

Lake County Invasives Team Meeting Minutes

Two Harbors Law Enforcement Center 2/16/16 10:00am

Attendees:

Clint Little – MN DNR Coastal Program
Emily Nelson – Lake County SWCD
Derrick Passe – Lake County SWCD
Jack Greenlee – USFS
Tony Lenoach – MN DNR Parks and Trails
Tyler Kasper – 1854 Treaty Authority
Molly Thompson – Sugarloaf
Mike Hedlund – MnDOT
Dave Hanson – MnDOT
Dan Schutte – Lake County SWCD
Laurel Wilson – Invasive Species Coordinator

Laurel called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Budget and Grants:

Lake County SWCD applied for and was awarded the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) CWMA grant for \$40,000 to support LCIT activities. The majority of the funds were designated to be used for the Coordinator salary and should cover approximately one year of work. The application stated that funds would be used for activities in Lake County. The funds should be transferred in the next month and available for use.

Laurel, Jack and Dan put together an application for the Superior Resource Advisory Committee's Secure Rural School funds. The application went through Lake County SWCD to fund work in both Lake and Cook County. The application was for \$20,000 with \$18,000 going toward the Coordinator's salary to complete treatment of 50 acres of invasive plants. The project end date was listed as June 1st, 2018. The funded proposals are likely to be announced in April.

Emily Nelson and the Lake County SWCD put together an application for the MN DNR Coastal Program grant. The grant would provide funding for Emily to continue outreach projects such as radio interviews and to put on events like the Sweep the Skunk event she organized in 2015. The proposal also included a project with the LCIT that would fund early detection workshops in communities along the shore in 2017. The notification deadline is March 31st.

Dan reported that, with the new GLRI funds, there will be \$59,284 in the LCIT account. The funds are divided between salary (including Lake County admin), travel costs and materials.

In an update from the CCIT, Laurel reported that the funds in the CCIT account are going to be expiring on March 15th. They will be used to fund Laurel's salary until that date and anything left will be used to reimburse the Cook County Highways Department. With the expiration of these funds, the majority of the money to fund the Coordinator position in Cook County will be gone. Laurel and the Cook County SWCD were successful in securing a grant from the Board of Soil and Water Resources that includes \$4,600 for the Coordinator's salary to be used on a project to treat invasive plants on the Gunflint Trail and survey gravel pits. The group discussed whether or not LCIT funds could or should be used to fund any work by the Coordinator in Cook County. The following items were agreed on by the group...

-From March 15th to April 15th, the LCIT funds will be used to cover 100% of Laurel's salary. Although priority will be given to projects in Lake County, Laurel will also tie up loose ends on projects that are on-going in Cook County.

-The CCIT will be informed that funds from a Cook County source must be secured to fund a portion of the coordinator's salary if work is to be done on Cook County projects. Based on the projected salary for 2016 and mileage, \$15,000 will be required for 25% of the Coordinator's time.

-Dan will propose a plan to bring Laurel on as a Lake County SWCD employee at the board meeting in March. If the board agrees, an offer will be approved at the April meeting and Laurel will be based in the Two Harbors office by May 15th.

The Annual Operating Plan will have to be adjusted based on the amount of work taking place in each county. The LCIT partners are asked to submit their invasive species work activities to Laurel for inclusion in the Plan.

Updates

Laurel and Emily updated the LCIT's Management Plan. The goals listed in the Management Plan correspond with the activity groups in the Annual Operating Plan. Please send any comments or suggestions on these two documents to Laurel.

Emily and Laurel will be giving an invasive plant identification presentation to the regional CCM crews at the end of February.

Laurel has been working with Amanda Weberg (Cook County AIS Coordinator) to develop a public knowledge survey. The survey would be given out during the summer months to gather information about general knowledge of invasive species, how the public gains their information about invasive species and use of decontamination for both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Right now they are working with Ingrid Schneider at the U of M to develop the survey.

Emily is coordinating the regional Envirothon which is a competition for high school students. The topics are natural resource-related including water, forestry, etc. This year the theme is invasive species and students will have to give a presentation based on a scenario involving an invasive species introduction.

The Lake County SWCD is planning to do rusty crayfish surveys on the Kawishiwi this summer.

Emily is waiting to hear back from the County Attorney before moving forward with establishing a community restoration shed in Two Harbors similar to the one at Sugarloaf Cove.

Derrick reported that the Lake County Commissioners are considering an agreement that would transfer the AIS funds that they received to the Lake County SWCD. In this case, Derrick could oversee the use of these funds and there would be potential to hire additional seasonal workers. St. Louis, Cook and Lake Counties are in communication about cooperating to coordinate their AIS plans.

The Ely Area Invasives Team is a newly establishing organization that Derrick has been involved with. The group started with lake associations looking at grants for AIS outreach. The group would focus on aquatics without ruling out terrestrial species as well.

Jack is currently working on hiring seasonal staff for the east and west zone of the forest. The Superior NF is developing a plan for water quality monitoring for herbicides in light of herbicide use for invasive plant control and forestry.

Tony is working with Laurel and MN DNR Wildlife on a project to control invasive plants in and around Cascade River State Park this summer. This is a project that was funded by the Conservation Partners Legacy grant. Conservation Corps of Minnesota crews will be doing the treatment.

State Park employees have been showing a greater interest in invasive species and are eager to learn more. Tony will be giving a 4 hour training at Tettegouche after the seasonal workers have started, sometime after Memorial Day. The training will cover identification and control.

Tyler also attended the Ely Invasives Team meeting and plans to have technicians working in the area on AIS issues this summer.

The St. Louis River Alliance surveyed for Phragmites from the Fond du Lac Dam to the river mouth. In Minnesota, unlike Michigan, Phragmites is mostly found on industrial sites. The CCMI will be contracted to do treatment on these sites with the 1854 Treaty Authority storing chemicals for the group.

Buckthorn and Siberian peashrub treatments have been taking place in the Ely area on private land this winter. The Treaty Authority will be trying to organize follow-up treatment with volunteers. This summer they will continue treating invasives at Hawk Ridge.

This summer the 1854 Treaty Authority will have three technicians working during the summer months. There will be opportunities for them to help out with other LCIT projects.

The Treaty Authority has been helping with the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture's emerald ash borer surveys. Their area covers Two Harbors where they have found a few trees with signs of stress and reported them to the MDA. There had not been confirmation that these trees are infested at the time of the meeting.

Molly reported that the North Shore Forest Collaborative received a grant for a project to provide tree cages to landowners for a reduced cost. Landowners will have to apply to receive the cages and will pick them up at Isak Hansen's in Lutsen. Preference will be given to individuals who have management plans in place or have gone through Sugarloaf's Lost Forest Program.

Mike is hoping to add one more licensed pesticide applicator on the shore this summer.

If anyone has a report of Siberian peashrub in the Highway 61 corridor report it to MnDOT.

Dan put together a contract for treatment of Japanese barberry on private property in Larsmont. The surrounding area will also be surveyed this year.

Emily and Dan met with a landowner in the Larsmont area who has very dense buckthorn on his property. Dan has spoken with the NRCS to see how they could help support treatment of invasive plants and found that the contracts would require follow-up plantings of native trees and shrubs.

Dan met with the City of Two Harbors' public works about projects to remove invasive species on city property including Japanese knotweed. CCM has helped with control in the past. Emily and Derrick uncovered a management plan for Skunk Creek that includes buckthorn control which will hopefully convince the city to address this infestation.

Discussion Topics

Laurel suggested that the group create priority lists for plants that aren't listed by the MDA but pose a threat to regional resources. The list could help member organizations rationalize treatment of species beyond those on the MDA's list. Laurel used the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council's risk assessment to create a threat assessment form to help the group determine whether or not to add a

species to the priority list. Laurel or a Team member would complete the assessment and present the information collected to the group at a Team meeting. The group would vote on whether or not to add the species to the list based on the information presented. If anyone has any comments or suggestions about the suggested process or the assessment please let Laurel know.

Meeting adjourned.