HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the September 2019 meeting of the HPC

A summary of what HMCA has been doing in the interval since the last submission in early July 2019.

* On July 13, Allison Turner led a hike featuring mid-summer flowers. Allison’s walks always draw a sizable crowd, and this year’s walk was no exception.
* The Summer Meeting was held on Aug 7, featuring Mike Clough of the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum speaking on “Southern Vermont’s Changing Wildlife Through Time - Illustrated with Live Animals and Birds.” It was an exciting program that engaged the audience.
* In late July, Bob Anderson mowed the Bishop Trail, Tower Trail, Rim Run, Quonset Hut, the Castle. He reported that the culvert south of the Quonset Hut is no longer safe to cross in a heavy vehicle such as a tractor. On foot it needs careful stepping. Should we build a pedestrian bridge?
* The map on the mini-Kiosk at the White’s Loop trailhead had been stolen. Diana replaced it in mid-summer, and weedwhacked the entrance to make it more obvious.
* Invasive plants report
  + In mid-summer Bob, Staley, Jack and Diana took out a clump of tree-size buckthorn on Meadow, in the ESH, stripping, bagging and removing the berries to prevent those seeds from being spread.
  + They also checked out suspicious reeds on Ripperoo downslope from Bob’s Bench. Couldn’t identify them. Worried they might be phragmites. Sent photos to Jennifer Garrett at VLT. She identified them as reed canary grass, not phragmites. That plant is also invasive, but not a high priority for control except in floodplains. She suggested we keep our focus on buckthorn.
  + In July Diana clipped Wild Parsnip seed heads along Route 9, both on HMCA boundaries and in the privately-owned stretches.
  + In July Diana treated two known clumps of Japanese Knotweed on Old Hogback Road (third year of treatment, and still not eradicated), and discovered a third clump and began treating it.
  + In early September Diana and John Winn tested the information on invasive plants that we received from Charley Eiseman as part of the Biodiversity Inventory.
    - The paper map is not detailed enough to find the invasive plants that Charley identified.
    - The GPS waypoints, however, when loaded onto a good-quality GPS unit, were accurate enough to allow the invasive plants to be located.
    - In early September, John W and Diana:
      * Found the multiflora rose east of the VAST trail just north of Old Hogback Road, clipped it and sprayed the stump with Triclopyr
      * Found the substantial barberry clump west of the VAST trail near the base of Hamilton Hill (south side), clipped it and sprayed the stumps.
      * Found the general location south of the distillery where Charley had found and uprooted a bittersweet vine. Did not find any bittersweet. Either Charley’s uprooting was successful or they didn’t find the right spot.
      * Saw that one of the three Japanese Knotweed clumps on Old Hogback Road (which were not covered by Eiseman’s report) was resprouting. Sprayed the sprouts with glyphosate.
* The web site continues to receive an average of about 30 visits per day.