

SUASCO CISMA
Steering Committee Meeting
Great Meadows NWR, Sudbury
July 13, 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), Matt Burne (Walden Woods Project), Barbara Volke (Friends of Assabet NWR), Lynn Knight (Carlisle)

Minutes

Members reviewed the May 14 minutes. John explained on page 4, #2 that the project in Maynard was initiated by a neighborhood group and the Conservation Commission is sponsoring it.

Dave moves to accept minutes. John seconds. Passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Updates

Administration

The Subcommittee has been discussing the residence of the CISMA Coordinator because it is still unclear whether FWS will be able to maintain the position. Regionally, FWS is potentially facing a 10% cut in staff (approximately 60 positions) in the next year, followed by additional cuts in the following years. Although there is still interest in keeping the Coordinator position, in reality this may be very difficult to do. All agree that the coordinator is critical to the success of the CISMA.

In order to secure the position, and to provide Amber (existing coordinator) with some certainty, Mass Audubon has offered to house the position. Nyanza funds will continue to support approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the coordinator time, and Jeff feels that coordinator skills would be suitable for other work at MAS. Lynn has also talked to NEWFS and Libby talked to SVT to assess their interest in housing the position. All agree that MAS is probably the most suitable.

Steering Committee made a formal statement that members are supportive of having the coordinator position housed at MAS if necessary.

Education and Outreach

The E&O Subcommittee sponsored the second in the CISMA Speaker Series at Thoreau Institute. Jess Toro from MA DAR presented and there was a good turnout.

The CISMA website has added a page with a connection to EDMAPS, the invasive species mapping program from UMASS. This will allow people within the watershed to report on sightings of invasive species infestations and be included on statewide maps. Amber will verify all reports that are made within the CISMA project area, i.e. the Concord River watershed. Once verified, a report will be sent to anyone who requests it. A map of the watershed will be added to EDMAPS. Amber hopes to have a discussion of EDMAPS and a short tutorial for use at the fall CISMA meeting.

There will need to be some work on the CISMA website to accommodate EDMAPS in the best way. “ Report Invasives’ tag should be put in more places, and be made visible. Perhaps a sidebar should be added.

The CISMA did not define the list of invasives that can be reported, so it is not specific to our watershed. Instead it is a statewide list, and some of the species may not occur in our area. Although EDDMapS wants all species reported, we are really focused more on early detection species. We may not care that Buckthorn is reported because we likely will not try to control it, but would be interested in Mile a Minute, or another ED/RR species. . When EDMAPS is introduced to it will be important to communicate why we want the data so that our needs will be met without possibly overtaxing the system. It will be important to spread the word so that we will get reports from others in the watershed, not just us, and be able to expand outreach and identify more ED/RR species. Amber will work with the Control Subcommittee to clarify the message of what we want reported and why.

Control/ Early Detection

The Subcommittee has not been very active these past two months since Anna has been away. A Roundtable discussion was held in the spring, and another is planned for September 3rd from 4-6 pm at the River Rock Grill in Maynard. A topic has not yet been chosen.

Membership Survey

Lynn is working on a survey to get feedback from the CISMA membership. After 4 years, she wants to reach out and get input from all members on the direction the Steering Committee has led the CISMA and ensure it is still meeting member needs. Survey Monkey will be used to administer the survey. Suggestions made were:

- to add a question about what the members want from the CISMA.
- Ask members to rank future activities against each other so that we know what to work on first

- Omit references to SWEET
- Ask for a name if people want to give it so we can follow up.

Nyanza Update

Harvester bids have been received. One bid was under the amount available. Tom Eagle, FWS is working on this and hopes to have an award in the next few weeks. Libby said that we will need to have a further discussion about how this harvester will be used and where it will go. Presently the partners use it in their towns and help pay for maintenance. Will this continue if other areas want to use harvester?

Sue F. gave an update on Water Chestnut mapping project. Summer interns at OARS are working on this, starting with the Concord Impoundments and the Sudbury River. They hope to complete the mapping within 3 weeks and will have maps available on the CISMA website. Water Chestnut have been found above the Saxonville Dam, where they have not been seen before. Sue would like to discuss how to get Framingham involved. There was a question about whether they would need a harvester. There was also concern for Water Chestnut in Billerica just above Billerica Dam. The infestation is very dense and hard for handpulling, but it might be too shallow for the harvester.

Americorps crew was with us for about 18 days, working in the Sudbury River around Fairhaven bay up to Sherman's Bridge. The crew worked really well and were very enthusiastic, however the time and effort that Amber put in to make it happen for such a short period was not worth it. Back in March Amber applied for a 10 person crew for at least 8 weeks, and finally got a 7 person crew for 2.5 weeks Amber is now recruiting a new crew to work for one month. This will include one leader and a small crew.

Only one canoe has been purchased to date, though by next year we will be able to purchase 10 canoes and 10 kayaks. That will allow us to accommodate 30 people on the Water Chestnut crews. With these boats we might be able to apply for Americorps and hire a local crew. For Americorps housing needs to be offered, and O'Rourke's Farm may not be offered again.

Jeff reported that the Purple Loosestrife Mapping project has been completed from Framingham to the confluence of the rivers. MAS Staff will return to the possible release sites and undertake the Cornell protocol so that the success of the release can be monitored over time. This year beetles are being released in areas where they have been released before and where there are still plants. Next year we will be able to use the current mapping data and begin to release at new sites.

First beetle releases were done yesterday and will be completed by the end of the week. Katrina has created 4 training videos for use by organization who will raise beetles. Seven organizations have been involved in training. An RFP will be released this fall to apply for release sites for next year.

The cooperative agreement has been completed and funds are now available. OARS and MAS will send reports to Amber to be included in the report required by October to the Trustees.

The Boston Globe did a long story on a number of the projects funded by the Nyanza settlement funds, including the bird banding taking place as part of the Belize project.

NFWF Grant

Progress is being made on this grant. Work days at each OD the sites have been scheduled. Amber needs to have everyone send her their hours so she can work ion match requirements for the grant.

RSC Grants

All recipients have been contacted.

SWEET has been in conversation with Lee and clarified that their work is for 2014. Maynard ConCom got NEWFS to help them with their Walcott Woods site inventory. E&O Subcommittee will continue their speaker series and possibly also purchase a microphone. There has not been an update from Westford.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on September 10th from 1 – 3 pm.