

# Falmouth Conservation Commission: Proposed Invasive Control Plan

For the past five years the Falmouth Conservation Commission has been working to educate residents about the problems posed by invasive terrestrial plants. We have held public information workshops; created a demonstration bittersweet control plot at the Bucknam Road fire barn; staffed a table at the polls on election days; partnered with area landscape and nursery businesses; and done town-wide mailings in an effort to inform residents about this environmental issue.

At the same time, the Land Management & Acquisitions Committee, through its Falmouth Conservation Corps, has been working to eradicate invasives on town conservation land. Three people have been licensed as master pesticide applicators, equipment has been purchased, and thousands of invasive plants have been eradicated in the past three years.

Now we want to expand our education, control, and eradication efforts. Our plan has three key elements (see attached):

1. Continue our educational efforts, and in particular expand those efforts to include public media coverage of the problems these plants create.
2. Propose new policies and ordinances that will help reduce the spread of these invasive plant species within our community.
3. Expand our eradication efforts by addressing the problem of roadside populations of invasives and heavy infestations of invasive plants on several town-owned properties.

Regarding new ordinances, we propose new language that would:

- Expand an existing ordinance to prohibit outright the sale, importation, and planting of designated invasive plant species within the town of Falmouth. We also propose to add additional species to the existing prohibited plant list.
- Require that performance bond requirements for developers include a provision that their developments be certified invasive free by the Conservation Commission. Also, add a criterion for acceptance of new subdivision roads to include a provision that the Commission certify subdivision roads as invasive free as a condition for their acceptance by the town. (New construction of any kind, with its concomitant soil disturbance, creates the conditions that foster the spread of invasive plants. It is important that they be controlled early, before they become firmly established. This is inexpensively done before they become firmly established.)

Regarding the control of existing invasives:

- Our roadsides are where many invasive plants thrive. Thus, they are the source of future infestations, expanding with the help of birds and wind to surrounding properties. These roadside plants have often spread beyond the town-owned rights-of-way and are now growing on private property.
- Significant invasive infestations exist in some town-owned park and open space properties. If left alone, these infestations will only worsen and these plants will expand into other adjacent areas.
- We propose a two-pronged initiative to reducing Falmouth's invasive population in these areas. First, we will contract with an experienced invasive control company to treat roadside invasives in West and North Falmouth (see map). A low concentration herbicide mix will be used as the control agent. Roadsides in this area of town have been surveyed and individual properties that have invasives identified. If approved, a letter will be sent to each of these property owners, notifying them of our intention and inviting them to a public meeting to hear about our plans in detail. Those who have invasives encroaching into their property will be offered the option of having those plants eradicated as well at no cost to them. Anyone objecting to herbicide use will be exempted from the control efforts. We chose to start in this area of town because invasive populations are relatively low, can be more easily controlled, and will reduce the likelihood of their expansion into new locales, including the many acres of town-owned conservation land in this part of town.
- Secondly, we will include in our 2015 control efforts several town-owned properties that are host to significant invasive infestations. These properties include Falmouth Community Park, Underwood Park, and Hardy Road Conservation Area.
- We will monitor the impact of this treatment in 2016 and beyond, re-treating areas that may require it.
- If successful, we will expand this initiative to include other areas of town in subsequent years, continually monitoring the impact of our efforts and re-treating areas that may require it.