

Minutes
Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area (RCCWMA) Meeting
Monday, October 1 2012, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Maplewood Nature Center
2659 East 7th Street
Maplewood, MN 55119

I. Meeting opened at 10:10 a.m.

Attendees: Carole Gernes – RCCWMA, Laura Van Riper – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; John Moriarty - Ramsey County Parks and Recreation; Nancy Duncan – National Park Service-Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA); Steve Pavek and Justin Knabe, Minnesota Department of Transportation.

II. Action Items

A. Partner updates

1. Carole received a call from Monika Chandler prior to the start of the meeting. Because Maplewood Nature Center was not equipped for a conference call, Carole said she would convey Monika's comments to the group during the meeting.

Carole updated the group on the Maplewood Invasive Plant Patrol volunteer monitoring program. She has received reports from five active volunteers through September 27th.

She gave an update on the status of populations of Bohemian knotweed at Hillside Park and Oriental bittersweet at Maplewood Nature Center. The number of knotweed stems has been reduced by approximately 90% and stem height by 50%. Stem diameters have gone from a maximum of 1.25 inches to a maximum of 0.5 inches. Two cut stump treatments of 25% glyphosate were done in late spring and early fall of 2011, with help from Joy Cedarleaf's Century College Field Biology classes. The knotweed has not yet been treated in 2012.

Maplewood Nature Center's Oriental bittersweet population has been cut and treated twice: on the NW hillside in September 2011 and 2012 with help from Century College students. Three citizen volunteers were also trained for a two hour removal session in 2011. These volunteers concentrated on the bittersweet growing along the causeway between the two ponds.

2. Laura Van Riper gave an update on the new Minnesota DNR "Play-Clean-Go" campaign/brand. She passed out new literature and posters. Pre-designed, species-specific signs are available for electronic distribution by request. Contact Susan Burks, MNDNR, for literature and signage.

Laura also offered to share a pdf. document with easy equipment cleaning tips to prevent spread of terrestrial invasive plants. She will email the document to Carole, who will share with the group and other parks/public works staff.

Carole asked for an update on the Minnesota DNR's invasive species display success at the MN State Fair last month. Laura said there was a steady crowd flow to look at the displays, watch the new documentary. She thought the invasives "ISI", CSI-like display was a hit.

3. Nancy Duncan updated the group on the National Park Service/MNRRRA's restoration work on the newly acquired 29 acre Cold Spring parcel near Fort Snelling. Buckthorn, garlic mustard and thistle have been removed and a large tree planting event was held this past Saturday. Digging was difficult due to lack of rain.
4. John Moriarty reiterated that the county is not removing garlic mustard. He cited Mark Davis' research on drivers for invasion by garlic mustard. Invasive earthworms, lack of mycorrhizae and deer all contribute to garlic mustard invasion. These factors limit growth of native plants but not garlic mustard.

John asked MNDOT members if they were aware of any herbicide treatments near the autumn olive at 35E and County Road J. The tree appears to be half dead. Steve and Justin said MNDOT did not spray that area.

John also mentioned that Ramsey County was treating black locust at Grass Lake, using Transline[®]. Transline[®] is being used because black locust is a legume. Triclopyr and glyphosate do not work on legumes.

John brought up the spread of wild parsnip along county Road E; that it appears to be thicker. Carole added that it is now on the north side of the road as well as the south. She said it has spread to the west side of Victoria in small patches. Canadian Pacific Railway did a spring spraying but didn't do any mowing prior to the flowering period. The contractor for the railway recently obtained a mower, so that may change. She received photos from Chuck Fiedler, Ramsey County Public Works, of plants sprayed after seeds had set. She questioned whether the seeds would still be viable.

5. Steve Pavek, MNDOT, responded that spraying parsnip with Escort[®] will kill the seeds.

Steve also updated the group with new information about the Japanese knotweed on the steep hillside near the MN/Wisconsin bridge. The knotweed that MNDOT sprayed on the slope was killed with one application. The knotweed treated by the owner of adjacent private property, required more treatments. The difference was that MNDOT used New Film[®] herbicide sticker; which is a super sticky substance that holds the herbicide on the leaves. Steve said New Film is available in pint bottles and is affordable.

III. New Business/Open Discussion

- A. Should we remove *Miscanthus sp.* from the early detection species list?

Carole conveyed the comments Monika Chandler made via phone regarding three species of *Miscanthus*. Monika was wondering why this was being considered. Carole explained that there was so much *Miscanthus* planted in the area that it wasn't really a species that could be eradicated. Monika recommended waiting until after the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee (NWAC) completed their evaluation of *Miscanthus*. She said that three species of *Miscanthus* were undergoing evaluation now. The species under review include *M. sinensis*, *M. sacchariflorus* and *M. x giganteus*. *M. x giganteus* is a hybrid of the two species that is being considered for planting as a biofuel. She said citations of scientific literature are being completed before the council moves forward.

Laura Van Riper confirmed, saying that *M. x giganteus* is sterile. Other *Miscanthus* have been shown to have relatively low seed set, much spread is vegetative. The group agreed that the *Miscanthus* at Highways 36 and 694 in Oakdale may have spread to the center of the cloverleaf vegetatively, through mowing or perhaps purposely moved by people digging it up. The group agreed to table this conversation until a decision has been reached by NWAC.

B. Suggestions for helping cities with small budgets to remove/manage target species in their parks:

Carole reported on the lack of homeowner and small business applications for the RCCWMA invasive plant removal cost-share program. This program is being funded through a grant by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. She wrote several letters to residents and businesses with knotweed on their properties. One homeowner (Maplewood) and one business representative (near 35E and Little Canada Road) said they would remove only if Japanese knotweed was added to the Noxious Weed List. Carole will contact BWSR to see whether funding can be expanded to include cities who would like to remove target species from their parks and open spaces.

Earlier, in response to this question, Monika said the removals/restorations that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is involved with are on a very large scale; involving several acres.

C. Hike to Oriental bittersweet infestation at Maplewood Nature Center.

With no other new business introduced, the group was joined by Ann Hutchinson, lead naturalist at Maplewood Nature Center. We hiked to the Oriental bittersweet infestation near the northwest corner of the main nature center trail. This infestation covers approximately 1/3 acre. Small diameter vines run along the surface of a steep slope, along with raspberry canes, a few currants and other shrubs. Accessing the large number of small plants for treatment is difficult due to the slope, thorns and tripping hazard caused by the bittersweet vines and raspberry canes.

Carole summarized the City of Maplewood's efforts to remove the bittersweet. Maplewood partners with Joy Cedarleaf from Century College. Her field biology labs perform service learning projects for the city, including two consecutive years of cutting and treating large bittersweet vines growing on trees in this area. The goal for the last

two years has been to kill large, seed producing vines first. Ann added that the infestation was thought to be American bittersweet until just a couple of years ago. The bittersweet has been in this corner of the nature center at least since the late 1970s.

One suggestion to prevent erosion with a foliar herbicide treatment or brush saw and herbicide, was to add a seeded erosion mat after treatment. Carole said she would contact watershed staff for information on that possibility, including what sort of seeded mats are available with watershed staff.

The group observed a few live vines with berries growing on trees and along the causeway between the ponds that were missed.

IV. Set next meeting date and location:

- A. Carole will send out a new Doodle poll to schedule a meeting in early November.

V. Meeting was adjourned at 11:50 pm

VI. Addendum:

- a. For more information on the MNDNR's Play/Clean/Go campaign, go to <http://www.playcleango.org/>
- b. For information about giant Miscanthus and biofuels: <http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Wildlife/Growing%20Risk-2-FINAL-LOW-RES.ashx>

Respectfully submitted by Carole Gernes, 11/9/12

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