

CCIT MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2015

USFS Gunflint Station



Members Present:

Laurel Wilson – CCIT Coordinator

Jack Greenlee – United States Forest Service (USFS)

Nancy Seaton – Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Association

Dave Betts – Cook County Highway Department (CCHD)

Diane Booth – Cook County Extension Office

Brandon Seitz – Grand Portage National Monument

Theresa Oberg – Cook County Soil and Water Conservation

Ginny Storlie – Cook County Commissioner, Board Liaison

Dave Hanson – Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT)

Molly Thompson -- Sugarloaf: the North Shore Stewardship Association (via Teleconference)

Additional Attendees:

Lisa Sorlie – Accountant, CCHD

Nanette Arands – CCHD

Laurel Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M.

Laurel began by introducing herself to the group, giving a brief education and work background to when she started her job as CCIT Coordinator in January. Introductions went around the room.

Laurel gave an update on the Lake County Invasives Team. Emily Hanson was hired by the Lake County SWCD and will be working on invasive species. Laurel will be working with Emily this summer on invasives control outreach programs and mapping of invasives on Lake County. Also, there has been discussion about a Community Shed in Two Harbors but no formal plans yet.

Laurel has sent a slide about terrestrial invasive plants to April Rust who runs the Lake Service Provider Training for the DNR. April will present the slides at the training up the Gunflint Trail on April 30th. The training is every 3 years with this year being the first renewal year per Nancy Seaton.

Laurel will be updating the Cook County Invasives website this year, possibly moving to a host outside of the county. Also, she is considering the possibility of combining with Lake County as there is a lot of overlap between the counties. Dave Betts would like to see Cook and Lake County separately for now but is open to ideas regarding a combined website. The group discussed how the two counties could be combined into an Arrowhead Invasives Team someday. Dave Betts is concerned that the current funding situation complicates the idea. Jack Greenlee agreed, would have to be like a non-profit handling its own money. Dave Betts said he likes the idea of collaboration but

not a combination of Cook and Lake County. He would like our meetings to stick to Cook County topics. Brandon Seitz suggested a tiered approach of a combined administration but separate talk groups. After some discussion, Jack Greenlee made clear that 75% of Laurel's time goes to Cook County Invasive Team and 25% to Lake County Invasive Team. Laurel's timesheet will be separated accordingly from now on. A breakdown of her timesheet is available.

Through the Soil & Water Conservation, Laurel has received a Coastal Program Grant to do 6 workshops and 6 WTIP radio spots, one of them being an hour long. She has an Aquatic Invasive Species presentation event scheduled on May 5th. She will have a booth set up at Cascade State Park for Play, Clean, Go Day on June 13. Dave Betts asked if she should be focusing on aquatic invasives as the focus is supposed to be on terrestrial invasives. Jack Greenlee said that Laurel's time spent on these projects is covered by the Coastal Program Grant, not the GLRI grant.

This summer, Laurel plans to continue to monitor areas of biocontrol at the Airport. She will continue control efforts in the Grand Marais trouble areas and working with CCHD and MNDOT regarding roadside invasives control. She will continue the Community Shed training. Wildflower walks will be held monthly June-August. Also, community activity days/weed pulls will be scheduled throughout the summer.

Jack Greenlee informed the team about a co-op weed management area in northern St. Louis County. He will approach 1854 Treaty folks for possible partnership in the effort. He will be putting in for a grant from the USFS Landscape Scale Funding for invasives treatments. He will have 4 temps working in Cook County this summer, focusing on the eastern half on the BWCAW and following up on treating gravel pits. Dave Betts asked if they will be doing the MNDOT pit. Jack said they plan to get to 25 pits and will coordinate with Dave before spraying. Regarding the spraying of Lupine along roadways, in an effort to avoid nasty phone calls, a Notice will be sent out before spraying begins. They hope to get to it before flowering. Lastly, Jack gave kudos to the CCHD for mowing the Caribou Trail early last year which helped to control the Lupine and other invasives.

Nancy Seaton shared about a grant for 2019 from the Scenic Byways Federal Fund & ARDC for treatment of invasives along the Gunflint Trail including the plowing of road shoulders and replanting with the Woodland Seed Mix.

Lisa Sorlie provided a breakdown of CCIT expenses and in-kind hours to date. She asked the group to submit in-kind donations from October 1, 2014-March 31, 2015 by the 1st week of April.

Dave Betts said Dalmation Toadflax is a concern on Hwy 61 and Cramer Rd. He will be keeping an eye on the Cramer Rd. Mowing will be done on the east end of the county first this year.

Diane Booth reported seeing Vipers Bugloss along Hwy 61 near Rock Cut. She will add it to the map for Laurel. Also, Diane has new Master Gardeners who will probably be open to volunteering with CCIT.

Brandon Seitz shared his concern about having lots of visitors in his area who don't know the rules about invasives. He is looking for ways to educate visitors through cooperation with other jurisdictions of the Border Route community. He would like to see signs, brochures, etc, with a common, consistent language.

Theresa Oberg said, in Soil & Water, there is currently a push to educate visitors before coming to Cook County. She is interested in collaborating with Brandon on some ideas. Also mentioned was the AIS project.

Ginny Storlie worked a number of summers with the USFS. She worked with the public, answering questions and giving information. She felt the brochures, etc that the USFS had available were very good education tools. She is part of her local garden club and they have people come in to do presentations on invasives, including the CCIT Coordinator last year. Regarding invasives on private property, Ginny had heard the fines are stiff for non-compliance. Dave Betts said the property owner is responsible and can be fined but he works with them. He has given orders but no fines so far. Eradicate List is most important to address with owners. Ginny suggested educating local realtors about invasives to get information to new property owners. Also, she suggested educating local garden centers.

Dave Hanson asked that we tell him when we see or hear about invasives along Hwy 61 and he'll follow-up. His email is david.l.hanson@state.mn.us. Mike Hedlund of MNDOT has taken over the invasives training. He will be training 2 temps to work along Hwy 61 this summer.

Molly Thompson hopes the Sugarloaf Community Shed will be a success again this year. Classes are starting up at Sugarloaf including landowner education regarding invasives.

In the future, Laurel Wilson will be looking for a restoration project for Cook County involving natives to combat invasives. Theresa said Soil & Water can get involved on specific projects and help find grants available. Also, they have a cost share program (75/25 split) for landowners for restoration after eradication.

Jack Greenlee has gravel pit and road decommission projects where they will be planting natives and trees. Dave Hanson mentioned that he is intrigued by aggressive restoration planting after eradication.

Molly Thompson will be doing more work with the Boreal Natives community.

Brandon Seitz also has a road decommission project in his area and is considering using it as a demonstration project for Laurel/CCIT.

Lastly, Laurel will be working on standardizing mapping procedures. She is considering using a mapping service called EDDMapS rather than creating/updating a map every year based on maps

sent to her from other entities. EDDMapS is a good resource for sharing data. The public is able to make submissions as well, which are verified by EDDMapS. Laurel has seen a few submissions from Cook County but not from the public community so far.

Diane Booth brought up the idea of CCIT doing a PR piece pulling together what we've accomplished over the last five years, for example. She feels it would help with education, funding and support. Mentioned was the GLRI Grant which may be a good resource for funding a PR piece.

Laurel plans to have the Cook Co/Lake Co Newsletter emailed out by end of March or beginning of April.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 A.M.

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