

SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
May 14, 2013

Members Present: Amber Carr (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), John Dwyer (Maynard Conservation Commission), Lee Steppacher (National Park Service/ River Stewardship Council), Libby Herland (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Laura Mattei (Sudbury Valley Trustees), Dave McKinnon (Lincoln), Sue Flint (OARS), Jeff Collins (Mass Audubon)

Announcements

On May 16 Jess Toro will be speaking at Thoreau Institute as part of the CISMA Speaker Series, in conjunction with Walden Woods Project. The Cheese Shop will host a wine and cheese reception before the talk. Contact Matt to RSVP.

Russ Cohen will lead a wild edibles walk at Stearns Farm in Framingham on May 29th. Call Russ for more information.

Minutes

Members reviewed both the January 15 and March 23 minutes. On the March 23 minutes, page 4, next to last paragraph there is an incomplete sentence.

Dave moves to accept both sets of minutes. Laura seconds. Passed unanimously.

Steering Committee Updates

Administration

The Admin Committee has been focusing on the Nyanza projects to ensure that we are able to follow through and accomplish CISMA projects.

- In regards to Water Chestnut management, we are still waiting to hear from Americorps on whether we have a 10 person crew for the summer. Amber recently met with the Americorps contact person who said the crews are being pulled into doing restoration work in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and that they got half the groups that they were expecting to do other projects. We will have a better chance of getting support if we are willing to share a crew with another Boston location. At best we will get 4 weeks of time, instead of 8. Americorps is confident in FWS because there is already an established relationship, so that is in our favor. Because of plant phenology our projects are a bit less flexible than others.

Tasks for the crew include handpulling of Water Chestnut plants, helping with the harvester and sampling of plants to determine if they can be composted.

After discussion, members agreed that we were willing to be flexible. Our preference would be a smaller crew of a longer period of time. Second preference would be a full crew of 4 weeks. Last choice would be a smaller crew supplemented with interns. The interns that Amber had initially identified are most likely already employed for the summer, so another search will have to be undertaken. Laura suggested that we hire interns and a team leader, through Mass Audubon. We do have the funding to do this if needed.

Amber will let us know when she hears from Americorps.

- NFWF Grant. Current grant is on track. A new person has been hired at NEWFS to replace Ted – her name is Amanda Weise.

New NFWF grant ideas. After sending out an initial email, Jeff is not getting a lot of feedback on ideas for a grant application for this year. The preproposal is due on Friday so probably there is not the momentum to apply this year. During the fall we should pull together a list of project ideas so we can be ready for grant opportunities. Some initial ideas are

1. More information on disposal options. Query towns and landscapers to see what they are doing regarding disposal. Use CISMA funds for a chipper. Create a composting operation in the watershed (bring up to MIPAG)
2. Work with towns and local land trusts to set up volunteer crews, replicating a SWEET- type model.
3. Need for permits to apply herbicides. Need to work at state level to move this issue along. Petition membership to help on this.

Control/ Early Detection

The subcommittee hosted a roundtable discussion on disposal methods which was well attended. Another is scheduled for the fall but a topic has not been chosen yet. Two trainings are offered this summer on identification of invasive species.

MA DARs recertification course for pesticide applicators has traditionally been focused on turf management. They are now starting to offer classes that are more invasive plant management focused.

UMASS Extension is hosting a training for invasive plant management and includes recertification for a CORE license. CISMA should look into partnering with them in the future.

Education and Outreach

The Subcommittee met with Bartlett Interactive, the company that helped design the website. They will be enhancing the website to include a mapping feature that will be connected to

EDMAPS at UMASS. Users will be able to enter locational data for invasive species on our website which will be included in the statewide database.

The subcommittee has hosted a speaker series in partnership with Walden Woods Project. The next speaker is Jess Toro later this week.

Nyanza Update

The cooperative agreement is being worked on so funds will be available soon. It has been posted on grants.gov and is now being processed. Hopefully funds will be available in July or August.

The harvester is being purchased through FWS. Specs have been set and will have to be submitted to Federal Business Opportunities before being advertised. When bids are received Tom Eagle will work with contracting officer to choose the successful bid. If costs are in line with estimates this will include harvester, trailer, conveyor and barge. [Sequestration is slowing down our process, and also the impacts of Hurricane Sandy. FWS has received funds for habitat restoration and that is a top priority of contracting to complete].

Ziggy, a FWS employee who has been very involved in deploying the harvester in the past, is retiring. This will be a loss for the program. Libby feels that FWS should be responsible for moving of the harvester and associated equipment.

Katrina and Amber are hosting trainings on beetle rearing technique for all those interested in hosting a rearing site next year. Katrina is creating videos of the process as well for future reference.

Mass Audubon has begun to map the Purple Loosestrife. Liz Newlands has been doing the field work, both by land and by boat as appropriate. She will revisit some of the sites when the plants are more mature to check her accuracy. Results of her surveys will lead to proposal for new beetle release sites where infestations are the densest.

OARS has hired two interns to help with Water Chestnut mapping. They will start on May 22nd and will coordinate with Mass Audubon. Plants are not up yet. If the mapping is completed quickly, the interns will be able to help with Water Chestnut pulling.

There is \$35K available for canoes and other related equipment. Amber is waiting to see what happens with the crew before making any purchases.

MA Fish and Game are the lead agency for the wild rice restoration. The primary contact person has changed and there is no real plan in place yet. Amber will follow up with them.

Heard Pond Water Chestnut Control is progressing and being led by Tom Largy. FWS is not involved in managing that project, although funds will come from the cooperative agreement with Mass Audubon. Amber assumes they will request reimbursement when they are completed. She does not think it will cost the \$50K allotted in the budget.

Jeff suggested that as part of our end of year progress report we identify any unspent funds from this year and propose how those funds can be used in 2014. This is a good way to show our progress and future intent to the Trustees and gain their approval before spring of 2014.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant Update

Work is progressing on this project. Only change of note is the replacement of Ted Elliman with Amanda Weise at NEWFS. This transition seems to be occurring smoothly.

RSC funded Small Grants for CISMA members

There are \$5K available to be distributed to projects. Amber received 4 proposals which she summarized on a handout (see attached). Comments on proposals are as follows:

1. **SWEET (sponsored by Town of Sudbury)** – Everyone supported efforts made by SWEET. In many ways they are a model for the kind of local volunteer efforts we would like to encourage in other parts of the watershed. Some concern about how to protect new native planting from deer and rabbits so they will thrive. NEWFS will help with plantings. Funds requested : \$1,142.49
2. **Maynard Conservation Commission (sponsoring)** – This project will occur on a one acre lot which is basically a ravine. Although a small area, if it is well publicized and effort put into outreach, perhaps similar efforts will be undertaken in other parks within town. Project value is in its educational benefit. Over half the funds, \$750 will be used to develop a restoration plan, but no funds are allocated to invasive species control at this time. Jeff asked about who would be taking ownership for the property after the initial clean up. John said that this was a conservation commission property and that they would take long term responsibility. One concern is that there are no certified pesticide applicators in town. Funds requested: \$1,250
3. **Westford Conservation Trust** – This is a proposal to continue to control Mile a Minute weed at 3 sites in Westford. The project has been successful to date; Only one plant fruited last year. Because the seeds are viable for up to 5 years, this project will continue to ensure that the early detection species is eradicated. Funds requested: \$738.40
4. **Education and Outreach Subcommittee** – This proposal is to continue the speaker series in conjunction with Walden Woods Project. Members discussed how they would like to get a big name speaker and that those costs are higher than the funds we have had allocated in the past. If we get such a speaker, Thoreau Institute may not be the best location for a talk. We will ask Matt and WWP what their preferences are and determine a place accordingly. Funds requested: \$1500.

There was some further discussion about our meeting schedule and whether we should only have a fall meeting to discuss APAs and in the spring have a big event for the public. Each year we seem to have a smaller audience and fewer meetings may increase attendance

Libby moved, Jeff seconded the following allocation of funds:

SWEET: \$1,150

Westford Conservation Trust: \$750

Maynard Con Com: \$1,250

E&O: \$1,500

Admin costs and funds for annual meetings: \$350

Approved unanimously.

Future National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant Ideas

Lynn had circulated a proposal to upgrade the website to include a calendar that included plant phenology and when control action should be taken for specific plants. This would be helpful to local entities and homeowners.

Other suggested that we need to offer more technical assistance to member organizations. Perhaps we should have a circuit rider to provide this assistance. The coordinator could also provide this service, thereby making that job almost full time.

These ideas should be sent out to the entire membership with a request for additional ideas. It would be good to have a 'wish list' of projects ready so we will be prepared when a request for proposals is distributed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 pm.