

Hampton Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2020

The meeting was held via Zoon, courtesy of Kathy Donahue, who taped the meeting.

The meeting called to order at 6:35 by Chair Mark Samios. Present: Marcia Kilpatrick, Pat Cascio, Penny Newbury, Ev Hyde. Absent: Karen Hamilton, Stan Crawford.

Audience members present: Bruce Spaman, KimRomagna

Approval of minutes: Motioned and seconded (Marcia/Pat) to approve minutes of 11/18/20. Approved unanimously.

Communications: Mark presented a request for donations/membership from the Land Conservation Council in Middletown. It was decided that we would concentrate our resources closer to home.

Audience for Citizens: Bruce requested that the Arbor Day event be added to the agenda under Old Business.

Old Business:

Knotweed project: Marcia reported on her conversations with the first selectman; he and most people agreed that we can't do anything until spring. Marcia is covering north of Rt 6 and Pat is covering south of Rt 6 for identifying possible areas of communal remediation (Station or Kenyon Rd. are possibilities). She will attend the selectman's meeting in February, provide details of what the project will look like, and then begin recruiting volunteers. [*See knotweed info attachment at the end of this report.*]

Open Space/Hiking Brochure: Penny presented an overview of what she's done so far and asked members for any more text or photos they had. She was asked to include the Warren Stone Preserve on Fisk Rd; info is available on the Joshua's Trust website.

HCC web page on the Town website: Mark will ask about changing meeting hours and updating membership list.

Arbor Day: Bruce gave an outline of what he and partner groups were proposing on the last Friday in April (included tree planting and identifying spots where this would be good). To date the groups involved are the Board of Education and students, Rec Commission, and Eversource (who donates seedlings). Stan is asking the Scouts if they want to help also. HCC told Mark that we would be interested in being a partner and at the next meeting he will let the group know how they can help. Bruce is the point person and will start working on the event beginning the first of the year.

New Business

Bird Habitat Grant: Marcia, on behalf of Joshua's Trust, asked for help mounting 5 wood duck boxes already acquired by JT, and bluebird boxes that JT hopes to get materials for through a DEEP grant. Kim, Ev and Penny said they would help put up the duck boxes. Ev said he would get some rebar for the bluebird boxes once the grant was awarded.

Abandoned/Discontinued Town Roads: Penny gave an overview of former Chair Randy Thompson's research and work to do an inventory of all former town roads, for the purpose of requesting that the selectmen designate a group of them as open space that could be used for certain types of very passive recreation (hiking, dog walking, biking, etc.). Since Ev had worked with Randy on this project he concurred with the potential challenges of this project, since to date there is no consistent state regulation or legal ruling regarding who may travel on a discontinued road and whether the road at times could revert to adjacent property owners. However, members thought that we should at least have a list of these roads and a summary of Randy's findings, which Penny will provide at the next meeting.

Membership: There was discussion on the process of recruiting members. Mark noted that people should be encouraged to attend meetings even if they are not members. At present, the process involves the member requesting to join via discussion with the first selectman, who will make a decision and then a motion at a selectman's meeting to appoint the new member, and then that person needs to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Penny Newbury, Secretary

(Attachment follows)

Invasive Plant Information Sheet

Japanese Knotweed

Polygonum cuspidatum Sieb. & Zucc.

Buckwheat Family (Polygonaceae)

Status: Increasing and invasive in Connecticut, primarily at disturbed sites.

Description: Japanese knotweed is a fast-growing herbaceous perennial that grows in large clumps three to six feet in height. It has hollow stems similar to bamboo, with swollen joints along the stem. Leaves are broadly egg-shaped, with pointed tips and squarish bases. The flowers are greenish white and profuse, growing in slender fingerlike clusters where the leaves meet the branches.

Preferred habitat: This plant occurs in a wide variety of habitats, in many soil types, and a range of moisture conditions. It appears to be found primarily in disturbed open areas with plenty of sun; shade depresses its growth. Edges of roadways and streambanks are common locations at which to find Japanese knotweed.

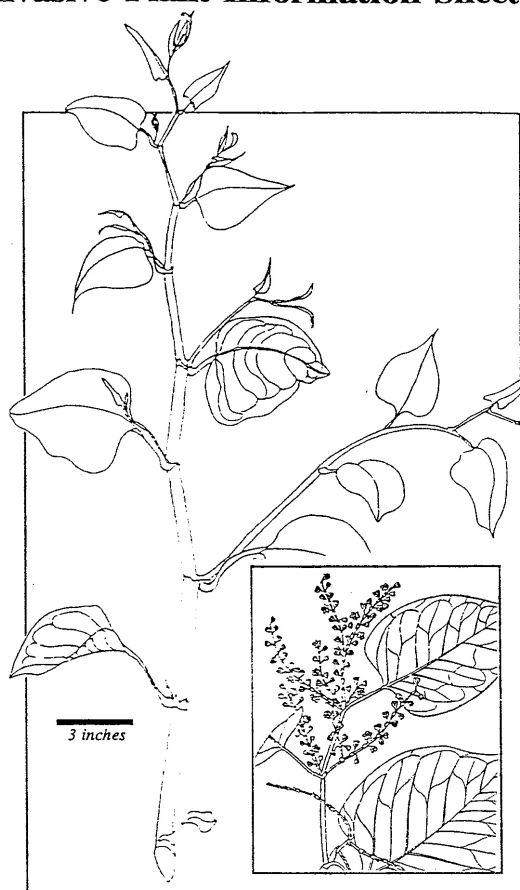
Seasonal cycle: In Connecticut, leaves appear on Japanese knotweed in April. Flowers, which develop in August and September, are pollinated by bees and other insects. The seeds mature about two weeks after the plant flowers and are dispersed by wind. Once established, the species reproduces primarily through its extensive rhizomes, which may reach 45-60 feet in length.

Distribution: Native to Japan, Japanese knotweed was introduced into the United States in the late 1800s as an ornamental. The species has been widely cultivated and has escaped and naturalized.

It is now widely distributed throughout the eastern United States and is found as far north as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and as far south as North Carolina. It is also found in much of the midwest and in the coastal areas of Washington and Oregon.

Other points of interest: The early emergence of Japanese knotweed leaves in the spring and its stand-forming habit produce a dense canopy beneath which few other plant species can survive. In addition, the persistent accumulation of stem litter within established stands also reduces species diversity and damages wildlife habitat.

Japanese knotweed is a wild edible. Young shoots up to one foot in height can be harvested early in the spring, then steamed or boiled for four to five minutes and served like asparagus. Slightly older stems can be used to make a rhubarb-like jam by peeling and boiling the sour rind with sugar and pectin.



Inset shows flower. (Main illustration by Dott Emmett, courtesy of Blackwell Scientific, Inc.; inset illustration from "An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada," 1913. Dover Publications)

This plant was classified as *Reynoutria japonica* by Houttuyn in 1777 and as *Polygonum cuspidatum* by Siebold in 1846. Recently, it has been suggested that it should be reclassified as *Fallopia japonica*. Japanese knotweed is also known by the common names Mexican bamboo and Japanese fleece flower. A similar species, *Polygonum sachalinense*, is much less common and appears to escape only infrequently, if at all. It can be distinguished from *P. cuspidatum* primarily by its larger size, greenish flowers, and heart-shaped leaves which gradually taper to the tip.

Control: It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate large established stands of Japanese knotweed. However, establishment can be prevented fairly easily by removing plants before they become firmly entrenched. Current control methods include both mechanical and herbicidal treatments. Mechanical control includes cutting with persistence, at least three cuts in one growing season. Herbicides such as glyphosate (active ingredient in Roundup®) may be more effective when applied to the regrowth of cut stems. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide and great care should be taken in its usage.

Additional information sources:

Gray's Manual of Botany. Eighth edition, corrected printing. M. Fernald. D. Van Nostrand Company, New York, 1970.

Element Stewardship Abstract for *Polygonum cuspidatum*, Japanese knotweed. Leslie Seiger. The Nature Conservancy, 1992. Unpublished document.

Fallopia japonica (Houtt.) Ronse Decraene (*Reynoutria japonica* Houtt., *Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc.). D. Beerling, J. Bailey, and A. Conolly. *Journal of Ecology*, 1994, 82, 959-979

A Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants (Eastern and Central North America). L. A. Peterson. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1977.

Diagnostic information: *Leaves:* Petioled, round-ovate, truncate to slightly cuneate at base, abruptly cuspidate, becoming firm, and 2"-10" long. *Flowers:* Greenish-white, dioecious, in forking axillary panicles. *Fruit:* Calyx wing-angled, 1/3" long; achene shining, trigonous, about 1/5" long. *Stems:* Erect, glaucous, often mottled, widely bushy-branched, 3' - 8' high; ocreae membranous, tubular; rhizomes are stout, subterranean (up to 45 to 60 feet in length).

H. Brunelle and B. Lapin / Revised March 25, 1996



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