



A Review of the 2015 Annual Fall Meeting

A Message from Amber Carr - CISMA Coordinator

I'd like to thank everyone that made our Annual Meeting possible. First, thanks to the Assabet River NWR for hosting CISMA meetings this year. Second, thanks to the members and friends that provided the refreshments. Finally, thanks to everyone who was able to attend the 2016 SuAsCo CISMA November 17th Fall Meeting. We had 27 in attendance - a great turnout!

For those who were unable to attend, please enjoy our latest newsletter summarizing the Fall meeting presentations and including a short summary of "The Vine". We will have 4 seats on the Steering Committee available in 2016! If you are interested in running or learning more about this opportunity, contact the Coordinator by December 15th. As always, please keep an eye on our website for upcoming events and open requests for proposals.



One of the CISMA weed wrenches is still missing. If any partners borrowed weed wrenches during the 2015 field season, please check and make sure that all of them were returned. The weed wrench looks like the one pictured to the left and it has a silver strip of tape with CISMA written on the handle. If the missing wrench is found, please contact Amber at acarr@massaudubon.org or call 781-259-2198.

Announcements

Grant Opportunity - Amber Carr

- A CISMA Small Grant Program from the River Stewardship Council is now available. CISMA is requesting proposals for projects that would directly benefit the rivers in the SuAsCo watershed by either eradicating or managing applicable priority species or by supporting educational outreach. Proposals that would include multi-landowner collaboration or make use of volunteers are encouraged. The deadline for applications is 5 PM, January 6th, 2016. Direct questions to Amber at acarr@massaudubon.org or 781-259-2198. Click [here](#) to access the RFP.

Walden Woods Project Stewardship Lecture Series - 2016

- On February 4, 2016 at 7pm, Dan Jaffe, the propagator and stock bed grower at the New England Wildflower Society's Garden in the Woods will present: [Taking on Invasives - Design Less Gardening](#). Dan advocates for replanting native species after invasive plant treatments, and will look at the opportunities and challenges presented in replacing invasive plants with native species. Where: Walden Woods Project, 44 Baker Farm Rd, Lincoln, MA. To **RSVP**, please call 781-259-4707. *Seating is limited.*

Treasurer's Report - Jeff Collins

- We began the year with a treasury balance from the previous year's Nyanza Superfund Grant, plus some small grant funds left over from 2014. Money also came through OARS from the Clean Water Network. Available funds were used to hire seasonal workers, assess water chestnut at the Saxonville dam, beetle-rearing, and other projects.
- Current capital assets include canoes, kayaks, trailer, tools and a storage facility - all Nyanza funded. Note that 2016 Nyanza funds for the CISMA coordinator will be decreased from previous years.
- 2016 projects funded include: OARS water chestnut management plan for the watershed, OARS mapping water chestnuts in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord river watersheds, Mass Audubon monitoring of vegetation in areas where Galerucella beetles were released, and wet meadow restoration.

Presentations

Property Management at Two Sites - Laura Mattei, Director of Stewardship - Sudbury Valley Trustees lmattei@svtweb.org

1. Cedar Hill - Shrubland Management

SVT began management of 16 acres on the south slope of Northborough's Cedar Hill in 2004. The goal was to convert old pasture into shrubland habitat for birds that require shrublands for breeding. SVT conducted a plant inventory and prepared a management plan. They hired a contractor to clear the shrubs and small trees with a tracked excavator with a flail mower head (known as a "brontosaurus"). They also cleared some areas with young trees, but the larger tree clearing was too expensive to clear so we only completed 3 acres. Unfortunately, Oriental bittersweet vine and honeysuckle shrubs gained the upper hand and SVT has had to go back multiple times to re-treat the area. The good news is that the birds arrived shortly after habitat restoration was initiated. SVT has recorded prairie warbler, Indigo bunting, and blue-winged warblers during breeding season. Eastern towhees have continued to breed at the site. The bittersweet challenge remains. SVT hired a contractor to do an intensive herbicide treatment this past season. We may need to convert to grassland management for several years until we can get a better handle on the bittersweet infestation.

2. Greenways Conservation Area - Field Management

SVT owns 80 acres of field, wetlands and woods that "wrap around" land owned by the Town of Wayland, bordering the Sudbury River. SVT owns one 8-acre field, known as the north field. In 1995, an inventory described a good diversity of plants with an abundance of butterflies. However, 15 years later, the plant diversity had declined precipitously and the butterflies had virtually disappeared. In 2005, SVT cleared the invasive shrub borders to expand the field. In 2012, SVT worked with other CISMA collaborators to obtain funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative. This funding was used to treat glossy buckthorn and other invasive plants that had infiltrated the field. Combined with funding from the Nyanza mitigation funds, SVT conducted herbicide treatments for four years in a row. This past year, SVT planted 1,600 native grasses and wild flowers and two plots in the field. In spite of drought conditions and weeds, the plants are flourishing and a multitude of pollinators have been using the new plants.

Wall Lettuce Management - Anna Wilkins, Outreach Coordinator Lincoln Land Conservation Trust wilkins@lincolnconservation.org

Wall lettuce (*Mycelis muralis*) is a problem in Lincoln. Native to Europe and the Mediterranean, it is a problematic invasive plant in the northern U.S. and Canada with airborne seed dispersal similar to dandelions. Lincoln's control efforts have focused on removing wall lettuce from roadsides and keeping it out of core conservation areas. Control consists of pulling, as the plant has easily removed roots; however, all roots need to be removed as it is a perennial. The NEWFS is also concerned with this plant at their sanctuaries. Hand pulling appears to be the most effective eradication for new populations, but may be aiding established populations by providing necessary disturbance. Research is ongoing.



Cedar Hill - Midfield View



Greenways Conservation Area - Asters in bloom at one of the native plant plots.

“The Vine” - General Group Discussion **Led by - Kathy Sferra of the Stow Conservation Department**

Upland “bad boys” – bittersweet, multiflora rose, etc.

Stephanie Wilson from the NRCS spoke about rotationally grazing pigs on a heavily invaded site. This tears up the soil which is then mowed. After two years, the site was planted with low growing perennials. It appears to have been a successful strategy.

Jackie Goring, Town of Stow Conservation Assistant, spoke about an invasive mapping and removal project on town conservation lands. The town began dealing with [Japanese knotweed](#) this year to great success, and has planned two years of follow up.

Rebecca Chizzo of Sudbury is working on an invasive species guide for the Town public works which offers help with alternative invasive control methods, as she is familiar with towns being uncomfortable with chemical control.

Friends of the Assabet River NWR have had a lot of success with their brush grubber in pulling large [buckthorns](#) and [multiflora rose](#). They have also been dealing with large amounts of Japanese stiltgrass, but have been able to beat it back by weed-whacking early in the season, then hand pulling the rest later in the season.

Amanda Weise of the [New England Wild Flower Society](#) also noted the heavy prevalence of [Japanese stiltgrass](#) in the area. Large amounts were seen on the Sudbury during wild rice surveys carried out this summer. MIPAG is making a list of contractors that can help organizations and towns deal with invasives.

Japanese knotweed

Kathy Sferra of the Stow Conservation Commission reported that one of their members mapped all of the Japanese knotweed along roadways in the town a while ago. The Commission is planning on redoing this mapping to see how the plants’ distribution has changed.

“Wet feet” – Pepperweed, loosestrife, phragmites, etc.

Amanda Weise of NEWFS noted that pepperweed control projects are still ongoing in coastal towns, particularly on the North Shore. Hand-pulling and chemical applications have been used.

Jeff Collins of Mass Audubon reported that Phragmites was controlled with spray application in Rough Meadows to great success this year. 500,000 Galerucella beetles were raised by all partners this year for biocontrol of purple loosestrife. Mass Audubon will not be continuing the project next year, but Lincoln and other Towns will.

Aquatics

The Hop Brook Protection Association has harvested [water chestnut](#) off several ponds, including Carding Mill and Stern’s Pond. Students at Assumption College have evaluated these harvests and found

that they could make good fertilizer.

[OARS](#) hired a seasonal crew of two to clear water chestnut from the Assabet River this year. OARS is searching for funding to do it again next year. They've also recently made a survey of water chestnut that conservation commissions can fill out to show where water chestnut is affecting each town.

Assabet River NWR staff noted that water chestnut appears to be spreading, and volunteer interest is falling. Hand pulling is intensive; consider chemical methods?

Early Detection Species

Friends of the Assabet River NWR have been dealing with [narrow-leaf bittercress](#) as well as others. Handpulling in Lincoln appears to have been affected, as the plant was pulled before a large population was established.

Westford's [Mile-A-Minute](#) removal program was successful as the plant was dealt with early on. The program is in its fifth year, and volunteer engagement has been vital.

Amanda Weise warned of several species that may be approaching Early Detection status, and asked CISMA members to be on the lookout for Japanese tree lilac, Geum thunbergii and Japanese zelkova.

Other Concerns

Anna Wilkins of Lincoln Land Conservation Trust spoke about a project currently underway to turn an old hayfield into a pollinator meadow. The project will be testing the effects of soil imbalance on invasive plant establishment. Half of site will be treated with soil nutrients, micro nutrients/minerals/organic fertilizer. The other half will have no treatment.



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