



ALL-ISLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS PLANNING SESSION MARCH 3, 2015

MVC Offices, 33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs

Present: Pam Goff, Chilmark Conservation Commissioner; Liz Durkee, Oak Bluffs Conservation Agent; Joan Malkin, Chilmark Conservation Commissioner; Chuck Hodgkinson, Chilmark Conservation Officer; Jo-Ann Taylor, Sheri Caseau, Mark London and Bill Veno, MVC staff.

The Conservation Commissioners and staff spoke about 2 topics that both Chilmark and Oak Bluffs have found challenging lately: **View Clearing**, including the removal of invasives; and **Climate Change Adaptation**.

View Clearing:

- View clearing projects often cross-pollinate with removal of invasives; some removal projects may really be intended for clear-cutting.
- Should the towns have guidelines or policies or Con Comm regulations or Wetlands Bylaw regulations regarding vegetation management?
- Need to define the issues in order to determine the best approach.
- Possible standards (or guidelines)
 - Possibly an arc-of-view standard for clearing, as Edgartown uses.
 - Limit tree pruning to leave at least 3-4', in order to maintain root structure.
 - Limit understory cutting to no lower than 24"
 - Limit pruning to avoid bird nesting season.
 - If all the invasive cover is removed, the site must be replanted with natives.
 - If a request is made to prune invasives, require removal and replanting with natives.
 - Leave the first 25' of buffer alone.
 - Incremental standards for first 25', next 25', etc.
 - Limit how much of the buffer zone may be altered.
 - Separate strategies for buffer zone and for resource areas.
 - Consider impacts beyond the subject property.
 - Investigate what other towns may have done (Cape e.g.)
- Pruning some invasives may just make them come back stronger (Phragmites, e.g.)
- Invasives may perform nitrogen attenuation that is beneficial for the adjacent waterway.

Climate Change Adaptation:

- Chilmark is looking at managed retreat – requiring vulnerable owners to submit a plan for retreat or removal, based on a geographic “timeline” of how many feet are left; possibly to require installation of retreat mechanism such as rails.
- Oak Bluffs has hired a consultant to produce dynamic modeling of the vulnerability of its coast, including sea level rise and storm impacts. Oak Bluffs is looking at re-alignment of some groins and beach nourishment below MHW.

Upcoming Workshop by DEP Circuit Rider Christine Odiaga:

- The group reviewed possible topics and dates proposed by Christine Odiaga and selected the following, later confirmed by Christine:

May 7, 9 -1, at the VTA Building, with sign-in at 8:30:

***“In the Judgment of the Issuing Authority...”* Buffer Zone projects, Minor Exempt Activities and RDA, with a brief overview of ecological restoration procedures and other regulatory changes.**