

**MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 13, 2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bingham, Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Molly Hoffer, Mike Kesling, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti, Douglass Moser

MEMBERS ABSENT: Susan Forester

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

BCC LIAISON PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT:

Chair, Chris Melotti, called the meeting to order.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT:

John Sundquist: He said he had attended the HAC subcommittee meeting on March 30th, and said that Chickering, Nelson, and subcommittee members were also in attendance. He said there was good information and questions presented at the meeting involving efficiency reports, district spray reports, activity reports, and maximizing efficiency. At the meeting, Sundquist asked if Public Works had a list of activities/planned activities, accomplishments, equipment purchases, and tests that would monitor results related to reducing or eliminating herbicide use as mandated in the ordinance, and there was none, outside the J&S Report and Staff Response. Sundquist asked if spray were introduced, would the person in charge of the spray program also be in charge of risk management, as was the case with Mike Perkins (previously retired from IMV Coordinator position), which everyone he said seemed surprised at that arrangement. He mentioned that he appreciated the difficulty of committees that are asked to evaluate the chemicals to be used as a last resort, but absolutely nothing has been done to find any alternatives to the policy that is supposed to be replaced. He said that is the problem is that the committee doesn't have any resorts attempted. He said this is not a last resort, but rather a first resort.

Jan Wroncy: Provided information on herbicide inert ingredients and included links to the websites she obtained the information from. She said there is a good deal of information covering inert ingredients that are of concern, and the EPA hasn't tested many of these inert ingredients. She said that with all these inert ingredients is a very complex mixture of chemicals that have synergistic interactions, and has to be very seriously thought through and, she feels that if a company isn't willing to provide information on the chemical then it shouldn't be used on any public property. She said that it's not fair to ask the public to be exposed to things that we can't even find out about. She mentioned "that there is a federal law that makes it unlawful for any person to use any pesticide and test on human beings unless such human being is fully informed of the nature and the purpose of the test and of any physical and mental health

consequence which are reasonably foreseeable therefrom, and freely volunteers to participate in the test...". She said that the public has worked very hard to get the Last Resort Policy in place to protect the public from this non-essential exposure. She said that she is very aggravated that Public Works has spent so much money on consulting with a firm that isn't really trying to implement the policy as written, but is actually trying to change the policy. She passed around photos she said she had taken just a few days before of Shore Lane (or Drive), and also Clear Lake near Fern Ridge. She said she has repeatedly asked Lane County to stop private individuals from spraying the County right of way, and that these individuals are absolutely destroying the ditches by spraying them to bare ground, which immediately sloughs off from rain and then clogs the ditches of the culverts. She said the County has to come in and spend the money to fix it, plus it's very hazardous for the public (no warning of spray, and often she has driven by while they are spraying with stuff blowing everywhere). She has reported these incidences to the Dept of Agriculture and Lane County. She wants Public Works to prosecute landowners who do spray herbicide in public right of way or at least let them know they are doing something wrong. She said it puts the public at risk, as well as County funds, when the County has to correct the problems.

Molly Widmer: Widmer said she is a botanist for the Eugene BLM, which has had a no-spray policy for some time. She said she has seen the draft version of the J&S Report, and had a few comments. Widmer first commented that there have been great technical advances working without herbicides (Waipuna, sunburst machine, and other equipment and materials), and she asked if these types of efforts would be implemented or put to trial at Lane County. She said that the species list (invasive weeds) needs to be worked on (be more species specific). She suggested that competitive exclusion be implemented, and not to forget other resources at hand, such as mulching, planting with natives, and using mowing and weeding equipment already owned. She suggested that the IVM Coordinator position be considered as not just a full time position, but possibly two positions, such as internships. Chickering said the County does have options to ensure that the position is filled properly, including a probationary period. Koivula suggested that a full-time professional with inter-governmental experience would be priority qualities for the position.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Bingham moved to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2005, as corrected. Moser seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF LAST RESORT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Chickering referred to a handout he provided (Technical Memorandum, Comments regarding Lane County's Herbicide Products List, from Shane Latimer, J&S). Moser commented that if the inert ingredients in herbicides cannot be disclosed, then they should not be used. Melotti agreed, and then referred to his own response that he provided as a handout to the Committee. Melotti said the ordinance should be given a chance to work as written before the decision is made that it doesn't work. He is concerned about the recommendations provided by the J&S Report, and that their information was not thoroughly investigated. Melotti said he supports the idea of creating a "weed board". He agrees that noxious weeds should be top priority to the whole of Lane County.

Melotti suggested that the County move forward to hire the IVM Coordinator. Koivula said he supports outreach programs for new and additional information. Clements said he is confused about the Committee's purpose. He said there might be a difference of opinion regarding the term "inert". Hoffer said her perception is that the J&S Report and the Staff Response were trying to make the ordinance more easily implemented. Bodner said the Last Resort Policy makes what the County does more visible. Hoffer asked if other members thought that the J&S Report was suggesting radical changes to the ordinance. Melotti said no, but he thinks that the Last Resort Policy should be tried first, then make changes. When asked about tracking herbicide use by Public Works, Manewal said he's used roadside miles and pounds of herbicide used. Sundquist added that spray should not be used at all unless under serious circumstances. Kesling said measurement criteria needs to be more defined.

Melotti suggested that VMAC use Chickering's Staff Response as a starting point for comments and/or recommendations. Melotti asked the committee to refer to the J&S Report, Chickering's Staff Response, the NCAP response, and Melotti's written response, to provide individual comment/recommendation.

IV. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE WITH HAC

Melotti said he prefers that the VMAC Committee provide input then decide whether a subcommittee is necessary. Jan Nelson will provide notice of next HAC subcommittee so that VMAC has the option to attend. Melotti asked for any written information from the subcommittee that could be helpful.

V. SEED MIX SOURCES – MELOTTI

Koivula provided seed catalog to the Committee. He said that seed sources are variable, so what is shown in the catalog may not be available right now. Melotti said he emailed Tanya Beard, a staff botanist from the Marion County Public Works, to find out if she would be interested in speaking at a future VMAC meeting. Another possible speaker is Jason Blazer, who is from the Friends of Buford Park project (they plant native seed for their park and other areas).

VI. GRANT APPLICATIONS POLICY (LANE MANUAL 21.137) – CHICKERING

Chickering referred to LM 21.137, stating that the County Administrator is delegated authority to approve and execute all documents in the application process and the acceptance of the award for any grants at \$0 - \$100,000. For all grants over \$100,000, the Board of Commissioners must approve the preliminary application and acceptance of the grant.

VII. ROAD MAINTENANCE & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT BUDGET REVIEW (2004) – CHICKERING, NELSON

Chickering referred to the budget review sheets provided. He explained that budgeting for road maintenance is for all zones. Chickering reviewed the budget reports with the Committee. In general, personnel costs in the budget as well as fuel costs are precipitating factors in the budget increase. Chickering pointed out that the herbicide application budget is very small; the CIP program has been drastically reduced, and a total of 15 projects scheduled in the CIP during the last year have been cut; \$2.5 million that was budgeted to go to cities in past years, will go to zero. Bodner asked about an "adopt a road program" (she suggested citizens who are interested pay for a section of road and they can put their name on it). Chickering said the County already has an "adopt a road" program in place, but instead of citizens paying money, they donate their time picking up roadside garbage.

VIII. ROAD MAINTENANCE / OPERATIONS UPDATE – MANEWAL, NELSON

Manewal said crews are working on chip seal preparation, safety strip mowing, brush mowing, and other maintenance work. Crews are currently involved in co-op tree projects with power companies. Bodner asked if spraying was included in chip seal preparation this year and Manewal said no. He said that he would be rescheduling mowing to go in tandem with chip seal operation. Manewal said he is using flails, but not rotaries. He added that crews are getting New John Deere equipment, which is currently being assembled with radios and top lights.

IX. 2005 WORK PLAN UPDATE

MOTION: Bodner moved to approve the 2005 Work Plan as written. Hoffer seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

X. NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS MONTH

Chickering presented all VMAC members with an award of recognition signed by the Board of Commissioners in appreciation of each member volunteering their time and effort to VMAC.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

Clements said he knows about grant money that could be requested directly from a grantor with federal monies (Cascade Pacific RC&D). Requirements would be to use alternatives to chemicals on public land and weed control. Clements will get a request for proposal during the next week. He said that a location along the Siuslaw River could be targeted as a location that needs attention. Manewal said that David Isler is looking at the Siuslaw and the scope needs to be determined. Koivula said he agreed that a short-term project would be best.

2. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING: WED., MAY 11, 2005:

- Soil Biology Presentation: (Microrysol Business): Bodner suggested Pat Patterson and/or Jeff Chote, who are master gardeners, present information possibly at the June meeting.
- Committee Comments/Recommendations for J&S Report
- Grant Information – Clements
- Siuslaw Watershed – Bill Manewal
- IVM Coordinator Position – Chickering

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Recording Secretary