

SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
May 10, 2011

Members Present: Amber Carr (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), John Dwyer (Maynard Conservation Commission), Lee Steppacher (National Park Service/ River Stewardship Council), Lynn Knight (Carlisle Conservation Commission), Libby Herland (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Alison Field-Juma (Organization for the Assabet River), Jeff Collins (Mass Audubon), Laura Mattei (Sudbury Valley Trustees), Jill and Dick Miller (Cochituate group).

Minutes:

March 8 meeting – Change p.2, update by Lynn regarding activity in Carlisle, clarifies that work on town property **will likely (added)** focus on bittersweet and loosestrife....One girl **has mapped (deleted is mapping)** loosestrife and Japanese Knotweed.

Announcements:

Bay State Roads training program in Invasive species is scheduled for May 11th in Concord.

OARS Innovators Contest is supported by Intel. It is directed towards high school students and requires them to do pick an issue and create an innovative solution to it. This year's winner focused on invasive species and created a website about 11 early detection species. Look at invasivesuasco.weebly.com.

ED/RR Training by NEWFS will be held on June 2nd from 6-9 pm at Assabet NWR and on June 5th from 10-3 at garden in the Woods. These trainings are to recruit new volunteers to work on the ED/RR project and also as a refresher for others.

Libby announced that there is a new video called Playing Smart against Invasive Species. She has copies for anyone interested.

Didymo (also known as rock snot) has been found in the Farmington River. We should find out if it is an issue in this area. For example, Zebra Mussels are in the Berkshires but are not an issue in the eastern part of MA).

A recent meeting at DCR identified the 2 top priorities for state management attention to be Asian Long Horned Beetle and Zebra Mussels.

Grant/Funding Update

RSC funding – Lee reported that the RSC approved \$5000 for CISMA projects this year. This is split between 4 efforts, including Aquatic Hitchhiker signs, photos of plant phenology, work

with high school students on mapping, support for website. Regarding the Aquatic Hitchhiker signs, Amber will get an estimate and then identify where the signs should go.

NFWF – Current Grant. Amber and Jeff are still working on meeting the match requirements before the grant expires on 9/20/2011. Amber will be sending an email asking everyone to document and send in hours of work that can be used as match.

NFWF Pulling Together Initiative (PTI). Jeff said that the pre-proposal was due July 15th, full application by October and award is made in February of 2012. The only NFWF priority habitat that is found in this area is the Eastern N. America Early Succession Habitat. This should also be matched to particular species that NFWF might be interested in. A 1:1 match is required for the grant.

The Steering Committee discussed a number of possible projects, including

- 1) Build off the ED/RR project model which trained and used volunteers to look for species. In this case, we could pick a species, train volunteers and look in a large area to find and eradicate it.
- ☞ Pick a specific area (Natural Desert Area in Sudbury was discussed) and focus on the early successional fields to protect this habitat for grass nesting birds. This may focus on buckthorn control.
- ☞ Use the model being applied by FWS on Water Row and apply it elsewhere. In this case, FWS is controlling invasives and planting shrubs conducive to attracting migratory birds. They are monitoring results, using standardized monitoring protocols so they can be duplicated. Conservation goal is to stabilize or increase bird species. This kind of effort could include an outreach component including perhaps a handbook that outlines how to replicate the project.
- 4) Create an early successional habitat through some heavy duty habitat restoration. This is what SOLF is doing in Southborough. A local partner could commit to long term monitoring, and that could be used as match.
- 5) Pick a few places within the watershed, perhaps up to 5. Present a variety of projects, but all place-based.

Match for the grant could include volunteer time, landowner monitoring, DPW equipment use, contracted tree service. Jeff and Amber will continue to work on this proposal and solicit ideas from others.

Review of Spring Meeting

Amber reported that approximately 30 people attended and everyone seemed to be enthusiastic about the meeting. The 'Vine' was especially good. There was a suggestion to put the presentation on the web, as well as the Vine discussion. Everyone agreed that we should have a similarly formatted meeting next spring.

New Membership

New proposed members include Middlesex Conservation District, Westborough Conservation Commission and Westborough Community Land Trust. Laura moves to accept these organizations as members of CISMA. Lee seconds. Approved unanimously. Amber will have each one sign the MOU. They are now eligible to serve on the Steering Committee.

Jill Miller asked whether an informal landscaping group could become a member of CISMA. Individual members are active within the watershed, though the group is much bigger than the watershed. Members do need to be defined entities and it is not clear if this group, called "The Underground", is. Libby will check into this.

Updating Early Detection Species –

Ted has been working with early detection species as part of the NEWFS project. He would like to propose that we update the list of species we have in the 5 year plan. His proposal is to take off Parrot Feather, Tansy Ragwort, Great Yellow Crest. And add Amur Cork Tree, narrowleaf bittercress, gray willow.

Members decided that we need not change our Plan at this time, but that Ted can change his trainings to be more up to date. The plan will be changed and updated every 5 years.

Lynn moves to accept changes, seconded by John. Passed unanimously. Please pass fact sheets on to CISMA members....

Nyanza Update

Libby reported that the Nyanza restoration Plan is closer to being released. There have been delays as the State and NOAA review and concur with the Plan. The State has wanted more of the projects to be focused around the reservoirs in Ashland and Framingham. This has required that some other projects be adjusted. Libby thinks that the invasive species project is still included. This addresses Purple Loosestrife and Water Chestnut. The original proposal included funds to purchase another harvester and trailer. The proposal also expanded water Chestnut work into the Concord and Assabet, as well as in the Sudbury. This work can be included as a match for the NFWF grant. She also thinks a project with anadromous fish is included.

After the Plan is released (sooner than later) it will go through a period of public comment. After final approval, funds will be dispersed in various ways – some may be through cooperative agreements, while others will be competitive request for proposals administered through the State.

Dick Miller asked a question about whether CISMA would want a role in Lake Cochituate projects including building an educational facility and program at the State Park, and also controlling milfoil and Water Chestnut. Members felt that CISMA might be interested in using an educational facility as a venue for meetings and such but would not be involved in building

such a facility. Regarding invasive species control, the group would like to be kept informed of activity at Lake Cochituate.

State Wide Mapping Protocol

Jeff met with representatives from TNC, TTOR, NEWFS and State of CT which has an invasive species mapping database. The database has 2 programs: Imap invasives and Early Detection maps. Both of these programs use Google Map formats. The goal is to collect and display invasive species data. Karen Lombard from TNC is leading the effort and will send out a survey to determine interest in MA. TNC may be able to host the mapping initially. Jeff thinks the primary weakness of the mapping tools is that the data is all point based, i.e. it does not accommodate polygons. Mass Audubon's mapping program for the watershed will link to this larger effort where there is point data, but it will also include polygon data. Each of these databases will need to have quality control, and perhaps a photo of any infestation will be required.

As a side note, Google employees may spend up to 20% of their time working on their own projects. Perhaps there is a mapping project we would like to encourage employees in the Boston office to take on.

John announced that the CISMA website is up in beta format. Pages are blank and we are working on content. There will be a training session on use of the content management system on May 25th at 2 pm.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on July 5th