

Clint Gilman, Forester, Tomah Ranger Station; **Kevin Luepke** Wildlife Biologist, **Jessup Weichelt**, Threatened and Endangered Species Biologist, **Jessica Salesman**, Natural Resources Specialist\Invasive Species Coordinator, **Fort McCoy** Natural Resources Branch (NRB); **Rikki Ratsch**, Colorado State University, serving Fort McCoy NRB; **Joey Esterline**, Adrian Township and Monroe Co. District 15. Supervisor; **Skip and Alex Frazee**, **Mike Pace**, **Jay Simonson**, Spring Bank Association; **Randy Poelma**, and **Daniel Shawley**, Ho-Chunk Nation Division of Environmental Health; **Karen Williamson** Sparta, **Eric Ressel**, Soil Conservationist NRCS, Sparta; **Brandy Ender**, Goats on the Go; **Connie Weedman**, Sparta; **Ben Johnston**, Wilton; **Tyson Langrehr**, Monroe County Highway Department; **Lilly Lefebvre**, Soil and Water Technician, Monroe County Land Conservation Department and MCISWG scribe. **Mic Armstrong** Soil Conservation Technician and MCISWG Scribe, Natural Resource Conservation Service under a cooperative agreement with New Solutions.

Prior to the meeting, most of the above group walked a route through Spring Bank guided by Skip Frazee, Mike Pace, and Alex Frazee. The hefty chain attached to the ramp on the historic swing bridge, Skip explained, used to be used to pull trains over Tunnel City Hill. Skip pointed out the honeymoon cabin, then we looked at the upper pond, Skip told a story about how they worked with DNR and they used to raise fingerling trout there, but it needed to have sediment dug out, so the DNR took the trout away and were supposed to bring them back after the work was donethe new trout were mistakenly stocked in Flora Dell, the competition resort's lakes instead. Alex explained what they have been doing to buckthorn and we stopped at an area Alex had marked off quadrants with ribbon and the difference between cut stump and basal treatments was explained. There has been a lot achieved in the buckthorn situation since the last time this scribe walked it (with Ben Anderson), you can see through the woods again, last time the buckthorn was too thick. Great Job Alex!

We decided to go on to the Savannah area of Spring Bank. Mike Pace headed back to greet newcomers to the pavilion and get the pulled pork lunch ready. Thank you, Mike, it was amazing! At the Savannah, we finished up discussing the ins and outs of a prescribed burn in the woods to restore the savannah area. The old rail bed could be one fire break. Skip told us that in 1901 when the resort was founded trains would stop and drop off passengers who would get into a horse and buggy and ride to the Lodge.

After lunch **Clint Gilman** kicked the meeting off.

No Agenda additions offered.

We all introduced ourselves, new faces included **Jay Simonson** of Spring Bank and **Jessica Salesman** who recently joined the Natural Resource Branch of Fort McCoy.

Monroe County Cost-share Applications for Private Land Invasive Species Management **Lilly Lefebvre** reported Robert Cox 2023, Bryan Hundt 2023 Spring Bank 2023, are all receiving well deserved grant payments.

Outreach media: **Weedman** wants to start getting a regular article in the paper on MCISWG and invasive species activities.

Armstrong started the recap previous meeting saying that it was raining the whole time we met in the shelter at Sandy Lake, and we talked about scuba diving for Eurasian milfoil in the lakes on Fort McCoy. Rikki Rasch then demonstrated basal and cut stump treatments on buckthorn, Honeysuckle doesn't respond to basal applications and needs to be cut stump treated, too many stems to consistently get herbicide around all stems to be effective. Most of the group went outside of the shelter, some sheltering under **Armstrong's** tattered collection of beach umbrellas and watched and learned from Rikki **Ratsch**. Chris **Hamerla** chimed in on basal vs cut stump. Jessop **Weichelt** talked about EDNA, Clint cooked hotdogs and everyone but **Armstrong** headed to the Airport Meeting room. Lilly **Lefebvre** was scribe at that meeting and **Gilman** apologized for not sending those notes out yet.

Vice Chair discussion. **Jessica Salesman** agreed to take on the role. **Luepke** led a discussion about how long of a term chair and vice chair can be expected to serve. We agreed to a 2-year term. **Gilman** would serve one more year and at that time a new vice chair will take over for **Salesman** and she would then chair the group. **Gilman** recalled that when he agreed to be vice-chair, he was told he would only need to run the meeting in the event the chair couldn't make it. He thinks it was the next meeting that **Ben Anderson** left the county, and he became the new chair.

A few minutes later **Gilman** got a call to a fire and had to leave. You can't make this stuff up! Someone came up with a gavel and **Salesman** got to run the meeting in her first two minutes, or so, of service.

A discussion on whether Jackson County could join MCISWG was on the agenda, although no one from Jackson Co was at this meeting, the effort spearheaded by **Andy Ellingson** had made it to the DNR's **Erika Segerson Mueller** and **McKenzie Manicki** who had sent helpful information about how to start a CISMA, as well as a document specifically on the pros and cons of a CISMA merge with Jackson County, including advice from other CISMAs. **Armstrong** clarified that MCISWG does not have a fulltime coordinator or any money in the bank. Everything is managed by volunteers and goodwill of our Partners. The consensus from the group was that without more buy in from Jackson County it was not a gimme that Monroe County would continue to act as fiscal agent for two counties. Our MOU and Management plan will need to be redone in a couple of years. It was a lot of work to wordsmith the first one to satisfy various parties including Department of Army, UW Extension, NRCS, Fish and Wildlife Service, Ho-Chunk Nation and others-all had their own verbiage that needed to be included. **Randy Poelma** of Ho-Chunk Nation, **Tim Wilder** of Fort McCoy, **Michelle Komiskey** and **Mic Armstrong** of NRCS put in the work to complete the process. A multi-county CISMA will probably need a grant funded full time position, it was too much to ask volunteer participants to keep track of. This was also suggested in Erika's Pros and Cons document. No one from this meeting would want to drive as far as Whitehall for a MCISWG meeting, and this has been the downfall of more than one multi county CISMA -people don't want to drive a long way for a meeting. Someone said it wouldn't be fair to split the Monroe County Invasives Species Grant budget with Jackson County landowners. However, we thought the meeting at the Cranberry Research Center was great, there were a lot of people present from Jackson County, we got the timing right for a meeting in Cranberry country, the speakers were excellent, goats showed up and we would try to do that again. A couple of MCISWG members live in Jackson Co, and really see the need for action on invasives there. In the end we agreed to hold our next (The Annual) meeting in

Cataract which is close to Jackson County and continue the discussion. **Armstrong** would contact the Cataract Sportsman Club and ask if we could meet there again without paying a fee.

Salesman asked when we would like to hold the Annual Meeting. February has five Thursday options in 2024, a leap year, so we unanimously selected February 29th.

Johnston talked about the summer walking the highways along with **Karen Williamson** and one other identifying and mapping invasive plants in the rights-of-way. He showed his 24x 48" map of Monroe County Highways his team has mapped, thanking **Ratsch** for helping to get that done and taking the time to really study the different layers and colors to make it readable. **Johnston** said they hoped to continue mapping next year, but nothing firm yet. As to getting the maps uploaded to EDDMapS, they were working on getting the line configuration to upload. **Armstrong** asked **Langrehr** if the map will help Monroe County Highway Department with vegetation management? Yes. Last year they were able to spray a mix containing growth regulator on State Highways and were very pleased with the results. The grass stayed short, didn't need mowing until later in the year and best yet the ditches weren't yellow, the wild parsnip was controlled. With **Johnston's** maps they will be able to do that on more roads.

Armstrong thanked **Langrehr** for the annual effort to spray Milestone on all of the Knotweed we know of in the rights-of-way and, with landowner blessings, the rest of these populations. Although the knotweeds come back every year **Langrehr** said the patches are getting smaller and weaker.

Amur Maple. **Johnston** explained that the campground site, once the snow starts to pile up, is difficult to access - **Johnston** has a key to get in, but we are the only ones that need access in winter. Someone piles snow up at the gate, but no one plows the road or parking lot out. We are low on herbicide but working on getting more. Volunteers if cutting with chainsaws need to have certification and first aid too. Usually volunteers work a half-day, this year the plan is to have a whole day event with a hotdog lunch.

Johnston can get a key for the bathrooms for the event. During the discussion there were some excellent offers of help and equipment and even herbicide. There is an email group specifically for Amur Maple volunteers, we have added quite a few new volunteers this year.

Invader Persuader. The idea is to get ballots to distribute by the next meeting. Nominees will be elected for efforts to educate or further the missions of MCISWG. **Armstrong** and **Wallrath** as Invader Crusaders are ineligible. **Gilman's** decision is final. Trophy presented at The Cranberry Research Center Field Day??

Fort McCoy updates, **Ratsch**-Crews were able to do some fall Garlic Mustard (GM) treatments in October/ November. Treatments of Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive and surveys ongoing. Shredder ready to go, waiting for frozen ground. **Luepke** The Prescribed Burn program at Fort McCoy could be expanding by partnering with the Forest Service, not exactly sure what the partnership could look like, but they can possibly expand the acres from 7-10,000 to 10-15,000. This could mean they will be able to do more Natural Resources burns, which don't get prioritized as high as Installation/Fuel Reduction burns. Someone asked if they burn woodland. Most of the trees harvested go to paper products so any charred logs are rejected. A discussion followed on fire effects on woodlands, including the Arcadia wildfire and the beneficial effects on Threatened and Endangered species such as Karner

Core 12/07/23

Blue Butterfly, other rare butterfly species (Regal Fritillary and Ottoe Skipper Butterflies), and game animals.

Updates from the frontline. **Brandy Enders** of Goats on the Go La Crosse talked about transitioning goat herding to electronic collars. There is a learning curve apparently.

Gilman came back from the fire just as the agenda was completed and **Salesman** gaveled the meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting will be the Annual Meeting.

February 29th, 2024

Tentatively Cataract Sportsmen's Club, 5984 Cannon Road