

**MINUTES**  
**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**June 8, 2005**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karen Bodner, David Bingham, Molly Hoffer, Chris Melotti, Douglass Moser
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Susan Forester, Paul Clements, Mike Kesling, Mike Koivula
- STAFF PRESENT:** Sonny Chickering, Stephonee Freeman, Bill Manewal, Arno Nelson, John Petsch
- BCC LIAISON PRESENT:** Faye Stewart
- GUESTS PRESENT:** Jan Wroncy, John Sundquist

Chair, Chris Melotti, called the meeting to order.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Jan Wroncy: Wroncy said that the purpose in the ordinance, as stated, is that the County promotes environmentally sensitive roadside vegetation management that protects the health and safety of the public and County employees, and that the County should use non-herbicidal control methods, including prevention as its preferred tool for roadside vegetation management and that permitted herbicide use should be used only as a last resort when other options have been proven ineffective. She said that changes shouldn't be made only for the convenience of Public Works but also for the safety of the public. She presented photos taken around the third week of May, showing problems of knapweed growing over Horton Road. She mentioned that when the lines were painted on the roadside, they were painted over the knapweed, and when the knapweed was mowed the lines were no longer visible. She presented pictures showing right of way ditches that have been sprayed by private landowners, which she says runs from Milepost 1 of Clear Lake Road and continues to Childers Road. She said she is not able to use these roads for some time after they have been sprayed. She said there is an Oregon law that states that a permit is required if machine powered equipment is used to apply any pesticide product for a public agency, and that individual must have a pesticide applicator's license. She said it's going to get the County into trouble if the County continues to let this happen. She urged the Committee to take their job seriously when making any proposed changes to the Last Resort Policy. (8 minutes)

John Sundquist: He stated that he is attending VMAC because he heard that there might be a recommendation by VMAC to amend the Last Resort ordinance. He said he hoped that VMAC will offer citizens such as he and Jan (Wroncy), who have an interest in attending these meetings, some of the material the Committee gets (agenda, minutes, etc.) He said that the County needs to get back to the ordinance as written, and that County roadside problems are more about attitude and dedication rather than money. He said there is a tremendous amount of public support for the safety and beauty of wildlife and roadsides, and that up to this point, energy, advice, and expertise is being ignored and wasted. He said he thinks that important questions for Staff have to be answered before any recommendations are made by the Committee is that in the almost two years that the ordinance has been enacted, does Staff have a list of activities or accomplishments planned and/or implemented, to reduce herbicide activity

and, if not, why hasn't Staff done anything to implement the ordinance as written. He said that we need to know how much money has been spent on Jones & Stokes and are there any more foreseen contract extensions or private parties that might be brought in, and how much Staff time has been involved in developing these responses, how is this time being tracked, what are the costs of this time, and are the responses being covered by the road fund. He said he's bringing this up because it's all costing money up to this point, and are there any other actual accomplishments other than spending money on responses and reports. He provided a handout to Committee and Staff (email he sent to Chris Melotti on 6/8/05) and said that while he served on VMAC, the Committee was intentionally packed with herbicide use supporters, and he thinks that things are a lot better now and he respects the Committee for their independence, and urges the Committee to reject any and all amendments, including chemical recommendations. He said that these matters can be revisited when the County has attempted to implement the ordinance as written and has acquired a history of accomplishment and analysis. Until then, he said that VMAC should advise Staff to stop wasting time and money and start implementing the ordinance as written. (5 minutes)

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: Moser moved to approve the Minutes of May 11, 2005, as corrected. Bingham seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

**III. COMMITTEE COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR J&S REPORT – CONTINUED**

Proposed Herbicide Products: Moser said he doesn't think that enough attention is paid to the soil, and that plants may adapt to the chemicals used. Melotti said he agrees to defer to Staff and the consultant regarding the proposed list and its prescriptions. Hoffer referred to Wroncy's comment regarding Roundup, as well as a handout provided by Koivula, and asked that Staff review its usage in light of recent research. Bodner asked if Staff uses Roundup near water, and Manewal said that the policy they follow, as well as in the Ordinance, that it is not used in areas where water is located. The Committee majority (3/1, with 1 abstaining) agrees with Staff Response; Moser disagrees, and would like more effort made in the soil treatment of so-called invasive plants. He asked for a scenario in which herbicide would be used, and Melotti said that a plant would be identified, mapped, and then an herbicide would be prescribed for treatment. It would be about determining the weed problem and then use the herbicide as a tool for treatment. Chickering said that there is recourse via the Board of Health as provided in the Last Resort ordinance.

Structural Organization and Operations: Committee agrees with Staff Response.

Recommended Training and Education: Committee agrees with Staff Response. Bodner asked if it's possible to get a map showing inventory of where the worst problems are located, and Melotti said that Staff would be creating the GIS layering system to address this.

Bodner motioned that the Board of Commissioners consider the creation of a "weed control board" that would operate separately from VMAC, with the purpose of organizing and/or participating in cooperative noxious weed education and training efforts similar to the "master recycler" program. Hoffer seconded. All presented voted in favor. Motion passed.

Public Notification and Communication Systems: Committee agrees with Staff Response.

Record Keeping: Committee agrees with Staff Response.

Chickering suggested that a draft report from VMAC be written that includes recommendations for final vote of approval prior to sending the report on to the Board of Health.

#### **IV. SIUSLAW WATERSHED – MANEWAL**

Manewal reported that he has been working with David Isler (Watershed Council) in the West Fork area of Deadwood to control a large population of Japanese knotweed. He said that they were working on a plan for treating the knotweed that would include excavation, geofabric layering, and rock cover, but Isler said that it would probably happen next January or February. There isn't a dumping location for the excavated material found yet. This project will be a test site for an alternative herbicide treatment.

Manewal gave a report on a weed tour he took two weeks prior with approximately 50 other interested persons, which was sponsored in part by the Extension Service:

ODF/Fern Ridge & Royal – Canary Grass: Using tractors to cut the root mass and then flood the area to block sunlight and oxygen.

Arboretum at Mt. Pisgah – Blackberry Bushes: Currently mowing 5-6 times per year to control. Discussed bio-control methods (New Zealand), but there is concern that the bee population, as well as other insect species, may be adversely effected.

Elijah Bristol State Park (off Wheeler Road) – Japanese Knotweed: Currently being treated primarily by stem injection (stalks 12-15' high, 1 ½" to 1 ¾" in diameter).

Big Fall Creek, Corps of Engineer Property – False Brome: Infestation is huge, and basically out of control in this area. Manewal spoke with Glen Miller, who said brome could live just about anywhere (shade, sun, etc.).

Manewal passed around a handout regarding Paterson's Curse, a noxious weed found in Oregon bordering a grass seed field in Linn County in 2003, and Douglas County in 2004. He said that the weed is being found in seed mixes.

#### **V. IVM COORDINATOR POSITION – NELSON**

Nelson reported that the IVM position is a union represented position so he has sent out a lateral opportunity notice three weeks ago. One individual responded and an interview will be scheduled for next week. If the individual does not qualify, then a public job posting will be published in approximately three weeks.

Nelson said that there is a very good chance that this position will be held intact if budget cuts become an issue.

#### **VI. ROAD MAINTENANCE / OPERATIONS UPDATE – MANEWAL, NELSON**

Manewal said crews are completing safety strip mowing, blade patching, and preparing roads for chip sealing. Normal process is to start low in the valley and then work up to outlying areas, but growth is consistent throughout the valley. The four new John Deere mowers each have increased productivity by 2-3 miles of mowing per day (24-speed, 84 hp). Seeding of seasonal grasses in progress where ditch work has been done in the areas of South Willamette, Buford Park, Pleasant Hill area, Kensington, and Zephyr. Also, tree trimming is currently in progress.

**VII. DISCUSS SUMMER CALENDAR**

MOTION: Hoffer moved that VMAC be excused from meeting during the month of August. Bodner seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING ITEMS:**

1. Bodner inquired as to whether Susan Forester has communicated to Staff regarding her four absences during the last six meetings. Moser offered to contact Forester.
2. Date and agenda items for next meeting: Wednesday, July 13, 2005:
  - Soil Biology Presentation (Forest Service?) – Bodner
  - Susan Forester/Meeting Absences – Moser
  - Prescription Control Specifications from Jones & Stokes – Petsch
  - VMAC Recommendations Report to Staff Response
  - Report on Consultation with Health Advisory Subcommittee Recommendations to the J&S Report – Melotti
  - IVM Coordinator Position Update – Nelson
  - Article for July material from American City & County, April 2005, “Weed Treaters, new technologies root out non-native plant species” (handout provided by Faye Stewart)

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Recording Secretary