

Randolph Conservation Commission 6.17.14
Town Hall Conference Room A, 7 Summer Street

Present: Gus Howe Johnson, Sid McLam, Erica Young, Paul Putney, Brendan Barden, Annette Higby, Linda Morse from the Braintree Conservation Commission, Jay Lackey from Vt Dept of Forests, Parks, Recreation.

Tree Pest Update

Jay Lackey updated us on pests of concern in our area. Emerald Ash Borer is the #1 concern, a federally regulated pest (quarantine wise) but it is well beyond eradication. It feeds on all 16 species of Ash that are known to exist. When it gets into a tree, the tree will die in two to four years, with 100% mortality. This insect has the potential to eliminate ash as a tree species in North America. Biological control is probably the only saving grace against an insect like this. It will take one or two decades for the biological controls to get ahead of this pest. Grants are available to high risk areas wanting to develop a plan. Girdling ash trees in areas where populations of emerald ash borer are known to exist are effective in attracting the pest into areas that can be controlled, this effort is called "SLOW Ash Mortality" (SLAM project). One plan could include identifying and removing the ash trees now, when the wood can be sold, to reduce the threat in future. Jay is a technical resource for our area. A planning team can be established to oversee the work to fight this threat in our municipality.

Erica will oversee compiling a list of names of interested foresters and/or forest property owners to start with, then embark on a public campaign to educate townspeople about identifying ash and threats to ash trees.

Minutes

Minutes from May 20, 2014, were reviewed and discussed.

Brendan made a motion to accept the minutes as read, Annette seconded the motion, motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Conservation Fund balance stands as \$21,087.87, after a \$5000 deposit from the town, but recent approved grant requests may not have been paid yet (ie \$2500 Pinello). A huge thank you to the town (Mel Adams) for this deposit!!!

Annette made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Paul seconded, motion passed.

Sheep Pasturing

A neighbor of the Ellis property, Jenn Colby, is interested and willing to move her small flock of sheep, with net fencing, to assist with biological control of invasives in the brushy part of the property. Gerry suggested we could take before and after photos of the undergrowth to be able to measure the potential advantages.

The RCC made a motion at the May meeting to accept Jenn Colby's proposal to use her small flock of sheep on the Ellis property to assist with biological control of invasives. Gus

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seconded the motion. The town was willing to consider the idea but the details of Ellis property management plan are unclear as to whether this is allowed.

Annette suggested talking to Carolyn Tonelli to see if the family would consider this idea.

White River Partnership

Emily Miller, WRP monitoring coordinator, is facilitating monitoring water quality on the White River tributaries, particularly the Second Branch (the Randolph/Royalton/Brookfield area, but the bulk is Randolph) because its levels more often exceed quality standards. Emily will update the RCC when more information is available.

Dutton/Jacques Estate Property Update

The 111 acre easement in Randolph Center is planned to be ultimately conserved by the Vermont Land Trust. Purchasers were the Dutton family and Osha family. An application for conservation will be forthcoming.

Sayward Harvest Proposal

Dave Paginelli marked the forest and has negotiated with a contractor. The actual thinning was expected to take place winter 2013-14 by logger Tony Chaloux of Barre but has not been started yet. It will likely be rescheduled for winter 2014-15.

Kiosks

Rob Runnals from Randolph DPW has indicated willingness to install the two completed kiosks that are being stored at the town garage in Randolph. The location for one kiosk has been selected for the Rabbit Track forest placement. The Sayward forest placement will be completed soon.

WHIP grant

An updated WHIP management plan for the Ellis property was submitted by the NRCS. Sid contacted Dave Blodgett to find out if we need to do more than agree to the proposal, which includes pest management and habitat management for 2014. This plan has been in place since 2002.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

The Randolph Conservation Commission regularly meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6pm at the Randolph Town Hall.

Next meeting will be 6pm on July 15, 2014. Public is welcome to attend.

Potluck snacks will be served, please bring a dish to share!