

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES  
September 23, 2019  
Craftsbury Town Hall

**PRESENT:** Farley Brown, June Cook, Susie Houston, Stephen Moffatt, Elinor Osborn, Heidi Rich, Steve Wright

**ABSENT:** John Brodhead, Carol Maroni, Diane Morgan

**GUEST:** Jared Nunery, Orleans County Forester

**MINUTES:** Minutes of August 26, 2019 approved. Stephen reported the balance in the Craftsbury Conservation Fund is \$1,816.17. Through volunteer hours at Antiques & Uniques from Susie and Heidi, the Fund was increased \$105.

**EMERALD ASH BORER:** The Emerald Ash Borer is present from Montpelier to Canadian border; Craftsbury is in the middle of infested areas. Jared displayed a map showing high risk and confirmed infested areas throughout Vermont. For the first five years of infestation, little outward signs may be apparent. A tree may look a little sick and there may be increased woodpecker activity. By the next five years, most of the infested ash trees will be gone.

How to keep ash trees from disappearing as part of landscape: Trees 1-inch in diameter and less are least impacted. Using silviculture to develop ash trees and hope next cohort is genetically immune. Ash borer infestations result in 99 percent mortality, far more lethal than diseases that affected chestnut and elm trees. A study in Michigan found 60 percent mortality in a type of ash. Black and green ash have highest mortality.

A pro-active approach is sacrificing trees. Town budgets can be impacted negatively with the need to remove dead ash trees in public right-of-way. Dead ash trees are brittle and more hazardous to remove. An inventory of roadside ash trees can be used to prepare for increased budgetary needs. State does provide i-pods to help in inventory and process the data. Proactively removing trees before infestation is an approach. Town right-of-way is treated differently from private landowner properties where silviculture may be the prime approach.

The tree warden must be involved before removal of trees from ROW and is responsible for trees in the public ROW.

The state is not at the point of a federal quarantine for Vermont. Infestations spread naturally about one or two miles annually. Movement of infested firewood results in faster and wider spread to uninfested areas. The state has guidelines about moving firewood from infested areas; no regulations if not in one of the "hot" zones. Jared displayed a map showing hot zones.

The commission voted unanimously to approve the following motion: The commission proposes to the select board an inventory of ash trees along public rights of way be taken in collaboration with the town forestry committee.

Stephen will present the proposal to the Select Board.

**INVASIVE DISPOSAL SITE:** Stephen reported Kurtis Mellett is interested in doing something, both in terms of a public site and town site. Guidelines will be needed if a public site is created. To what depth must invasives be buried and cost of creating and maintaining a site have not been determined. No precedents have been found to determine workings of an effective disposal site. Farley will contact Elizabeth Spinney for more information regarding disposal sites for invasives.

**JAPANESE KNOTWEED:** Elinor reported that Peter Emerson from Fish & Wildlife said the state is using the chemical injection method to control knotweed. The site at THwy19 and Cole Road will be reviewed in the Spring for longer coverage or for potential plantings to cover area.

**FUTURE AGENDA:** Presentation by Sterling students on invertebrates in soils between areas of knotweed chemically treated and non-treated areas.  
Presentation on Chimney Swifts for public, possible times – April 16 or 23, 2020.  
Presenter: Margaret Fowle; Location: Craftsbury Public Library or Simpson Hall, Sterling College.

The Commission will meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Submitted by June Pichel Cook, Secretary