

Hiring Interns!

The SuAsCo CISMA is hiring interns for the 2014 field season to hand-pull water chestnut in areas along the Sudbury River where the mechanical harvester is being used. Please pass along the following links to anyone you think would be interested! Please contact the coordinator with any questions! acarr@massaudubon.org

www.massaudubon.org/jobs/invasive-plant-crew-leader2

www.massaudubon.org/jobs/invasive-plant-crew-member2



Highlights 2013

SUASCO COOPERATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT AREA 2013

2013 Fall Meeting Presentations:

“Southborough 10 Years Later: Invasive Treatments, Land Restoration and Wildlife Habitat”

Freddie Gillespie gave an excellent presentation on the challenges of restoring a 30-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. A true success!

“Hand-pulling Water Chestnut in 2 Ponds in Acton”

Bettina Abe 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 again necessary. The project illustrates the value and effectiveness of one person taking a leadership role to recruit volunteers and learn-as-you-go to tackle the water chestnut problem.

“Which Willow? Identification and management of rusty willow (*Salix cinerea*)”

Amanda Weise talked about the early detection species rusty willow, also known as the gray willow. 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 in almost every town in Massachusetts, in meadows and fields, shores of rivers, ponds, and lakes, and in floodplains and wetlands. Get to know the plant at cisma-suasco.org and www.salicicola.com. Be on the lookout in your area!

Upcoming Events:

April 8, 4 - 6 PM

Roundtable Discussion -
Pesticide 101
River Rock Grill Maynard, MA

April 17, 7 - 9 PM

Invasives in your backyard -
Guest speaker, Peter Alden
Garden In the Woods,
Framingham

Keep an eye on cisma-suasco.org for more events information!

Finishing up Control Projects under the NFWF Grant

Work continued for the second field season of this 18-month grant period. The town of Carlisle, The Carlisle Conservation Foundation, The Walden Woods Project, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service completed major invasive control projects. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant was extended until June 30, 2014 to allow a prescribed burn to take place at the Desert Natural Area in Sudbury. The burn will complete the work under this grant that focused on the creation of early successional habitat at seven sites in the watershed including meadows, shrublands and pine barrens. We have SURPASSED our proposed match, thanks to all the hard work conducted by the participating organizations!



Hotchkiss School alums help remove Garlic Mustard at the Walden Woods Project site. May 11, 2013.

As we enter our 5th year as an organization, I encourage all SuAsCo CISMA members to take a minute to reflect on and applaud all of our accomplishments over this time period! We continue to make important progress educating the public and controlling invasive plants throughout the watershed. We also should celebrate the fact that the CISMA was selected by the State of Massachusetts to administer an important part of the Nyanza Superfund Site Natural Resource Restoration Plan. This is a tribute to our credibility and effectiveness as an organization. During this past season, we adeptly accomplished all of our planned goals for the first year of Phase I of the plan. Read about the Nyanza work as well as other partner projects in the following articles. AND, congratulations to us all for the successes brought about by our hard work!

As far as CISMA Administrative news, the Steering Committee held the Officer elections at the January meeting. Laura Mattei of Sudbury Valley Trustees was elected as the new CISMA Chair; Alison Field-Juma of OARS was elected Vice Chair; Amanda Weise of New England Wild Flower Society and Kathy Sferra of the Stow Conservation Commission will serve as Co-Secretaries; and Jeff Collins of Mass Audubon will remain as Treasurer. Lastly, as many of you may already know, Amber Carr, who will continue as the CISMA Coordinator, is now an employee of Mass Audubon. Please note her new contact information acarr@massaudubon.org 781-259-2198.

Over the summer, a survey of the membership was conducted. This was a productive tool for soliciting input from our membership for directing CISMA activities. Several efforts grew out of this exercise, including initiating a dialog with MACC and others about streamlining the Wetlands Protection Act permitting requirements for invasive control projects in wetlands or buffer zones. In addition, a list of suggested topics was generated for future speaker presentations and CISMA projects. If you missed the opportunity to participate in the survey, or any time you have some suggestions, please contact Amber or any of the Steering Committee members. Your feedback is essential for making sure the CISMA is providing value to its members.

I look forward to another productive field season. Thanks to all for your efforts and commitment to our mission!

*Lynn Knight, Outgoing Chair
SuAsCo CISMA Steering Committee*

2014 Steering committee members:

Barbara Volkle- Friends of Assabet River NWR;
Dave McKinnon- Town of Lincoln;
Dave Williams- Middlesex Conservation District;
Jeff Collins- Mass Audubon (Treasurer);
M John Dwyer- Town of Maynard;
Laura Mattei- Sudbury Valley Trustees (Chair);
Lee Steppacher- National Park Service;
Libby Herland - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
Lynn Knight- Carlisle Conservation Foundation;
Alison Field- Juma – OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury,
and Concord Rivers (Vice- Chair);
Amanda Weise- New England Wild Flower Society
(co-secretary);
Kathy Sferra- Town of Stow (co-secretary)

Comings/ Goings

Amanda Weise is the new Ecological Programs Coordinator for the New England Wild Flower Society. She has replaced Ted Elliman as the main contact for the organization.

Kathy Sferra is the new Conservation Coordinator for the town of Stow. Stow was also elected onto the 2014 Steering Committee. Welcome Stow! Kathy has replaced Pat Perry as the main contact for the town of Stow.

THANK YOU 2013 Steering committee members:

Barbara Volkle- Friends of Assabet River NWR;
Dave McKinnon- Town of Lincoln;
Dave Williams- Middlesex Conservation District;
Jeff Collins- Mass Audubon (Treasurer);
M John Dwyer- Town of Maynard;
Laura Mattei- Sudbury Valley Trustees (Vice Chair);
Lee Steppacher- National Park Service (co- secretary);
Libby Herland - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (co-
secretary);
Lynn Knight- Carlisle Conservation Foundation
(Chair);
Alison Field- Juma – OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury
and Concord Rivers;
Amanda Weise- New England wild Flower Society;
Matt Burne- The Walden Woods Project

www.cisma-suasco.org

The SuAsCo CISMA Highlights are written and collected by members of the Administrative Subcommittee, and designed by the Walden Woods Project

CISMA Completes One Year of Control Projects Under Nyanza Superfund Restoration Plan

As part of the Nyanza Resource Damages Superfund site settlement, the SuAsCo CISMA will manage and utilize \$1,047,500 in Tier 1 funding to control aquatic weeds in the Sudbury River watershed. This funding will support mapping, monitoring, and bio-control of purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers and in 130 acres of ponds in the Hop Brook Watershed, as well as focused control efforts on the main stem of the Sudbury River.

The USFWS continues rearing beetles

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service successfully reared 37,500 *Galerucella* beetles at their demonstration site located at the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. Beetles were distributed for release to the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the town of Marlborough Conservation Department, the Concord Land Conservation Trust, and the Lincoln Conservation Department. Katrina Scheiner, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intern, led four training sessions for CISMA partners to engage in beetle rearing. This hands-on experience will help partner organizations to create their own rearing facilities in 2014 and 2015. The CISMA hopes to have 10 rearing sites scattered across the watershed to rear and release beetles as part of the Nyanza Restoration Project. The coordinator will continue rearing beetles at the demonstration site during the 2014 and 2015 field seasons. If partners are interested in rearing beetles during 2014 or 2015 please contact the Coordinator at acarr@massaudubon.org or 781-259-2198.



Rearing beetles is a fairly low-tech process and doesn't require much space.

OARS Mapped Water Chestnut on 2,133 River Acres

This summer, Nyanza funds supported mapping of the full extent of the water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) invasion in a large part of the SuAsCo watershed, including the three rivers and several ponds. OARS Staff Scientist, Sue Flint, set up the project, trained the interns, and analyzed the data collected. The mapping started in May, and despite very high June water levels, was completed by early August.

This is the first time water chestnut has been mapped on the Sudbury and Concord Rivers. Previously, purple loosestrife was mapped. Of the 2,133 acres surveyed over both seasons, 3.7% had moderate to heavy density of plant coverage, 20.3% had emerging or light-moderate density coverage, and 76% had no water chestnut. You can view the maps at: http://cisma-suasco.org/maps/WC_survey.



OARS interns returning from the hunt.

Purple Loosestrife Mapping

Mass Audubon staff mapped the abundance of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) in 3,284 acres of wetlands in the mainstem of the Sudbury River, from the oxbow off Little Farms Road in Framingham to the confluence with the Assabet River in Concord. Loosestrife cover was high for 171 acres of the study area. They also monitored sites where *Galerucella* beetles had been previously released, and assessed the abundance, growth, and vigor of loosestrife at those sites. *Galerucella* beetle releases appeared to have been an effective bio-control agent at several sites where loosestrife cover and/or vigor and growth were significantly low. Mass Audubon recommends future release of beetles at the following locations:

- Pantry Brook Wildlife Management Area in Sudbury, MA;
- USFWS GMNWR Heard Pond wetland complex in Wayland, MA;
- Rt. 20 wetland complex in Wayland, MA;
- Rt. 2 wetland complex in Concord, MA;
- Baiting Brook Reservation in North Framingham, MA;
- USFWS GMNWR Water Row wetland complex in Sudbury MA.

Partners Put RSC Funds to Work for the 5th Year

The CISMA is grateful to have received another \$5,000 from the Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council (RSC), which allowed us to continue our small grants program for this past field season. This grant enabled the following projects:

Westford MAM project:

Westford completed their third year of a five-year management program controlling Mile-A-Minute (MAM). With a strong focus on community participation, they established a public outreach committee and provided 2 early detection trainings. After the trainings, they conducted 13 workdays scattered throughout the summer to manually remove MAM at several locations around town. A total of 45 volunteers participated in MAM control in 2013, which is an increase in volunteer participation as compared to previous years. During this third season, a more aggressive pulling program was implemented by increasing the number of sites being monitored as well as the number of workdays planned. Way to go Westford!



Aggressive treatment of Mile-A-Minute at sites in Westford has been effective. The before- and after-treatment photos above show the return of native grasses after treatment.

Walcott Woods- Maynard

The Maynard Conservation Commission received funds to inventory invasives in Walcott Woods. New England Wild Flower Society conducted a botanical survey of the area and found that 13 percent of all species were invasive. Control of some species was conducted by community members in the fall of 2013. In the spring of 2014, they hope to restore the area by planting native species to benefit the resident bird and herp (reptile and amphibian) species.

Continued Support for S.W.E.E.T

The Sudbury Weed Education and Eradication Team (SWEET), a very active local volunteer group in Sudbury, has completed another successful year of invasive plant management. They held their third "eat it and defeat it" town-wide garlic mustard pull where over 355 bags were collected. Over the three-year time period, over 1,280 bags of garlic mustard have been removed! They also completed their 5th year of management at King Phillips woods where they planted native species in previously controlled areas. SWEET also expanded community involvement by establishing a relationship with Scout Troop 61, who is anxious to participate in control projects in 2014. In addition to their on-the-ground efforts, they created a Facebook page and became an official 501(c)3 non-profit organization! Keep up the good work SWEET!

"Taking on Invasives" CISMA Speaker Series

The Walden Woods Project hosted a presentation in May by Jess Toro of Native Habitat Restoration, LLC, on managing invasive plant, and a presentation in October by Jennifer Forman Orth, Ph.D., entitled "Invasive Forest Beetles." For future lectures in the Taking On Invasives series, check out the SuAsCo CISMA website: <http://www.cisma-suasco.org/calendar>

The education outreach subcommittee also purchased a portable microphone that is available to the CISMA membership for various events. If you are interested in using this piece of equipment please contact the coordinator at acarr@massaudubon.org or 781-259-2198.