

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting 11/4/19

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, S. Jaracz, D. Pydeski, R. Razani, A. Schmidt, P. Waltsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. C. MacIvor and J. Johnson had informed the commission that they were ill.

S. Jaracz introduced Dr. George Hamilton, Extension Specialist and chair, Dept. of Entomology and Economic Zoology, School of Environmental and Biological Science, Rutgers, to present a seminar on the Spotted Lantern-fly. (The audience, other than the Commission, numbered 12.)

The Spotted Lantern-fly is the most recent of a number of introduced insects, mostly from Asia, that are causing problems: Asian Long-horned Beetle (not so much in NJ), Emerald Ash Borer, Brown Marmorated Stink-bug. The Lantern-fly is in the family Fulgoridæ, like the Stink-bug. It feeds with sucking mouth parts. While its rear wings are a striking red, it is usually seen with folded wings, which are cryptic gray. Adults are approx.. one inch long. Adults mate from August to November; the female lays eggs, the over-wintering stage (adults die in winter), on any smooth surface, usually bark, where they form a gray patch. These hatch in spring (mid-May). The first three instars are black with white spots, the fourth instar (found in July to September) shows red.

It feeds on over 70 species of plants – especially grapes, fruit trees, hardwood trees such as black walnut, dogwood, sugar maple and other maples, and especially Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus*), an introduced Asian tree, on which adults congregate; it may draw defense chemical from this species.

It is native to China and Taiwan; it is an invasive species in Korea. In the U.S. it was first reported in Berks Co., Pennsylvania, in 2014; it has now been found in 13 counties in Pennsylvania and two in Delaware. The first New Jersey reports were in 2018, in Warren and Mercer counties; by now Warren, Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Burlington, Camden and Salem counties (but not yet Gloucester) are under quarantine. One problem is that they lay eggs on Christmas trees (though they don't feed on them), which are transported to more urban areas.

When feeding on Tree-of-Heaven it produces 'honeydew', like aphids, which can lead to growth of a sooty mold which blocks photosynthesis. It feeds on stems and trunks, not on fruit; but grape yields have been decreased by as much as 50% in a heavy infestation (this is the most important economic effect). Reports (see below) should preferably include a picture, to confirm the identification.

Management: scrape egg masses off trees, either double-bag and dispose of them, or immerse in alcohol. Brown sticky bands on trees, applied in May, discourage them. They particularly infest Tree-of-Heaven; it is suggested to cut most of these down, especially the female trees which produce dispersing seeds, but leave some as traps for the adults. Apply a herbicide (triclopyr, dicamba, glyphosate, imazapyr) to the stumps of cut trees to prevent regrowth. In May treat remaining trees with 10% dinotefuran (a systemic neonicotinoid).

For other trees, spray with an insecticide only if the flies are definitely present, and not when the trees are in flower. Contact insecticides include bifenthrin, carbaryl; systemic insecticides such as dinotefuran; for less ecological effects neem oil (which interferes with insect hormones), insecticidal soaps.

The Rutgers reporting web site is slanternfly@njaes.rutgers.edu; they share reports with the state Dept. of Agriculture. The Dept. of Entomology is monitoring populations using environmental DNA in honeydew and studying development of the insect.

There were 70 NJ reports in 2018, 350 so far in 2019, mainly in August, some in September and October; the largest number of reports were from Hunterdon Co.

What quarantine means is: inspect vehicles before driving to an unquarantined county, especially in the fall. He has a check-list for residents.

More information is available at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/spotted-lanternfly>, and other sites findable through Google.

A question asked: are there specific predators on the species? Not in the U.S. (APHIS is looking for predators in Asia.) Spiders and ladybugs will eat early instars. He expects that local predators will start to keep populations down after an initial burst.

When to wrap trees (with sticky wraps)? End of May. Grapes are so far the only crop economically affected. The flies also like Virginia creeper and poison ivy vines, and hops.

Why did we get them only now? Trade with China has greatly increased in recent years. Chinese exporters are supposed to watch for insects and egg masses on materials exported, but are not very effective.

Dr. Hamilton was thanked for his seminar. [He has been asked for his slides, to post on the EC web site.]

Sarah McCabe, Americorps Watershed Ambassador with the Watershed Institute, introduced herself to the Commission.

At this point (7:43 PM) the regular meeting of the Commission resumed.

Chair's report: water fountains in township buildings are being upgraded. He has contacted the recipients of the Environmental Stewardship awards, and T. Chase has put the awards on the Council agenda for Nov. 26.

The minutes of the 10/22 meeting were approved with one minor correction. T. Chase noted, with respect to the item on certification of noise meters and personnel operating them, that he received and passed on to the Commission an assurance from township manager Bob Vornlocker that we have a regularly certified meter and police personnel trained to operate it.

Web site: corrections to biographies still have not been made.

There were no plans for review.

A. Schmidt passed out copies of the proposed new agenda format.

Sustainable Jersey: we were approved for Silver certification, with 460 points (all we submitted). The certification will be awarded at the Sustainable Jersey luncheon on Nov. 19 in Atlantic City. Sustainable Jersey requests that Green Team members present gather for a photograph before noon.

Old business: no response yet from Boy Scouts for green activity. BPU Community grants: R. Razani has made contact with people in Montclair, does not yet know what they are interested in. T. Chase speculated that they may be interested in including Franklin in their energy aggregation group of communities.

Single use plastics: P. Walitsky has identified the person to talk with at corporate Stop & Shop, has not yet talked with her. Stop & Shop gave him 2000 reusable bags for a food drive for the Food Bank. Damianty Chivukula is not yet writing an article for the newsletter on single use

plastics. Commission members should review the ordinances we have (ANJEC model ordinance, Hoboken, Highland Park) to agree on what to recommend to Council. T. Chase noted that we should also talk with the Franklin Chamber of Commerce about a ban on single-use plastic bags.

LED street lighting, etc.: Councilman Galtieri is pursuing Smart City lighting, from Philips, for the municipal center. Assemblyman Danielsen has said he could get the township money from the state for this.

EC autoresponse for the e-mail address: D. Triggs sent an autoresponse text. J. Johnson was to talk to Bob McQueen about getting this set up.

New business: A. Schmidt noted, among letters received, a DEP letter reporting ground water contamination at 2387 Amwell Rd, the Onka property. The DEP is not concerned because residences in the area are on municipal water, but he is concerned about possible contamination of the D&R Canal and fish in it (fishermen fish at a number of points). He will contact the DEP about this. T. Chase speculated that the original clay lining of the canal, designed to keep water in, would also keep ground water out.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.