

SuAsCo CISMA Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2015, 1-3 pm

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Sudbury

Present: Amber Carr, Laura Mattei, Jeff Collins, Libby Herland, Alison Field-Juma, Barbara Volkle, Ron Gemma, Frank Lyons, Karen Pelto, Delia Kaye, John Dwyer, Rob MacArthur, Bettina Abe, Tom Brownrigg, Amanda Weise, Alison LeFlore

1. Announcements

The Speaker Series will present Jeff Taylor on January 22 at 7 pm at Walden Woods (44 Baker Farm, Lincoln). Amber will circulate the announcement and everyone was asked to publicize it.

2. Officer Elections

Framingham would like to join CISMA and their representative would be Rob MacArthur. It was moved and unanimously voted to admit Framingham and welcome Conservation Administrator Rob MacArthur as the representative.

A slate of Alison Field-Juma as Chair, Amanda Weise as Vice Chair, Jeff Collins as Treasurer, Laura Mattei, and Delia Kaye as Co-Secretaries was nominated and unanimously elected for one year with immediate effect. The former office-holders were thanked for their service. Ron Gemma will become the Chair of the Control Subcommittee.

3. Spring meeting

The Spring Meeting will be on March 10, 3-5 pm. It was agreed that the ARNWR Visitor Center was a good location (Libby will reserve the meeting room). Possible speakers were discussed: Tom Lee, UNH, an expert on buckthorn and a good speaker and personality was suggested. Also Peter Alden, Concord, an expert on birds and their association with invasives. It was decided that Delia will ask Peter Alden if he is available for the Speaker Series or fall meeting (see below). Everyone should aim to bring some snacks to share as there is no budget for this—the notice will remind everyone of this. Amber will send a Save-the-Date 6 weeks in advance, and a reminder 2 weeks prior to the event.

It was subsequently agreed that the EDD Maps tool on the CISMA website should be launched at the spring meeting and a short training provided. Amanda will invite Ted Elliman, Senior Botanist at the New England Wild Flower Society, to come to lead this. This could be used to build data on a particular species, e.g., bittersweet, that could be the focus of a grant proposal on controlling a particular species. This training could be followed by a quick review of the early detection species, with slides, fact sheets and networking among participants. Amanda and Amber will review the slides. Additional ideas included addressing why stiltgrass got too widespread for control, looking at knotweed from the air. Since the EDD Map and early detection species review will take up most of the time, it was agreed that speakers should move to the Speaker Series or Fall meeting.

Frank Lyons offered to fly over Cedar Swamp to map water chestnut there; Alison will discuss this further with him. The cost of dredging two Hop Brook ponds has been estimated at a few million dollars, and tarp covering has also been considered to control invasives.

4. Strategic Plan

It was agreed that the Strategic Plan should be revised if it is useful to do so. It is good to have it current, but it also needs to be relevant. The Admin Committee has been discussing the bigger picture of where CISMA needs to go to, see below.

5. Subcommittee updates

Administration (Amber): The Admin Committee has been discussing the bigger picture of where CISMA needs to go to address the growing invasives problem, in light of scarce resources. It was noted that Amber's time is committed to implementing Nyanza-funded efforts, not to CISMA administration, which she fits in where she can. Grant proposals should reflect need to make a significant impact on invasives control, either in a specific location, e.g., through a few towns, or a specific species, e.g., bittersweet, throughout the watershed.

Frank suggested using local CPC funds for land with public access; it would be helpful if CISMA provided a model proposal for communities to use to raise CPC monies to apply to an invasives project. Delia has a proposal to CPC which she will send to Amber to circulate and post to CISMA's website. These proposals should be submitted through or made by the local Conservation Commission and stick to the timing schedule (fall to CPC ->spring to Town Meeting). One could ask for funds to be sent to a fund to be used on invasives control, but is most persuasive if it is for a specific control problem. Call it "habitat restoration" or "improvement."

Amber submitted a proposal to the National Park Service via the River Stewardship Council. She will also submit the report to the RSC for the Small Grants funding—Alison will send her the form. For the next round of RSC funding, Amber will submit a proposal that includes outreach and the website explicitly, separate from the funds to be given out as small grants.

Control (Ron and Amanda): Edd Maps will be launched. There has been a Westford-wide garlic mustard pulling effort. Research indicates that it is unclear whether it is worthwhile in the long run as garlic mustard may be self-limiting in some ecosystems/landscapes. NEWFS could collaborate with CIMSA for a future symposium in fall 2015 or spring 2016. NEWFS could provide the venue.

Education/Outreach (Barbara and John): Speaker series. Website updates have been discussed with Bartlett Interactive to increase visibility of website and make it work properly on different devices. John has posted the water chestnut maps and has worked on renaming the photo albums on Flickr so they can be moved to the CISMA website. It was suggested that community TV be asked to post speakers from our Speaker Series on their websites and then we can link to it.

6. Nyanza projects update

This past summer Amber was very busy coordinating the rearing of 10 shares of beetles, hiring and overseeing 10-person water chestnut crew, and working with the crew of the new harvester. In 2015 she will be hiring two crew leaders to assist in supervision. The other water chestnut pulling crew members will be paid \$10.10/hour. There will be 15 shares of beetles available to all groups.

She has written the report to the Nyanza Trustees but not yet completed the financials/budget. There have been savings on Heard Pond water chestnut harvesting and the canoe purchases, with ~\$100,000 left. This will be proposed to be used for administration, \$25,000 to OARS for water chestnut control permitting and planning, mitigation of the impact of loosestrife removal on bee forage, and hopefully to hire a water chestnut harvester operator for 12 weeks. The operator is difficult to recruit, train and hire via Mass Audubon so alternatives were discussed.

Karen reported that the Nyanza Trustee Council can make decisions in time for the field season as long as she gets the report from CISMA by Feb. 10, before the Feb. 17 call. There is no delay in providing funds to partners as Mass Audubon can do that. Amber will send the report text to Karen now so that Karen can include it in her Trustee report.

MassWildlife won't be directly managing the wild rice planting project, but will provide technical assistance to NEWFS.

AFJ, 1/19/15