

CRAFTSBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

October 18, 2021

Called to order at 7:00 p.m., Craftsbury Town Hall

PRESENT: Steve Moffat, Diane Morgan, June Pichel Cook, Brian Machesney, Farley Brown, Elinor Osborn, Ashley Nunery, Susie Houston (Selectboard Liaison)

PUBLIC: Rob Libby (Craftsbury Municipal Forest Committee), Colin Netzley

AGENDA ADDITIONS: Farley notified the Commission of a tree planting event in the Black River watershed (attached).

DRAFT PLAN FOR ASH TREE INVENTORY: Rob and Brian reviewed the attached draft plan. June moved that the Commission supports the formation of an *ad hoc* committee by the Selectboard to move forward on the ash tree inventory. Farley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES: Diane moved to approve the minutes of September 20, 2021 meeting. Ashley seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

- Educational Outreach: June found one broken link on the CCC web page and asked Michelle Warren to repair. June will assemble a list of “Links to Other Natural Resource Websites” and draft “disclaimer” language to review at the December meeting. Ashley will work with Brian to draft and post a brief account of recent activities at the Japanese Knotweed eradication demo site.
- Invasive and Non-native Species Control: The WG voted to change the name of the WG to “Invasives Working Group.” Elinor reviewed the attached report.

PLANTINGS BY STERLING COLLEGE STUDENTS AT JAPANESE KNOTWEED

DEMONSTRATION SITE: Farley reviewed the attached presentation, “Anchoring Willow Fascines to Slow the Spread of Japanese Knotweed.”

NEW MEMBER UPDATE: Elinor moved that the Commission go into executive session for personnel at 8 p.m. Brian seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. The Commission returned from executive session at 8:05 p.m. Farley moved that the Commission recommend to the Selectboard that Liz Keglор and Colin Netzley be appointed to the Commission. June seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: The Commission will meet on December 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall. Proposed agenda to include: welcome new appointees; list of other natural resources websites; working group reports; Selectboard’s reception of draft plan for inventory of ash trees.

Brian moved to adjourn at 8:08pm. Diane seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Submitted by Brian Machesney, Secretary

Volunteers Needed for Tree Planting on Nov. 3 (Wed.)

Good evening neighbors,

I am posting this announcement on behalf of Kiley Briggs (kbriggs@oriannesociety.org) of The Orianne Society, who is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on this habitat restoration project.

There is an upcoming habitat restoration volunteer work day taking place on the Black River in Craftsbury on November 3 that a small number of people are needed for. The project is aimed at improving habitat for sensitive wildlife by planting clusters of native trees and shrubs in a key area within the river floodplain. Work will entail ~4hrs of light shovel work and hand-pulling vegetation around where each tree and shrub is planted. We'll get started around 9 and precise details will be provided over email to those who are interested. The work is family-friendly, but we understand that most kids old enough to participate and learn from the project will probably be in school that day. If you do want to bring your kids, please use your best judgement about whether a day on the riverbank with a shovel is appropriate for them given that the weather conditions are usually cold and often damp in early November. We are hoping for sun, but will get what we get.

Water and refreshments (fruit and granola bars) will be available for volunteers. If you would like to participate or learn more about the project, please email Kiley directly at kbriggs@oriannesociety.org

*Thank you all so much,
Kiley Briggs
Director of Conservation
The Orianne Society
www.orianne.org*

REPORT: INVASIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPECIES CONTROL WORK GROUP

October 18, 2021

Milfoil Prevention in Little Hosmer Pond

Update from the Aquatic Biologist with the State DEC Watershed Management Division confirmed that the floating green algae we found was most likely filamentous algae, and not something to be concerned about.

Japanese Knotweed Control

- September 26: Site prep for “fascines” experiment – 1-½ hours
 - Brian and Steve used DR mower to cut path through JK to “bench” area below culverts from Cole Drive and Little Hosmer Pond
 - Tough to maneuver the DR in a small space among numerous JK
 - DR cuts JK to ground level
- September 27: Willow Fascines Experiment – 2-½ hours
 - Ten Sterling students from Farley Brown’s Watershed Ecosystems Analysis class plus four CCC members
 - Cut JK to the Cole Drive and Little Hosmer Pond culverts, piling it off the cut areas
 - Cut, bundled and installed willow fascines, next to and just above the stream
 - Brian will keep JK cut down in all the places it was cut yesterday and this morning
 - Elinor will send report of this, plus photos, to F&W
- October 16: Diane and Ross Morgan took down the two JK drying racks, the banner and posters – 45 minutes

An aerial photograph of a forest with a winding path, serving as the background for the title page.

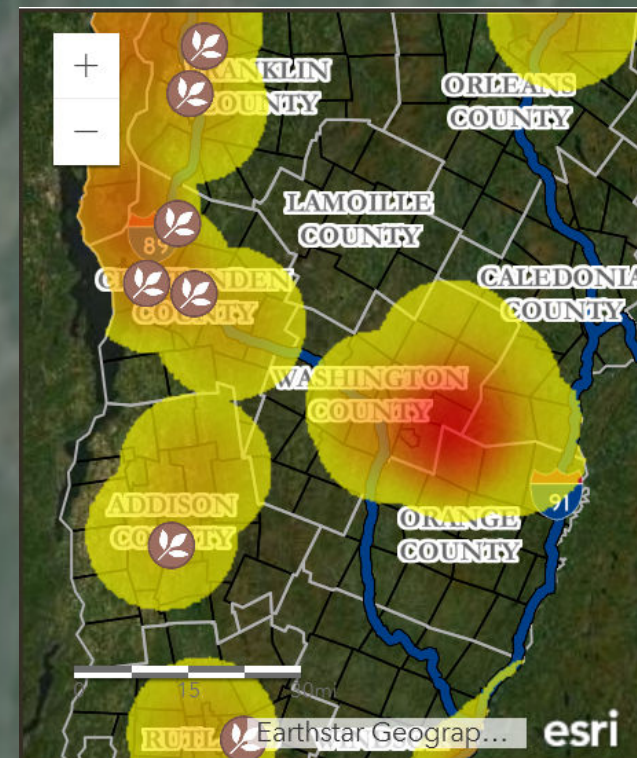
Craftsbury Ash Tree Inventory

Preliminary Plan

Rob Libby – Municipal Forest Committee
Brian Machesney – Conservation Commission

Sudden Ash Decline Expected

- Emerald Ash Borer expected to kill many trees in Craftsbury
- Trees survive 2 – 5 years from first attack
- See:
<https://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont>



Prepare for Sudden Ash Decline

- Dead ash trees may threaten people and property
- Ash trees in public right-of-way may be a liability
- Goal: predict timing and scale of potential problems
- Recommendation: *ad hoc* town committee to survey and monitor ash tree inventory

Initial Ash Tree Survey

- Train volunteers
- Photograph trees and threats
- Transfer photos to PC
- Transform data for assessments

Train Volunteers

- Town right-of-way on individual routes
 - *Safety, safety, safety*
- Recognize ash trees
 - Early summer: late to leaf-out
 - Bark pattern
- Recognize threats
 - Lean, overspread
 - Roads, utility lines, etc.

Photograph Trees and Threats

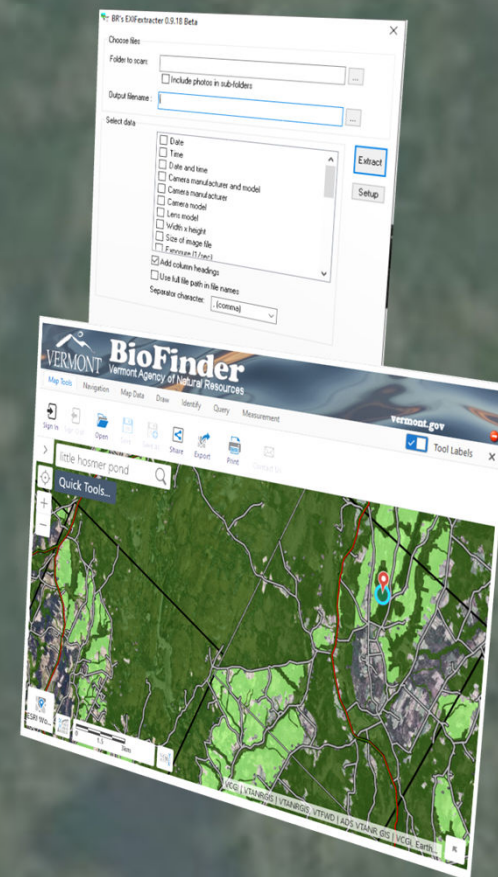
- GPS-enabled digital cameras and smartphones
- Photographic record allows rapid, expert analysis
 - Minimize misidentification
 - Assess threat severity for prioritization
 - Monitor trends

Transfer photos to PC

- Memory stick, internet
- Maintain long-term inventory database
- Share with other entities

Transform Data and Assess Results

- Free *Windows* app transforms photo data for upload
- Map the inventory with ANR's *BioFinder*
 - Map points link to respective photographs
- Analyze with spreadsheets, etc.
- Potential: tender RFPs for removal estimates



Annual Monitoring

- Should require much less time than first pass
- Track changes by locale
- Focus remediation efforts
- Optimize expenditures