

MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
June 13, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Graham, Mike Koivula, Jim LaRue, Chris Melotti, Jan Nelson, John Sundquist, Kai Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

STAFF PRESENT: Orin Schumacher, Debby Woodruff, John Petsch

B/CC PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Jan Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Williams moved to approve the Minutes of May 9, 2007, as revised/corrected/written. LaRue seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

III. GENERAL COMMENT

Ross Penhallegon passed around a hand-out "Weed Watcher" Training Opportunity to all members and staff. Woodruff handed out copies of articles from the May meeting.

J. Nelson pointed out that the Agenda did not have NSA as an item. Sundquist suggested it be added to the agenda after item #7.

Koivula asked about the business of not photocopying stuff that members bring in. He stated that he has only brought in things a few times and since he is volunteering and sharing information with the staff and county, he would like those things to be copied at County expense. Woodruff explained that it is in the By-Laws and County manual that small amounts of copying can be done but after that, a charge will apply. This is to discourage members bringing in books or multiple pages to be copied. Koivula stated that it is in the By-laws that they are here to provide information to the BCC and staff and to be charged for performing their duties isn't right. Woodruff stated that she didn't know how to change the By-laws. J. Nelson stated it is not listed in the By-laws. Woodruff stated that she may have used the wrong term. Schumacher stated that the County has a thing about charging for the copies. Schumacher stated that he will check into this and report back.

Schumacher stated that there is a lot of Knapweed up the McKenzie.

Koivula stated that the City of Eugene is using Aqua master at Alton Baker Park to deal with the False Brome issue.

Penhallegon stated that he recently went on a County tour with the Federal Farm Service Agency out in Swiss Home, Hwy 36, Hwy 126, Walton Rd, Davis Rd, Horton Rd and the Knapweed is taking over in that area. It may be something to consider for roadside education of property owners out there. Schumacher stated that they are working with BLM, Army Corps of

Engineers, Dept of Agriculture, ODOT, and Siuslaw Watershed Council for a July public forum to get ideas on how to control the knapweed problem and how to get public involved. Schumacher will email members with the date. Schumacher stated that one possible idea is to till the land. Nelson asked if PW is working with other agencies. Schumacher stated that they are working together. Schumacher stated that he is hopeful they can raise funding. Melotti stated that there is some focus at OSU on weed science. Sundquist asked what the controls are for the knapweed. Schumacher stated that ODA has introduced some bugs for bio-control. Research is being done.

IV. BIO-CONTROL RELEASE

Schumacher gave a presentation on the Seed Weevil collection. Schumacher and others met to collect Scotch Broome Seed Weevils south of Pleasant Hill. Glenn Miller with Oregon Dept of Agriculture participated. Schumacher showed pictures of the weevils and collection process. J. Nelson asked if the weevils would go after other things and Schumacher stated that at this point the answer is no. Melotti stated that the basic research done shows that they do not affect other crops. Schumacher stated that they collected the bugs in cups by putting a net over the plant and shaking the bugs off into the net. The group went early in the day when the bugs were more lethargic and less likely to be flying around. He estimated they got 800-1000 bugs per container. After the collection process, they drove around looking for Scotch Broom areas for releasing the bugs. The group did find one area at Hills Creek. Schumacher stated that they were restricted by where they could distribute the bugs. Road maintenance was an issue because they didn't want to place them where maintenance would be done because the bug population wouldn't survive. Schumacher went out himself and did 7 more sites the next day. Sites included: Hamm Rd, Crow Rd, Hills Creek Rd, Kenneth-Nielson Rd, Lorane Hwy Site 1, Lorane Hwy Site 2, McKenzie View Dr, and Pine Grove. He showed pictures of the different sites. Schumacher stated that McKenzie View Dr is an area he would really like to see controlled. It has an infestation of French Broom and Scotch Broom. Melotti asked that Schumacher inform the McKenzie Watershed Council that the County is interested in control. LaRue asked if the purpose of using the bugs is to eliminate the plants. Schumacher stated that this will not eliminate the plants but hopefully over the years reduce the seed bank. Monitoring will be done to see if the bugs survived and the process is working. It was suggested that pictures be taken of the before and after affects at the sites. Schumacher stated that the collection took approximately 1 hour.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Adopt-a-road: Melotti stated that he has nothing to report on the Adopt-a-road sub committee. LaRue stated that he plans to make copies of some materials to bring at the next meeting. Bio-Swale: LaRue reported that some of the nurseries are huge users of water spending \$\$ to keep water from going back into the rivers and contaminating the rivers. He stated that the Oregon Dept of Agriculture and Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality are working on creating bio-swale projects on county roadways. LaRue wants to see what Lane County can do to help the grass seed growers maintain their fields better and prevent contamination of the waterways by creating some bio-swales. LaRue stated that he believes the roadside ditches are designed wrong and are designed to move water from one point to another as quickly as possible and it is not the best way to do it. J. Nelson stated that on Central road she sees areas that are grassy swales and she is interested in going out there with the subcommittee to identify what a bio-swale is. LaRue stated that the grass seed grower has to be a good steward of the land and find a good balance with growing their crops and controlling the water contamination. J. Nelson stated that some of the committee wants to be able to identify the bio-swales. LaRue stated that

the Oregon Association of Nurserymen does a good job of educating members. They have scholarships and research programs. LaRue stated that even ponds and swamps are bio-swales. J. Nelson asked LaRue if he would checkout locations of the nearest bio-swales to look at. Schumacher stated that the County worked with the City of Eugene on the Airport realignment project and it was designed with grass swale systems. He stated there are also bio retention ponds at the Bob Straub Parkway. Schumacher stated how much easier it is to do these projects at new sites rather than existing sites. Question was asked how well the swales age? Schumacher stated this kind of work is being done at Bob Straub Parkway and that they do require maintenance.

Shoulder Reclamation: Sundquist reported that nothing has been done yet.

Illegal Spray: Koivula stated that the committee had its first meeting Tuesday June 12. Koivula passed around a sign-up sheet to members to indicate what days they are available and how best to contact. The members are: Koivula, Melotti, Sundquist, Nelson and possibly Lynn Bowers. J. Nelson stated that if members want to bring in outside people, they can. J Nelson informed Penhallegon that he can sign up on any subcommittee he chooses since he was not present at the meeting when the committees were formed. It was suggested that a contact person is chosen for help with the Illegal spray issues legal wise. Koivula stated he will be working on that and LaRue suggested that it would be helpful to have a grass seed farmer on that subcommittee. Melotti questioned whether VMAC can be bringing outside people in to be on the subcommittees. J. Nelson stated that they can bring those outside people in for their professional or legal services. Melotti stated he just wanted to be sure before inviting outside people. J. Nelson stated it is not in the bylaws. She stated that it does not talk about it in the bylaws and her experience on committees is that a public notice is put in the paper. Schumacher stated that this is done for established committees. J. Nelson stated that it has been done for subcommittees too. Nelson stated that it is posted in the County notice section. J. Nelson is going to check into the issue.

Outreach: J. Nelson reported that she and Williams have talked on the phone. Williams stated that when VMAC needs to place notices, it can be sent to the Register Guard by email, edited, approved and placed. J. Nelson asked if there are some materials that she can have to distribute at meetings she attends. Melotti stated that what exists already is: Adopt-a-road, roadside trees and vegetation, site safety distance, and conflict resolution. Schumacher stated that the conflict resolution brochure is one that VMAC did and it is a really good brochure. Schumacher stated that there are none now, but it would be a good idea to get more made, although he doesn't know if there is an electronic version of it. J. Nelson stated that Commissioner Fleenor asked Nelson to attend a meeting at Florence. She will pass out her phone # to anyone who has questions for VMAC to address. J. Nelson stated that she would like to hold a committee meeting in Florence sometime after scoping it out ahead of time to see if there is any interest. J. Nelson asked if the sign shop could make a sign for her to use at a table at an event coming up in Florence so the public will know what she is there for. Sundquist suggested J. Nelson find out what it is first before VMAC commits to anything.

Sundquist asked about the August meeting and whether staff wants to hold a meeting or not. Graham stated that he looked in his binder and could not find anything regarding the issue of inviting outside people into the subcommittees. Penhallegon quoted some of the information in the bylaws. Melotti stated that the subcommittees can seek information from the outside unofficially. J. Nelson stated that members can talk to each other individually but not as a group outside the official meeting.

VI. SUMMER LANE TREE REMOVAL PROJECT

Schumacher gave a slide show on Summer Lane which is off Hunsaker Road. Schumacher stated that he has received numerous calls from property owners that want trees removed due to sidewalk safety. Schumacher stated that the community is generally elderly people and there is

a safety issue with the sidewalks buckling due to tree roots. The types of trees are Sweetgums, Cherry, Maples, Pine, and Oak. The project scope is from Hunsaker Rd to Gerald St. It is a three block area. There are 21 trees that need to be removed. Schumacher showed slides of some of the sidewalks and the trees that are restricted and lifting the sidewalks. All the calls they have received so far are for the removal of the trees. There have been no calls against the removal of trees. Schumacher stated that some street lights are also affected by the tree growth, as well as utilities meters. The County will be coordinating with other agencies. Letters will be sent out to home owners informing them of the planned action and to inform them of the planned action. There will be a public forum held hopefully in September. Schumacher stated that the owners will be required under a permit to pay for the sidewalk to be constructed to certain standards. Schumacher stated that the owners will have to hire their own contractor. Melotti stated that when the County did the Ruby project, it was suggested that home owners pool together to hire one contractor to cut down on multiple contractors at the same site at the same time and possibly to save on cost. Melotti would like to see what the outcome was on that project. Melotti suggest contacting the Public Information Officer to find out how the owners dealt with the contractor issue. Melotti stated that some owners may want to try to curve the sidewalk around the trees instead of removing of the trees. Graham stated that in some cases they can remove some roots without taking out the whole tree. Graham asked if there was already a form letter to send out to owners and if Schumacher was going to draft that letter to give to VMAC for approval. Schumacher stated that he will draft a letter and does not need VMAC approval, but wants to make VMAC aware of the project and see if VMAC wants to be involved and give input in the public forum. J. Nelson asked if one person in the middle of two people doesn't want the removal. Schumacher stated he will not close any doors and stated that some trees may not have to be removed and a certified arborist may be brought in to look at the options of saving the tree. If the arborist makes that certification, it will take the liability off of the County. Koivula stated that in some cases they may be able to grind off some of the sidewalk and still keep it. Schumacher stated that there is definitely some black & white areas. J. Nelson asked what happens to the wood from the tree removal. Schumacher stated that the home owner gets first right to it. Schumacher stated that if they don't want it, then the County will have to look at whether to mill it. Melotti stated that at the Ruby project, VMAC gave suggestions to home owners as to what they could do. Melotti stated that a lot of property owners don't realize that they are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk and it comes as a shock to them when they get a letter telling them that they have to have this work done and pay for the cost. Sundquist asked when Schumacher will be holding the meeting. Schumacher stated that he would like to have the meeting in August and the work done in September. Sundquist asked what Schumacher would like the committee to do. Schumacher stated that input is important and if VMAC would like to participate at the forum, it would be helpful. Koivula asked if the County would be responsible for the tree removal and replacement of trees. Schumacher stated that the County would do all the removal of trees. As far as replacement, Schumacher stated that that is something to look into. Schumacher wants to make sure that the right trees are planted there is some control of where the trees are placed for visibility issues, etc. The question was asked about whether there would be a low cost loan available for home owners. Schumacher did not know yet about that. Schumacher stated that in talking with Arno Nelson, it was decided that there would be one permit for the entire project. Sundquist asked if the County will be removing the roots of the trees. Schumacher stated that the contractors will be doing that portion of it. Sundquist asked if the owners will be required to get a permit. Schumacher stated that there will be one permit for the whole project. Melotti stated that there is usually a lot of peer pressure for owners to do the work along with the property owners, and there is also the financial incentive. John Petsch stated that the permit fees are about to increase and that there are ways to do the permit for this project such as putting a 3 month deadline on the owners to prevent owners from dragging their feet on getting the sidewalk work done. Petsch stated that when he worked for City of Roseburg, they would pick a neighborhood and mark it, figure out how much it will cost,

put it out for bid and then assess the property owners. Petsch stated that then the whole neighborhood is done at the same time and looks consistent. Schumacher stated that he will be talking to contractors to get a general idea of cost and Petsch suggested looking at current bids for contract to see how much concrete is per square yard or however they bid it. Schumacher stated that on the Ruby project, there was one owner who did not buy into the program and their sidewalk looks very different. Koivula suggested providing a list of the arborist to property owners. Sundquist asked Petsch if the Roseburg owners were allowed to pay their assessment over time. Petsch thought that was the case. Schumacher stated that he didn't know yet if that could happen. Schumacher will have an update next month on the public forum meeting.

VII. BUDGET CUTS-HERBICIDE PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Schumacher reports that the potential impacts are that we lose the Inmate work crew on July 1. The County is also losing some vegetation crew people. If there are vacancies open right now, they will not be filled. Schumacher stated that currently they are 2 positions that will remain vacant. Sundquist asked if there was a way around losing the inmate crew. Schumacher stated that it is in the Local 626 Union contract that if there is any reduction in work force, the inmate crew goes away. Schumacher stated that the County has summer help. There are some crew people that go to other zones to work. LaRue asked what the inmate crews will do once they are not doing vegetation work. Schumacher stated that there could be early releases. He also stated that the Sheriffs office now has to farm out their services elsewhere to other agencies. Schumacher stated that the County was their main bread & butter. Schumacher stated that it cost about \$1 million per year to pay for the Sheriffs, the vehicles, equipment, maintenance cost, lunch for the inmates, etc. Melotti explained that this money was from the Secure Rural Schools money, not directly from the County. Schumacher stated that as of July 1 we lose these services. Graham asked about the Adopt-a-road litter pick up and who was going to be doing that now. Woodruff responded that she is working with Arno Nelson on that issue and does not yet know how that will be handled other than possibly road crews picking up litter. Graham offered to drop his litter bags off. Sundquist asked if the funding continues until July 1 of 2008. Melotti stated he thought it ended 2007. Petsch explained that the Federal government runs on a different fiscal year than the County. Schumacher explained that some of the primary work the inmate crews did was guardrail work, litter pick up, landscaping, grass removal and anything that could be done without power tools in areas where the County crews did not have the mechanical means or crews to do the work. Schumacher stated that he spoke with Arno Nelson and guardrails are huge. He stated that there are 29 miles of guardrails maintenance that they will lose. Nelson stated that the primary reason for the guardrail maintenance is for vision and safety purposes. Schumacher stated that it is for safety for the traveling public, maintenance & preservation of the infrastructure. Nelson talked about the Blackberries bushes and that those help with maintaining the slope. Schumacher explained that maintenance of those 29 miles is just not going to happen with the cuts. Petsch explained that the crews also pull the vegetation back to prevent it from ruining the road structure. Schumacher stated that the County is required to maintain these guardrails. Melotti asked about the cost of updating the spray truck to spray these areas. Schumacher stated that those spray trucks will not be used for these areas. Melotti stated that there is going to be capital outlay to pay for those updates, so are there options to look at the mechanical methods for controlling the vegetation. Schumacher stated that the mechanical equipment will not work within 2-3 ft. area around the guardrail. Schumacher stated that that is what the inmate crews took care of. Melotti stated it is an issue of coordination between the inmate crews and the road maintenance crews to do the work together. Melotti stated that he sees this as a wash regarding the outlay in cost. Schumacher explained that that is why we haven't used the herbicides in the past because we had the inmate crews to do that, but they have now lost that help. Schumacher stated that there are only 3 brush mowers in the County to do the work. Schumacher stated there are about 3000 sections of

guardrails in the County and that isn't even half of what there is. Schumacher explained that they can't get the road crew and inmate crews at the same place at the same time because the road crews also have to cover other road duties. Schumacher stated that the schedule of work will be combined. If an area hasn't been done in several years, then it will be high on the list, plus the time of year is a factor and responses to calls. Sundquist stated that the County may have to contract out for these services. Sundquist explained that the County needs to look at all the alternatives before resorting to spraying. Sundquist doesn't believe that losing employees should result in spraying. Schumacher stated that the idea of paving under the guardrail may not work because the guardrail is already impinging on ROW. Schumacher explains that there seems to be a lot of potential for ways to prevent this problem but that mostly applies to new areas, not existing sites. J. Nelson stated that there needs to be some way of using a squelch to control this vegetation. Penhallegon explained that labor is the major issue that Schumacher is talking about. Schumacher explains that they have to spend money regardless. Schumacher stated that from where the County spray program was over this last decade to where we are now is huge. Schumacher stated that Arno Nelson is clear about the need for the spraying are the guardrails and noxious weeds and that is where his vision for roadside maintenance is. Clear zones are gone now and that used to be 90% of what was sprayed. Schumacher wants to make sure it is understood how things have changed drastically. Schumacher stated that they are so far behind and they are still putting out fires from way back. He stated that there are just not enough work crews to do the job.

Sundquist made the motion to extend the meeting for 5-10 minutes to further the discussion. Melotti seconded. Vote was 4-4. Motion failed. Members agreed that discussion can continue unofficially off the record once the meeting is adjourned.

Nelson adjourned the meeting at 7:35

VIII. ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Tabled until next meeting

IX. NSA- SUNDQUIST

Tabled until next meeting

X. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., JULY 11, 2007

- Minutes

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Debby Woodruff, Recording Secretary