

Kevin Luepke, Natural Resource Specialist, Fort McCoy; **Rikki Ratsch**, Colorado State University, Serving Fort McCoy; **Bob Micheel**, Director Monroe County Land Conservation; **Mark Pfost**, Private lands Biologist, Necedah Wildlife Refuge and Partners for Fish and Wildlife, **Randy Poelma**, Environmental Science Program, Ho-Chunk Nation, Black River Falls; **Steve Nachowicz**, Town of Sparta; **Dave Ohnstad**, Monroe County Highway Department; **Joey Esterline**, **Chris Hamerla** Golden Sands RC&D; **Michelle Komiskey** -District Conservationist, USDA NRCS. **Mic Armstrong** Soil Conservation Technician and Scribe.

Luepke thanked **Armstrong** for sending out the email invitation to join the meeting.

Ben Johnston sent apologies

New Faces.: **Steve Nachowicz**, Town of Sparta. Had heard about the group has buckthorn and barberry on his property off Ideal Rd in Sparta. By the end of the meeting he thought he may have more after he googled the names of things we mentioned.

Chris Hamerla Golden Sands RC&D- Regional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator for Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, Taylor, and Wood Counties. He has been working with AIS since 2008

Report on Field Trip/Pre-meeting- None

Presentation AIS Funding, **Chris Hamerla**

AIS funding has changed, it used to be all competitive grants, but now each of the affiliated counties is proportioned a maximum of \$12, 188 annually. Monroe Co. could decide to use it themselves for Aquatic Invasive Species work, hire interns to monitor boat landings etc. Or, contract with GS RC&D as the agent to do aquatic work in Monroe Co. There was a lot of questions from the group and examples of how either Chris or **Anna Cisar** would be helping. Some ideas that could be a fit were purple loosestrife biocontrol **Pfost** would like the populations along Hwy 21 east of Tomah to be worked on. **Komiskey** wondered if we could get help with the 2 Phragmites populations in Tomah. Chris said they could certainly help with grant writing. Other examples could be help training watercraft inspectors, Snapshot- an annual one-day AIS event. Outreach/Education, e.g. Opening day of Duck season, or possibly a Field Day covering more users of the resource. Another example of the contribution could be mapping of some new AIS such as Starry stone wort followed by early detection activities. Land eligible will be lakes with public access but could also include wetlands (with easement) and streams with public access. Signage may be an option. **Micheel** queried when deadlines for a decision are for this year. September 2nd Deadline of intent to DNR (either take \$ or designate agent); Nov 1st to submit agreements.

When queried about Fort McCoy AIS needs, **Luepke** said they already have some programs in place including treatment programs for Eurasian milfoil to include herbicide applications and/or hand pulling via scuba divers. This year they are also conducting eEDNA testing on many of the streams and lakes on McCoy. **Ratsch**, added the tests were for multiple species (multiplexing). This will allow for a broad survey in terms of species and area, but will allow for a rapid response if an invasive plant or animal has "flown under the radar" and has yet to be discovered. As this scribe understands it eEDNA testing means that you can detect what species may be present or have been present in a water body just based on traces of DNA in a sample, so you may, for example, be able to say zebra mussels are present without even finding one. Then you would really start looking!

Agreed to consider the concept of working with Golden Sands on AIS projects for 2021-22. Will let them know by the September deadline, with a plan. Chris had another meeting going on and we went on with the agenda.

Last Meeting Recap. Luepke summarized the minutes of the January 14th Teams meeting.

<https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/invasive-species-workgroup>

Micheel and **Armstrong** needed to leave the meeting early, Bob to attend yet another one, agreed to move agenda items to the top.

Monroe County Cost share Applications for Private Land Invasive Species Management:

Micheel said there are now 4 applicants for the project in 2021: Brecheisen, Arena, Leis, Flasher. And Hubbard

Armstrong ran through the status of each after gleaning information from **Mickelson** and others via phone calls. **Armstrong** completed a survey of the Flasher project- Multiflora rose in a 15-acre pasture. Report and maps now with Mickelson for assessment. **Fraze** and **Johnston** arranged to meet Leis at the property, but he was a no show. Since then they had a successful outing up to the goat prairies and a report has been turned in. The Brechenstein application was already mapped and documented by **Armstrong**. Invoices are still trickling in for things like chainsaw bars as well as photos to prove at least that blue die is being utilized on Barberry bushes. We assume the mix was geared towards their demise not just a fancy woodland color scheme.

Armstrong is in communication with Hubbard, waiting for him to get back from Arizona to schedule a visit to a steep hill with buckthorn in a horse pasture.

Mickelson continues to track the program and asked the Inspection Committee ensure landowners have a written proposal, maps clearly delineating the project and the inspectors provide good photos both before and after.

Poelma is waiting for a new map to ground truth the Arena project.

Action Updates

Luepke is now in possession of the MCISWG binder transferred by **Armstrong** on an ice fishing trip.

Armstrong had to leave the meeting and his duties as scribe for the day, first recounting that we had another successful outing to the Amur Maple site at the Imac Avenue Campground (Sparta Elroy Bike Trail). The crew included Megan **Mickelson** on the paint roller (Pathfinder soaked) and one Nate **Prairie** who, although certainly qualified and dressed to be a sawyer on the campground area, did not have written authorization yet and we went over to the private land (Hold Harmless agreement on file) to use Element 4/bark oil, (donated by the landowner), on cut stumps and basal of both Amur Maple and the two species of buckthorn. Ben **Johnston** held the fort with his crew back in the main area and at the end of the morning we regrouped and, once again, enjoyed the famous, individually wrapped, chocolate cookie bars.

New scribe: **Komiskey**:

Joey: Farmers Market: Opening stage for topics again. There was really good one-on-one with Mic in previous year. Will be good to do something again, such as the weekly invasive stand.

Michelle: Mission statement: Michelle will forward out the options for both a mission statement and a vision statement. Please vote for the one you feel matches our group best.

Kevin, Gravel: Still working toward moving forward on certified quarries. Planning a meeting with quarry owners after COVID restrictions ease.

Michelle, Advertisement board: Photos were too small after routing through email. Kevin volunteered to work on them to enhance the images and will get them back to me.

A customer arrived at the office and I had to run. Missed a few updates...

Joey: Described the area she has been trying to get converted from an undesired weedy/grassy area to a prairie. It is no-man's land with an easement because of the trail. Not really owned by anyone.

Phragmites grant: Michelle, still not heard back on eligibility for MCISWG to apply (pending response from Alex Selle). Also having a dilemma on how to get bids from contractors. Being cautious to not give the appearance of favoritism to any business. Discussed what to plant after a kill to the invasive happens. Mark Pfof offered some suggestions and it was suggested that if this project happens Mark could develop a seed mix and we could ask that the companies fund that part of the project

Mark Pfof: will do a site visit with NRCS on the Flasher property, maybe potential for restoration at some point.

Dave: Invasive survey, state is still under restrictions, inventory is delayed again.

Rikki: Wondering about plans moving forward with in-person meetings, field trips, etc. We all just don't know. We don't have options locally to make that call. Also commented on feral cats as an invasive creature, more of a problem in other areas, but is in conversations. Also mentioned some studies looking at tick and mosquito prevalence in areas of invasive species. In Honeysuckle infestations, the tick numbers were no higher than other habitats, but those ticks in honeysuckle areas contacted a host more often. Furthermore, Barberry infestations had up to 10 times the number of ticks compared to other habitats. Ticks thrive in humid areas and barberry offers that.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45.

Next Meeting: **Thursday May 13th** 1 to 3 p.m.
In Person?? Either way will have option to do Microsoft
Teams/phone in