

**SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
September 11, 2012**

Members Present: Amber Carr (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), Lee Steppacher (National Park Service/ River Stewardship Council), Libby Herland (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Laura Mattei (Sudbury Valley Trustees), M. John Dwyer (Maynard Conservation Commission), Jeff Collins (Mass Audubon), Lynn Knight (Carlisle Land Foundation), Russ Cohen (MA Dept of Ecological Restoration), Tom Largy (Wayland), Dave McKinnon (Lincoln), Pat Conaway (Lake Cochituate Watershed Coalition), Ted Elliman (New England Wild Flower Society).

Guests: Karen Pelto (MassDEP Coordinator of Natural Resource Damages Program), Rose Knox, (MassDEP Nyanza Restoration Plan Trustee Representative).

Minutes of July 10, 2012

John highlighted some typos.

Lynn moved, second by Ted to approve as amended. Approved unanimously.

Announcements

Amber announced that there would be a site visit to see progress on control of Mile a Minute in Westford. Another site visit would be organized to go to Concord to see and discuss Buckthorn control. Amber will announce dates.

The Early Detection Committee organized two Aquatic plant ID classes for members, and there was good turnout for both.

Thursday, September 13 the Early Detection Committee will host a round table discussion about engaging volunteers to be held at Main Street Café in Hudson. Nine people are already signed up.

Amber has revised the new membership form, based on suggestions from the last meeting. There were no comments from members today, so Amber will forward the form to the Natick Garden Club. They will provide a ‘trial run’ for this process.

Grant Updates

1. RSC grants
 - a. NEWFS offered training in August for 15 people, introducing them to 15 early detection species in the classroom and in the field. Ale Echande spoke about mile-a-minute weed, and Irena and Alexi Kadis, from Arnold Arboretum,

addressed Rusty Willow. The group went to Callahan State Park to observe species in the field. Rusty Willow was there. Brazilian Water Weed was also present, although it was not present over the past 2 years.

- b. Westford Conservation Trust has already hosted work parties to remove Mile a Minute weed. The infestation has been removed.
 - c. Our thoughts go to Rebecca Chizzo who has a family member with serious illness. Despite this, SWEET is working with volunteers at King Philips Conservation land. She is postponing some of her work until later in the year.
 - d. Baystate Roads program for DPW workers and others to help identify and manage invasive species will be held on Oct 10 in western MA and 11 at the Assabet River Visitor's Center.
 - e. Education and Outreach subcommittee is still working to organize one or more talks for the public later this year. Lynn suggested that a talk about Winter Moths and how to control them by banding trees might be of interest.
2. NFWF grant. Amber reported that this grant focuses on 7 sites in the watershed. Control work has begun on all of them, except Bear Hill Garden, owned by Walden Woods Project. Other sites are O'Rourke land, Foss Farm and Ben's Woods in Carlisle, The Natural Desert Area and Assabet River NWR in Sudbury, and Greenways in Wayland. Katrina and Amber have created wayside signs to be posted at each site and describe the work that is being undertaken. A certificate-seeking student at NEWFS is photographing each of the sites, before, during and after the work to provide documentation. Jeff asked that participants in the project submit invoices to him for payment, and to also document hours for match reports.

Planning the Fall Meeting

Lynn outlined the general agenda for the meeting including highlights of this year's projects, presentation of annual priority actions (APAs) to membership for comment and a moderated session for everyone to share ongoing activities and concerns.

Presentations on this year's projects will include:

Katrina will present on the Water Chestnut Pullathon and the protocols for raising beetles to control Purple Loosestrife.

Amber and Lynn will discuss the NFWF grant

Alison and OARS will present their project to map water chestnut infestations in the Assabet River

Members suggested that there should also be a discussion of the Nyanza Restoration funds, especially discussing how the invasive species management monies to be directed to CISMA will be managed.

Russ said that Carly Rocklen, from the Neponset watershed has been raising beetles for 3-5 years using volunteers and she might have some good suggestions for us.

Lynn asked that the subcommittee chairs pull together APAs for the coming year by November 5th and send them to her.

Future Funding Template

Lynn presented a draft template which she has created to present possible project ideas that could be submitted for funding to a foundation or other grant making group. Instead of only reacting to grant proposals, Lynn suggested that if we be proactive by packaging some strong proposals together and present them to a foundation. The foundation could then either pick among the proposed projects or fund the entire package. Lynn asked for comments on the template as soon as possible. She will bring it to the fall meeting so she can solicit project ideas from all of the members. The hope is to have a package of projects by the beginning of the year.

Nyanza Natural Resource Restoration Plan

Karen Pelto briefly presented the Nyanza Restoration Plan which contains 11 projects and \$3.6 million in funding. Invasive species management is the largest project category and will receive \$1.1 million. CISMA will manage these projects. Rose Knox will be the Trustee Representative who manages the invasive species projects, so CISMA will work closely with her. A cooperative agreement between FWS and Mass Audubon (CISMA's fiscal agent) will make funds available. Not all funding will be available at once, but the hope is that some will be available by next spring so it can be used in the upcoming field season.

The Plan says that Purple loosestrife control will receive \$175K /year, water chestnut control will receive \$269K in the first year for the harvester and mapping costs. In the first year a total of \$444 will be transferred to Mass Audubon for CISMA projects.

Heard Pond will also receive \$50K for 3 years of water chestnut control. Tom said that the costs had been reduced on Heard Pond to about \$5K/year. He asked if the funds could be made available for more than 3 years, and/or if some of the funds could be redirected. Karen responded that the Trustees as a group would have to discuss if and how funds could be reallocated.

CISMA needs to discuss how the funds will be distributed and determine who will do the projects.

1. **Purple Loosestrife** – needs to be mapped from Ashland to Concord to determine location and amount of infestation. How far off the river should we map? Karen said that the Trustee's first priority is the floodplains near the river. Karen said that the Town of Ashland is interested in this project, so CISMA should reach out to them.

CISMA will need a plan to address how to monitor Loosestrife. Members questioned whether we could allocate the funds in a way that we could extend the period of monitoring. Karen will look into this.

CISMA needs to discuss who would undertake this project. The protocols are in place for raising beetles but not clear who will do it. This could be an opportunity to engage schools, although beetle release will likely occur after school is out for the summer. Other volunteer groups may be able to take this on.

2. Water Chestnut Mapping and Removal

Mapping will take place on the Sudbury River. OARS has completed a mapping project on the Assabet and Concord rivers this summer, and it is likely that the protocol they used will be applied to the Sudbury river as well.

Removal will take place in Heard Pond, Fairhaven Bay, Rt 117 to Rt 20, Carding Mill Pond and Sterns Mill Pond. For the Trustees, the mainstem of the Sudbury River is the priority.

There are three parts to this project.

1. Purchase a harvester. If a harvester is purchased, along with a conveyor and trailer, who will own it?
2. Hiring a crew of 10 people for 8 weeks to do handpulling
3. Purchase of 20 canoes

Should all three parts of the project be done by one organization, or should different groups take the lead for different parts? The Admin Committee will discuss this and put together a straw proposal for the fall meeting. Dave said that Lincoln could help with beetle rearing and could possibly oversee crews in canoes. There was a suggestion that one organization oversee the hiring of the crews and have oversight bounce around based on where the crew is working.

Tom Eagle, Deputy Manager at Eastern MA NWR Complex visited to discuss the harvester. He said that the current harvester was purchased in 1988. It requires a lot of maintenance each year. He asked whether we should consider using funds to pay for a contractor to do the work. Karen said that when reviewing proposal for the plan she got the sense that the timeframe for harvesting was tight, there were multiple sites to work at and to try to get a contractor to work within our needs might be difficult. Because of long distance between sites, it might not be as time effective with a contractor.

3. Wild Rice Restoration

This project will be done through an interagency service agreement with MassWildlife. Native stock will be collected from remnant populations along the river. Ted said that NEWFS might be interested in helping with this portion of the projects and could use some of their volunteers.