

Minutes
Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting
Tuesday, December 9, 2014, 1:00 pm – 3:00 p.m.

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
2665 Noel Drive Little Canada, MN 55117
651-792-7959

- I. **Call to order and introductions, 1:00 pm.** In attendance: Ann White Eagle, Ramsey Conservation District; Katy Chayka, minnesotawildflowers.info; Dave Hanson and Ken Graeve, Minnesota Department of Transportation; John Kyle, U.S. Forest Service; Mary Lee, Minnesota Army Reserve National Guard; Dana Larsen-Ramsey, H.B. Fuller Company; John Lampe, Green Shoots; Mike Goodnature, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation; Simba Blood, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District.

John Kyle introduced himself as a new attendee. He is trained as an entomologist and botanist and is in charge of the northeastern section of the U.S. His office is in St. Paul; his duties also include invasive plants. He is a Ramsey County resident, interested in learning how a CWMA works and helping with Ramsey County monitoring and projects. He is also a certified applicator. Everyone welcomed John to the group.

II. Partner updates

A. Ramsey Conservation District/RCCWMA: 2014 Accomplishments PowerPoint

1. MOUs signed: Minnesota Department of Agriculture, City of North Saint Paul, City of Shoreview, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, National Park Service, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, Rice Creek Watershed District.
2. The suspected Dalmatian toadflax reported at the Fish Creek Blitz was identified as Balkan catchfly; *Silene csereii*. They look very similar when not in bloom. Ken and Dave have also seen this plant along roadways and have had to get a closer look. The catchfly has opposite leaves; the toadflax has alternate.
3. There have been a few partner representative updates:
 - a. Meghan Manhatton is no longer with Saint Paul Parks. She accepted a position with Dakota County. Shannon Montante is now the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation contact. She was recently married, her last name changed from O'Brien.
 - b. Elizabeth Hosch is no longer with Rice Creek Watershed District. Contact for the district is now the district inspector, Catherine Nester. Rice Creek will not have an intern in 2015. The intern provided most of their in-kind match in the past.
 - c. Jessica Schaum, who was instrumental in obtaining an MOU from the City of Shoreview, took a position with the City of Apple Valley. Tom Wesolowski is taking on her duties, at least for now. Shoreview is interested in starting a volunteer program.

- B. Katy updated the group and Mike about the Oriental Bittersweet at Long Lake Regional Park. She said there are a lot of suckers coming up in need of treatment.
- C. Monika spent a lot of time organizing/working on the invasive species conference. Laura Van Riper, MNDNR, who was not able to make it today, also worked on the conference.
- D. Carole shared that she learned that Laura has reoccurring meetings on Tuesdays. Carole will try to schedule for other weekdays in the future.

III. Action Items

- A. Reminder to renew/sign MOUs if necessary

IV. New Business/Open discussion

- A. MOUs; do we need them?

The group suggested that signing new MOUs every 5 years wasn't necessary and extra work for partners, especially considering that there is a clause in the MOU that states partners can choose to leave the group at any time. The general consensus was that MOUs should be signed by new partners and expiration dates should be removed from the document. Carole agreed to make those changes and email the new document to all partners who signed between 2008 and 2013. Ann said she would send copies of the signed MOUs for partners to keep on file.

- B. Invasive knotweed tour; critique, comments: The group thought the tour was good despite one wrong turn along the route. Simba said she thought 3 stops would have been enough, especially considering the weather and that each of the infestations resulted in brown knotweed stems, regardless of which herbicide was used. She suggested a selection of early detection species and is especially interested in *Phragmites*.

A short discussion concerning identifying the owner of the knotweed-infested property next to 2112 Victoria ensued. Contacting the County Assessor was suggested.

- C. Invasive plant Google tours vs caravanning tours or both: the group thought a Google tour would be valuable for people to visit the sites on their own, if they missed the original tour, if the weather is bad, or would like to recheck progress over time. Simba described a tour that Cliff was setting up for the watershed. Drawbacks include Google's requirement that people cannot be in the photos and the long time required for Google review and approve content before they will post it. Simba thought the process takes up to three months. Cliff had to show a group his tour presentation as a PowerPoint since it wouldn't be up on Google in time for his meeting.
- D. EDDMapS verification, staff use and training interest: Carole and Katy were having problems with the distribution maps loading and getting a "not available for public viewing" message after adding a report. Carole has also been unable to verify her own reports, as she doesn't receive an email alert that contains them. Carole agreed to contact Chuck Barger from the University of Georgia, to see how to fix these issues. Carole said she would share website and setting up account info with new partners as they sign on. There are good instructions on how to use the database in the Tools tab. A class on how to use EDDMapS may not be necessary.

E. October Upper Midwest Invasive Plant Conference (UMIPC) items of interest:

1. Invasive knotweed herbicides and results: The consensus at the knotweed sessions was that Triclopyr is the least effective herbicide to used on invasive knotweeds. Of all of the presenters and participants in the audience, none has eradicated a knotweed infestation, even with years of treatment.
2. Buckthorn pulling vs. cut stump treatments: Carole attended the presentation of the study comparing succession in forests after pulling buckthorn vs cutting and stump treating. In areas where buckthorn was pulled, there is a greater vegetative cover and diversity of plants that grow in 1 and 2 years after removal. Unfortunately these are weedy species, dominated by buckthorn seedlings, garlic mustard and a variety of non-native weeds. Cut stump areas take longer to fill in, but species show up include more native species and less weedy species.
3. Invasive *Phragmites* control: Monica updated the group on *Phragmites* information: it sets seed late in the year, often in November. There needs to be some genetic variation in an area before it will set seed. It is very important to eliminate small patches, which do not seed, before a new patch comes along and seed viability begins. After viable seeds are produced, it is more difficult to control.

Carole has been participating in the Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative webinars that covered this topic as well and highly recommends them. She also participated in one that covered the development of a biocontrol and the history of *Phragmites* invasion of the U.S. The biocontrol is within a year of approval, but the research is having funding issues. One interesting and unexpected occurrence during testing was that they found non-native and native forms had hybridized in the field outside of their testing area. They had not been able to force hybridization in the lab. They were going to stem inject the hybrids to make sure they were eradicated.

4. Other:

Aquatic Plant Id Workshop: Simba attended the all morning workshop. Plants were labelled in trays with identification; all in one room. There were no dichotomous keys; just labels.

Tours offered at the conference included:

- a. A tour of boreal native plants in the Cloquet area. The Cloquet Forestry Center was studying climate change in plants grown in gravel beds.
- b. Tour two was of Eerie Pier where they were sterilizing ballast water to prevent/kill invasive species. They were using a UV light filtration system that treats the water during water intake.

F. Ann updated the group on the status of the RCCWMA grants:

1. The 2012 BWSR Grant is completely encumbered. Roseville submitted a cost share to treat a list of target species in various parks to use up the remainder of the funds. They contracted with Stantec.

2. Conservation Corps of Minnesota: applied for treatment at three sites. The sites must be public lands, not necessarily county lands. The group recommended adding the Otter Lake Phragmites to the application.
 3. Carole received a very late application for cost share from a resident who bought a sprayer, herbicide and foaming agent to treat her knotweed. She would like to encourage residents. She could loan out the equipment to others in the neighborhood. Ann recommended reimbursing her from the 2014 maintenance and equipment budget.
 4. Aquatic Invasive Species funds: funding goes to designated county departments. The amount depends on how many boat launches and trailer spaces are in each launch parking lot. Part of the funding is for education. It isn't spelled out what sort of education is required.
 5. The group discussed Conservation Partner Legacy funding. These funds do not require hunting or fishing on public lands. Money may be used for habitat restoration. Due date is the end of December. minnesotawildflowers.info received this grant to be used over three years.
 6. Environmental Trust Fund might be another possibility.
- G. The group discussed adding *Phragmites australis ssp. australis* to the target species list. Carole described the infestation at Otter Lake. Simba said that the patch is growing near a storm drain outlet. Carole mentioned that increased nitrogen has been identified as an infestation driver for non-native Phragmites. Mary thought that invasive Phragmites was also at Turtle Lake. The group voted to add non-native Phragmites to the RCCWMA early detection target species list.
- H. Katy asked the group to use minnesotawildflowers.info as an information venue. Use by partners was included in their grant application.

V. Set next meeting date and location:

- A. Carole will set up another Doodle poll for our next meeting; likely in mid-February

VI. Adjourned meeting: 2:45 pm