Attending: Megan Mickelson DNR Forester, MCISW Chair; Bob Micheel, Director, Monroe County Conservation; Sharon Folcey, WI Towns Association; Howard Garves, MCISWG Vice Chair, Sparta Township and Landowner; Jim and Bernie Arena Landowners Little Falls; Matt Modjeski -Conservation Warden, WI DNR; Mic Armstrong Soil Conservation Technician, USDA NRCS and Scribe.

Armstrong summarized the premeeting at Greg Selbrede’s Poison Hemlock site. Should develop an action Plan., Armstrong thought we should meet at the same place in the spring and expand education of stakeholders and initiate some actual action.

- Monroe County Land Conservation Cost Sharing

Mickelson reported that applications for the 2019 Monroe County Land Conservation grants have been preapproved. Dec 1st is the closing date for new applications, Eligibility letters mailed from the last field day, January 1st Pool and pre-inspections within 30 days.

- Field Day, Little Falls, Oct 19th

  1. Scribes Summary
     The Field day commenced at the Little Falls Town Hall. Armstrong conducted a lively show and tell with approximately 15 species using live samples expertly gathered and deburred by Nate Prairie of the Fort McCoy Wildlife Dept (Colorado State Contractor). We used some of our plastic specimens too and more species were highlighted using the “posters” created for the Sparta Farmers Market this summer. Halfman’s Half Hour hit two main themes- pesticide labels and why they should be adhered to and personal protective equipment and why they should be worn. 3 presenters outlined possible funding sources for invasive species projects. Crystal Bailey, The NRCS/National Wild Turkey Federation Forester stationed at Richland Center, talked about NRCS funding including EQIP and CSP; Megan Mickelson summarized DNR forestry grants and Bob Micheel explained the Monroe County Land Conservation Cost Sharing program.

     Literature was distributed on the various plants and topics and we moved to the barn at Jim and Bernie Arena’s where Ben Johnston and Megan Mickelson demonstrated and discussed tools of the trade including back packs, hand sprayers, the buckthorn blaster and Ben’s nifty homemade wicking wand

     https://www.stewardshipnetwork.org/sites/default/files/wand.pdf

     Bernie Arena talked about working with your contractors and introduced Natureworks LLC who took the ‘stage’ and hosted a Q &A session on how they do invasive species work as professional contractors.

  2. Discussion

     Mickelson explained that we had to scramble to fill the spot on herbicide Q&A as the week before the event Lee Shambeau of 4 Control (Nutrien Solutions) who had promised someone would definitely be there, called Megan on her vacation and said that as there were only 12 signed up it would not be worth his or our time for them to attend. All agreed to ask for Rick Schulte for future events.

     Jim and Bernie Arena our hosts thought all the presenters did well. Several attendees wanted to come back and look at wild flowers. Howard Garves lamented that we have to keep repeating the plant ID session so that people recognize them eventually, also we did not have Multiflora rose. Micheel thought
if a township hosts a field day they should be there. **Armstrong** followed up saying the idea of having the meeting on a weekend was to get more attendance, however most of the people there were retirees and could easily have come to a weekday event. Asked about the excellent donuts **Mickelson** said there was a budget allocation and they came from *The Bakers Table* in Tomah.

**Ben Johnston**, via email, commented that we should up the educational level and explain concepts such as basal and cut stump application, plant life cycle considerations - biannual, perennial etc. Perhaps we could also educate using work party events on private or public land. The land owner could provide food and some labor...**Armstrong** said we were in the process of organizing a potential work day to attempt management of Amur Maple on public land this fall around the Elroy Sparta Bike trail in Sparta and would try to get private landowners in the area with Amur Maple involved one way or another. There was also coordination with Excel Energy on their conversion of an Amur Maple infestation to prairie.

- **Ideas for 2020**

**Mickelson** suggested we stock a work trailer with tools and herbicides for use by landowners similar to the program maintained by the Lower Chippewa Invasive Partnership. There would be a nominal fee for its use. Also, we could have buckthorn blasters with our logo to “give away” at events such as Field Days, alternatively Hoof brushes (to clean boots). **Micheel** thought we should have signs with boot brushes at strategic places on public land. **Armstrong** thought we had signed up for some signage at the last CISMA meeting.

- **Around the table**

**Garves** inspired a discussion about the virtues of battery powered back pack sprayers- spray a long way and last a long time; new cordless chainsaws cut a lot for a long time!

**Micheel** outlined his hopes for more grant writing/staff for the Invasive Species work in the county.

**Mickelson** relayed a story she had read about Tilia an invasive sniffing Labrador trained to find invasive salamanders and also plants. Dogs can be particularly useful to find those last few plants after the majority of a site has been cleaned up.

**Armstrong** passed around a newspaper article about a native loosestrife species and a possible experiment the 4 H club could run in the purple loosestrife tent next year see if it is immune to the beetles.

**Mickelson** reported that in the County Forest her team had been spraying invasive woody plants, mostly buckthorn and were about halfway done with preharvest treatments.

**Garves** said he had sprayed roundup on the multiflora rose that he had chopped up with a forestry mower and it wasn’t working. **Armstrong** wondered why he selected Round up, all that would do would be to kill the grass, and the woody plants would laugh it off. A discussion followed and it was decided a Garlon type product (Triclopyr) in the recommended oilbased carrier applied as basal would be a good choice to proceed at this time of the year.
Armstrong relayed that Mark Renz said his team have mapped about 50 miles of the Monroe Co. Highway system, on foot, as part of the contract with the Highway Department. Mark asked if there would be students/interns that could learn invasive mapping next year. He also said that his staff, Ann and Leo could attend the MCISWG Meeting next January and talk about the mapping so far.

- Annual Meeting

The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting where we assess the year’s accomplishments and failings and edit the annual work plan for 2020. To make the meeting a little more festive we decided to meet at Jakes Restaurant by the Fireplace between 3 and 5 p.m. A Thursday date in January to be decided by an email poll.