

**Community Preservation Committee
Town of Lincoln
Project Submission
November 10, 2008**

Project Name: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVES

Submitted by: Tom Gumbart, Conservation Director
gumbartt@lincolntown.org 781-259-2612

Town Committee: Conservation Commission

Project Description: Back during the previous fiscal year's Conservation Commission (ConCom) proposal to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) we were hoping to have a successful field season and then seek Town Meeting approval to have funding built into our operating budget for seasonal assistance. Traditionally this is how the Conservation Department operated, with an enhanced seasonal crew. The field season was successful (please see the report from Anna Wilkins our Land Manager), however, given the current economic climate it does not seem prudent at this time to seek the desired staffing level through Town Meeting. Rather, while we are still seeing a significant match in State CPA funding, we are requesting an additional year of funding from the CPC for the invasives management program of the Conservation Department.

In the coming year we really anticipate building on our strong foundation of field work with an expanded public outreach program. Perhaps the most critical "new" potential invasive is the Asian longhorned beetle, an insect pest that quickly kills mature hardwood trees such as maples. Although it has not been found in Lincoln, it was recently discovered in Worcester and now the current beetle "regulatory zone" includes portions of four surrounding communities. This invasive pest will cost taxpayers a tremendous amount of money in identification, monitoring, tree removal, chemical treatments, replanting etc. If the Asian longhorned beetle arrives in Lincoln without rapidly being identified and controlled it will result in the loss of many of our beautiful trees, thereby permanently altering the visual and ecological character of our community. Given that Worcester is not too distant from Lincoln, it seems that a sensible course of action will be to educate residents to have them on the alert for this destructive insect. We envision educational outreach via the local cable station, the Lincoln Journal, the Town's website, and workshops on this new threat and on the ongoing issues with invasives with which we are more familiar.

The presence of increased seasonal staff will again allow us to give a concentrated effort on eradication and control of invasive plant species. The ConCom believes that the allocation of CPA funds for this purpose is clearly within the scope of the

Conservation/Open Space parameters governing how money is spent. Also we believe it is a judicious and cost-effective use of these funds. Below is some text from last year's proposal and it is still relevant since much of the work will be the same.

The first year of chemical treatment for control of the hemlock woolly adelgid was completed this fall. The treated area is the Codman Hemlock Grove that lies along the Iron Horse Trail between the Lincoln Station and Concord Road (just south of the RR tracks). There are about 165 trees to treat in this stand, some more than 160 years old. The only viable treatment at the landscape scale at this time is root injections of Imidacloprid, an insecticide that is a synthetic nicotine. The material is absorbed into the tree and then kills the adelgids. This is a safe product that has no known adverse impacts on mammals.

The hemlocks in the stand are infested heavily with the hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the health of the trees has steadily declined in recent years. However, with treatment the trees are able to survive and even exhibit regeneration where branches were previously defoliated. There is current research into biological control of the adelgid with insect predators from Asia and hopefully in the future one or more of these will replace chemical control as the means of protecting our hemlocks.

To be effective there needs to be two consecutive years of treatment and then probably one every other year. The cost for one annual treatment is \$11,700 and the Commission believes this is a worthwhile investment for preserving a distinct part of Lincoln and New England's natural heritage.

The goal of the invasive plant aspect of this project is to preserve and restore native woodland and meadow habitat by removing non-native invasive plant species from Lincoln Conservation Lands. This is not routine maintenance but a real focused effort to target these disruptive plants that are a true threat to the ecological integrity of our common open space. In Lincoln there is a serious problem with invasive plants that in recent years has been highlighted by the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, the Garden Club, and ConCom. We need to make inroads against this tide of plants to protect our lands for future generations.

Targeted plants include oriental bittersweet, glossy buckthorn, phragmites, Japanese knotweed, black swallow-wort, garlic mustard, and others. The primary cost of this part of the project is for seasonal labor. We expect to follow our model from this year where Jane Layton expanded her hours to serve as the project supervisor and we hired two seasonal staff. Other costs are for equipment and plants. Most of their efforts will be dedicated to removal and control of these plants.

Time Frame for Project: Spring 2009 through October 2009

How does project help preserve Lincoln's character? Much of Lincoln's character is rural in nature and it can be defined by open field vistas bound by historic stone walls or by forest with majestic canopy trees. Alien vines, shrubs, and groundcover expand annually and threaten our rural character. We can help change this trend by addressing this problem head on with a crew that is dedicated to this issue. We will not eliminate the problem but we should be able to make some serious headway in the right direction. Keeping the Codman Hemlock Grove alive keeps a truly unique ecosystem intact and hopefully healthy for generations. Also you cannot put a price on the value of keeping out a pest as destructive as the Asian longhorned beetle.

Funding Requirements: Total = \$32,000

We are seeking full funding for our FY 2010 program; however, we are also soliciting \$11,700 from a separate source for a critical second year of treatment of the old trees in the Codman Hemlock Grove for control of the hemlock woolly adelgid. If this comes to fruition then this request for CPC funding will be \$20,300.

We thank you for your efforts in reviewing this and the other proposals and please do not hesitate to contact any of the Commissioners or myself for further discussion or clarification.