

## CCIT MEETING MINUTES

October 16, 2015

USFS Gunflint Station



### Members Present:

Laurel Wilson – CCIT Coordinator

Jack Greenlee – United States Forest Service (USFS)

Diane Booth – Cook County Extension Office

Amanda Weberg – Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator (AIS)

Mike Hedlund – Minnesota Dept of Transportation (MNDOT)

Ilena Berg – Cook County Soil and Water Conservation

Marcia Eiyneck – Grand Portage Environmental Technician

Nancy Seaton – Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Association

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

### Additional Attendees:

Ginny Storlie – Cook County Commissioner, Board Liaison

Nanette Arands – Cook County Highway Department (CCHD)

At 10:00 a.m., Laurel called the CCIT meeting to order. A meeting agenda was made available. The team proceeded with progress updates since the last meeting.

Laurel began with her summer accomplishments. She spent about 12 hrs. treating Spotted Knapweed in an area around the Cook County Highway Department and Purple Loosestrife in county rd right-of-way. She did some follow-up treatments on Dalmatian Toadflax in an area along the Cramer Rd. Also, she spent about 4 hrs. treating Purple Loosestrife on private property.

She worked with a 14 year old volunteer throughout the summer. Among other things, they spent about 12 hrs. hand-pulling Spotted Knapweed. She had a group of interns volunteering for a day and they pulled more Spotted Knapweed in an area around the Cook County Law Enforcement Center and along the Gunflint Trail. The CCC helped pull Spotted Knapweed for about 12 hrs. along the Gunflint Trail by the Pincushion area. She bagged all the plants, brought them to a USFS gravel pit and burned them.

Laurel has been participating in other groups in the area. She is now on the executive committee of the North Shore Forest Collaborative, sharing her knowledge and expertise regarding invasives. She is a member of the county AIS Taskforce. Also, she is on the board of a new group just getting their feet under themselves called the Northwoods Volunteer Connection. At this point, she is mostly helping with grant writing. They have a trash pick-up event schedule for Monday, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. Interested parties will meet at the Tofte Forest Service and head out from there to work along the Six Hundred Rd.

The Coastal Program funded a number of events and workshops throughout the summer. From the experience, Laurel learned that people responded best to the hands-on events and workshops, like the shoreline restoration program she and Kerrie Berg from Cook County Soil and Water Conservation did in the Rec Park. She plans to do more hands-on programs in the future.

The Sugarloaf Shed Trainings were successful this year with 15 participants. Laurel believes the program could use more advertising and she will be looking into that for next year.

Laurel had did an outreach activity with fourteen youth at the summer YMCA Camp. Laurel focused on the Play, Clean, Go program and gave out boot brushes. Laurel and Amanda from AIS had 37 participants from the CCHS for hand-pulling of invasives along 5<sup>th</sup> St and at the Cook County Highway Department. The next week they did some presentations and provided samples of spiny water flea for examination.

The Grand Portage outreach and sweet grass project with Brandon Seitz from the Grand Portage National Monument was very successful and interesting. Second and third graders from Oshki Ogimaag learned the cultural significance of sweet grass and how it's different from other grasses. Plenty of samples were collected from a nearby meadow. Laurel audio taped a portion of the day and may use in a radio spot on WTIP.

Laurel shared copies of an educational brochure she designed about invasive species in the Arrowhead and what to do about them. Funding to produce them came from the Coastal Program and they will be made available to the public.

Laurel is spending about 75% of her time in Cook County and 25% in Lake County. She has been working with Emily Nelson of Lake County Soil and Water Conservation locating invasives and documenting locations. CCMI worked on controlling Japanese Barberry in the Larson area west of Two Harbors. This population has spread 4 miles from where it is assumed to have originated. Postcards were sent to property owners in the area to inform them and ask for their help. Laurel is helping the DNR to get a grant for treating the Japanese Barberry. CCMI also treated Japanese Knotweed in Two Harbors.

Jack Greenlee from the USFS had 4 seasonal staff members working out of the Grand Marais office this summer. Their truck for treatment spraying arrived later than expected (July) so they focused primarily on BWCA, specifically the Pigami Lake and Cavity Lake burn areas. They treated for Canadian Thistle, Spotted Knapweed, and some Hawkweed. Jack said that good plants are growing in these burn areas and that helps. Once the truck arrived, they followed up on treatments done in the local gravel pits, seeing a noticeable reduction in invasives this year. They also focused on BWCA entry points, the upper Gunflint Trail and The Grade. Overall, he felt they were effective this summer.

Diane Booth from the Cook County Extension Office is often the first point of contact with property owners. She's concerned about Himalayan Balsam, which spreads rapidly. Just past Cutface Creek on Hwy 61, she's seeing Vipers Bugloss, which spreads rapidly. On County Rd 7 and the Caribou Trl, she's seeing Poison Hemlock, which also spreads rapidly. She's seeing large patches of it in Lake Co. between Two Harbors and Duluth also. Poison Ivy is also being brought to her attention. Lastly, she's seeing Amur Maple, an ornamental plant, spreading in the Arrowhead region as well.

Amanda Weberg, new to the position of Cook County AIS Coordinator in June of this year, has been focusing mainly on outreach and planning outreach programs. She plans on hiring watercraft inspections next year and trying to educate the public about aquatic invasives. She has been working with Laurel clipping purple loosestrife flowers and doing outreach programs.

Mike Hedlund from MNDOT reported that they had some issues with their truck sprayers this summer and need to update their trucks soon. They have 2-3 licensed applicators. As far as mowing along Hwy 61, they have 2 staff members who do all the mowing using older mowers so it can be very slow going. Ginny Storlie shared a story about watching her elderly neighbor try to pull out of his driveway on Hwy 61 but the grass was too tall for him to see safely to pull out. Mike said he understands the issue very well and is trying to get as much mowing done as possible. He said they're not able to begin mowing until after Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> due to laws protecting nesting birds, though they can do top cuts before that.

Ilena Berg from Cook County Soil and Water has been working with Laurel a lot this summer and doing grant writing with Laurel for CCIT.

Marcia Einyck, the new Environmental Technician at Grand Portage as of this summer, has mostly been getting herself settled in to her position but has done some hand-pulling of Spotted Knapweed around the Hat Point Marina.

Ginny Storlie, Liaison for the Cook County Board of Commissioners, reported there was a large patch of Poison Ivy near the Tofte Fishing Museum. She was part of a group who pulled and bagged it. Laurel said pulling is not very effective with Poison Ivy and it may come back. Laurel had looked at it as well.

Nancy Seaton from Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Assoc. said they applied for and got a grant from the Scenic Byways. It will be matched by CCIT and Cook County Soil and Water. It will cover the removal and spraying of invasives and replanting along a 5+ mile stretch of the upper Gunflint Trl. Work will start in July and the process is expected to take 3 years from start to finish. The grant guidelines are very specific so they'll do their best to follow them exactly. Jack from USFS and Laurel will be assisting with the project.

Laurel provided an update from Anna Heruth from the DNR saying that they were able to purchase safety equipment for spraying and herbicide. They are working on the plan for next year including

budgeting, chemical storage, and focus of treatment. They now have 3 MDA licensed staff members for spraying next year.

Laurel also provided an update from Brandon Seitz from the Grand Portage Nat'l Monument saying they received a sizable grant that will be used to fund positions, education, outreach, and control of invasives, as well as cooperative efforts with other groups.

Molly from Sugarloaf said the North Shore Forest Collaborative received a grant from the Weeks Foundation that will fund restoration projects, caging, etc to private property owners.

Regarding the GLRI grant reporting, Laurel reminded all to get their volunteer hours for the year to Lisa Sorlie, Accountant at the CCHD. Laurel will email a reminder soon as well.

With the BWSR CWMA grant, Laurel will use it in part on Cook County gravel pits, including re-surveying them, seeing what was effective, what needs more work, etc. Also, she will be contracting out treatment work on approximately 10 acres of roadside on the Gunflint Trail and purchasing an Ipad for data entry. The grant is for up to \$15,000 and some of it will be used to match the Scenic Byways project as well.

Laurel applied for the NFWF Pulling Together Initiative Grant and will get an answer in December. If received, it will fund early detection educational programs and rapid response treatments for Cook and Lake County, as well as the hiring of a contractor for treatments on public and private land.

Laurel asked the group to let her know if they have needs that would work within the parameters of the Coastal Program Grant. The deadline for applications is January.

Regarding areas of concern that would benefit from a collaborative effort, there is a large area on the west end of Grand Marais that is dense with Purple Loosestrife. It's on private and commercial land, near Putt & Pets, WTIP, etc. She's already hung pamphlets on doors in the areas but is considering a postcard mailing as well. Diane Booth said the area was treated 20 years ago but was hard to get it all. Another concern is Spotted Knapweed along Hwy 61 in the area of the Onion River wayside rest and it's heading southwest. There is also some Wild Parsnip there by the guardrail. She believes this would be a good area to try to control. Mike Hedlund said most of this will fall under DNR Parks and Trails jurisdiction.

This winter, Laurel will be evaluating the Community Shed program and updating the curriculum. She will be planning future treatments with CCMI. She'll be preparing to manage treatments by contractors. Lastly, she'll be meeting with City officials to coordinate control work on the Vipers Bugloss and Tansy in the Grand Marais area.

Laurel invited interested parties to the General NSFC Meeting on Oct. 22 from 1:00-3:30 pm at the Beaver Bay Community Center. The Nature Conservancy will be presenting there.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

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