

SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
May 15, 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), Ron Gemma (Westford Conservation Trust), Ted Elliman (NEWFS), Matt Burne (Walden Woods Project), M. John Dwyer (Maynard Conservation Commission), Jeff Collins (Mass Audubon), Freddie Gillespie (Southborough Open Land Foundation), Anna Wilkins (Lincoln Land Conservation Trust).

Minutes

Add Ted Elliman to the list of attendees. Change text to reflect that the video of the spring meeting will be uploaded (it is not on the website yet). With these changes the minutes were approved unanimously.

New Members

Three organizations have requested membership in CISMA: US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service, Natick Garden Club and Acton Conservation Commission.

There was particular discussion about the Natick Garden Club and garden clubs in general which are different than most other CISMA members in that they do not own land and may not be incorporated nonprofit organizations. Many garden clubs are federated, but it is not exactly clear what that entails. A number of issues were discussed including

- What are the costs and benefits to CISMA in terms of size of the organization. Do we reach a critical mass beyond which we become less effective?
- Garden clubs are a different kind of entity. Would we also include scout troops, environmental clubs? Is there an outer boundary to our membership?
- Most garden clubs have a conservation mission, and membership might allow us to reach an untouched constituency. It might also help us to reach out to private landowners.
- Should garden clubs and the like be encouraged to sit on subcommittees.
- Does the MOU provide any guidance on this issue? Admin Subcommittee should look into this.
- Should we consider if an organization has a board and officers as criteria for membership in CISMA?

Matt moved to accept USDA.NRCS and Acton ConCom as members, and asks the Admin Subcommittee to determine the appropriate level of membership for garden clubs and report back to the Steering Committee. John seconds and approved unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports

Education and Outreach

John reported that the website continues to expand. Matt is taking photos of species, through the seasons, for aid in identification. Google Analytics shows that new visitors to the site has increased from 120 to 225 between April and May, and page visits has increased from 525 to 1200 in the same time period. John is visiting all CISMA members to get input on the website.

The NFWF grant project will be documented on the website. A student in the NEWFS certificate program will create photos and /or a video of each of the 5 sites being managed. Five students have expressed interest in participating and Amber will select one to work with CISMA.

After a discussion with Jeff, it has been decided to use EDD Maps as the source of maps on the website. Once a seamless link is made with EDD Maps, users will be able to report sightings of invasives on our website and locations will be mapped at a central location and displayed on maps. Maps created by IPANE are being included in EDD Maps. Jeff explained that mobile mappers, which he worked with in the past few years, are generally being superseded by EDD Maps. Nonetheless, Jeff is working with OARS to map water chestnut, using the mobile mappers.

John asked the Steering Committee whether we should put a list of contractors on the website. There were some questions about how we would vet the contractors on the list. DOT has a list of contractors, and these are probably approved by Natural Heritage program. Instead of creating a new list, we should consider linking to DOT for this information.

Early Detection Rapid Response Subcommittee

A number of trainings will be available this summer, including

- Aquatic Plant Identification in July and August. CO sponsored with the Commonwealth.
- Two round table discussions
- Field trips to ongoing project – Westford, Southborough, Sudbury
- Baystate roads training

Amber will send out details. Russ is developing a course to provide recertification credits for pesticide applicators.

Admin Subcommittee

The Admin Subcommittee reviewed the spring meeting and began to consider speakers for next year. While the fall meeting will continue to be a recap of the year and a chance for all members to participate in an update of their activities, the spring meeting will be a speaker again. Bernd Blossey, from Cornell was discussed, though he would not come for free, he could provide a talk on current invasive species research. Dr. Casagrande from URI was also mentioned. A presentation and hands on session about EDD Maps was another option.

Discussion of Small Grant Proposals (RSC funds)

Five grant proposals were received. \$5800 available.

1. Baystate Roads Program proposal for \$2000 to host 2 trainings, one in our watershed, and the other in western part of the state. Last year, with money from TNC, 2 workshops were offered. We benefited by being able to host one in Concord. One of the grant criteria is that the project have benefit to the rivers in our watershed, so it is difficult to justify support for a workshop in the western part of the state. Grant funds were reduced to offer only one workshop, in our watershed. \$750 granted.
2. Sudbury Weed Eradication and Education Team (SWEET) request for \$1700 to continue removal efforts in Sudbury in partnership with the high school and town volunteers. Rebecca, the lead on this project, does a good job of recruiting volunteers in town and getting the work done. There was some discussion of whether she was getting enough technical supervision and how we could offer that at least in part by inviting her to some of our in-field training sessions. CISMA is working to develop some standardized outreach materials to be used by members, so would like these funds for SWEET to be focused on eradication efforts and tools. \$1,500 granted.
3. Westford Conservation Trust requested \$490 to eradicate Mile-a-Minute weed from two sites in town. This is an early detection species and Westford has done a good job in controlling its spread. Funds will be used primarily for permit filing fees. The Steering Committee felt that costs for this project might have been underestimated and increased the amount slightly. \$600 granted.
4. The Education and Outreach Subcommittee proposed a speaker series to target the general public and requested \$1200. Although specifics were not detailed, conceptually the series might piggyback on an existing lecture series, or include partnership with other organizations in order to touch a larger audience. The subcommittee was asked to refine their proposal and consider how a speaker series might complement the CISMA spring meeting. \$750 granted.
5. New England Wildflower Society requested \$1300 to continue the early detection volunteer trainings that were started 2 years ago as part of the NFWF grant. These trainings would keep trained volunteers engaged in management. In addition NEWFS would organize volunteer pulls of Japanese Stiltgrass in 5 locations within the watershed. \$1300 granted.

Jeff moves that the 5 projects be approved with a total of \$4900 committed for small grants. Ted seconds and all approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.