

# WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## SPECIAL MEETING

**Wednesday, July 9, 2014, 9:30 p.m.**  
**Tyler Mill Preserve, Wallingford, CT**

### MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice Chair John Lathrop, Ken Ryan, Tom Pietras, Dianne Saunders, Carl Arsenault, Dianne Lendler, Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, Howard Kilpatrick, Senior Wildlife Biologist, DEEP Wildlife Division, Rob Rocks, DEEP Forestry Division, Peter Picone, DEEP Wildlife Division, Anthony Zemba, Ecologist, HRP Associates, Sam Saulys, Board member, CT Botanical Society, and Eric Vo, Record-Journal

Chair Heffernon convened the Special Meeting at 9:36 a.m. at the main entrance parking area of the Tyler Mill Preserve at Tyler Mill Road/Northford Road indicating that the purpose of the Special Meeting was to assess ecological conditions in the Preserve. She welcomed the assistance from representatives of the State of CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection present today, Howard Kilpatrick, Senior Wildlife Biologist, DEEP Wildlife Division, Rob Rocks, DEEP Forestry Division, and Peter Picone, DEEP Wildlife Division, as requested by the Commission. Anthony Zemba, Ecologist, HRP Associates, who has been advising the Commission on various ecological matters, was also present.

Commissioner Saunders reviewed the work of the Stewards of Tyler Mill in the inventorying of habitats and invasive plants and the eradication of invasive plant species. She noted the Commission's interest in establishing an early successional stage project within the Preserve and the potential impact of the deer population on the latter as a concern. Chair Heffernon noted the perception of decreased wildlife activity in the Preserve was also a concern. Rob Rocks, DEEP Forester, inquired as to conservation easements or deed restrictions for the Preserve property relative to tree harvesting or deer hunting. The past harvesting program was noted. Mr. Rocks stressed the importance of public awareness of the issues to garner public support for initiatives that may be proposed. Commissioner Saunders listed key areas of interest within the Preserve from an ecological viewpoint and noted the bird point count study by Anthony Zemba.

Meeting participants relocated by vehicle to the Tyler Mill Bridge parking area and from there walked down Tyler Mill Road to the Green Trail and the Red Trail moving from drier forestland to floodplain forest along the Muddy River where DEEP personnel shared their observations about forest conditions. At one spot, deer browse on maple-leaf viburnum was in evidence which is a sign of a stressed system as deer do not usually eat this species as they do not like it.

Commissioner Saunders will forward DEEP participants copies of a map of problem areas of invasive plant locations. Sam Saulys indicated the Preserve plant inventory being completed included 220 plant species to date. Peter Picone, DEEP Wildlife biologist, indicated CT has about 1,800 native plants and 1,000 non-native plants of which 96 are considered "invasive or potentially invasive". He stressed the need to prioritize invasive plant species for eradication or control factoring in goals for a particular property, giving Sessions Woods as an example where Japanese knotweed and Black locust are the eradication priorities. The top eight species should be prioritized in a plan. He listed barberry, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, garlic mustard, Tartarian honeysuckle (a big problem in the western part of the state), Japanese knotweed, Phagmites, and burning bush as State priority invasive plant species targets. The State's priority habitat is "young forest habitat" that supports whippoorwill, towhee, and woodcock. Deer dislike invasive plants.

Successful treatment protocols for various plant species were discussed. Mr. Picone suggested the use of a contractor (\$300 - \$400/acre) to eradicate bittersweet in a particular problem area. The vines should be cut low with a second cut “above your head” (so the new vine growth cannot reach up to the old vine stump). The goal of control is to not let it flower. He suggested adding blue dye to the chemical trichlopyr for use in a backpack sprayer applicator. He reviewed the process for State pesticide licensing for local Public Works personnel. Anthony Zemba suggested a treatment for garlic mustard - spray with vinegar and weed-whack it before it seeds. Once established this species can actually change the soil pH. He indicated if bug traps evidenced occurrence of the Emerald ash borer, it would be justification for an ash harvest. He recommended the eradication of multi-flora rose in patches only with replacement with blackberry to promote rabbits. Howard Kilpatrick indicated late winter was the best time for browse and stem counts, and due to fresh growth, now was the worst time to assess impact. Mr. Picone suggested using the Preserve as a deer management profile and for an invasive plant management profile for the whole Town’s use.

The last discussion of the Meeting addressed the proposal to create early successional habitat which would require perpetual management of invasive plant species and a decision to maintain as open or to let it go back to forest. Deer management and invasive species management would be conducted years before the “demonstration young forest habitat” creation. One could do small cuts around in the floodplain to create woodcock habitat. Mr. Kilpatrick indicated in a shelter-wood project, half of the canopy is removed to re-generate oak in a 10-year process.

Mr. Kilpatrick will coordinate the DEEP reports of findings and recommendations and will forward the document to the Chair within a few weeks. Chair Heffernon will forward by email copies of the 2006 Forest Inventory to the DEEP participants.

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner