

DRAFT

Notes from site walk at RS Fife Conservation Area with resource professionals

Professional Attendees:

Steve Roberge, UNH Extension – State Specialist, Forest Resources

Tim Fleury, UNH Extension – Merrimack County Forester

Matt Tarr, UNH Extension - State Wildlife Habitat Specialist

Wendy Weisiger, Forest Society - managing forester

Wendy Scribner, Forestry Field Specialist, Carroll County

(other names to come)

Volunteers from CCC: Kelly Short (chair), Audra Klumb (vice chair), Ken Stern (past chair), Bob Steenson (treasurer)

Kelly's take-aways from discussion

Controlling Bittersweet

- Controlling bittersweet via mowing requires mowing much more frequently, at least monthly May-Oct.
- Controlling bittersweet on this site will probably require herbicides:
 - 3x or more
 - Garlon - a brand of selective weed killers containing triclopyr designed to kill woody brush, trees, and broadleaf weeds without harming established grasses.
 - Use Glyphosate on edges of field; a broad-spectrum, systemic herbicide used to kill unwanted grasses, weeds, and woody brush
 - Directly treat stumps to suppress new growth
 - Ballpark chemical treatment cost: \$500-\$1k/acre.
- Lyme and fertilizer treatments where grasses are still growing could strengthen them to be more robust, possibly held shade bittersweet.
 - Same treatment in other areas after chemical control.
- Not sure burning is a reliable option.
- This is a forever problem. If we stop careful management, we lose.
- The field may be too rocky to ever be a hayfield
- Mow grassy patches frequently.

Approaches:

- Divide field into sections and try best treatment for each
 - Segment and experiment.
 - Try “everything” on one section to see how it responds

- Focus on best areas, east of apple trees. Work from the edges of invaded areas inward.
- Mow grassy patches frequently. Mowing only annually will perpetuate current conditions.
- Keep mowing areas not in experiment.
- Abandon current plan of mowing half of field every other year
- West side is better than east. Keep mowing. Expand milkweed. Field is drier on west side. Needs something to dominate against invasives.
- In worst sections, we may need to do an interim conversion (i.e., treat it like a lawn with constant mowing before attempting to revive it as a natural field)
- Overall, monitor results and adapt to what works best
- Consider shift of emphasis from whole field to walking paths, given that tick explosion is reducing people's interest in walking through fields with tall growth.

Possible Vendors, Partners and Funding

- Vegetation Control Services (VCS)- <https://vegetationcontrol.com/>
- Asplundh
- Carl Majewski for advice on improving field: <https://extension.unh.edu/person/carl-majewski>
- Possible NRCS funding if the town contracts use of land to farmer (who would be the grant applicant). Needs careful structure.
- Possible small grants through NHF&G
- County Conservation Districts have rental equipment. Contact Stacy Lucas. <https://merrimackccd.org/programs/programs/>

Equipment:

- Some mowers can prep seed bed. Shallow till. Seed perennials grasses.
- **Rayco** mower can take down stumps, small trees, grind rocks, mulch bittersweet. Very good to use on field edges. (It's not just a mulcher.) It can mow around base of trees.

Actions:

- Continue removing seed sources from apple trees and field edges
- Continue perimeter mowing
- Cut least productive apple trees to create better mowing access around those that remain
- Decide which treatments to test and where

Woods section

Glossy Buckthorn growth is aggressive; outlook hopeless.

Size of parcel is a challenge.

Bittersweet will kill the trees if allowed in.

Possibly allow shrubby plants to take over areas to slow BS. (this was an idea, not a clear recommendation)
Maintain trail.

Notes by Kelly Short