

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 14, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bingham, Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Doug Graves, Mike Kesling, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandra Corbin, Molly Hoffer

STAFF PRESENT: Sonny Chickering, Stephonee Colley, Bill Manewal, John Petsch

BCC PRESENT: Commissioner Anna Morrison

GUESTS PRESENT: Glenn Miller, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA)

Chair, Chris Melotti, called the meeting to order.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Doug Graves, 92107 River Road, Junction City, Oregon, regarding private landowner/farm spraying in right of way next to their fields. Said if County tried to enforce no-spray, it would probably get zero compliance. He knows a grass seed farmer whose livelihood is based on a thin margin, like most others, who will take spraying into his own hands. Farmers know the County can't mow often enough to control weeds (lack of time and labor). Bodner asked if they are spraying because they understand the County is not going to spray, and Graves confirmed this is correct. Graves said these landowners/farmers know this right-of-way has been a problem for a very long time and their market is very competitive, so chemical treatment is the least expensive way to deal with weed control.

Morrison commented she has noticed there are a number of people, not just grass seed farmers, that are spraying; and wondered if landowners are taking things in their own hands because they are aware the County has a no-spray policy in place, and if so, what would enforcement be. Chickering noted when the County completes the annual report required by the new ordinance, the County would address tracking the increase in vegetation and whether there is a decrease in the County's ability to keep up with vegetation on the right-of-way, and somewhere within that discussion, the County will be keeping eyes and ears open about whether there is an increase in use by private property owners to control areas the County cannot.

Clements asked if there was means of recording every mile of road, or something more anecdotal, and how will that information be created. Chickering said the maintenance crew supervisors who are driving roads throughout the County would be educated to observe the rights-of-way in their particular zones, so they are aware of the differences in the vegetation accumulating along the roadway. Currently, when vegetation encroaches upon a roadway, the specific zone supervisor will contact Manewal to let him know of the situation and the Vegetation crew would respond. This process will need to be more formalized now than in the past.

Clements asked if it's considered trespassing for a citizen to treat right-of-way vegetation with chemicals, and what would it mean to the no-spray program. Chickering said, to his knowledge,

they've never tried to stop anyone from doing that because it actually helps the County, but in light of the new ordinance, the language needs to be reviewed. To his knowledge, the ordinance does not prevent adjacent property owners from over spraying across a fence nor does it give the County authority to issue fines. Melotti requested that staff look into what would happen if there was a citizen-complaint regarding a private landowner spraying into public right-of-way (County liability). Chickering said he would forward that question to legal counsel and any information received will be added to the next agenda.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 10, 2004.

Bodner referred to Item VII, REVIEW OF PROPOSED 04-05 IVM BUDGET, seventh sentence: need to add "million" after "\$1.8 to \$1.7" to clarify dollar amount.

MOTION: Graves moved to approve the Minutes of March 10, 2004, as corrected. Bodner seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. NOXIOUS WEED INFORMATION SHARING – Glenn Miller, ODA

Bodner introduced Glenn Miller, who was invited to discuss broom. Miller introduced himself as an Agronomist, a person who deals with field crops, mainly grass-type (corn, wheat, barley). He is an OSU graduate of Agronomy, has been in the agricultural business for 20 years. He works out of an office at the Lowell Ranger's Station, and as a sideline, he farms hazelnuts on 40 acres. He is very involved in noxious weed control from a bio-control standpoint as well as basic monitoring, testing, and tracking projects.

Scotch Broom - Miller explained that Scotch Broom has four (4) stages of growth:

1st Stage: Seedling stage (grows to about 6" during first year); most often it is during this stage when mowing is done, but doesn't destroy the broom and instead causes spreading of the seedlings.

2nd Stage: This is a period of extremely rapid growth (2nd – 5th year) that includes elongation of up to 5 feet, flowering, and maximum seed production. Mechanical damage during this stage will cause the plant to sprout back.

3rd Stage: The plant starts to bow over, and there are signs of bushiness, diebacks, and storm and frost damage. In this stage, there is still high seed and flowering production. It is during this stage, that if mechanical damage is done, the plant can actually be killed.

4th Stage: (Final Stage) there is degradation to the plant, low seed and flowering production. Plant begins to fall over, and bug damage begins to show (bug-feeding will shorten the broom's lifespan by 5 years). Usually by year 12, in the Pacific NW, most Scotch Broom is fairly degraded (bugs and mites feeding off the plant year round are a major reason). Miller said that if the broom stem were allowed to reach the 4th stage, then it would be more cost effective to deal with mechanically. He added that State laws prevent this ideal situation.

Miller said the only way to break the cycle of constant whip growth is herbicide application. Using heavy machinery to chop roots out and remove vegetation would set the plant back to the 2nd stage, stimulating the seeds. Seeds are very long lived in dry conditions and this is the number one mechanism for the plant's success. They're waxi-coated, will live for years, and when

mowed, will spread via mowers to other parts of the roads. Research was done in New Zealand, and what they found was that Scotch Broom can live up to 30-40 years, but the soil organisms are cleaning the ground up in a much shorter time. Miller has done some sampling with Scotch Broom at the Hampton Landing (Lookout Point, Lowell), and found high levels of seed in the soil. Over time, the broom went away, blackberry bushes topped over, and about 7-8 years later after the last seed sampling, Miller bored a hole into the soil between the blackberries and did not find any broom seed in his soil sample. Another factor is that Scotch Broom is a leafy plant and will shed when it gets dry. A test done in South Australia, where there is a hole in the atmosphere and significantly higher levels of UV radiation, showed higher UV did not slow Scotch Broom growth, but actually caused the plant to thrive.

An economic report shows Scotch Broom is the #1 economically damaging weed in Oregon, primarily because of the timber and right-of-way industries. The seeds are edible (quail, other birds, and ants). Sheep and goats will debark broom some.

Morrison asked if ODA was aware of a mapping project showing where Scotch Broom is located and where the heaviest concentration is, and with all the GIS mapping happening, and the DOA and the other agencies looking at these same issues, these maps would already exist. She explained some agencies have requested the County fund this project. Miller said he has seen the maps Morrison is referring to, but the ODA really doesn't place importance of knowing every section of its location, because it doesn't change what they do. Unless a massive herbicide or cutting program is going to happen and there is a need to know cost, it would not be significant. Morrison stated their response had been the County wouldn't fund this because they felt that there was already enough data available that could be shared between agencies, but they would be willing to help with eradication.

Miller said another way to limit spread of Scotch Broom is to try to ensure that stockpiles are not infested with seed. Miller explained that quarries may be surrounded with broom and seed gets blown or mixed in. Bingham asked if seeds were still viable after composting, and Miller said some seeds would probably be killed.

Portuguese Broom - Miller talked about a Portuguese Broom infestation at South Jetty Road (Florence, on forest service lands), found about three years ago. It was also found in North Douglas County on prime timberland covering about 3,000 acres. A lot of money and effort invested by BPA, DOA, Weyerhaeuser, and other agencies successfully shut the plant down on the 3,000 acres. This broom is similar to Scotch, except it's bigger and a stem can grow over 12 inches in diameter. It can grow 20 feet tall, 30 feet across. This broom grows at an enormously fast rate and is not being fed on by any of the typical bugs that feed on Scotch Broom. This plant will probably survive in excess of 20-25 years as opposed to the Scotch Broom lifespan of 12 years. Portuguese pods are completely fuzzy, like Pussy Willow buds. Scotch Broom pods are black and have hair only on the outside. Between the USFS and DOA, 130 acres of Portuguese Broom have been cut manually. Because of new seedlings coming up in the particular area, DOA decided not to continue cutting until an herbicide treatment can be done. Clements asked what the current treatment included and Miller said the process is to chainsaw down the bigger trunks, and then do treatments. The bigger trunks will re-sprout, but the smaller ones, if treated during the dryer part of the year, may not re-sprout. Miller said there is currently no bio-control for Portuguese Broom. ODOT found one plant over in the Triangle Lake area, and due to a close working relationship with DOA, they will go out and do treatments together. Miller asked that his dept. and the County could have that same kind of working relationship so County crews can start recognizing this plant and be able to respond quickly. Miller gave the CD

presentation to Manewal for reference.

French Broom – Miller said this broom, located over by the cliffs on McKenzie View Drive, spread onto the cliffs and started moving onto County right-of-way. Miller said it probably started as a single plant. The landowner cat-logged the land and spread it all over the mountain and now it is down into the BLM land and into the Mohawk Valley. In northern California, French Broom is much worse than Scotch Broom, because French Broom doesn't shed leaves, and in the process, it will create a canopy and exclude all life around it. There are no bio-control agents for treatment. Clements asked if French Broom is treated with the same recipe that is used on Scotch Broom and Miller said yes, but French Broom takes more treatment due to its leafiness. Miller said that since Scotch Broom is just about everywhere, it would be hard at this point to try to control completely. But since Portuguese and French Brooms are relatively new invaders, we could come up with some kind of containment strategy for when these plants show up; it is far more cost effective to get rid of them immediately. Miller said it is important to keep lines of communication open between County and DOA because this method has been very effective between ODOT, BLM, and the USFS.

Miller responded to Morrison's question if Cascade Pacific RC&D helps the DOA with funding, some projects, and grant allocation. Morrison asked if SWCD's (Soil Water Conservation District) have employees do eradications and Miller said that in Clatsop County they are leading the way by hiring an applicator, which's employed year around on a variety of projects. Miller said language is being written regarding what SWCDs can license and hire applicators to work for them to get these treatments done. Currently, for the Middle Fork of the Willamette, DOA is going to try to eradicate Japanese Knotweed. This problem is starting to explode. Initial treatments have been done, and with the help of the cooperative weed management area, the Forest Service, and the City of Oakridge to identify landowners and obtain permission to get on the private property to provide treatments. Also, the Lost Creek Watershed Group is getting involved. This is happening through a lot of ongoing communication between the agencies and groups.

Miller described a new tool that has been developed in Clark County, Washington, using herbicide on plants existing next to streams and other waters or sensitive areas. The tool injects a measured amount of herbicide into the stem of Japanese Knotweed (in September) and seems to be effective with one application. Miller said fall treatments seem to get better results, up to 100% in some areas. Kesling asked what products are most effective for broom control and Miller said Garlon 3 or 4 is good, but Garlon 4 has an odor.

Kesling asked Miller how familiar he was with Lane County's Last Resort Spray Ordinance and if the County would be in potential trouble. Miller said he's read the ordinance, but wasn't aware of the ordinance when it was being considered by the Board. Miller said he is concerned since right-of-ways are the number one way that new invasive plants are introduced into an area, and without a means of a rapid control mechanism, essentially these plants will continue to grow and spread. Kesling asked if Miller thought the ODA may form an opinion for the Board of Commissioners regarding the policy or lack thereof, and Miller said the ODA could do that. Morrison asked to start that process. Miller said for the Committee to contact Dan Hilburn, Division Manager, ODA.

Bodner asked if there are control projects being planned that the Committee could see and, if so, are the sites open to the public. Miller suggested the Committee look into BLM, since their work is mostly manual and on a bigger scale. Kesling asked if there are annual reports available on this work. Miller said that the Committee could contact Chuck Fairchild, Eugene BLM office.

Miller closed his presentation by saying he would like to work with the County, since he has a great working relationship with about every other agency. He said by staying in regular communication, the ODA and County could both strongly benefit. Kesling asked if there were any mechanisms within the ODA that would be of assistance in developing trial projects for alternative vegetation management (design & development). Miller said he wasn't aware of ODA having any, but there has been a lot of work already done by Greg Pruell, a previous consultant for the USFS, on non-chemical management techniques for their roads (for Willamette National Forest). The USFS is using a lot of Pruell's recommended techniques since they are not using herbicides. Miller will provide contact information to Manewal to obtain IPM Report, and phone numbers for Chuck Fairchild and Greg Pruell. Miller offered to return to a future field crew meeting to provide more information regarding selective weeds to look for. Melotti thanked Miller for his presentation.

IV. VINEGAR AS AN HERBICIDE – Chris Melotti

Melotti referred to a handout provided in the 3/10/04 packet, regarding this means of herbicide treatment. Melotti said there is only one product approved in Oregon that he was able to find called Burn Out 2, which he saw at a local store, and that it is very expensive (\$46/gallon, mixed 2-3 to 1). Melotti said that particular store is higher-end pricing, and it might be possible to get better prices over the Internet. The product is not listed for right-of-way treatment, nor is vinegar listed as the active ingredient. Vinegar with 20-25% acetic acid content is best, but this level of content is not found in standard household vinegar (5% acetic acid). Melotti clarified that acetic acid used alone is effective at higher concentrations. Clements added that in the handout it stated that acetic acid is a by-product of the wine industry and that there may be sources in Lane County. Melotti said that he was hoping that a chemical company producing this product might be able to provide this product. Melotti said that he could make more contacts and keep the Committee apprised with new information.

V. IRVINGTON DRIVE / TREE CONFLICTS WITH OVERHEAD UTILITIES – Doug Graves

Graves said he drove down Irvington Drive earlier in the day and identified the trees that are growing up near the overhead utilities on Irvington Drive as Horse Chestnut, Flowering Pear, and Maple trees. Graves said some of the Maples are already at least in the TV cable lines, and just above those are the EWEB lines. He said the most concern he has are those trees on the north side of Irvington. He asked who would bare the expense of trimming (EWEB, County). Chickering said that the Irvington project was reconstructed last summer, and a landscape architect was hired to put together a plan for the road because the project was so extensive and the County doesn't have a staff person with those skills or time to do it. Clements said the City of Eugene has an arborist on staff and asked if that arborist would be available to the County in projects such as this when County and City land are involved. Chickering said that the County has its own list of approved trees that differ considerably from the City's list, and added that the County's list is more strict than the City's. Manewal added there are trees on the City's list that the County will not plant. Graves said there would be considerable cost down the road to maintain these particular trees, and he suggested that in a year or so, to get an arborist's recommendation on maintenance. Chickering said it is possible the County did ask for larger trees due to the issue with a lot of trees being removed and then replaced. It was understood that Firs would not be planted, but other types of trees would be planted. Morrison said it might have been the direction of the Board to have larger trees planted. Manewal noted the specifications on trees are 1 ½ to 1 ¾ inch caliper trees in order to get a tree in a size so that it's not damaged by kids (bending and breaking the trees), which has happened in the past. Particular trees, other than the Horse Chestnuts, are Pacific Sunset Maples. Manewal referred to some tree guides that

state maximum height of these trees is in the 30-35 foot range in ideal locations. Manewal measured trees at Irvington earlier today and found some are growing under the power lines, some are shifted off to the side about 9 feet with a crown width of 30 feet (15 feet on either side); some of the trees might not be a problem, but if the trees do well, they could become a serious problem. Koivula said he thought there was a new law that trees had to have 15 feet of clearance from power lines. Manewal said that this depends on the voltage of the line. The higher the line voltage, the more clearance is to be provided (per OSHA regulations). Melotti asked when the tree planting had been completed, and Chickering said the tree planting didn't occur until last fall. Manewal said some of the planting was finished up this winter. Chickering confirmed that a landscaper had been hired by the County as a consultant and they provided sheets of plans that were included in the full set of documents. The prime contractor hired a sub-consultant to install the trees. Melotti asked how wrong trees got planted. Chickering said these trees are on the County's street trees list, and have been identified as at least acceptable. Melotti asked if there would be language provided by the landscaper recommending preventative pruning that would force the trees into lateral growth. Graves said trees planted in front of his office have been pruned by a hired arborist and that has controlled tree growth. Manewal said most trees with a 20-foot crown are minimum. Planting strips and trees from a maintenance point of view are tough and could be a maintenance headache. Melotti said he saw this as a possible area for community involvement, a site where a group with tree-pruning experience could monitor the trees, such as master gardeners. Melotti added that he knows Manewal and his crew have less time and budget now more than ever, and a master gardener group could put on a workshop there. Bodner said they do have public workshops and they could just put it on their schedule. Melotti suggested Graves and Bodner take this issue to a community group to check for interest.

VI. POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR TEST PLOT PROJECTS – Bill Manewal

The Committee has requested that potential locations for test plot projects be found for both enhancement and noxious weed control. Manewal said the first site would be ideal for noxious weed control (Japanese Knotweed), and it is located on the northern part of Clear Lake Road, just east of Greenhill. He said the area is a ditch and fence with an infested area of about 100 feet. Manewal said they will not give a permit to mow this area, but will weed eat a portion of the area on a weekly basis when the plants are small, and on another portion of this area, they will place fabric over the weeds and add rock on top of the fabric to "cook" the weeds out. This method reduces airflow and smothers the weed. Manewal will check for any water issues in the ditch, and if not, he will use chips. Manewal will document the project with photos. Bodner asked if ODOT is under the no-spray policy, and Chickering said the County ordinance only applies to County right-of-way. Kesling said all the information that has been provided to him over the past several months shows there is only one viable measure to kill Japanese Knotweed and that is glyphosate. Kesling asked Manewal the purpose of these procedures. Chickering said the ordinance requires the Committee and Staff to experiment with new treatment methods. Melotti suggested, from his own experience, that clear plastic rather than black plastic would work better. Manewal said that the weed, most likely, raise the plastic as it grows beneath, and probably grow through it, so they will need to place a lot of weight on the fabric and keep it low to the ground. Kesling said that he has been doing work on canary reed grass by using a fabric, not a plastic. Manewal will keep the Committee apprised of the project. Melotti suggested that the Vegetation Crew use sanitary care to keep equipment from spreading the weed, and keep track of cost. Kesling suggested that the recorded information contain not only specific road and cost data, but also measurable outcome and success. Clements suggested that signage be placed near the project stating "Alternatives to Chemicals, Noxious Weed, Test Plot" or something similar to help with reference. Chickering said

that posting signs at construction sites is routine, so this is possible. Melotti suggested that signage refer to the ordinance.

Manewal listed potential enhancement project locations as 1) south on Delta at the exit to Goodpasture Island Road in the strip next to the highway; 2) at the south Valley River exit, 3) north on Delta and Willagillespie where curbing had been done, 4) at 30th Avenue and Lane Community College exit. Manewal said these sites are not very big and wildflowers would be used. Kesling suggested that these sites be potential grant opportunities and contract research, which could include replicated plots with variations on cultural practices and species used. Clements asked if the County, VMAC Committee, or an alternative (group/individual) could contact the Engineering Dept. of the Oregon State University (OSU) to find out if there is some interest in this project (student/class project?). Kesling said it would be a direction to head into, but funding via grant opportunities should be headed by the County. Melotti suggested Tom Kay, formally with the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, who started his non-profit organization that is affiliated with OSU (native plant, false brome). Chickering asked if the purpose of these plantings would be to prevent noxious weeds from invading, and Melotti said that it would be two-fold: to prevent noxious weeds from growing in a bare ground area, and to use native plants. Melotti said he would get more information and maybe have Tom Kay present information to the Committee.

VII. LC HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE /
DISCUSSION OF HERBICIDE RESISTANT GRASSES – Bill Manewal

Discussion moved to meeting on May 12, 2004.

VIII. ROAD MAINTENANCE MANAGER / OPERATIONS UPDATE – Bill Manewal

Manewal reported crews are working on finalizing work for FEMA regarding storm damage; also currently completing surface maintenance prep work done for upcoming overlay and chip seal projects, and they are getting ready to start the safety strip grass mowing.

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Responses from Herbicide Manufacturers – Bill Manewal

Discussion moved to meeting on May 12, 2004.

B. Last Resort Ordinance / Consultant Scope of Work – John Petsch

Petsch said he is working with Jones & Stokes, the consultant who has been retained to review the last resort ordinance and to define the meanings within the ordinance. He said the consultant will be completing cost comparisons of the vegetation management program vs. the information they find in their research regarding composting, irrigating, fertilizing. The consultant will also be looking at possibilities of using native and non-native species for control of noxious weeds on the roadside. They will be looking at mechanical methods, such as hand pulling, string trimming, flaming, and mowing. They will be looking at cost comparisons and efficiency of the mechanical method versus spraying. The consultant will do the legwork and provide a cost estimate by May 21st, and have the final report completed by August 6, 2004. Kesling requested a copy of the Scope of Work be provided to the Committee, and Chickering confirmed copies would be distributed to the Committee once final work is done.

X. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

The next regularly scheduled VMAC meeting will be Wednesday, May 12, 2004.

The following agenda items to be suggested:

- LC HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE / DISCUSSION OF HERBICIDE RESISTANT GRASSES – Bill Manewal (Material provided with March, 2004 Agenda Packet)
- OLD BUSINESS / A. Responses from Herbicide Manufacturers – Bill Manewal
- Scope of Work Final Draft
- County Liability Issues/Last Resort Policy – Citizens spraying right-of-way
- IPM Report
- Discuss Summer Calendar (month to take off)

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Recording Secretary