

Kevin Luepke, Natural Resource Specialist, Fort McCoy; **Rikki Ratsch**, Colorado State University, Serving Fort McCoy; **Bob Micheel**, Director , **Ben Anderson**, Soil and Water Technician, **Roxy Anderson**, Land Use Planner, Monroe County Land Conservation; **Joey Esterline**, Adrian TSP; **Mary Hubbard**, Sheldon TSP; **Michelle Komiskey** -District Conservationist, USDA NRCS. **Mic Armstrong** Soil Conservation Technician and Scribe.

Ben Johnston, Mark Pfof and Randy Poellma sent apologies

New Faces.:

Ben Anderson, the new Soils and Water Technician for Land Conservation in Monroe Co. Ben has quite varied experiences including a lot of different invasive species, including Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Spotted knapweed and Japanese Hedge Parsley. Welcome Ben!

Mary Hubbard is the wife of Bob Hubbard who sent in an application for help with Buckthorn and other woody invasives. **Armstrong** inspected and that will be a 2022 project for the Monroe County Cost share Applications for Private Land Invasive Species Management. Mary needs to be informed more about the invasive plants we looked at and **Armstrong** said he would meet her out there one day too. Although not mentioned in the meeting Mary is involved with the West Salem School Forest which is located just off Fort McCoy by West Sandy Lake- more on that later perhaps?

Agenda Additions. Luepke: As of June 5th, The Department of Defense will no longer support Microsoft Teams for these meetings, however there will be a new service that hopefully will still enable us to continue meeting virtually.

Report on Field Trip/Pre-meeting- None

Last Meeting Recap. Luepke requested, that as all had read the version emailed them the Minutes of the March 11th Teams meeting could be approved (all agreed). Find them at: <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/invasive-species-workgroup>.

Action Updates

Annual Cisma meeting update

Armstrong there are 2 new CISMAs in WI. **Anne Pearce** sent out notes of the meeting which were forwarded to MCISWG previously. **Armstrong** highlighted the PlayCleanGo sign and boot brush program which we are taking advantage of. We have a box of metal signs, handheld and mounting versions of boot brushes on the way as well as podium styled signs will be installed in Monroe County in stages. The Renz lab work was featured at the Cisma meeting- it is well worth looking at the new website and sorting through the data on all of the experiments that are certainly relevant to our invasive species management practices.

<https://renzweedsience.cals.wisc.edu/> ,

also, the excellent new guide to all things NR-40

<https://renzweedsience.cals.wisc.edu/nr-40-master-resource-table/>

There is an item in the state budget for Invasive Species funding, stay tuned. Kelly Kearns led a breakout session for new CISMAs she was a little surprised that I joined, but even though we are one of the oldest groups, we only officially became a CISMA this year with our signed MOUs in hand. Great to meet with the new CISMA leaders and, sadly, I believe this will be Kelly's last time leading the group as she finally plans to take retirement. Her presentation of new invaders is "essential" reading we will add to our web MCISWG page.

Boot brushes and signage **Armstrong** -see above

Farmers Market, **Esterline** announced the opener on May 15th will feature MCISWG on the stage. **Armstrong** will coordinate plant samples, walking stick examples, leaflets, pollinator posters and other lovely giveaways. He will stay the entire morning as long as it seems COVID safe.

Mission/Vision Statements **Komiskey** reported the poll was sent out, returned the final versions are:

Mission Statement *To educate the public and private interests in Monroe County on the impacts of Invasive species, and to conduct and promote the management of Invasive species by interagency and private citizen action.*

Vision Statement: *Continuing to inform, promote and conduct the management of invasive species by interagency and private citizenry action. Using public and private collaboration to reduce or eliminate the impacts of all invasive species that affect the resources of Monroe County.*

Gravel Fill Certification **Luepke** updated that there was approval to go forward and invite the Gerkes and other vendors to a future MCISWG meeting to meet our group and discuss the program. This will be once we are meeting in person again. **Komiskey** commended the effort with "Great Job"!

Golden Sands AIS proposal **Micheel** said the consensus was to go ahead and let the Golden Sands AIS team conduct AIS work with the grant in Monroe Co. as outlined in the previous meeting. **Luepke** wondered who would sign the agreement- Monroe Admin. We look forward to the collaboration, we tend to focus on terrestrial issues, and we don't have as many lakes as other areas, but the reality is there are a lot of Aquatic Invasive Species issues in the County. A brief conversation about Garlic mustard spreading along watercourses highlighted some of the unique problems of this unwelcome European salad herb.

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

Micheel: Project 2021: Brecheisen, Leis, Flasher, all in stages of approval or payment

Armstrong inspected the Hubbard project, a steep hill with buckthorn and Barberry in a horse pasture-will be approved for 2022.

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 (email communication) is still waiting for a new map to ground truth the Arena project.

Display Printing Update **Komiskey**. It is home! We e-awed over the photo of the oak savanah on one side and the infested woods on the other. Now we need to work on getting photos to add on (using magnets, blue tac) to create custom displays.

Prairie garden **Esterline**. Armstrong was put to work one Saturday morning and the duo cut a lot of brush (mostly walnut and mulberry seedlings- a common buckthorn was also dispatched) then the area spot sprayed to manage quack grass problems. The crab apple was trimmed. An infestation of Garlic Mustard was discovered, mapped on Gledn and sprayed with glypho. Rye grass was seeded and mulched the following week on a steep bank we denuded of berry vines **Esterline** revisited the site a couple of weeks later with generic grass herbicide (taking care to avoid the native bluestem grasses) and observed the garlic mustard had indeed died. (We will continue to manage). The idea of replacing the old fence along the path was discussed by the group- black locust posts with a buckthorn railing but it was opined that this would be a lot of work for a short term fix and really a split rail fence would be the thing. Future plans involve on of the small PlayCleanGo signs with hand brush on a chain and hopefully a Leopold Bench for boot scratchers to sit on. (Scout project-anyone??).

Fort McCoy updates **Ratsch** Garlic Mustard (GM). Due to the disruption in management caused by the COVID 19 pandemic it was decided to reassess the 5-year plan on garlic Mustard. Some areas are not getting treated due to lack of resources. As mentioned previously in these notes Garlic Mustard is unique in that it has an enormous seed bank it can build up and it seems to create a never-ending battle even with a lot of effort expended every year. Note to readers: if you find a small patch of GM somewhere, in an otherwise clean site, pull it, don't hesitate, or even stop to map it. If it has seeds that are potentially viable bag it securely and put in the trash. I digress

Ratsch continued the report with a summary of the Challenge Academy's GM pulling efforts at Pine view campground. New GM has been mapped near the SE corner of McCoy, near a snowmobile trail and there is currently a discussion about collaborating treatments with neighbors. There is also a Ho-Chunk site in the area, a sacred well, and hand pulling will be employed there.

Phragmites Tomah sites **Komiskey** talked to Selle again. Still no action to speak of.

Purple Loosestrife mass rearing tent. **Armstrong** lamented that the 4H group that worked the tent in 2019 has since disbanded and despite efforts through the 4 H leader and organizers no other club has stepped forward. The 12x12' steel frame is still set up on Avon Road in the middle of some Purple Loosestrife, there is training scheduled for the process by the DNR, this week, we have a brand new cover available in Madison, or we could patch up the old one again. Loose strife guru Bryce Richardson would be available to assist as would Armstrong. **Luepke**

thought there was some boy scouts connected to McCoy families that were looking for projects- will pass the word.

UMISC 2020 videos. The Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference is one that often lands in La Crosse, it is put on by a coalition of groups mostly rotating between Minnesota and Wisconsin, but with participants coming from other midwestern states as far as New York Ontario to the east. These are researchers presentations, formal papers posters and also a huge input from the volunteer community embodied in the CISMA groups in the area. Armstrong received a free registration for agreeing to help moderate any unwelcome online behaviors, problems with either or lost virtual souls etc.. In the end he wasn't really needed, got extremely busy in the field that week anyway and only listened to a few of the presentation (live) on his I phone. However, as a bonus for registrants in this new virtual format the videos of the presentations and recordings of chats, the poster sessions etc al became available earlier this year. Normally you wait at least a year for the 'Proceedings' to be released. The videos it turns out are great, lots of information, well filmed for the most part, great moderators, good Q& A's although that aspect could use work in future conferences, and all of the data, charts, results show up on your computer for your edification and capture as notes. Hopefully the idea is accepted by future presenters/ organizers and continues to be a perk of registration.

Ratsch and Armstrong (R&A) shared some of their highlights from the conference and subsequent viewing. The conference should have been held in Duluth so there was a lot of the content geared to that geography, including a lot on Phragmites management, There were some great presentations on mapping- EDDMapS is really taking citizen science to a new level. There were plenty of talks on woody invasive management, (**R&A**) both remembered the fact that red elderberry was the best aggressive native to plant after buckthorn removal as its foliage smothers seedling regrowth and persists late into fall. Fear not Sambucus canadensis the black berried elderberry is a close second. Reed canary grass is actually a native (in Minnesota) and the native Phragmites seems to be spreading more aggressively than the exotic, so documented by a researcher who seems to go back and forth between England and the Midwest to check on it. The moderators seemed to enjoy the freedom to run their sessions from comfortable settings, one ran her group reclined on a couch, another bounced the entire time on an exercise ball, some stood, some had digital backdrops others were just hanging in the front room. It went remarkably well, I think, due a lot to the skills of organizer Clair Ryan.

Although partners were chomping at the bit to get back to their prescribed burns, more meetings and other meetings **R&A** kept talking. Climate change factors on invasive species, new herbicides- the Rinskor family looks like a game changer. Foam herbicide dispensers, the adjuvant guy, Spotted lanternfly is serious business in New York State- great Extension work over there. Biological control of different species, (Buckthorn looks like a bust), and the ornamental plant industry embracing the use of sterile cultivars - barberry, burning bush among others. **R&A** told the story of Bradford Flowering Pear and its degeneration into a serious invasive in Ohio, (coming here soon?), because, even though the cultivars were sterile, the root stock could form flowers and it got going that way, plus different sterile cultivars if planted close enough together could start little families. A bright note for me was the Plant Sentry Program developed and managed largely by Tom Beuchel, a member of the Governor's advisory group on invasive species. They manage to keep track of all rules governing shipments of plants interstate, not just invasive issues but all pests and diseases. Nurseries utilizing their services will have their

orders flagged (not shipped) if, say a customer in WI, tried to order a plant listed on NR-40 from an online or brick and mortar nursery. However not all nurseries are enrolled, this is private enterprise, but a good one. Look into it, ask your supplier, or other vendors such as Etsy to look into it. There was more- butternut canker, hours of aquatic stuff, oak wilt, wild parsnip, and neither **R** nor **A** came close to watching everything but what a great way to spend a little free time, watching, listening and reading to the nitty gritty of invasive research.

I just caught one from the last day on roadside management. Many areas of WI have implemented a Plant Growth Regulator spraying program (PGR). Highway managers can virtually eliminate broadleaved weeds including wild parsnip and save a lot of money, headaches etc. on mowing and equipment maintenance costs. Great session, again kudos to the Renz team and IPAW (The Invasive Plant Association of WI) for funding the workshops.

The next conference will be even better! Mark your calendars for October 24-27, 2022 in Green Bay (or maybe your living room).

Garlic Mustard Pull

Saturday June 5th, 2021 - Annual Garlic Mustard Harvest along the Elroy Sparta Trail (EST)- section from CTH T (west of Norwalk) to the Summit Ridge Tunnel (#3). (Sunday June 6th.)

For the record:

FAQs

Ben, I really really want to help, honest I do, but I am already busy that day. I am so sorry. Could you reschedule for a different day?

No. But you can pull garlic mustard any other day, at any location, be it on the trail or other public property. I can even suggest some locations to you.

Ben, I really really want to help, honest I do, but Norwalk is too far for me to drive. I am so sorry. Could you reschedule for a different location?

No. But you can pull garlic mustard any other day, at any location, be it on the Elroy Sparta trail or other public property. I can even suggest some locations to you.

Hey, would you like me to invite/bring the local football team, Scout Troops, or the Shriners in those funny little cars, etc.?

Um no, I mean yes, um sort of....again there comes a point of having too many people for this section of trail. If you have access to such a group, I would suggest taking on another site or section of the trail. I can help coordinate.

You know, Ben, my knees and/or back just can't handle all that bending and pulling anymore. Can I help in other ways?

Yes. One, you can join us for team/moral support, talk to trail users about GM (if/as applicable), share fun facts and random trivia, or simply sing to us as we pull. Two, You could send someone in your place.

Ben can I come later and/or leave early?

Yes. You are in charge of your own good time.

Can I just come to mock you for your silly endeavor?

Yes. Please do.

What is so special with this section of trail? That is, isn't garlic mustard on other sections? Why the date?

This section was suggested to me by two different folks, in part since the garlic mustard isn't "all that bad" and there is a "fair bit of good worth saving" along this segment. I have selected the first weekend in June for the annual event date because it is close to the last opportunity of gathering the GM seeds before they start to drop, AND June is Wisconsin's Invasive Species awareness month.

Children? Do you allow Children to participate?

Yes. The 2021 Garlic Mustard Harvest is a "Fun for the whole family" event.

Updates from the front line

Esterline has been fighting Garlic Mustard keeping it from heading down Silver Creek.

Komiskey The Tomah goats have eaten themselves out of buckthorn, nothing left but bigger tree sized ones which they happily eat when brought down to their level with a saw. This is year 3 on the site, now they are moving on to new areas. They are popular with people too. They seem to leave the native trees alone if they have something else to eat, (buckthorn!).

Next Meeting: **Thursday July 29th** 1 to 3 p.m.

In Person?? Either way, will have options to do video conference/phone in.

Field trip (Pre meeting 11a.m-12?) likely.

Possible venue the West Salem School Forest in Sparta (past the Best Western)

Stay tuned