirley St

Sucker Brook - Ames St, Brookline St., Jewett St., Moonlight Way

Meeting with Paula Terrasi and Mike Shrader, January 10th

Mowing

Most mowing is done after August, but because there is no snow/plowing going on right now, they are trying to play catch up and get some down. If time allows, they also like to get some mowing done in April. There is not a focus on mowing invasives - the method is to mow what is within the reach of the mower without having the operator get off the vehicle. Mowing the intersections takes priority.

Safety and road improvement projects (culverts) always take precedence and the crew often has to interrupt their daily work to respond to vehicle accident damage, culvert issues, etc. So, sticking to a schedule is difficult - they try to fit in the mowing around their other projects

Property ownership varies from road to road, so we would need specific road list to determine the areas that can be worked on. It is typically 6' in from the roadside, but some vary to like 18" on one side and 6' on the other. Mike has that info available.

Herbicide Treatments

No one on the Highway is licensed to treat roadways with herbicides. Their union contract does not address handling chemicals as one of the safety issues, and the employees and Mike are not interested in obtaining a license for personal safety concerns.

Mike's recommendation - Status Quo, but keep in communication - decide what INPAC wants their role to be

DPW will notify us when they mow a street/area, and if we want to come in back behind them to do further work, we can. They can't get down the slopes if the mower blade doesn't reach there. Deb to discuss with INPAC about what amount of involvement they actually may want to pursue.

Grant-funded ideas

We spoke about possible equipment to help - he recommends a chainsaw, safety goggles, and a weed trimmer with a blade attachment. These would be helpful for oriental bittersweet, Japanese Knotweed and multiflora rose. Paula also mentioned trash bags if we do a garlic pull, gloves and technu wipes for volunteers. She also mentioned training.

INPAC Meeting Discussion and Proposal - January 11th

Deb reviewed the notes from her meeting with Mike and Paula (above) with the Committee. We discussed Mike's proposal, but the following issues came up

- Timing for the Highway Dept's mowing doesn't align with recommended times of plant growth stage (before they set seed) to address removal/cutbacks of the species that are most abundant.
- Further, the Highway Dept mowing would not address the areas that we feel need to be addressing. Most of the culvert areas are on slopes or in areas where the mowing machine would not reach.
- Suggested alternative approach.
 - INPAC members will do site visits to each culvert. We will need ownership info on the sites where we feel our crew can safely work on cutbacks. Deb can get property lot maps and will get town-owned info from the Highway Dept for the sites we select. We will also need Cons Comm direction on whether we need their approval to work in wetland areas.
 - INPAC members will monitor the areas we select to work for plant growth state, and notify the Highway Dept. when we plan to go out, probably on a Saturday and do what we are able to do. There will be no herbicides used, and no removals--only cutbacks.
 - We will reassess our approach after the growing season and adjust as needed.