

CRAFTSBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

August 18, 2014

Members present: Joe Houston, Farley Brown, Diane Morgan, Rhoda Sweatt, Steve Wright

Guests: Ann Slayton, Kim Tri, Wylie Soloman, Sung-Hee Chung, Ann Ingerson

The August 18 meeting of the Craftsbury Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair, Joe Houston.

Presentation. Farley Brown presented an update report of her stream bank stabilization project with slides and map handouts depicting the areas of concern found in her investigation of the Upper Black River from Craftsbury village upstream to the outlet of Little Hosmer Pond. Photographs included her images along the river and scanned historical photos of the farms and mills of the past. The maps were produced by Sterling College student, Kim Tree. There were noted seven areas of concern needing attention. Farley and a team of assistants primarily looked at erosion, sedimentation, and non-native invasive plants. They also consulted with Ben Copans, DEC Memphremagog Watershed Coordinator and Barry Cahoon, DEC River Management Engineer. One site with excessive bank erosion was found to be a former mill pond and the river is "correcting itself" and can be left alone. Other sites need replanting to stabilize the banks, cleaning out of ditches, a structure to filter storm run off before it goes into culverts and into the river, and plant removal. Some of the physical work can be coordinated by the Conservation Commission; some will need attention by the Select Board and Road Crew. Extensive areas of Japanese knotweed and nonnative honeysuckle were mapped. Some of the eradication work could be done by the individual landowners. Farley spoke with some landowners and will notify others to see if they would be willing to help with the management.

The Conservation Commission is committed to continue its goal of invasive plant education and outreach. Knotweed roots do not hold the bank and pieces break off creating new beds downstream. Although the honeysuckle is holding the bank better, it presents other problems and crowds out native species. Farley found that

where the natural, native vegetation prevailed, the quality of the river was better.

The final report will be complete by the end of September at which time it will be presented to the Select Board and put on the Town website. Kim will make needed corrections to the map.

Because eradication of knotweed needs to be done in the fall, waiting until after September for another public presentation will be too late. Sung-Hee offered to hold another Knotweed "party" where Farley's report can be presented, use of removal tools can be demonstrated, and people can do some physical work. It is important to provide information on all methods of removal, including using Roundup, on knotweed and other non-native invasives. Sung-Hee will announce this event via Front Porch Forum and we will ask June Cook to do an article ahead of time in the Gazette.

Other Business. Some of the money received through the river bank grant will go to purchase two weed wrenches which will be available for loan to Craftsbury residents wanting to remove invasive plants. Since the money went directly to the Town, Farley will ask Effie to put in the order for the wrenches.

Joe announced that he brought the binder of Best Management Practices for roadside invasives to the road crew and he will continue to work with them to make suggestions for change. They were receptive, and with funding and/or support, they will do what they can.

Farley made the motion, seconded by Steve, to contribute \$100 for the fee charged by Skip Lisle, wildlife biologist, who spoke at the library on beavers and wetland conservation. All voted in favor. The Conservation Commission co-sponosred the event which was well attended. Diane will ask Effie for a check.

Joe reviewed our shoreland guidelines handout and feels that with the new legislation, it will need to be updated or redone. We will discuss this further at the September meeting.

Sung-Hee and Wylie thanked the Conservation Commission for its support in their goal of knotweed eradication.

This meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m. The next meeting will be September 29.

Submitted by: Diane Morgan

