

Minutes
Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting
Invasive Species Field Trip
Monday, July 16 2012, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

AHATS; Arden Hills Army Training Site
4761 Hamline Avenue N., Arden Hills MN 55126

I. Group began to gather at 12:50, tour began at approximately 1:10 pm

Attendees: Mary Lee (host), Dave Hamernick, Michael Murray (plus a MN National Guard member driver); Monika Chandler, Lucia Hunt and Jonathan Ostus, Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture; John Moriarty, Ramsey County Parks; Sarah Duke Middleton, City of Burnsville; Lonnie Brokke and Erica TenBroek, City of Roseville; John Lampe, Green Shoots; Barb and Dave Gibson and Rene Martin, Maplewood Invasive Plant Patrol and Open Space Monitors; Laura Van Riper, Maryanna Harstad, MN DNR; Tim Power, MN Nursery and Landscaping Association; Ken Graeve, Dave Hanson, Steve Pavsek, John Sander, MN DOT; Doug Jensen and Marte Kitson, MN Sea Grant; Simba Blood, Wyatt Behrends, Alex Plattes and Tracy Lawler, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District; Stephanie Herbst, Elizabeth Hosch and Samantha Kerbich, Rice Creek Watershed District; Essam Dabaan, US Dept. of Agriculture; Dan Shaw, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Carole Gernes, RCCWMA Coordinator.

II. Tour details

A. Field trip participants met at the new AHATS office building. Introductions were made and the group moved out to the parking area to carpool to our tour stops.

B. At our first stop, just north of the new office building, our host, Mary Lee, described a soon-to-be-constructed wash rack. There, vehicles and equipment will be washed down to remove invasive plant parts and seeds, to prevent their spread. The rack will trap seeds and be cleaned out to dispose of them in a safe way.

Driving about 0.75 miles NW, we came to our second site. Bristly locust, a shrub native to the SE US was the main focus at this stop. It is not listed as a noxious weed in MN, but it is aggressive. This site is an old homestead. The former owner planted interesting native plants on the opposite side of the road. Some of these were butternut, Kentucky coffee tree and wafer ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*). The leaves of wafer ash are similar to poison ivy and the fruit looks like giant, 1" diameter, elm samaras.

Travelling approximately 1/3 mile ENE, we stopped near an infestation of leafy spurge. This spurge was recently treated with herbicide. Leaves and flowers were turning brown.

Our fourth stop was about 1/4 mile NNE of our third stop. The main attraction here was cypress spurge. Cypress spurge is shorter than leafy spurge (around 12" tall) with many narrow leaves and short internodes. Superficially, it resembles a pine seedling. A yellow toadflax with similar leaves was discovered in the spurge infestation. Monika answered a question about testing and how host specific biocontrol insects are. Her reply was that each species is tested for years to make sure they do not cross over and affect native non-target plants. The *Aphthona*

beetles released for leafy spurge are so host specific to leafy spurge that they do not control cypress spurge.

Travelling another ¼ mile to the NE, we came to the north end of Marsden Lake. This is an area where loosestrife beetles were previously released and a great example of biocontrol success. Attendees spread out looking for purple loosestrife. Very few plants were found. Those present were small and had many holes in the leaves.

Spotted knapweed biocontrols were the subject of the fifth stop, about a 1.5 mile drive to the NW. Mary pointed out a distinct circle within an infestation of spotted knapweed plants, where knapweed beetles were previously released. The beetles thin out the knapweed in the release area and then work their way out in a circle. Both seed head and root boring beetles were released and were found during the tour. Mary passed out collection bottles and demonstrated how to collect beetles. She explained that beetles were most likely to be found along the outer edge of the thin knapweed circle. Participants wandered the area searching for and collecting beetles. Seed head beetles are best collected on very warm days. The temperature during the trip was about 97°F. Wind gusts blew the knapweed tops around making beetle collection more difficult.

Some of these knapweed beetles were released in the restored prairie area at our next stop, north of the AHATS property, along Ramsey County Rice Creek North Regional Trail. Attendees piled into three vehicles and from the parking lot, drove down the bike trail to an area where Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) had been discovered and parasitic stingless wasp biocontrols released.

Jonathan Ostus, from the MN dept of Agriculture, brought an oobinator, containing samples of EAB eggs that were parasitized by *Oobius agrili* (stingless) wasps. According to Monika Chandler, MN Department of Agriculture, "The EAB eggs were from the USDA APHIS EAB bioagent rearing facility in Michigan". The oobinator "is a contraption made from an inverted plastic cup to house parasitized EAB eggs. The oobinators are nailed to ash trees. Adult wasps emerge from the parasitized eggs in the field". Jon showed the eggs, which were attached to filter papers. Normal eggs are cream colored, parasitized eggs are dark colored. The eggs were tiny; only about 1-2 mm long. All of the adult wasps had already emerged.

We caravanned back to the AHATS office parking area to adjourn.

IV. Set next meeting date and location:

- A. Carole will set up a Doodle poll for the next RCCWMA meeting.

V. Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm

Respectfully submitted by Carole Gernes, 8/1/12

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