

Report on the Field Day at The Cranberry Research Center.

We first met at this facility at about the same time in 2023. The timing is carefully worked out with **Wade Brockman**, the Research Station Manager, to slot in with other events and the cranberry harvest season. In 23 we had a lot of people but that was at the time there was a push for Jackson County to either join MCISWG or form their own CISMA. Subsequently it was decided it wouldn't work for Jackson County entities to simply join the Monroe County group, but at our annual meeting we decided to keep the Cranberry research Field Day even though it is just inside Jackson County.

Gilman and **Armstrong** worked on the details we had the date saved well in advance and were able to get a few plugs for the meeting in The Monroe County Herald as well as fliers distributed over a month in advance, Facebook posts etc. **Andy Ellingson** sent mass email out twice to all his Jackson County contacts, despite all that the turnout was less than 2023.

Kyle Johnson brought 70 goats to demonstrate what they do to glossy buckthorn, the same site as last year, at the back of the property by Robinson Creek. **Joey Esterline** who presented last year couldn't make it, has two meetings on this Thursday of the month now, but **Eric Ressel** of Sparta NRCS had wanted to put a presentation together to go with Joey's talk about using native plants after you effect control of invasive plants. Herbicide guru, **Rick Schulte** cancelled with a few weeks' notice, still, we figured we were OK. **Mark Renz** of UW was coming, he can field herbicide questions better than anybody. Last Year **Matt Wallrath** figured out the Hi tech screen and projector set up at the facility, no worries, **Lilly Lefebvre** would figure it out. The day of the event **Mark Renz** sent email he had a family emergency and wouldn't be able to come, was there a way we could let him participate on Zoom. In the end that didn't happen either. **Kyle Johnson** had mentioned he could do a presentation, but I didn't pursue it, thinking we would have a panel discussion on goat grazing involving Mark Renz and others in the room.

Andy Ellingson who pioneered the idea of a Jackson County meeting preferred we just do an afternoon event because he and others wouldn't be able to get off work. At a little after noon we started rolling in, there were two local landowners, I asked if they wanted to go see the goats as we had advertised, they did, and I gave them the map to the site. The agenda started at 1.p.m **Jessica Salesman** got everyone to introduce themselves and we were off. Jessica used the "vouchers", dried, pressed plants, put together by **Rikki Rasch**. **Ressel** used internet to illustrate the species from the DNR interactive NR-40 site, of course Lilly figured the projector out! and it seemed to go well. It was a small enough group that landowners and presenters could interact. We distributed handouts on several of the species.

Mara Lince gave a nice presentation on Purple Loosestrife identification and management. She passed around plastic replicas, and handouts about the plant and biological control. She had a flashdrive of her presentation which ended up on the screen without a hitch.

Ressel's 'Creative Dedication with Native Vegetation' was marvelous, especially as he didn't start working on it until a couple of days beforehand. I suspect he has been slowly putting it together before that though! Sparked lots of great discussions about the plants he featured.

There were several questions about management that came from time to time and **Salesman** put most of them off until a general discussion at about the time **Mark Renz** would have called in. Although none of us were really qualified to talk as experts on herbicides there were several

in the room including **Salesman** with enough experience to field the questions. It was actually a fun part of the agenda and I think everyone went away with something new and useful.

Lilly Lefebvre explained the grant offered by Monroe County Land Conservation Department for landowners actively working on invasive species management. First write a note with a map to Bob Micheel, Director Monroe County Land Conservation Department, 820, Industrial Drive, Sparta.

Ressel explained some options for people wanting to pursue brush or herbaceous management through the EQIP program. He also promoted the WFLGP grant program with some detail added by **Chris Schmitz**.

Wade Brockman started a description of his work as manager of the Research Center, but it evolved into a fascinating question and answer session about cranberry growing, weather and pollination. One problem this year was that the honeybees they hired for pollination services all decided to visit glossy buckthorn which was in flower at the time. Wade walked the woods and found it is everywhere.

Wade guided the group in a smaller convoy than last year out to the area of bogs next to the pollinator planting. The Pollinator seed mix was installed several years ago and was designed so that it would not be in flower when the cranberries were, its purpose is for nurturing bees and other beneficial pollinator species for the rest of the season. When cranberries are in flower the bees need to be working there. This year, unfortunately, the pollinator planting was in flower at the same time as the crop, so Wade mowed the pollinator plants, and the bees went on the cranberries. At the time we visited there was only yellow flowers blooming. Jessica thought it was partridge berry. There was a lot of erosion on the steep slope, Wade has tried a lot of different things to slow it down with a cool season grass buffer below the pollinator planting, but it washes out in the sand. In addition to hiring honeybees, they buy Bumblebees, and plan on increasing that number. **Weedman** was seen taking lots of pictures of bumble bees and other pollinators as she made her way to join us by the Diversity Landworks goats. Conversations about goats ranged from the fence and its electric power, collars for satellite tracking vs collars for no fence grazing, breeds of goats, what they eat amongst other topics. As we adjourned attendees helped Kyle load goats in the trailer and we departed happy and hopefully a bit wiser.

Post Field Day comments were that the presentations were all very good, **Ellingson** even referred to **Kyle Johnson** as the keynote speaker in an email. MCISWG regulars thought we should start the meeting mid-morning, perhaps with a bigger session on aquatics as some of the landowners there came specifically to learn about Aquatic Invasive species. Plant ID before lunch too?? There is a nice kitchen, we should be able to rustle something up even if it is just hotdogs with potluck contributions from regulars. We wouldn't be so pressed for time in the afternoon and hopefully **Mark Renz** will join us in 2025.

