

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 8, 2006

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Balthrop, Paul Clements, Ross Penhallegon

STAFF PRESENT: Sonny Chickering, Stephonee Freeman, Orin Schumacher

B/CC PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT: Tanya Beard & Tom Shamberger, Marion County IVM Program

PUBLIC PRESENT: John Sundquist

Karen Bodner called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sundquist: Provided Schumacher with an article titled *How to reclaim gravel shoulders, Better Roads, August 1996*, and asked that the Committee receive a copy. Sundquist also submitted for review by the Committee a copy of a document titled *Report on Induced Chemical Sensitivity*, which he wrote to the Lane County Commissioners June 3, 1998. He said he also submitted a copy of the document to the Health Advisory Committee (HAC). After reviewing the Control Prescriptions document prepared by the County, he is concerned that the County is trying to get the spray truck back on the road. He would like the County to consider the most invasive weeds and chemicals that would be used, and added that the County's background has not made the right choices in past, and HAC wants to see some good faith.

Sundquist also presented Staff/Committee with the following questions:

Is Route 36 closed due to mud slide, and how many times has it been closed this year?

(Chickering) - This route belongs to ODOT and is not a County road.

Regarding the Standards/Guidelines, August 1999, is the phrase "that herbicides will not be used as last resort", could revisions be made to the 1999 document to bring it up to date with the Last Resort Policy?

(Chickering) - Yes, Committee could focus on this at some point.

Are inmates still doing vegetation work and, if so, how much money is spent on that?

(Chickering) - The County has an agreement with the Sheriff's Department/Inmate Worker Program as one of many of the Sheriff's Dept. clients. Schumacher said he would check into the cost of the program to County.

Is Staff/Committee still proposing a code change to amend the Last Resort Policy and, if so, when?

(Chickering) - The proposal has been postponed, and Staff will reconsider maybe mid summer.

Bodner asked Sundquist why he thinks the County wants the spray truck back out to treat roadsides, and he said he thought so because the no-spray forms were mailed out to citizens again this year, and because of the possible code changes that VMAC and Staff are considering making to the Last Resort Policy that include herbicide spray.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Melotti moved to approve the Minutes of February 8, 2006, as revised. Moser seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. GENERAL COMMENT

No comment.

IV. PRESENTATION: MANAGEMENT ISSUES & METHODS – TANYA BEARD (BOTANIST) & TOM SHAMBERGER (IVM COORD'R), MARION COUNTY

Tanya Beard said she is in a unique position as she is the only official botanist in a County position in Oregon. Duties include Parks (natural heritage, weed identification/encroaching weed issues, public presentations, grant writing, and public relations), and is currently working with a local middle school whose students have been involved in turtle restoration work (currently have a successful nest in progress), and Roadside Development (mitigation, weed identification, T&E identification/management, weed district assistance, presentations, grant writing, and public relations). Beard said her passion is noxious weed management. Her most recent success has been to reinstate Marion County as a noxious weed control district.

Tom Shamberger handed out copies of the *B. Vegetation Management, Marion County PW Best Management Practices for Clean Water*, and began the presentation:

Noxious Weed Control District: Shamberger said Marion County Commissioners had some issues regarding enforcement of the noxious weed control district, and decided that the enforcement emphasis will be on education. Language in the ordinance for money was worded "as funds and personnel allow". He added that the State of Oregon loses \$83 million per year in weed control costs.

He said that in the late 1990's-early 2000 when fish recovery became important, his staff put together BMP's (Best Management Practices), which included plans that wouldn't impact salmon and soil runoff. Roadside shoulders were divided up into three zones:

Zone A is vegetation-free and maintained with herbicide spraying. Width is 2' wide on local roads, 3 ft wide for collector roads, and 5 ft wide for arterial roads;

Zone B is maintained by the following schedule: Mow to ditch catch point May-Oct, brush every 7 yrs Sept-Oct, and spot spray noxious weeds Sept-Oct;

Zone C receives no maintenance except for the following: emergency and/or dangerous circumstances, if vision hazards exist; if vegetation in Zone C is encroaching into Zones A or B and adversely affecting other maintenance activities, and within the 16 ft. vertical clearance; tree limbs are overhanging into the roadway.

BMP's - To provide the focus for roadside vegetation treatment: minimize disturbance of native plants, encourage populations of threatened and endangered plants, maintain ground cover to prevent erosion, and control vegetation through mechanical means first, whenever possible.

Proper BMP application include: Gravel shoulders that are safe for citizens and maintenance work; grade and blade shoulders; effective early season vegetation control (cutting roots off, then treat shoulder); buffers of 60 ft are left on each side of waterway/stream crossings; hand spray applications, which allows for more targeted herbicide use and is more costly and time consuming, but more effective. Herbicides listed for use are Arsenal, Chopper, Banvel. Weed master, Casoron, Norosac, Diuron, Direx, Karmex, Escort, Express, Garlon 3A, Milestone, Oust, Rodeo, Round-up, Telar, Transline, Weddar 64.

Alternative Control Methods – Meadow knapweed: Release Eurasian bugs (*Larinus minutus*) in 2004, and has seen evidence that the bug population is working at eating away the knapweed. The bug is species-specific, and was brought in from Hood River, where they had been used against Meadow knapweed. So far, the native plants seem resistant.

Marion County currently has about 70 private maintenance agreements with citizens regarding spray/no-spray areas. Marion County has placed posts to mark sites that are to be treated and untreated (red means stop, green means to continue). For no-spray agreements, it is up to property owners to apply any annually. Other agreements may include no mowing, spraying, or some other request. Locations that are absolutely not sprayed are native plant locations, organic farms, school zones, bus stops, or other areas of foot traffic.

PMA's by GIS: Marion County is working on a GPS identification program for noxious weed locations and PMA's (noxious weed locations submitted to WeedMapper); Spray trucks will be equipped with audio warnings for operator to shut off system within a certain distance of sensitive or agreement sites. Spray information will be electronically tracked and recorded (how wide, how long, volume).

Grass-Ditch Projects: Marion County is working on re-grading ditches, sloping back the ditch lines, and purposely planting the slopes via hydro or hand seeding. They discovered that this method negates further ditching, decreases levels of erosion, and increases water flow. Another experiment at a different site will be done to verify findings. If the same result occurs as expected, they will write a proposal to switch to this method.

Bio bags (mesh sacks filled with compost and wood chips) are placed in the ditch until it is established, then the sacks are recovered. Marion County prepared their BMP's to cover all County activities (available on their county website for viewing).

Mitigation: If Marion County removes any tree, they must plant two trees as a replacement, either in the same or different location, species and location appropriate.

Marion County Weed Control District: Status successfully gained on March 1st, 2006; goals include being able to utilize education & outreach tools and opportunities to work with private landowners and improve the County's control efforts by making headway on "both sides of the fence"; additional noxious weed funding is available to the County via the District that would have been unavailable previously.

The process from idea to actual establishment of the weed control district began mid-summer of last year, beginning with the ODA Weed Control Division approaching Marion County.

APPROVED: _____

Target weeds for 2006: Diffuse Knapweed, False Brome; Giant Hogweed; Giant Knotweed; Gorse; Himalayan Knotweed; Japanese Knotweed; Kochia, Meadow Knapweed; Milk Thistle; Paterson's Curse; Puncture Vine; Rush Skeletonweed; Spotted Knapweed; Tansy Ragwort; Yellow Starthistle; Yellow Toadflax.

Beard said that outreach to landowners helps lessen impacts of noxious weeds, and partnering with them can reduce recurrence by monitoring sensitive species and identifying new invaders.

Next Steps: Configure weed district workings; continue working relationships with agencies and organizations; strive for further efficiency (RICAPS – remote info capture and processing system); continue monitoring especially for new noxious weeds.

At the end of the presentation, Melotti suggested that Beard and Shamberger return in a year with a follow-up presentation regarding progress of their weed control district program.

V. "RIGHT-OF-WAY" MGT PRESCRIPTION PLAN & ACTION THRESHOLDS 2006

- Table 2 on Page 9 versus descriptions on Pages 5-7 does not match – easier to follow if listed in same order.
- The list for weeds will be updated periodically to reflect current problems

VI. IVM STATUS UPDATE – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher reported that he is currently involved with the following:

Working with County GIS and got T&E maps complete; spring inspection is planned; short school training is scheduled March 9th regarding noxious weeds; Gibbs Creek planting (Clear Lake Road, east side of lake): working with Liz Vollmer of the Siuslaw Watershed Council, and the Inmate Program/Sheriff's Dept. and has completed 180 plantings (15 to 16 natives species planted); getting authorization to establish a vegetation page on county website; plans to publish the educational flyers are in the works; working with Vegetation Crews to develop new brushing standards and add to policies/guidelines, specifically for the brush mowers and the top trim truck; working on setting up a test site possibly at Mt. Pisgah (Myco-remediation & cost analysis).

VII. ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE – NELSON

Postponed to April meeting.

VIII. REVIEW OF 2006 VMAC WORK PLAN – COMMITTEE & STAFF

Postponed to April meeting.

IX. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., APRIL 12, 2006:

- Gibbs Creek Planting Project Presentation – Schumacher
- Presentation: Dale Darris, USDA, NRCS – Native Grass Seed Specialist
- Expanded IVM Status Update
- Eco-Blanket Description and Discussion

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Stephonee Freeman, Recording Secretary