

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 14, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bingham, Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Molly Hoffer, Mike Kesling, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti
MEMBERS ABSENT: Doug Graves, Jack Harris
STAFF PRESENT: Mike Perkins, Ollie Snowden, Sonny Chickering, Doug Putschler, Bill Manewal, Caroline Manewal
GUESTS: Jan Nelson & 2 others

Chair Mike Koivula called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Staff requested the Last Resort item be moved to the beginning of the meeting.

MOTION: Bodner moved that Agenda Item VI, "Last Resort" Work Item, be moved to Item III, after Approval of Minutes. Melotti seconded. All present voted in favor, motion carried.

- I. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 9, 2003

MOTION: Melotti moved to approve the Minutes of April 9, 2003. Bodner seconded. All present voted in favor, motion carried.

III. "LAST RESORT" WORK ITEM

Chickering distributed copies of a draft *'Last Resort' Model for Vegetation Management*, explaining that staff had read through members' various definitions and had drafted a model to help facilitate tonight's discussion. Chickering also distributed copies of the HAC's motion from their 5/13/03 meeting regarding a 'last resort' definition. Both models/definitions refer to the Control Option Matrix as being a good idea. Chickering noted that staff is committed to reporting back to the Board on May 21.

Koivula noted he had attended both the HAC subcommittee meeting and their regular meeting, adding that Thurston County's program had been discussed as a good model. Melotti added that he also likes the Thurston County model. There was discussion of Thurston County's model. Chickering suggested getting everyone's ideas put down, then go back and work out any duplications with what is already in the IVM policy document, etc. The Committee reviewed the draft language. The following ideas were discussed:

- "Herbicides may be utilized for vegetation control only after use of all other methods"
 - Change "use of" to "considering and rejecting" all other methods
 - Academically proven methods rather than field use by PW?
 - Put academic data/reasons into matrix
 - No reason for PW to replicate others' research data on cost per unit, efficiency, etc.

Consensus: "Herbicides may be utilized for vegetation control only after considering and rejecting all other methods"

- Add language about "use of least toxic chemical first"?
 - Is "least toxic" definable?
 - Consider worker protection, interaction with environment, etc.
 - Add "according to current EPA standards"?
 - Add "per 1990 IVM Policy, Section 2.4"?
 - Add "per matrix" because species dictate which herbicide?
 - Least toxic may require higher rates of application and/or more applications
 - Least toxic may target more species (non-selective) vs. a selective herbicide

Consensus: Add #4 - "Use of least toxic per Section 2.4 of the IVM Policy and the most effective per Control Option Matrix"

- Under #2, in using a matrix to identify cost and efficiency, how do we define “cost”?
 - Per unit cost of application (internal costs)
 - Per efficiency (internal costs)
 - Subjective costs - long-term risk to public, long-term human/wildlife health, etc.
 - Defense of claims (external costs)
 - Sustainability
 - There’s already language in the Policy that addresses external & political costs
 - There’s room to tighten up the Policy in the area of environmental costs, etc.
 - If Committee’s concepts of costs differ from Board’s, it’s VMAC’s responsibility to bring that to the Board’s attention [end of T1S1]
 - Costs include more than chemicals: other vegetation management activities have risks and costs, e.g. broken windshields, injuries from thrown rocks/wire, dermal reactions to plants.
 - Don’t change definition of cost in Policy unless given direction from Board to do so
 - Need to consider the current, on-going costs to agriculture due to 1980’s moratorium
 - Have “hard costs” go in matrix: for other costs, give Board Section 6 of Policy, explaining that this is what we have
 - Let Board know that as VMAC considered this, cost was a big factor, and we always get hung up on it, however, there are other methods of funding veg. mgt. that could be tapped into if staff was given direction by the Board to look into non-traditional methods
 - What is the County’s obligation/legal liability to adjacent landowners to control weeds along the rights-of-way if it poses economic loss to those landowners?
 - Not VMAC’s current direction to discuss budget
 - Action thresholds would be included in the Control Option Matrix

Consensus: have staff draft a cover letter to go to the Board, along with VMAC’s “last resort” definition, that would explain the Committee’s discussion/concerns regarding the cost factor.

MOTION: Clements moved that staff revise/finalize the draft “*Last Resort Vegetation Management Model*” to reflect VMAC’s agreed upon changes, that staff draft a cover letter explaining VMAC’s discussion/concerns over costs, and that both these documents be forwarded to the Board for their 5/21/03 meeting. Hoffer seconded. All present voted in favor, motion carried.

Lengthy discussion about what wording/format to use in order to relay VMAC’s various thoughts, concerns, and questions regarding costs to the Board. Staff will e-mail/fax copies of these documents to all VMAC members by Friday, May 16; members will provide feedback to staff by Monday, May 19.

IV. IVM COORDINATOR’S REPORTS [T1S2-904]

Operation update – Perkins reported the main emphasis right now is on grass mowing; weather permitting, herbicide treatments are taking place; the majority of tree projects have been completed; have completed some hydroseeding projects (upper Camp Creek, Forest View Lane, and Lois Lane). Hydroseed mix included wildflowers. Discussion of various seed mixes used by PW. Manewal reported on open positions on the vegetation crew: a shared position is currently vacant; there are also 3 vacant Road Maintenance 2 positions due to one retirement and two transfers. Manewal (Bill) added that right now is the busiest time of year for vegetation management and currently 1/3 of the vegetation work force is “green.”

Waipuna System, BLM demo – Perkins passed around follow-up photos he had taken several days after the demo took place. Perkins noted he and Clements had been able to view the demo. BLM has leased the equipment from, and had employees trained by, the New Zealand company. The product must be purchased from that same company. Perkins explained the hot foam product and process. Perkins added that Glenn Miller would still like to do a similar demo for VMAC/PW if desired. [end of T1S2] Clements noted the equipment/product was good at what it did, small, scattered colonies, but it didn’t seem practical or possible to use it on miles of roadsides. Perkins noted that with the cost of the lease, a vehicle, and the need for 2 employees, the cost would currently be higher than for any of the methods PW currently uses; that contracting this type of application would be more efficient and cost effective. Melotti noted that BLM’s

demo/use had been for a specific noxious weed in a research natural area, so it was the appropriate method for that location.

Kesling noted he had studied the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for this hot foam product and the MSDS states the foam product is an herbicide; and under safety equipment it talks about ventilation risks, and organic vapor respirators. Kesling added he is concerned that there have been no studies done on long-term effects, and there is no LD50 data available for the product. Perkins added this product also has a higher-level rating as a skin irritant than the herbicides currently being used in the IVM Program. Kesling said one of his concerns about developing this last resort policy is that it may be too restrictive and would end up applying to some of the newest technologies, even if they were deemed to be one of the safest environmental alternatives.

Some members expressed an interest in not only seeing a demo on the hot foam, but also maybe setting up a demo on the steam system being used by the city of Eugene. Koivula volunteered to obtain information from the City regarding the use of steam for vegetation control.

V. REVIEW PROPOSED BUDGET, FY03/04 [T2S1-197]

Perkins referred to budget information from the packet. Perkins took a moment to give Nelson information before she had to leave, and then returned to the agenda item. Perkins and Putschler responded to questions and provided the following information:

- Why the increase under Professional Services (512111) from \$50,000 to \$200,000 – Because we've been short on money for consultant services in planning/designing fish passage for the new fish-friendly culverts; that the last six culverts came to approximately \$120,000.
- What does RUVL (511510) stand for – Reserve for unused vacation leave
- There are 3 major components to Road Maintenance: Drainage Maintenance, Surface Maintenance, and Vegetation Maintenance; vegetation and bridges need the most attention right now
- What are Damage Claims (512351) – public claims against PW for rock chips, broken windows, broken fences, etc.; only disputed claims go through County's Risk Management. A lot of time is spent discussing chemicals, but other maintenance activities have costs/risks also.

Committee consensus was they had completed review of the budget per the 2003 Work Plan.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Potential agenda items for June 11, 2003:

- Report back from Koivula on use of steam by the city of Eugene
- Report back from Chickering on 5/21 Board meeting regarding Last Resort
- Review 2003 Work Plan

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Recording Secretary