

SUASCO CISMA  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury  
January 12, 2011

**Members Present:** Amber Carr ( U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), Matt Burne (Walden Woods Project), John Dwyer (Maynard Conservation Commission), Anna Wilkins ( Lincoln Conservation Commission), Lee Steppacher (National Park Service/ River Stewardship Council), Lynn Knight ( Carlisle Conservation Commission), Barbara Volkle (Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge), Libby Herland ( U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Alison Field-Juma (Organization for the Assabet River), Jeff Collins ( Mass Audubon), Ted Elliman ( New England Wildflower Society).

**Announcements:**

Libby Herland will be replacing Eileen McGourty on the Steering Committee, and will take over the role of chair. Because of staff needs at FWS, Eileen will be working with New England Cottontails and will be spending more time in the field. Libby is happy to be back with CISMA and pleased that she now will have a vote!

**Minutes:**

Minutes from 9/14/10 with the following changes:

- P.2, correct Asian Long Horned Beetle
- P. 2 and p. 3 typo for CISMA

Minutes from 11/9 were approved with the following corrections:

- P. 1 correct spelling of Barbara's name - Volkle

Ted asked whether the training on control of Glossy Buckthorn by John Bakewell had happened. It has not, but we should get it. Amber will follow up on this.

**Discussion of Fall Meeting**

In general the meeting was very successful. There were approximately 60 people in attendance, and the presentation on Asian Long Horned Beetles was well received. Things to be improved included:

- AV equipment was a problem and FWS is already aware of this.
- The meeting was a little long, making little time for refreshments and networking afterwards.
- Feedback on APAs was not as 'rich' as we hoped. IN the future perhaps the subcommittees could work on the APAs in advance of the meeting and then have a scheme for attendees to vote on their priorities. Subcommittees could work on APAs in fall, Steering Committee could refine them in January and the full membership could set priorities and vote in March.
- Matt suggested that this meeting was more about listening and we might want to think about ways to make it more dynamic and participatory. There was a suggestion to use

the spring meeting for more interaction – to have a round table for members to discuss projects. Alison thought this could be a good thing to put on the website as well.

### **ED/RR Project Update - Volunteer Celebration and Ideas for 2011**

Amber and Ted said that approximately 25 volunteers attended. Many of the volunteers brought slides of the work they had done and participated in the meeting. Challenge will be in following up next season. There will need to be an effort to maintain current volunteers, there will be a need to recruit new ones as well. There will also need to be new priority lands to survey. Ted will have a new training this spring – much will be the same, but some new species might be added for early detection.

Ted is beginning to make contact with the high schools as a resource for volunteers. Lincoln Sudbury was contacted this year, but it was too late in the season to get students engaged. Rebecca Chizzo and Peter Alden met with the Wayland High School Science program. Emily Norton is a good contact. Minuteman Tech has a horticulture school. Alison described the Innovators Contest that OAR sponsors each year with high school students. The contest ramps up in the fall and judging is done in March. If we work with students we might be able to get Tsongas interested as part of River Day which she sponsors. Jeff will contact Concord Carlisle Environmental Club to see if they have a network of clubs in the high schools.

Alison asked if there was any legislation needed to help control invasive species. Anna identified the local DPWs and independent landscapers as two groups we want to reach. Would legislation help and should it provide a carrot or a stick? Jeff suggested that invasive species are biological pollution and that there may be antipollution laws that apply.

Barbara suggested that instead of focusing on ridding the landscape of invasive species, and how bad they are, we should have a more positive message focusing on creating healthy landscapes. We could be stronger advocates for a process that includes control methods, followed by a restoration plan.

### **Les Mehrhoff**

Ted expressed the views of many when he said how saddened he was by the death of Les Mehroff. Ted had known and worked with Les for many years. He and Bill had both been involved with IPANE which Les helped to create. Does CISMA or the members want to do something in honor of Les?

### **Funding Update**

Jeff reported on status of funding and associated projects. These include:

- RSC funds (\$5K for 2010) to support the design of a CISMA website.
- RSC funds (\$5K for 2009) for purple loosestrife/ beetle rearing project, led by SVT
- RSC funds (\$1K for 2009) to SWEET for volunteer control efforts in Sudbury

- NFWF (\$50K) for 2 efforts: \$24K to support the coordinator and \$26K to support ED/RR effort led by New England Wildflower Society
- Sudbury Foundation (\$12K) funds to Mass Audubon for mapping project. Will use Drumlin Farm and Concord Carlisle HDS as pilots for mapping with mobile mappers.
- Intel Co. (\$5K) to Drumlin Farm for match.

We need to make an effort to meet match requirements for the NFWF grant. RSC funds cannot be used as match because they are from a federal source. Everyone should track and turn in the hours they spend on CISMA projects. We should begin to seek new sources of funding that can also be used as match. Lynn is beginning to research private foundations and other local grants from businesses to help support our efforts. Jeff would like to build the relationship with Intel to use new technologies for invasives work.

Jeff asked who should be applying for grants – the CISMA or individual members? If we apply individually, we should probably check with each other before applying. If any of us are going after funds and using the CISMA to strengthen our application, we should let others know. Matt suggested that our guidance should be stronger – if CISMA is named specifically in an application for funds, then the project should go through the Admin or Steering Committee. This may also allow coordination between applications and perhaps joint applications as well. When Jeff puts together a Treasurer’s report, her will add a few sentences about this. Eileen also suggested that the CISMA can also write letters of support. It would be good to tie the applications to our APAs.

Lee asked for project ideas for funding from the RSC this year. Ideas include:

- Website maintenance
- Training of highway crews. While we have the curriculum, we may have to hire someone to give the training.
- Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker signs at boat access sites
- Map extent of water chestnut infestation (a Nyanza project)
- Get high school students involved in beetle rearing and use of mobile mappers
- Have students do training videos and podcasts
- Create high quality ID photos for website for top ten invasive plants/ Matt is interested in pursuing this idea.

Libby has recently talked to Karen Pelto about the Nyanza restoration funds. There have been some internal questions about the draft restoration plan, but Karen is hoping that the plan will be released in February for comment (30 days).

Libby said that the coordinator position is funded through October 1. She hopes that the Nyanza funds will be available by then and help to continue this work. There was discussion of approaching the Sudbury Foundation to gage their interest in supporting this kind of position.

### **New Membership**

Two organizations have joined the CISMA. 1) Natural Heritage Program has joined as a supporting member. Brian Connelly, wildlife biologist will attend meetings. 2) Stow

Conservation Trust has joined. Eve Donahue will be their representative. Lynn moves to accept these new members. Anna seconds. Approved unanimously. Jeff spoke with Pat Huckery from Division of Fish and game. She still cannot make meetings, but we will still try to stay connected to this organization.

### **Annual Priority Actions (APAs)**

**Control Committee** – Need to have a focus to control efforts, for addressing species that are already established in the watershed. While ED/RR efforts have been good, we need to identify sites for control. Consider conducting a number of ‘control days’ for established plants at sites that are accessible, have parking and restrooms, and create some education around these control efforts. We could ask at the spring meeting for good candidate sites. We should set priorities for site selection based on habitat and holding the boundaries. We need to consider ways to control plants outside the growing season if we want to engage schools in these efforts.

Final input on APAs will be needed by end of February. Other committees will look over the handout and respond.

### **Spring Meeting**

The spring meeting will be on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Location has not been determined, but all felt these meetings should be moved around the watershed. Ted will look into NEWFS. Meeting should be 3-5 pm if we want working people to attend.

A number of names were raised as possible speakers Peter Del Tredici from Arnold Arboretum, Bernd Blossy, from Cornell about how plants affect the ecosystem, John Sidelander, Ecology professor at UCONN

### **Updates**

Initial design of the website should be completed this week. The Outreach Subcommittee is now working on collecting content for the site. Each subcommittee will have to provide information, by February 4<sup>th</sup>. Matt will work with Control and ED/RR on content. We will need to discuss what information on species we want on website, without replicating lots of other sites. Anna already had specific websites bookmarked which she thinks are helpful. Anna asked if there would be a way to use the website to post documents for the CISMA only – that would not be available for public viewing. This might include equipment lists, contact lists and other things. The subcommittee will look into this.

Cynthia Boettner, invasive species coordinator from FWS, sent an email asking our interest in providing training to municipal DPW personnel in invasive species control. Bay State Roads would provide the materials and possibly also a speaker. CISMA would probably have to send a letter to town selectmen inviting DPW staff to assess interest and request participation.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on May 10<sup>th</sup>.