



SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
Park Ecology Committee
January 12, 2017 meeting
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MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING January 12, 2017

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 2:55 p.m.

Park Ecology Committee Members Present:

John Ernst, Chair, Dan Wilt, Bradley Austin, (ESD), Robert Stegemann (DEC), Art Lussi

Other Members and Designees Present:

Sherman Craig, Chairman, Karen Feldman, Dr. Chad Dawson, Sandi Allen, (DOS), Barbara Rice, William Thomas

Local Government Review Board:

Fred Monroe, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, James Townsend, Kathy Regan, Keith McKeever, Emily Tyner, Kate-Lyn Knight, Mary O' Dell, Leigh Walrath, Mark Rooks, and Annemarie Peer

RASS Program Report (Ed Snizek)

Mr. Snizek gave updates on three grants that have come to a close. The first one being the NYS-DEC-Adirondack Park Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program, which is a continuation of the 2015 pilot program. The RFP closed on October 14, 2016 and DEC will be awarding the grant soon. Another grant which closed on December 9, 2016 is the NYS-DEC Invasive Species Comprehension Management Plan for NYS, which is an Invasive Species Council priority. The third grant, which closed on December 15, 2016, was the Lake Champlain Basin Program Local Implementation Grants for aquatic invasive species management and prevention. These grants are for up to \$15,000 and will be awarded to local communities and lake associations in New York and Vermont. Recipients of all three grants should be announced within the next month.

Mr. Snizek also reported that the Adirondack Land Owners Association awarded the 2016 Stewardship Award to the Adirondack Lakes Alliance. The Adirondack Lakes Alliance was recognized for helping organize lake and river associations and for creating awareness of threats to the environment and economy from aquatic invasive species.

Adirondack Invasive Plant Program Annual Report (Zack Simek and Erin Vennie-Vollrath, APIPP)

Ms. Erin Vennie-Vollarath began her presentation with a summary of the 2016 Aquatic Invasive Species Management Program (APIPP). Ms. Vennie-Vollarath explained that APIPP monitors for eight different aquatic invasive plants and animals, including spiny waterflea, which is currently in nine lakes in the Adirondack Park and spreading quickly.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath reported that since the early 2000s, APIPP, working with a large volunteer network, rapid response teams and with partners was able to survey and map AIS across the region. She showed a distribution map of the 103 lakes which are currently infested with a least one aquatic invasive species. Approximately 70 % of lakes surveyed are still invasive free.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath said they have an extensive volunteer network in the Park and to support that network they provide three training programs in the summer. Training includes aquatic invasive plant monitoring and ID, Adirondack Mountain Club backcountry water monitors, and aquatic invasive animal identification coordinated by the Lake Champlain Sea Grant program. They had 90 participants this past summer.

Ms. Vennie-Vollarath also reported that they had aquatic rapid response teams in place for the past two years. Their mission is rapid response, early detection surveys, and to contain/reduce high priority existing infestations. She reported on results from some of the lake surveys. She showed a comparison of 2015-2016 where they surveyed 38 waterbodies both years. A total of 17 waterbodies had aquatic invasive species in 2015, while 16 lakes were found to be infested in 2016. The response teams are managed by Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath also reported that APIPP teamed up with the Upper Saranac Foundation to do management of invasive milfoil in Fish Creeks Ponds this past summer.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath thanked Dr. Eric Holmlund and his staff from Paul Smith's College who manage all of APIPP's AIS programs in the Park. They are the boots on the ground and responsible for collecting and analyzing the data.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath finished her presentation with sharing some priorities for 2017 which include expanding monitoring for soft bodied organisms (i.e. spiny waterflea), promoting spread prevention education, including radio spots and news articles, and working with Department of Transportation for boat wash signs to be placed in highway travel corridors.

Mr. Zach Simek is the coordinator of the Terrestrial Invasive Plant Program. He gave an overview of past season work to address terrestrial invasives and acknowledging seasonal staff who collected the data.

He identified eight terrestrial species they focus on through surveying and management during the season. He provided a map which showed that the eight species are wide spread in the Adirondacks primarily located along public roads. Mr. Simek reported that invasives are transported by natural and human factors. Human pathways include road maintenance and construction activities, primarily the movement of contaminated fill and construction equipment. Invasive plants can rapidly colonize disturbed habitat which in turn can lead to their spread in adjacent areas such as wetlands and Forest Preserve. Recreation activities are also a problem as people spread invasives on their clothes and boots.

He provided an example of some of the field work they have completed, including the work they did on the Whiteface Memorial Highway this past season. They surveyed five miles of the highway and found 13 invasive species had infested the area after the highway was rebuilt. Teams, including workers from the DOT and DEC, removed 69 bags of invasive plants in 2016. This was an important management effort as the Whiteface Memorial Highway is home to ten rare, threatened, and endangered plant species.

Mr. Simek gave a second example which was the distribution of phragmites. In 2016 over 1000 documented occurrences of phragmites were recorded in the Park. Many of the locations were found to be adjacent to NYS DOT facilities, which contain highway construction equipment, fill material, and other construction material. The movement of equipment and material from these sites spread invasive species along roadways.

Mr. Simek finished up his presentation by noting a positive outlook involving collaboration with the Department of Transportation, through training, response team surveys and managing assessments and monitoring for forest pests for early detection and rapid response.

After an answer and question period, Ms. Vennie-Vollarath and Mr. Simek were presented a certificate of appreciation by John Ernst, Ms. Martino, Chairman Craig, and Mr. Snizek

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:50 p.m.