

CCIT MEETING MINUTES

February 1, 2016

USFS Gunflint Station



Members Present:

Laurel Wilson – CCIT Coordinator

Jack Greenlee – United States Forest Service (USFS)

Anna Heruth – Dept of Natural Resources (DNR) - Forestry

Amanda Weberg – Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator (AIS)

Mike Hedlund – Minnesota Dept of Transportation (MNDOT)

Ilena Berg – Cook County Soil and Water Conservation

Jim Raml – Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Association

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

Dave Hanson – MNDOT (via Teleconference)

Additional Attendees:

Ginny Storlie – Cook County Commissioner, Board Liaison

Nanette Arands – Cook County Highway Department (CCHD)

At 1:08 p.m., Laurel called the CCIT meeting to order. A meeting agenda, 2016 Annual Operating Plan, and CCIT Accomplishments handout was made available.

Laurel began with the future directions of CCIT and asked Jack to begin the discussion. Jack said that the CCIT has been around for about 5 years. The focus of the group has been on treatment and lots of education. Funding for CCIT has been primarily from a grant from GLRI. Other sources are BWSR and Coast Program grants. In 2011, the GLRI grant was approximately \$100,000. That amount has been reduced to \$30,000-\$40,000 in the last couple years. The application is more competitive now and not as easy to get. The applications for the past few years have been traded off between Cook County and Lake County and this year was the Lake County Invasives Team's turn to apply. There is about \$30,000-\$40,000 left in the CCIT budget that has to be spent by March 15, 2016 as it can't be carried forward. It will be spent on Laurel's salary and reimbursement to the CCHD for mowing. The agreement between the USFS and the CCHD, as the fiscal agent, will also be coming to an end. Therefore, CCIT will be looking for funding to continue work in the county.

The LCIT did apply for and get a GLRI grant this year for \$40,000. Unless there is a source of funds from Cook County for the coordinator position, it is likely that the coordinator office location will move to Two Harbors sometime after March 15th. Laurel will be working in Cook County for a portion of the summer due to monies from the Board of Soil & Water Resources (BWSR). It will fund \$4,600 to Laurel's salary for grant management and gravel pit surveys and \$7,000 towards treatments on the Gunflint Trail. In order for Laurel to continue working 50% of her time in Cook County from June through September, she will need approximately \$6,300. She wrote a proposal for

funding from the Secure Rural Schools, which offers a \$20,000 grant. It was written for Cook and Lake Counties as the Arrowhead Invasives Team with Lake County Soil & Water as the fiscal agent. Jack expects to hear from them within the next two months.

Laurel asked for ideas for funding the CCIT. Suggested was to:

1. Apply for a grant from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on MN Resources (LCCMR).
2. Apply for a grant from GLRI next year and ask Lake County to help float us for this year.
3. Request funds from Cook County timber sales.
4. Apply for grants with LCIT as the Arrowhead Invasives Team as grant applications are stronger when a bigger area is represented, per Molly.

The group went on to review Laurel's 2016 Annual Operating Plan. Laurel asked for plans from the group members to be added to the master plan. They can be emailed to Laurel so she can add them.

Laurel updated the group on the Oshki Ogimaag sweet grass project. The sweet grass seeds collected last fall will be planted in a school garden and the plants will be used in a traditional manner. Also, she and Amanda have developed and are planning to teach an invasive species curriculum in the schools, working mainly with the 3rd, 7th, and 10th graders.

This summer, Laurel will be training the CCMI seasonal staff on identifying invasives. Also, she and Amanda are putting together a Public Knowledge Survey in Cook County regarding awareness, where they get information, etc.

Laurel gave an update from Diane Booth, Cook County Extension Office, saying that we should consider treating invasives not on the MDA list but a problem in Cook County such as Vipers Bugloss, Himalayan Balsam, and Poison Hemlock. As far as getting the word out about these invasives, Laurel suggested newspaper articles, emails to management agencies, and coordination with city officials to treat invasives. She suggests we bring a list of local invasives not on the MDA list and we do a threat assessment of local invasives. We can vote on it as a group.

Jack is in the process of hiring seasonal staff. He has updated the Weed Database with the latest invasives data and is looking at priority sites to treat.

Anna said that they have three people certified to apply pesticides in Cook and Lake Counties using their newly purchased treatment equipment. They will submit their Treatment Plan in March and hopefully it will be approved. They have some treatment projects that they will be contracting out. Also, they now have iPads for sending invasives info directly to EDDmapS.

Ilena talked about the BWSR grant that they worked on for CCIT. Also, she said they will be doing shoreline plantings this summer. They will be using a 10-year plan based on climate change.

Mike is preparing a plan of treatment for this summer. They have two people licensed to treat with herbicides plus one more this summer. He is hoping to purchase better equipment soon.

Jim said that Spotted Knapweed, Thistle, and Tansy are spreading rapidly in areas along the Gunflint Trail, specifically the North Star ski trail system, the Ham Lake Trail, Seagull Creek, and Larch Creek valley. Along the Gunflint Trail, Sweet White Clover is spreading along it and the side roads. Hawkweed has taken over the further campsites on Three-Mile Island and into the forest. Jim talked about the grant they received to treat the Gunflint Trail ROW. They will be treating all non-native plants in a 4-5 mile area between Magnetic Rock Trail and the Seagull Lake Public Landing. He hopes that the grant received by CCIT from BWSR will be complimentary to their project. Also, some coordination with the CCHD will be necessary so they don't mow the area at the wrong time, etc. He asked Jack if the firefighters at Seagull Guard Station could pull the Hawkweed around the immediate area. Jack thought it was worth suggesting.

Amanda will have two boat landings in Tofte manned with watercraft inspectors from CCM for about 10 hours per week. They will have Tablets at the landings to collect data. They will be providing education materials and a place to wash off boats. She is doing a lot of marketing ads that can be seen at Buck's Hardware, Ryden's Store, and indoor posters at local restaurants. She will be at the GM Visitor's Center in a crayfish costume raising awareness of aquatic invasives. She will be monitoring crayfish and spiny water flea along with other agencies. She will continue to work with Laurel on the Public Knowledge Survey.

Ginny is on the Broadband Committee and they are forming a tech center at Birch Grove School and hoping to have other tech centers in the county. She is suggesting we include topics about invasive species. While at Cascade River pull-off, she saw that the retaining wall plantings have tansy growing in them. Also, there is some plastic that needs to be removed as it looks bad. Mike acknowledged these items and will try to follow up on them.

Molly is busy working with the Master's Naturalist Training Program.

Regarding mapping of invasives, Laurel asked that we get our lists updated on EDDmapS as soon as we can.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

/nya