

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 12, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti, Douglass Moser, Ross Penhallegon

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Balthrop, David Bingham, Molly Hoffer

STAFF PRESENT: Sonny Chickering, Stephonee Freeman, Arno Nelson, Bill Manewal, Orin Schumacher, Howard Schussler

B/CC PRESENT: Anna Morrison

GUESTS PRESENT: Dale Darris (USDA, NRCS)

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Karen Bodner called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

III. GENERAL COMMENT

No comment.

IV. PRESENTATION: "CURRENT STATUS OF NATIVE SEED PRODUCTION IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY" – DALE DARRIS (USDA, NRCS)

Dale Darris introduced himself and began his presentation:

General importance and uses of native grasses: General re-vegetation, erosion control and wildlife habitat improvement; restoration of upland and wetland prairies, estuaries, oak savanna, riparian zones, marshes, bogs, and other wet habitats; reclamation of logged over, burned or mined lands, roadways; native plant landscaping, active pasture and rangelands in SW OR.

PMC (Plant Materials Center) Work with native grasses: Evaluate seed sources (select and release populations, test adaptation, develop potential seed zones); investigate seed production, processing and germination methods; conduct seeding and re-vegetation or reclamation trails; grow out seed (from a handful of seeds to private grower) for research, commercial growers, other agencies.

Common garden study of Roemers Fescue: 46 populations sampled, 10 plants (families) per population; collections made by the IAE (Institute for Applied Ecology) in 2001 and 2002. Roemers fescue CGS (Corvallis Germoplasm series) at PMC. Up to 8 plants per family,

approximately 2700 individual plant plots.

Principal Component Analysis: Established 3 zones below 3k foot elevation. Statisticians take the data, look for characteristics (latitude, longitude), look for clusters that make logical groupings; able to identify eco types in the Willamette Valley, SW Oregon/Northern California, and mid Washington. Selection will occur naturally. Cost was approximately \$200k to get to this point.

Research/Seed Production: Small combine is used; Fertilizing starts with recommendation by Oregon State University.

Upland Grasses:

- California Brome: Bunchgrass, annual or short life 2-3 yrs; full sun; well known, quick cover, grazing; rapid establishment; fibrous; very weedy; Don't use where there's seed farms. Commercially available and local.
- Roemers Fescue: Bunchgrass, variable longevity, full sun; prairie restoration, erosion control – may work in landscaping due to low maintenance, although longevity may be an issue; tolerates mowing; 30-90 cm tall, fine textured; moderate to slow establishment; may lack competitive ability; deep, fibrous stress tolerant root system, drought tolerant; highly variable, blue forms; commercially available, local.
- California Oat Grass: Bunchgrass, long lived; full sun; prairie restoration; 35-100 cm tall, med textured; slow to establish; lacks competitive ability until mature; appears to have good trafficability; droughty uplands to transitional wetlands; must fall sow (seed dormancy); sow alone at high rates or use plugs; commercially available, expensive.
- Slender Wheatgrass: Bunchgrass, short lived perennial, full sun; quick cover, erosion control, reclamation; wildlife food and cover grazing; 50-100 cm tall, med textured; rapid establishment; competitive, weedy; fibrous root system; excellent for highways; moist to dry or periodically droughty soils; commercially available, local. Every 3rd yr, let go to seed. Cost per pound is currently \$8-10 dollars. Limit 1-2 lbs per acre.
- Lemmon's Needlegrass: Short bunchgrass, long lived, full sun; prairie restoration, low maintenance; re-vegetation of hot, sunny, impoverished sites and weakly developed soils; 30-80 cm tall, fine text, long awns; slow establishment, winter germinator; non aggressive, compatible with forbs; commercial availability.
- CA Fescue: Bunchgrass, long lived, partial shade, sun; prairie restoration, erosion control, wildlife cover, landscaping; 40-130 cm tall, med textured; slow establishment; persistent, year round green foliage, often bluish; fall sow alone at high rates; tight clumps and non-aggressive, suggests compatibility with forbs; commercially available from California only. Currently, cost per lb = \$160.
- Prairie Junegrass: Small bunchgrass, perennial, sun to part shade; prairie restoration, wildlife cover, native lawns; re-vegetation of droughty, rocky sandy sites; 40-80 cm tall, med-fine textured; easy establishment; commercially available only from the Midwest.
- Pine Bluegrass: Small bunchgrass variable longevity full sun; prairie restoration; re-vegetation of rocky sites.
- Blue Wildrye: Currently \$8/lb ; tall bunchgrass, moderate shade to full sun; quick cover; easy and fast to establish; loosely tufted, very versatile; competitive but short life of 3-6 yrs; intermediate drought tolerance; commercially available.
- Sitka Land Prairie Grasses: Tufted hairgrass – bunchgrass, very long lived, full sun; wet prairie restoration, erosion control along waterways and ditches; slow establishment; high availability; beautiful.
- Slender Hairgrass: Bunchgrass, moderate shade to full sun; very attractive; life of 2-3 yrs; densely tufted; commercially available; cover in ditches, erosion control along waterways,

moist ravines and in woods.

- Meadow Barley: Quick cover in ditches, erosion control along waterways as well as drier sites; variable longevity, full sun, bunchgrass; broadly adapted; rapid and easily established; competitive.

To find seed for purchase, Darris suggested the nativeseednetwork.org website, and to check the website this coming fall for more grass seed information. Schumacher said he has links to other sites, as well.

V. GIBBS CREEK PLANTING PROJECT UPDATE – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher reported that the Gibbs Creek planting project is complete and referred to the photos attached to the agenda. He added that the plantings were completed by work camp labor and that because of the distance off the road, visibility and safety issues should never be an issue. The site was a CIP (Capital Improvement Project), and plant materials cost an estimated \$480 (some plants were donated by the Watershed Council). The project involved mitigation of trees, so that for every tree removed, two were planted.

Koivula requested that pictures be taken in a year and brought to the Committee showing progress of plant establishment.

VI. ECO-BLANKET DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION

Schumacher reported that he and Manewal took a tour at Rexius Products, which developed the eco-blanket product. The newly developed product helps with erosion, has high germination rates, but is more costly, initially. But, in the long term, it may pay off by reducing the need to re-seed in the future.

Schumacher said that the product is applied after they get desired mix rates. The price is 1 ½ - 2 times the price of other hydro-seeding methods, and has a lot better root establishment. The mulch is not weed free; the heat processes kills off pathogens but not all weed seeds; The Cities of Eugene and Springfield have used it and LC Staff will monitor progress. Koivula added that this product should not be used around sensitive areas if not proven to be toxin or weed free.

Eco-Berm: This is a replacement for a silt fence and works as a barrier, but costs much more than 2 -1.

VII. IVM STATUS UPDATE (EXPANDED) – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher provided handouts to Committee and briefly discussed projects that Vegetation staff have started and/or completed over the last 6 month period. Orin also discussed projects that were planned in the near future.

VIII. ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE – MANEWAL

Manewal reported that Vegetation Crews finished up brush mowing in preparation for scheduled surface maintenance road work for 2006; top trimming is in progress, as well as regularly scheduled maintenance work. Crews have been working on clean-up of a road slide in Blachly that included top trimming and tree removal. Crews will be grass mowing safety strips in the next few weeks, pending weather. The vegetation training program is almost ready for implementation.

Nelson added that crews wrapped up winter cleanup from winter storms, and that AC overlay preparation work is in progress (should be completed by next week).

Storm drain work hours at Sweet Creek will be reimbursed by federal government funds, as well as embankment work hours on Macbeth Road (embankments that slid out below the roads).

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

Updated work plan.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

1. The process for vacancy notice will begin within the next month to find a replacement for Molly Hoffer, whose last meeting will be June 14.

Motion: Melotti moved that Schumacher contact David Balthrop regarding his commitment the VMAC Committee and to include his position in the vacancy notice process should Balthrop elect to resign. Clements seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

2. Committee agreed that the July 12th meeting will be canceled.

X. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., MAY 10, 2006:

- Vacancy Notice Process (Molly Hoffer, possibly David Balthrop) – Schumacher

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Stephonee Freeman, Recording Secretary