

Town of Bethel, Vermont  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2016, 6:30 PM  
Chuck Davis' Home

Meeting brought to order at 7:20 pm

Present: Mary Floyd, Lisa Campbell, Chuck Davis, Emily Miller, Katie O'Neill,  
Ferron Griffin, Mark Heckman, Pieter van Loom (VT Land Trust)

1. Minutes: Minutes from November were reviewed and accepted.
2. Pieter van Loom, VT Land trust spoke with us about non-native invasive plants (NNIP).
  - a. Pieter suggested that it would be helpful to partner with like-minded organizations (for example, a regional planning group, watershed group, neighboring Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs).
  - b. The CISMA structure might be a good model for us to consider if we want to move forward. Two to look at as models might be:
    - i. Upper White River Cooperative Weed Management Association (UWR CWMA), which operates in the neighboring towns of Rochester, Stockbridge, Hancock and Granville.
    - ii. A CISMA down on the Battenkill
  - c. Pieter suggested the need to prioritizing from the perspective of the town. We need to find an issue that gets peoples' attention and is doable.
    - i. Bird habitat? River erosion? Ticks? Native insect/fish habitat? Skin irritant? Forest health?
    - ii. Find something you can be successful at and do it well and work out from there.
    - iii. Important places to consider in Bethel include Peavine Park, town forests
  - d. Funding
    - i. Limited funds, chances are better if you're affiliated with a CISMA, regional planning group.
  - e. Some of these plants can be a health hazard: giant hogweed, chervil, poison parsnip.
    - i. Pieter suggested we should be on the lookout for giant hogweed, the sap of which can cause dangerous burns. It has been spotted in nearby Woodstock.

- f. We discussed management options for NNIP, including education to prevent and manage new infestations, mechanical removal, the treatment with herbicides (glyphosate).
  - i. Education
    - 1. Speaking with the road crew about mowing, possibly training them to do early detection and rapid response.
    - 2. Speaking with folks at garden centers.
    - 3. Outreach through BU.
    - 4. School groups.
  - ii. Timing is important. Can't just treat any time, need to take the plant's biology into account.
  - iii. Covering (completely!) to smother populations, mowing constantly.
  - iv. Herbicides. We talked about concerns and uses of these herbicides.
  - v. Fire. Works for barberry.
- g. Pieter suggested we look at the info at [www.VTInvasives.org](http://www.VTInvasives.org) (put together with the help of TNC, VT Forest, Parks and Rec and UVM). Specific things to look at there include the Gallery of invaders (includes info about treatment)
- h. Pieter suggested a good next contact might be the VT Invasive species coordinator, Elizabeth Spinney. She works through UVM's Extension service.
- i. Mark asked about the field just downstream of the mouth of Locust Creek. Discussion ensued about possible actions or treatments. No conclusions were reached.
- j. We discussed the need to focus our effort on a few target species to be successful. Possible priorities:
  - i. Bittersweet
  - ii. Barberry
  - iii. Buckthorn?
- k. Pieter said that as a forester he tells landowners and management folks to be particularly mindful of controlling NNIP when you're about to open up forests through timber harvests, etc. NNIP control should happen before any timber harvest and then it's important to follow-up on treatment for a few years to prevent any infestations from taking over.
- l. VT Land Trust may do another training in Woodstock this May. Pieter will let us know.

### 3. Invasive insects: Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)

- a. EAB
  - i. Peter also shared what he knows about EAB.
  - ii. EAB goes after the weaker trees, so keep the mature and healthiest trees and harvest the sicker trees.

- iii. Be vigilant.
  - b. HWA
    - i. Experimental work ongoing trying to find a natural predator.
    - ii. HWA is not super cold tolerant, so our cold winters may be keeping things at bay.
- 4. Funds have been submitted to start a conservation fund.
- 5. Letter was sent out to landowners adjacent to the Branliere forest.
  - a. Letter went out to approximately 12 land owners. Mary has heard from several so far, and we're hoping to hear more.
  - b. Some questions about determinations about boundaries and the need to make it clear when walkers are leaving town forest and entering private land.
    - i. Next spring we'd like to place markers to let folks know when they're entering/leaving town forest.
- 6. The CC would like to offer a workshop about invasive plants through BU. More details to come.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9pm. Next meeting will be Wednesday, 1/11/17 at 6:30pm at the town office.