

SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
July 5, 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), Ted Elliman (New England Wild Flower Society), Matt Burne (Walden Woods Project)

Minutes:

May 10 minutes approved unanimously. Lynn makes motion, Matt seconds.

Announcements:

Ted spoke about the 2nd year of the NFWF Grant to address ED/RR species. He and Amber held 2 trainings in June. First was 6/2 at Assabet NWR at which approximately 15 people attended, and second was 6/5 at NEWFS where 25 attended. There was a speaker at the program at NEWFS , so that may have drawn more people.

Ted is working with volunteers to begin surveys of chosen parcels. He has added 20-30 new parcels this year, and also added 3 new ED/RR species to the list for volunteers to look for. He will focus on towns that had less survey work done last year, though there will be work done in most watershed towns.

There was a discussion about volunteers and how to maintain their interest over a number of years. Ted has found that for many people the novelty of working to control invasive species lasts about a year.

Ted will be offering field trips to volunteers and CISMA members. He is hoping to go to Allendale Wilds in Jamaica Plain to see the American Cork tree. Members also asked Ted to give his slide show to the Steering Committee.

Amber asked that everyone submit their hours committed to CISMA related work so this can be used for match to the current NFWF grant. Organizations should consider a room usage fee as possible match too, e.g. where CISMA meetings are held.

Amber announced that there will be a Weed Watcher training on July 18 at 6 pm at Assabet NWR. Training will focus on aquatic weeds.

Amber announced that the Aquatic Hitchhiker signs are being printed. She will make a list of places to post them. It will be the responsibility of the CISMA member to post them, either on a tree or a post. Permission to post will be needed in most locations. It was suggested that we place as our first priority river access sites which are within our priority areas.

Pulling Together Initiative – preproposal discussion

Jeff circulated an email about 3 weeks ago asking for further ideas and suggestions for a grant application. He heard from Laura, Freddie, Lynn and Matt with ideas of parcels of land to focus this grant on. Emphasis is being placed on open meadow early succession habitat because that is a priority for NFWF, the granting organization (although when Jeff spoke with a representative she said it did not have to be early succession habitat).

Lynn discussed a small open field owned by the Carlisle Conservation Foundation. It is being encroached along the borders by Euonymus and Buckthorn. CCF would like to manage the parcel as open meadow and maintain Milkweed. It is too small for Bob-o-link nesting. Lynn also put together a template for a budget to manage the property, which could be used by others.

Laura described some open fields at Greenways in Wayland which is being encroached by Buckthorn. Field is about 7 acres. There are additional fields owned by the Town and perhaps they would want to participate in this grant as well.

Laura also discussed The Barrens where SVT is considering a controlled burn to manage buckthorn. FWS Burn Crew might be able to help on this.

Matt said that WWP owned a half acre parcel off Sudbury Road with many different species.

Other areas suggested were Foss Farm and O'Rourke property in Carlisle (both with a lot of acreage), Old Calf Pasture in partnership with Concord, south part of the Assabet NWR which could demonstrate a partnership with SVT Barrens property.

The group discussed presenting a number of different scenarios within the grant. Presenting a variety of fields – some small and others larger. Some to focus on a perimeter defense, others with more full blown management, including a possible burn, some may go back to haying. Properties should include a variety of land owners.

Lynn's budget template can be used for each individual field, but should be aggregated for the pre-proposal. Budgets should be increased to include cost of restoration and monitoring. It should include a fair estimate of Coordinator's time to survey and develop management plans, as well as time for property owner/manager. Pesticide applicators may need to be hired, and that too should be in the budget. Signs should be posted at each site to bring attention to the project. Match requirement for the grant is 1:1. Lynn will modify the template and then distribute.

Everyone felt the grant should be written for about \$60-\$65K. Matt, Laura, Lynn, Amber, Ted, Brian (Monahan) and Jeff will either meet or have a conference call to finalize the pre-proposal.

CISMA Website

John said that the website is functional and our contract with Bartlett Interactive is almost complete. Effort is now required on our part to include the content for the site. He wants information on each project – a 1-2 sentence introduction, and then a more complete description.

Photos and maps will be added. Matt is reviewing bugwood.org and salicicola.org to determine the availability of photos. Jeff is working on interactive maps. Before that project is completed, we should upload static maps of the watershed, priority areas etc. on to the site. There will also be links to other organization's websites – maps specifically.

Other Business

Alison said that OARS is working on controlling water chestnut on the Assabet River and is finding it hard to get volunteers. Work is focused in Stow behind the impoundment. OARS had to cancel their 7/6 pulling day. Libby said that FWS has a YCC crew this year and they will be pulling chestnuts in the Sudbury River. Maybe they can be used in the Assabet as well.

OARS has also applied from a grant from ERM to help support the mapping of water chestnut on the Assabet and a plan for pulling. This will be helpful to be able to show the success of pulling plants over time. CISMA will write a letter of support for the project.

Ted said that NEWFS is working with the Town of Foxboro and doing an invasives inventory. They also are working with the Town of Concord on management of Buckthorn at the Old Calf Pasture.

Ted reported that 85 bags of Mile a Minute weed were collected in Westford using ED/RR volunteers and others.

The fall membership meeting will not have an outside speaker, but will focus on developing Annual Priority Action (APAs) and sharing results of summer work efforts.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be September 13.