

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 12, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bingham, Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Sandra Corbin, Doug Graves, Molly Hoffer, Mike Kesling, Chris Melotti

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Koivula

STAFF PRESENT: Sonny Chickering, Stephonee Colley, Bill Manewal, Arno Nelson, John Petsch, Ollie Snowden

BCC PRESENT: Commissioner Anna Morrison

GUESTS PRESENT: None

Chickering called the meeting to order and Committee appointed Bodner as Substitute Chair. Bodner accepted.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 14, 2004.

Bodner suggested the following changes to the Minutes: Page 2, III., correct spelling for Lowell, and in “4th Stage, change “degration” to “degradation”; Page 3, 3rd paragraph, delete “responded” after Miller; 5th paragraph, after the word Broom, change “has” to “have”; Page 4, 4th paragraph, change 2nd sentence to start reading as “The tool injects a measured amount of herbicide into the stem of “; Page 5, IV., after the word “used” delete “by”.

MOTION: Clements moved to approve the Minutes of April 14, 2004, as corrected. Hoffer seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discussion of Herbicide Resistant Grasses – Bill Manewal

Manewal said this type of grass is a great product for the turf industry, but from a vegetation management standpoint, it can't be supported. A chemical other than Round-Up would have to be used to control it. He found a lot of information on the Internet, the Association of Oregon Counties, and weed partnerships, both pro and con. The Scotts Company has been involved for about three years and would like the product out on the market in the next year. Kesling said there was a 1500-acre block in Central Oregon designated as a production zone only. He said it is illegal to produce it anywhere else in the state, and he believed most producers in the grass-seed/farming industry in this area are against it. The end-users are golf courses that may not fully understand the potential ramifications of its use on a long-term basis. Kesling said there is designated machinery (trucks, warehousing equipment, etc.), but this may not prevent accidental distribution. Manewal said he believes the ODA is partly involved. He said he hasn't had any quorum for public comment, but he had comment from the Association of Oregon

Counties. Morrison said if they could contact ODA and/or the Grass Seed Council, they might be able to get more information about the plan for public comment and input. Kesling thought it might be too late because the plan has already been established and designated a production zone (he thought it had gone to grower-production, but not to end-user market yet). Manewal said the battle is over distribution and who might be able to get it.

Manewal made comment to Association of Oregon Counties that he wouldn't want it on any land that may be adjacent to County right-of-way. He said it would likely go through the USDA and other interested parties who might respond, and said if it gets on this type of land, it could be easily spread down the right-of-way by means of mowing machinery used to control growth in the right-of-way, similar to how Knapweed is spread. Manewal suggested Chris Bayham (Assoc. of Oregon Counties), or Patrick Smith who's involved in some of the cooperative weed groups as possible speakers. Clements asked Morrison if there's any record of the LC Health Advisory Committee ever presenting anything on the topic of herbicide resistant grasses, and she said no. Kesling said Round-Up ready grass is capable of being treated with spot treatments to prevent other grass species from growing on the golf courses. Kesling said growers in this area don't want the resistant grass because it will devalue their own crops. Manewal said the U.S. Golf Association has invested a lot of money into university research to get this project going. Clements suggested that the Committee find a qualified speaker for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). Chickering said Manewal could talk to his contacts and find someone who could speak on behalf of the topic.

B. Responses from Herbicide Manufacturers – Bill Manewal

Manewal received materials back from Monsanto and they report that they believe everything will pass with the exception of Half-Life product. DuPont sent a response that includes their products. Dow didn't respond to date. Manewal will provide copies of the information on the products that are used by the County for the Committee/Staff. This same information will be presented to Jones & Stokes for indexing.

IV. UPDATE ON LAST RESORT POLICY / JONES & STOKES (J&S) – John Petsch

Petsch said Shane Latimer of J&S is proposing to work with NCAP to put together information for the LRP. Latimer told Chickering and Petsch via phone conference that he is willing to gather information and be a filter for it. He is meeting with County Staff and NCAP in the next two weeks. Chickering reminded the Committee that J&S has been hired to put together an annual report, definitions, and certain guidelines and conduct regarding certain chemicals used, etc., that are requirements within the new policy. Due to workload and turnover, County Staff elected to add additional work to the consultant's current requirements contract to complete this task. Chickering thought the prime contact working on this project has a Ph.D. in Toxicology (he will confirm qualifications). J&S wants to work with NCAP because NCAP is the moving force behind writing and getting the ordinance approved. Graves asked why the industry isn't brought in, and Chickering said he wasn't opposed to it. Kesling said he'd like to see this project go to a non-partisan committee because industry and NCAP, both, could come up with biased data. Morrison suggested that Terry Witt (Oregonians for Food & Shelter), NCAP, and possibly two to three others could meet and discuss meaning and move forward in agreement. Chickering said there are about 20 definitions that are subjective terms and identified in the Scope of Work.

V. COUNTY LIABILITY / LAST RESORT POLICY (Citizens spraying right-of-way) – Sonny Chickering

Chickering spoke with Marc Kardell, LC Legal Counsel, and was told that the interpretation is that the LRP was written specifically to cover activities of Lane County Public Works and not those of an abutting property owner. Kardell suggested that Staff could go to the BCC and ask for clarification. Chickering said he'd rather not do this. There is nothing in the LRP that requires the County to pursue citizens. Melotti commented that riparian areas (County owned or not) that could be affected by citizen over spray might become an issue (mentioned injunction on spraying within 50 feet of fish habitat). Morrison said this is out of the 9th Circuit and in the process of being appealed at the Court of Appeals, and there's a move to get the injunction lifted. Chickering said if there were a complaint, an "education contact" would be made explaining the County ordinance. Nelson said there's literature available at the PSB in Land Management regarding spraying riparian areas. Morrison added that there's a lot of information already existing that's possible to use (DOA, Dept. of Forestry, Dept. of Fisheries).

VI. ROAD MAINTENANCE MANAGER / OPERATIONS UPDATE – Arno Nelson

Crews are preparing roads for overlays, chip seals, and driveways; Vegetation Crews are mowing and also trimming trees around the roads to prepare for roadwork; Material service contracts are out for the fiscal year needs; all storm clean-up is done; dust abatement will begin June 12th for gravel road treatment (prep work will start 1st of June). Due to no-spray policy, road prep now consists of scraping road edges. Kesling mentioned he saw a tool attached to a grader that looked like it would work for this type of weed removal (6 large 18" discs on a gang that hung out with a one-pass on the grader with a sweeper behind it).

VII. DISCUSS SUMMER CALENDAR – Committee & Staff

Clements moved to take August off, and Bodner seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

VIII. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

The next regularly scheduled VMAC meeting will be Wednesday, June 9, 2004.

The following agenda items suggested:

- Follow-up discussion on Scotch Broom (Glenn Miller's presentation) and prepare action items.
- Presentation on Treatment of False Brome - Chuck Fairchild, BLM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Recording Secretary