

Minutes

SuAsCo CISMA Fall Meeting

November 12, 2013

The fall meeting of the Sudbury Assabet Concord Cooperative Invasives Species Management Area (SuAsCo CISMA) was held at the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on November 12, 2013 from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm. The meeting was attended by 30 people representing 23 member organizations.

After a brief meet and greet, CISMA Chair Lynn Knight called the meeting to order at 3:15 pm. Lynn recapped the results of the membership survey conducted in August and referenced a summary (attached) of the responses. There were 21 responses which represents about 50% of the members. Lynn had two observations from the survey:

- There is a desire among members for assistance in getting permits for working in wetlands to control invasives; and
- There is interest in having a chronological calendar on the website that explains when plants are going to seed, best time to conduct control methods, etc.

ViceChair Laura Mattei reported she has already reached out to the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) to begin dialogue on this problem and would like assistance from local conservation administrators in this effort.

Lynn reported that Libby Herland contacted the New England Wild Flower Society (NEWFS) and proposed the development of a SuAsCo invasives calendar as a community service project for students in their certificate program. The project was accepted by NEWFS and has been forwarded to certificate program students. To date, no one has contacted Libby for more information.

Lynn encouraged members to visit the CISMA website – it is really informative! www.cisma-suasco.org

Lynn also reminded members that the CISMA has received grant money for several years from the SuAsCo Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council. This money has supported small member projects. She reminded folks to start thinking about their funding needs now, as the announcements often come up quickly. Also, if we have a number of projects the Administrative subcommittee might be able to pull together a larger grant application either to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) or to some other potential funder.

CISMA Coordinator Amber Carr updated accomplishments funded with Nyanza Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) funds as part of the Nyanza Restoration Plan. MassAudubon has mapped purple loosestrife and *Galerucella* beetle populations to determine best places to release beetles in the future (high loosestrife population/low beetle population). OARS has mapped water chestnut

populations in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers and 130 acres of ponds in the Hop Brook watershed. New infestations of water chestnuts were found as a result of the mapping. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is purchasing a second harvester which should be available in 2014. An Americorps crew and a 7 person MassAudubon crew hand-pulled water chestnuts. Additional canoes will be purchased this winter by FWS unless another organization steps forward to purchase, manage and maintain the canoes. Water chestnut pulling was completed in Heard Pond by a contractor.

Treasurer Jeff Collins indicated that the final report for work funded by NFWF was being prepared. All work except a controlled burn in the Desert Natural Area has been completed. NFWF provided \$71,000 to be matched by \$75,000 of in-kind or partner funding. To date, we have identified \$65,000 match.

Jeff also indicated that the CISMA coordinator position will be transitioning to MassAudubon in December 2013. Jeff thanked the FWS for its support for the coordinator position over the last 4 years. As of December 1, 2013, Amber can be reached at acarr@massaudubon.org

Lastly, terms are expiring this December for four members of the steering committee: Lincoln Conservation Commission, Maynard Conservation Commission, National Park Service, and The Walden Woods Project. Members were encouraged to nominate themselves for a seat on the steering committee.

There were three presentations about invasive species control and early detection efforts:

- Freddie Gillespie's presentation was "Southborough 10 Years Later: Invasive Treatments, Land Restoration and Wildlife Habitat". Freddie gave an excellent presentation on the challenges of restoring a 20-acre apple orchard that had been completely overrun with oriental bittersweet to a grassland meadow. The effort included the development of a stewardship plan, a virtual clearcut, chemical applications, removal of other invasives (multiflora rose) that moved in once the bittersweet was cleared, trail development, establishment of pollinator plants such as milkweed, and the return of bobolinks to the site.
- Bettina Abe's presentation was "Hand-pulling Water Chestnut from 2 Ponds in Acton". She described how she coordinated volunteers starting in 2011 to hand-pull water chestnuts in Ice House Pond (4 acres) and Robbins Mill Pond (2 acres). One of the most important points Bettina made was that the Ice House Pond had been drained and dredged in 1995 to address the water chestnut issue, but 16 years later was so thick with chestnuts that removal efforts were necessary. Bettina very nicely showed the value of one person taking a leadership role to recruit volunteers and learn as you go to tackle the water chestnut problem.
- Amanda Wiese's presentation was "Which Willow? Identification and management of rusty willow (*Salix cinerea*)". The rusty willow, also known as the gray willow, is an early detection species. It is in the same family as poplars. It has a very high invasiveness rating and is outcompeting native willows in Eastern Massachusetts. It has been documented on almost every town in Massachusetts, in meadows and fields, shores of rivers, ponds, and lakes, and in floodplains and wetlands. Amanda described the willow and discussed management options.

She offered to lead a field trip and prepare a fact sheet about this species. Amanda also recommended a website, www.salicola.com, maintained by willow expert Irina Kadis. Amanda works with NEWFS and is the new chair of the CISMA's Early Detection/Control subcommittee.

The remainder of the meeting was brief presentations from members about this year's invasive species control efforts and some issues for next year:

- Lynn Knight, Carlisle Conservation Commission and Carlisle Conservation Foundation, described two successful projects clearing invasives from edges and restoring meadows. Working on controlling poison ivy and buckthorn
- Frank Lyons, Hop Brook Protection Association, briefly described water chestnut control efforts in some of the ponds in the Hop Brook watershed.
- John Dwyer, Maynard Conservation Commission, described two projects including a small project funded by CISMA with a survey and plan developed by NEWFS and a riverfront project where the permittee is being required to remove invasive species and restore the property over period of years.
- Ron Gemma, Westford Conservation Trust, described the third year of Mile-A-Minute (MAM) control efforts. They did less control because they are making progress with this plant. They also are creating more citizen knowledge and stewardship through the preparation and distribution of handouts about MAM and oriental bittersweet.
- Karen Riggert, Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, indicated that there was spotted knapweed, purple loosestrife, and buckthorn control on the refuge and that there is a neighborhood effort to control garlic mustard in the Moore Road area.
- Laura Mattei, Sudbury Valley Trustees, described the mapping and control of invasives in the Desert Area which is owned by SVT and the Towns of Marlborough and Sudbury. She also described how Nyanza NRDA funds are being used to treat multiflora rose and buckthorn on their Greenways property in Wayland, and she has also been doing some shrubland habitat management in Northborough.
- Kathy Sferra, Stow Conservation Administrator, introduced herself (she is new in this position) and indicated that invasive locations are being digitized.
- Bettina Abe, Acton, reported that Acton is engaged in garlic mustard control.
- Alison Field-Juma, OARS, described the water chestnut mapping they conducted using NRDA funding. She indicated that OARS is working on a guidebook for conservation commissions about removing aquatic invasives. She identified a growing problem with the establishment of Japanese knotweed at river put-ins.

- Tom Largy, Wayland Surface Water Quality Committee, reported that after 11 years of water chestnut control in Heard Pond, less than 700 plants were harvested this year. He also indicated that Eurasian milfoil remains an ongoing concern in Dudley Pond, and he identified tape grass as a new concern in Wayland lakes.
- Stephanie Wilson, Natural Resources Conservation Service, indicated that they are now focused on brush management on farms, including invasive species removal. They are working with over 800 farmers throughout the state on brush management.
- Joan Ferguson, Concord Land Conservation Trust, reported that they completed their 12th year of water chestnut removal in Fairhaven Bay (hand-pulling only for the second year) and that they also worked on Phragmites, buckthorn, black swallowwort, porcelain berry and yellow flag control.
- Delia Kaye, Concord Natural Resources Commission Administrator, indicated that the 4th year of effort to restore Britton's violets in the Old Calf Pasture through invasive species management was conducted. Concord is also planning a town-wide garlic mustard pull and she is looking for ideas on how to organize that.
- Amanda Weise, NEWFS, indicated that they are doing invasive species surveys and control throughout Massachusetts.
- Brian Colleran, Natick resident, just moved here from Vermont where he mapped invasive species along the interstate system. He also discussed controlling Japanese knotweed after flooding events.
- Brian Connelly, MassWildlife State Botanist, indicated that grey willow is being proposed for invasive species status in Massachusetts.
- Amber Carr, FWS, described the early successional habitat control that was conducted in Carlisle on Great Meadows NWR, the water chestnut harvesting conducted on the Sudbury River, and the *Galerucella* beetle rearing at Assabet River NWR.
- Rebecca Chizzo, SWEET, announced they are now a recognized public charity and have started a Facebook page to build support and ease communications. She also described garlic mustard control efforts.

The Annual Priority Actions (APA) were on the agenda and given as a handout but were not discussed. The 2012 accomplishments and the 2013 APAs are attached.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Highlights from Membership Survey Conducted Summer 2013

General Points:

- Members were satisfied with the standard agenda and timeframe few have been following for the Spring and Fall meetings
- The most valuable benefits of membership cited were the sharing of technical expertise, equipment, and other resources ; as well as collaborating on control projects
- Folks expressed an interest in having more lead time to respond to CISMA-sponsored funding opportunities
- Many members do not use or are unfamiliar with the CISMA Web site

Suggested High Priority Projects:

- Working with Conservation Commissions to provide model Orders of Conditions and homeowner information sheets to make invasive control projects easier to permit
- Adding to the CISMA Web site a calendar that indicates when specific invasive plants emerge, bloom, and go to seed as well as the best time to conduct control measures

Other Suggested Projects:

- Assistance with disposal options/issues
- Continued training in identification of Early Detection species

Suggested Topics for Future Speaker Presentation/Roundtables

- Successful techniques for re-establishing native plant species after control projects
- When is “pulling” not enough
- How to approach the problem of a large invasive population adjacent to member’s properties.
- Long-term (10-year) solutions for problem areas
- How to pick your battles – what is not worth putting much effort into?
- When do control measures exacerbate the problem – lessons learned
- New Early Detection species
- Web-based reporting of invasive populations – could the CISMA utilize such a tool?
- Latest best treatment practices
- How to approach CR and trail easement property owners
- Alternative control measures – bio control
- How to tackle difficult sites such as slopes, bogs, etc.

Additional ideas or feedback on the above is welcome. Please direct your suggestions to Amber Carr at: acarr@massaudubon.org

2012 Accomplishments:

Administration Subcommittee

- Treasurer's report
- 2011's highlights newsletter
- Hosted two annual membership meetings
- Mid term Report for 2011 NFWF project
- Received \$5800 from River Stewardship Council (RSC) to support 5 projects
 - Highways training
 - Speaker series
 - Continuation of ED/RR trainings with NEWFS
 - Control of MAM in Westford
 - Control of invasive in Sudbury by SWEET
- Tracked and oversaw 2012 NFWF grant. Grant is focused on restoration of early successional habitat at 7 locations:
 - Bear Garden Hill (Walden Woods Project)
 - Foss Farm (Town of Carlisle)
 - Ben's Woods (Carlisle Land Conservation Trust)
 - Great Meadows NWR- adjacent to Foss Farm (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - Assabet River NWR- south side (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - Sudbury Desert (Sudbury Valley Trustees and others)
 - Greenways- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- Investigated REI grant opportunity (\$5-10k)
- Tracked progress on release of the Nyanza Environmental Damages funds

Early Detection and Control Subcommittee

- Conducted 1 roundtable discussion
- Hosted 2 Aquatic plant ID trainings with the state
- Coordinated site visit to Old Calf Pasture
- Coordinated and hosted Highways roadside training (Funded by small grant program- RSC)
- Continued to distribute and post aquatic hitchhiker signs
- Assessed project sites for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant (Coordinator and New England Wild Flower Society)
- Wrote management plans for NFWF grant project sites (Coordinator)
- Created project site informational displays for NFWF grant project sites (Coordinator)
- Provided general support as needed for NFWF grant
- Released rare plant locations that are threatened by invasives to land owners

Education and Outreach Subcommittee

- Continued to provide content for website
- Took photos of plants for identification and posting on website
- Developing speaker series (Funded by small grant program- RSC)

2013 Annual Priority Actions:

Administrative Subcommittee

- Treasurer's report
- 2012's highlights newsletter
- Investigate grant opportunities
- Oversee and implement Nyanza Environmental Damages funds
- Track and oversee 2012 NFWF grant. Grant is focused on restoration of early successional habitat at 7 locations:
 - Bear Garden Hill (Walden Woods Project)
 - Foss Farm (Town of Carlisle)
 - Ben's Woods (Carlisle Land Conservation Trust)
 - Great Meadows NWR- adjacent to Foss Farm (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - Assabet River NWR- south side (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - Sudbury Desert (Sudbury Valley Trustees and others)
 - Greenways- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- Submit final report for 2012 NFWF grant and track match hours
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Early Detection and Control Subcommittee

- Conduct 2 roundtable discussions
- Host aquatic plant ID trainings with the state
- Host early detection species ID trainings
- Continue to distribute and post aquatic hitch hiker signs in watershed
- provide general support as needed for NFWF grant
- Provide general support as needed for Nyanza Environmental Damages funds projects
- Support watershed wide garlic mustard pulling competition
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Education and Outreach Subcommittee

- Continue to work on expanding website services
- Continue to take photos of plants for identification and posting on website
- Host speaker series (Funded by small grants program- RSC)
- Support watershed wide garlic mustard pulling competition
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