

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
June 14, 2006

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Clements

STAFF PRESENT: Stephonee Freeman, Arno Nelson, Bill Manewal, Orin Schumacher

B/CC PRESENT: Anna Morrison

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

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

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Melotti moved to approve the Minutes of May 10, 2006, as written. Hoffer seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. GENERAL COMMENT

Melotti commented that he read a publication in the Eugene Weekly that listed Schumacher's name and number to call regarding the possible spraying of the five approved herbicides listed on the Permitted Products List. Schumacher said he has not received any calls to date.

Bodner said she wanted to thank Anna Morrison for her years of service and that she was sorry that Anna lost her campaign for commissioner.

Hoffer said that she wanted to convey to the Committee her thanks for volunteering and to Staff for their help. She added that she appreciated Schumacher's clarity, enthusiasm, and dedication during the short amount of time that he has been at the County, and that she admires what he has brought to the Committee. She said volunteering for VMAC has been a good experience.

Bingham said he's learned more about how the County has handled vegetation issues as a whole and appreciated that there wasn't a fixed agenda.

IV. VACANCY REVIEW PROCESS – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher said there are three positions available. Staff currently has on file three applications that were re-submitted from the last vacancy process, and one new application has been received. Penhallegon knows of two citizens interested in applying and has provided them with applications.

V. ROADSIDE BRUSHING STANDARDS – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher provided a handout titled Lane County Management Standards and Guidelines, Series 1, Rights-of-Way Brushing Standards, which he prepared with direct involvement from Vegetation Crews, that basically outlines what, when, how, and why the County is dealing with road vegetation issues, specifically for roadside brushing.

VI. ROAD TOUR UPDATE – SCHUMACHER / STAFF

Schumacher said that the Roads Advisory Committee will select the date some time in July. Schumacher said that the Committee could make suggestions regarding vegetation issues, and he will try to incorporate sites into the tour.

VII. ALTERNATIVE CONTROL METHODS, BERM SHAPER AND RETRIEVER – SCHUMACHER

Nelson said that these methods are not practical for use in Lane County due to its ditch slopes and because we do not spray herbicide to reduce vegetation.

VIII. GIS FOR MONITORING WEEDS AND RARE PLANTS – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher planned to provide a visual presentation by computer, but the equipment was not properly working. He said he provided flyers, training, and folders to be placed in Vegetation Crew vehicles for reference/review. A form has also been provided to crews for the inventory of noxious weeds. Schumacher provided a copy of the form titled RIGHTS-OF-WAY NOXIOUS WEED DATA COLLECTION FORM. Schumacher said he has developed an Excel spreadsheet as a tool to gather the data from the forms, which will be imported to other software from GIS.

Koivula suggested that school science classes may be a great source of assistance in native plant programs, and Schumacher said he has been in contact with Siuslaw Elementary (field trips).

Bodner asked if television/public service is possible to get weed of the week information out there. Melotti said the NW Weed Coalition might be a possibility. Schumacher said a weekly program may be too labor intensive, and thought more on the lines of a quarterly/seasonal information output. He added that he will provide a visual computer presentation in August.

IX. BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO VEGETATION WEBSITE – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher said the front page is developed and it looks very good. He will provide a visual computer presentation in August.

X. IVM UPDATE – SCHUMACHER

Schumacher said that County crews had a possible hogweed scare last Monday, when two crew members were using weed eaters on weeds in behind guardrail at the North Fork Florence area, M.P. 6 to M.P. 9, along the creek side. He reported that he received a call that the crew members' skin was blistered on their faces, necks, and forearms. Pictures were sent of the weeds and employees, who sought medical attention. Schumacher explained that the sap from the plant will get on skin and then react with ultraviolet light from the sun and cause blistering and pain, and could possibly lead to permanent skin damage. The skin then becomes sensitive to ultraviolet light and skin cancer. Treatment is cortisone cream.

Schumacher visited the site and cut down some of the plants, which ended up being cow parsnip (9' tall and mistaken for hogweed). The County is now facing another problem at how to deal with this plant. Schumacher said he will contact OSU regarding the matter.

Schumacher reported that Star Thistle was found on BLM lands west of I-5, which was most likely distributed by humans (brought up from Northern California and Southern Oregon freeways). The ODA should be major force to rid the problem, and Northern California has the greatest potential to control it. Manewal said it also is being tracked in by the wool on sheep that is transported back and forth from the Valley to Southern Oregon for feeding. Penhallegon added that the plant prefers very dry conditions, so it may not spread as quickly in the Valley floor as the wet weather may not be a desirable climate, so there might be a chance to control it.

XI. ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE – MANEWAL

Nelson reported that paving crews started up last week. Price and materials (liquid oil, rock production for stockpiles, etc.) went up 39% so the maintenance program will run only until Sept 1st (typically runs through September). Dust oiling starts on Monday (Veneta crews plan to complete 60 miles during the season) and will wrap up in July. AC Overlays are in progress (Delta Highway, Hamm Road, Latham Road), and McBeth Road, which had a one lane opening for most of the season, will be back to a two lane road tomorrow. Sweet Creek Road has been cleaned up of all storm damage.

Manewal reported that crews are in the middle of safety strip mowing, except for Camp Creek (mower was down). Crews are currently finishing up in the Junction City area. Brush mowing, based on crew size, is primarily happening now in Zones 1 & 2 (Eugene/Springfield and Cottage Grove areas). Tree work and clean up from storms is underway and crews are working with EPUD and Lane Electric. Summer help is starting Monday, adding three positions.

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

Updated work plan.

XIII. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., AUGUST 9, 2006:

- Application Review & Selection for VMAC Vacancies – Staff/Committee
- GIS & Vegetation Website Visual Presentation – Schumacher
- Present brief description of Series 2 – Top Trimming Standards Draft – Schumacher

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Stephonee Freeman, Recording Secretary