



SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
Park Ecology Committee
October 14, 2016 meeting
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MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING October 14, 2016

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 9:47 a.m.

Park Ecology Committee Members Present:

Arthur Lussi, Acting Chair, Dr. Chad Dawson, William Thomas, Bradley Austin, (ESD)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Sherman Craig, Chairman, Karen Feldman, John Ernst, Sandi Allen, (DOS), Barbara Rice, Dan Wilt, Robert Stegemann, (DEC)

Local Government Review Board:

Fred Monroe.

Agency Staff Present:

Kathy Regan, Keith McKeever, Emily Tyner, Kate-Lyn Knight, Mary O' Dell, Annemarie Peer

Park Ecology Report (Ed Snizek)

Mr. Snizek gave updates of upcoming conferences including, The North Country Stormwater Tradeshow & Conference in Queensbury and the 2016 Salt Summit in Lake George. He announced upcoming grant deadlines: the NYS-DEC-Adirondack Park Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program which is a continuation of the 2015 pilot program with the deadline of October 14, 2016, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program Aquatic Invasive Species with grants for spread prevention with a deadline of December 15, 2016.

Mr. Snizek also provided an update on the Asian clam. He said this was a lake-wide survey recently completed for Lake George. A total of 3 new sites were found, bringing the total number of sites to 19, covering more than 100 acres during the fifth year of the survey.

Mr. Snizek also reported on the hemlock wooly adelgid prioritization workgroup meeting which was held on Sept 29, 2016. APIPP, Cornell University, DEC, NYS Parks and others were in attendance for the all day session which was held at the Agency. He said early detection and rapid response are the two priorities which Agency staff and partners will be working on.

The Balsam & Hemlock Woolly Adelgids-Implications for the Adirondacks (Dr. Mark Whitmore, Forest Entomologist, Cornell University).

Dr. Whitmore gave a presentation on the balsam and hemlock wooly adelgids. He reported that we have an opportunity to be much more proactive here in the Adirondacks. He said we have an opportunity to save the hemlocks if we act now and that if we wait we risk losing hemlocks which will change the ecology of the area. Dr. Whitmore showed pictures of different areas affected and the damage done, such as the southern Appalachians Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

Dr. Whitmore went over the lifecycle of the hemlock wooly adelgid. He explained that there are two hosts, the spruce is the primary host because that is where sexual reproduction occurs and hemlock is the secondary host, which supports only asexual generations. A major problem is that one individual can start a new population. When the egg hatches, the crawler emerges, and is the only dispersal stage for hemlock wooly adelgid. The crawler will find a feeding location and insert its mouthparts into the twig tissue, staying in that spot for the rest of its life. Dr. Whitmore continued with the impact on trees and how wind can move crawlers short distances, but it is thought that long distance dispersal is by the crawler attaching itself to birds.

He also explained how the crawler kills the trees, by inserting its stylets into the stem near the base of the needles, starving the developing bud. The buds die first and the needles live a few more years then gradually fall off usually killing trees within four to ten years. Dr. Whitmore showed pictures of early, middle and late infestations where hemlocks go from looking robust to needles falling off.

Dr. Whitmore also covered some of the ecological impacts of hemlocks. The hemlock is considered a foundation species because they occupy the base of the food web which several other species depend on. The protection of water resources are the most important in his mind. Because of its dense canopy, stream water temperatures are kept low, which is important for trout and invertebrates. The dense canopy also provides shelter for animals and plant and keeps the snow on the ground longer. Hemlocks also stabilize shallow soils especially in steep gorges.

Dr. Whitmore discussed natural controls of insect populations. Natural control is based on three factors including, host tree resistance, abiotic factors (temperature and humidity), and biological control. Resistance is difficult and very poorly understood. He believes biological control, is the long-term answer to controlling HWA.

Dr. Whitmore also went over systemic insecticides which are relatively inexpensive and important tools to keep selective trees alive. Dinotefuran is a basal bark spray which rapidly moves through a tree, but is only effective for 1-2 years. Imidacloprid is slower acting but provides long-term protection of 7 years or more.

Dr. Whitmore discussed the NYS Hemlock Initiative and its importance in New York State. The NYS Hemlock Initiative works to engage stakeholders, identify priority hemlock stands to survey and map, establish hemlock gene conservation strategies, and locate hemlock hedges across the state, among other activities. Dr. Whitmore once again reiterated early detection is key.

After a brief answer and question period, Dr. Whitmore was presented a certificate of appreciation by Chairman Craig, Ms. Martino, Mr. Lussi, Ms. Feldman and Mr. Snizek.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:05 a.m.