

Invasive Terrestrial Plants in the Town of York

Created by: York Conservation Commission 8/25/20 (revised 10/6/23)

What is an Invasive Plant? Invasive Plants are defined as “those which are not native to a region, and which cause harm to the environment, human health, or economic resources (e.g. agriculture or forestry). (1)” Invasive plants have evolved in environments foreign to our own. They have evolved with their own set of predators and biological regulators. In an environment without these obstacles, such as our own, they are able to spread unchecked, to the detriment of native species. They can prosper earlier in the season than can our natives and often continue later in the fall. Due to lack of natural enemies, they can over run our native flora to the detriment of naturally occurring ecosystems. They exact an ecologic as well as a rapidly expanding economic cost to communities where they occur.

The goal of this program is to limit the spread of invasive plants throughout the Town of York and set forth a comprehensive plan to deal with any existing invasives on town owned or public access land. This plan might follow that of the Town of Falmouth, Maine, which continues to show successful mitigation of invasive plants within the town since its establishment in 2018. (10)

Recommendations of Action to the Town of York:

1- Education: It is important for all departments/parties in town that own or manage land or public spaces be aware of invasive plants. Education is the first step to managing current locations of invasives, but also in prevention. We recommend that all town departments are familiar with the invasive plant topic. A form of training or education class should be required for all involved in land management. A Maine Invasive Plants Field Guide (2) should be supplied to all departments and easily available for quick reference. Information on Invasive Plant identification, treatment & disposal should be posted on the town website or another website operated by a town department for residents to refer to. A member of a Town department ie: Code enforcement or DPW should be trained as a licensed pesticide applicator and be prepared to instruct members of department staffs in identifying invasive plants in environments for which they are responsible.

2- Mapping: It is essential to create a town map of where invasive's locations. This can be done by manually taking inventory of all land/public areas in town or using the IMapInvasives Program (3), eddmaps or other suitable program. Once a detailed record of invasive plant locations in town has been created, a prioritized plan can be established.

3- Plan of Action: A set plan should be standard across all town departments. For each department an individual plan of action should be created for specific tracts of land that are managed by that department. This individualized plan should relate to the specific invasives on the site and follow the standard practices of the town. This will help prioritize which land to assess first. There should also be a plan to manage invasive insects and diseases on significant trees in town. Trees that hold social

importance in the landscape and or as important habitat should be considered.

Treatment

- All federal and state laws & setbacks to be followed by, such as but not limited to the Shoreland Zoning Act (4) and/or Natural Resource Protection Act (5).
- An Integrated Pest Management (6) system should be set in place. This should include the notification of town residents prior to treatment if located on public land.
- Treating invasives should be specific to the plant type and should prioritize current best practices for the species involved.
- Manual labor should be the first option for treatment when practical. Volunteer-led groups could be implemented for larger areas.
- If an herbicide application is required, it is to be completed by a licensed applicator.
- For large, complex areas of invasives, a licensed invasive plant removal company (7) should be considered to perform the work.

Prevention

- Stockpiles of material used throughout town such as loam, gravel, mulch, etc. should be constantly monitored for invasives and treated when needed before being used. This will prevent invasives being spread across town when such materials are used in new or ongoing maintenance or construction..
- All material coming into town from away locations (purchased or otherwise) should be monitored for invasives before being used. A written statement outlining precautions being taken to prevent invasives in the material should be required from the origin of location/owner including municipal and quasi-municipal entities..
- When removing invasive plants, or performing maintenance roadside repair, construction or vegetation trimming along established right of ways where invasive plants may occur, proper equipment cleaning should be performed before moving any equipment that was used to a new location. This helps prevent the possibility of plant material moving into new areas that the equipment frequents. This includes washing of equipment and properly disposing of any plant material/fragments. Cleaning procedures for equipment used in invasive plant removals should follow the U.S. Forest Service procedures (8).
- The proper disposal of removed invasive plants is key in preventing the spread to new locations. Each invasive plant has a specific way of disposal to ensure safe removal techniques. A list of disposal techniques can be found here at Guidelines for Disposal of Terrestrial Invasive Plants (9).

- If invasive plants have been removed from an area, leaving exposed soil, a plan should be put in place to prevent erosion and add native vegetation. If an area is left exposed, it invites more invasive plants to establish themselves in this location. Native plants or native grasses should be the first option depending specific location.
- York's recycling facility/transfer station located at 65 Witchtrot Road, in York is a potential location for invasives to be dumped by town residents. The facility manager or person on staff should be trained to look for invasives being brought in by residents. Any invasives being dumped should be put into their own separate pile(s) This pile should be properly disposed of depending upon the species of the invasive plant.

Monitoring

- Establishing a monitoring program is essential to discover new cases of invasive plants across town. With employees being trained in identifying invasive plants, they should be looking out for them while performing regular maintenance routines.
- If a town employee comes across an undiscovered invasive plant population, the department manager should be notified. This population should then be added to the Town of York Invasive Plant Map. From here, it would be added to the plan of action for that specific site.
- During new construction inspections, code enforcement should also be trained in identifying invasive plants. Property walkthroughs done at the initial stage of a site development plan is a great way to take inventory of any invasives on site. Either the land owner, site developer or member of the Conservation Commission that is on the site walkthrough should take inventory of any invasives on site. If invasives are on site, a plan of action should be included in the development plan to address the invasive plants. A follow up inspection should be done by an employee of the town to check on and confirm the removal process at a time appropriate for the plant species encountered.

References

- (1)- Maine Natural Areas Program- Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- (2)- Maine Invasive Plants Field Guide- Maine Natural Areas Program:
<https://extension.umaine.edu/invasivespecies/2019/06/06/just-released-maine-invasive-plants-field-guide/>
- (3)- IMapInvasives: <https://www imapinvasives org/>
- (4)- Shoreland Zoning Act: <https://www maine gov/dep/land/slz/index html>
- (5)- Natural Resource Protection Act: <https://www maine gov/dep/land/nrpa/>
- (6)- Integrated Pest Management: https://www maine gov/dacf/php/integrated_pest_management/index shtml
- (7)- List of Licensed Companies Offering Services for Control of Invasive Terrestrial Plants:<https://www maine gov/dacf/php/gotpests/terrestrial-invasive-companies.html>
- (8)- Inspection and Cleaning Manual for Equipment and Vehicles to Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species-
https://www fs usda gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5374537 pdf
- (9)- Guidelines for Disposal of Terrestrial Invasive Plants- https://cisma-suasco org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Invasive_plant_disposal_guide_8-2011 pdf
- (10) Town of Falmouth, Invasive Terrestrial Plants Management and Control Plan-
https://www falmouthme org/sites/g/files/vyhlif556/f/pages/2018_invasive_plan-final_dec_03_2018_0 pdf