

**Franklin Township Environmental Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 4, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM, and the Sunshine Law notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Biercz, J. Clyde (part time), C. MacIvor, A. Schmidt, D. Triggs, A. Vernick, P. Walitsky and Council liaison T. Chase. Absent: D. Pydeski.

A. Schmidt introduced Susan Brookman, executive director of the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (NJISST), who spoke about invasive species, her organization and what residents can do about invasive species. (See appendix.) The audience, beyond Commission members, was 14.

After her talk and questions finished, at 8:15 PM, the regular meeting continued. The chair reported receipt of a letter concerning extension of sewer services to a banquet facility on Churchill Ave., now under construction. He reported that the rain barrel workshop involved 27 barrels. Twenty-six of those who registered came, along with three who had not registered (two of whom had to go home without a barrel.) Access to the municipal building was a problem, eventually solved with the help of the police.

The minutes of the meeting of April 6 were approved. There has been no activity at the web site. Four plans were reviewed, including a revised site plan for the abovementioned banquet facility.

Sustainable Jersey: there are county meetings coming up on May 12 and 13. T. Chase reported on a Community Garden meeting on April 20.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Appendix: Notes on the Invasive Species Presentation

The Invasive Species Strike Team started in 2008 as the Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team in the Hopewell Valley, went statewide in 2011. It addresses the threat of invasive species to the environment, the agricultural heritage, and the economy of New Jersey.

Invasive species are defined as **non**-native, aggressive species which compete for resources with native species. They may have been introduced unintentionally (e.g. insects in nursery stock) or deliberately (butterfly bush, purple loosestrife planted as ornamentals; kudzu; northern snakehead, introduced as a game fish). Invasives adjust readily to climate change, gaining a competitive advantage over natives (for instance, occupying clearings created in forests by hurricanes). Deer tend to eat native plants rather than invasives.

The Team focuses on *emerging* invasives, which may be eradicable, immediately after first detection. Widespread invasives cannot be eradicated, only controlled locally.

NJISST tracks invasive species, reviews methods of control, and publishes an annual survey and fact sheets. Early detection and rapid response are carried out with partners in a shared service model; they have over 200 partners. They have listed 134 emerging invasives – 94 plants, the rest animals of various sorts. They have a US Forest Service grant for forest health, especially keeping non-native garden species out of the forests. They support a buy-back of invasive species from gardens, with coupons usable at garden centers for native plants.

They characterize emerging invasives by frequency of reports: stage 0 = <10 reports (some unreported, but expected because reported in nearby states), stage 1 detected 10-100 times, up to Widespread (such as Japanese stilt grass. Pull it in August and early September, when in flower but has not set seeds). Herbicides can be recommended, they have recommendations for each species.

Local control of some other widespread invasives: **Japanese barberry** (under which deer mice congregate, thus engendering more deer ticks and Lyme disease): it does best in sunny locations, treat these first. One can pull up smaller plants; get all the roots. **Multiflora rose** can be controlled by mowing four to six times a season for two to four years. Herbicides can be effective. Three insects and a virus attack it. The virus causes rose rosette disease, which does not initially kill the plant but makes it frost-sensitive.

Species on the move: northern snakehead (fish), mile-a-minute vine; weevils released by the state Dept. of Agriculture are controlling it. The process of release of biological control agents is very rigorous.

**Northern snakehead** is in the Delaware watershed, has been reported once from the Passaic watershed. Other species mentioned: **beefsteak plant** (used in Asian cooking, readily escapes); **kudzu** (introduced in Philadelphia, found widely in the South, where it overwhelms trees. There are a few populations in New Jersey.) **Siebold's viburnum**: from Japan, still widely sold. Crushed leaves often smell like burning rubber. **Common buckthorn**: an example of an invasive which competes by leafing out early. **Chinese silver grass** (*Miscanthus*, proposed as a crop for cellulose-to-ethanol.) **Japanese and Chinese wisteria**: these do not bloom in the shade, making them very difficult to distinguish from American wisteria [which blooms at a different time of year]. **Oriental Photinia** – resembles chokeberry. **Linden viburnum**. **Water chestnut**, in streams. **Japanese angelica tree**, resembles native devil's walking stick tree. **English ivy**, which harbors a pathogen. **Callery pear** [which the EC has long recommended against]. **Water hyacinth** –nearest population in Washington, DC. **Nutria** (aquatic animal, introduced in Louisiana): nearest population in Delaware, but found as far north as Oregon.

The report of the state's Invasive Species Council sits on the shelf, with little action taken. They ask that people download their app, which identifies invasives and provides a way to report invasives. Photos can be sent to them for identification. See IPC Connect New Jersey for control methods. NJISST's web site is [www.njisst.org](http://www.njisst.org).