

**MINUTES**  
**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**December 13, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Bodner, Paul Clements, Mike Koivula, Chris Melotti, Ross Penhallegon, Jan Nelson, John Sundquist

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peter Graham, Douglass Moser

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

B/CC PRESENT: Faye Stewart

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Karen Bodner called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

**III. GENERAL COMMENT**

No comment.

**IV. REPORT BACK – BOARD DISCUSSION ON VMAC APPOINTMENTS – COMM. STEWART / STAFF**

Stewart explained that at the Board Meeting on 11/29/06, the Board approved reappointment of Ross Penhallegon because they felt that he had been a member for only a short time and it's generally, in most cases, an automatic reappointment. Also, there was concern by the Board that the applicants weren't interviewed, so he (Stewart), Mr. Dwyer, and Melotti would be conducting interviews on 12/18/06 and make recommendation for vacancies at the first of the year. Schumacher explained to Bodner, who was originally asked to join the interview panel as VMAC Chairperson, that because she her term was expiring, the Board requested that the Vice-Chair (Koivula) attend; however, Koivula isn't available, so Schumacher contacted Melotti, who volunteered. Stewart extended his thanks to Bodner for her willingness to conduct the interviews, and apologized that she was informed of the change at this meeting and not earlier.

**V. DISCUSSION – DIVERSITY SURVEYS (DISTRIBUTED AT 10/11/06 VMAC MEETING) – SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher said that not everyone was able to complete their surveys at the last meeting, and requested that those who didn't should complete and submit them so that he can put them together and bring them back to the next meeting. He asked if anyone had any questions or

issues, and offered copies to those who did not have one. He said he has received Koivula's survey to date.

## **VI. WAIPUNA POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D) – SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher presented information regarding trial use of the equipment borrowed from BLM for about 4 months. BLM had a contract with Waipuna for 4 years, but on the 4<sup>th</sup> year, BLM lost funding for the equipment to transport it and the staff to run it, so Staff saw an opportunity to do a non-monetary exchange where County would provide a truck for transport and staff to operate it. The plan was to get into eight (8) BLM sites as part of the agreement, but it changed and only County land was used for experimentation as listed:

- East Franklin Road by BRING Recycling: Meadow Knapweed was treated with the unit (coconut oil and steamed water creates hot foam treatment). Treatment is very similar to using a carpet cleaner. The slow movement allows the heat to be applied, which actually is the key element to treatment. Treatment does seem to immediately stunt the plant, but he's not extremely optimistic that the heat from the foam is going to impact the seed (rock hard – each flower holds around 50-60 seeds). On the back-side of the pond by Bring, Knotweed was treated by using the probe under the earth of the plant. Blackberries were also treated, but not sure if treatment will be at all successful.
- West Boundary Road/Lookout Point (approx. M.P. 2 to 6): False Brome was treated at 8 sites, approx. 4' x 4' patches and up to 20'x 10' patches. The Waipuna was brought in specifically to treat this species (thin tissue vegetation is more impacted by the heat). Two 500-gals. tank trucks were brought to the site to provide water for the Waipuna, which was enough for 1 ½ to 2 hours worth of actual work. BLM had previously pumped road-side creek water into the unit for use, but clogged the internal filters, which ruined them. It is highly recommended not to use any water unless it is purified. Clements suggested that a large water truck be used to pull the Waipuna behind it to enable a full day's worth of work. A. Nelson said that at the time of year that they conducted the Waipuna trial, water trucks weren't available. Sundquist asked if mowing could assist in killing the plant, and Schumacher said that some of the areas had been mowed, but the plant growth returned quickly compared to some of the other grasses. Sundquist asked about the knapweed that already set seeds, and asked if that was in an area that wasn't mowed, and Schumacher said that knapweed could be mowed up to three times a year and it will still go to seed (similar to a Dandelion). J. Nelson asked if there were any cases where herbicides had been used on knapweed and it returned, and Manewal said it doesn't really affect the seeds, but herbicide does a really good job on the plant itself. Schumacher said that all the trial areas were measured and imported the data into GIS and had maps developed detailing the populations. He will go back and monitor the sites again next year. Schumacher said the treatment did seem to make an impact, but the foam didn't last very long (1.5 gallons of coconut oil to 500 gals of water); Schumacher said he increased the oil quantity a little bit to see if they could get more foam, but they found that if they could keep the temperature at around mid-90's Celsius, then the foam consistency would be thicker and last longer.
- Northwest Expressway and Frank Parrish are other areas that were treated, but planting strips were not tested as planned.

Other alternative trials involved the XMark mid-deck mower (demo from Ramsey-Waite), which was used on North Game Farm Road, strips of County owned urban areas that don't accommodate the larger equipment owned by the County. The smaller mower didn't work well at this particular project (ground was uneven and covered with overgrown grass and blackberry bushes, which were heavily present and growing over property owner fencing, as well as

dumped landscape and garbage debris). Schumacher said some of the questions to be answered were “what will the mowers handle” and “how much time is needed to invest in the project”, and “what are costs involved”. Stewart asked Schumacher what the cities of Eugene or Springfield do in cases where landscape of the right-of-way outside their fence line is the responsibility of the landowner, and Schumacher said they bill the landowners for the time to maintain the areas through a “Nuisance Abatement” program. The County doesn’t have a system in place for urban environments, since it is geared to maintain rural areas. Melotti asked what responsibility the utility/gas companies have in these rights-of-way, and Schumacher said there are no franchise fees or charges to them for the strips of land that they use. Schumacher said that in the future, as more of this type of development is engineered, vegetation types will be more carefully considered. J. Nelson asked why these types of areas should be landscaped with shrubbery and chipped mulch or something so that it doesn’t really need maintenance, and Schumacher said it will never “not need maintenance”, and it’s an urban transition for the County of looking at the appropriate landscaping. J. Nelson said she’s seen a lot of plantings along Beltline (over by Jerry’s and down to West 11<sup>th</sup>, by the walls) that doesn’t seem to require that much maintenance. Schumacher said there are a lot of blackberries growing over the walls. Bodner suggested that the North Game Farm might be a good location for chunks of test plots. Schumacher said that the Sheriff’s Work Camp will be considered to help maintain these areas, but they can only use hand tools (no power tools allowed). Melotti suggested that the homeowner’s association be contacted and alerted to the problem. Stewart said he’d like to find a way to get the landowner involved in this particular part of land and have them maintain it (still part of landowner’s property, but has easement for County rights-of-way). Schumacher said he’s started dialogue with the City of Eugene to get more information on how to do this, since the City has been doing this for the past 20 years.

Schumacher said that if the X-Mark was used by the County, it would have to be retrofitted with a roll cage. J. Nelson said she has a little tractor with a brush x on it that would wipe out the vegetation out in a ½ hour, and A. Nelson said that the problem is the fencing that the blackberries have grown into and over, and when the cutters go into the vegetation, it would pull the fencing down. J. Nelson said that at first hack the vegetation out, but then it could be maintained that way. A. Nelson agreed that once the work is initially done, it would be regularly maintained much easier. Schumacher said all possible routes are being considered in how to tackle the problem. J. Nelson wanted to know if the native plant people would object to planting spreading Junipers that just covers everything and all that the County would have to do is cut along the sidewalks once every couple of years or so. Schumacher reiterated that ideas, cost, and maintenance all have to be considered. He said the X-Mark is probably not the solution for this type of work, being that it’s not safe for more than a 5% grade, although it is relatively inexpensive – just not very safe for the operator.

## **VII. ADOPT-A-ROAD (ADR) FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT/ENHANCEMENT – SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher said that he’d like to postpone discussion because Peter Graham was absent this meeting and was personally involved in the program. Bodner asked to discuss it briefly being that this is her last meeting (term expires 12/31). Schumacher referenced the flyer that he’d included in VMAC packets for October’s meeting, and said that Woodruff is very involved in the coordination of the program. He asked that the Committee, who initially brought up the item for discussion, should give him comment on how vegetation issues and roadside clean-up could be partnered. Bodner said she envisioned getting people involved in the program who don’t like to spray, yet don’t offer any solutions. She thought this should be looked at by VMAC next year, and offered to be involved as part of the general public. Melotti asked Woodruff if she directly deals with the public and wanted to know how many people are involved in AAR. Woodruff said

she does deal directly with the public, and it was estimated that at least 30 groups are involved. She said that if a group signs up and actively cleans up their section of a road two times or more, then they receive a sign acknowledging their group. A. Nelson said that AAR has been in action for over 10 years. Woodruff said she's spoken with Graham's wife, who'd called for more brochures because she wanted to get more involvement. Woodruff explained that to join the program, one must complete and submit a facility permit and liability release form, watch the safety video she provides, and use County loaned supplies (first aid kit, road signs, hazardous material flags, safety vests, heavy-duty garbage bags, gloves, long-arm prongs). After a group completes the clean-up, they return all supplies and let Woodruff know where and how many filled garbage bags are to be picked up. Woodruff then contacts the Sheriff's Dept., who coordinates the pick-up. Melotti suggested that a new brochure be developed to combine current AAR information with vegetation issues, such as blackberries and Scotch Broom, as well as include weed website information, the goal being to get AAR volunteers to alert noxious weed locations. Woodruff said in that the AAR brochure does have brief information regarding vegetation issues. A. Nelson proposed that VMAC take the new brochure concept on as a committee project over the next 4-5 months, spending 30 minutes on the subject at each meeting. A. Nelson said the safety video could be updated in-house. Clements suggested that Staff make County Information Officer aware of needs for vegetation issues. Koivula asked if the County would be comfortable loaning sharp tools to volunteers for vegetation use, and would there be need for investigation T&E plants and areas prior to public access/operation. Schumacher said it depends on the area, as the County road system has already been inventoried. Schumacher added a comment requested by Moser regarding the "adopt-a-weed", ever since the Black Locust discussion came up regarding usage of bi-products from the eradication efforts, and that not clearing an area, but actually using the products would be a good idea. Melotti moved that VMAC take on writing the Adopt-A-Road Side Vegetation brochure. Sundquist seconded. Motion passed.

#### **VIII. IVM STATUS UPDATE – SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher reported that the vegetation training program's (equipment operator) classroom portion of two full days was just completed for 43 Staff. Certification for safety and policy issues will begin next. The training program has been in development for the past 6 months, and has been a great success, and there's a lot of positive feedback from Staff. Schumacher said the training program will eventually be accessible by the general public via the vegetation website once the website is complete (other projects taking priority at this time). Sundquist asked what Schumacher was currently working on for VMAC background. A. Nelson said Schumacher is working on a new program called RMIS (Road Management Information System) that will track T&E sites, areas of no-spray and noxious weeds. Schumacher added that he's working with County Environmental Permits crew regarding County Force and CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) seeding project development, brief planting plans, as well as working on partnerships with watershed councils, presentations (working with Penhallegon and OSU Extension), and other projects. Melotti asked about the status of the Annual Report that is to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners as required by the Last Resort Ordinance, and Schumacher reported that it will be submitted some time no later than February. All alternative methods that have been trialed this year will appear in the report.

#### **IX. ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE – NELSON & MANEWAL**

A. Nelson reported that crews are currently busy with technical work for 75 miles of chip seal and 25 miles of road for overlay work. Four miles of gravel road is being prepped for paving on West Boundary Road; Beaver Road and Christiansen Road (off Fox Hollow) are also being prepped for paving. Prep work, which takes up to 6+ months of time to get roads ready for work to begin in July, includes possible culvert replacement, brush mowing, road widening, and shoulder and

driveway work is considered. Clements asked what kind of criteria the County uses when replacing stream culverts (fish passage), and A. Nelson said a database courtesy of ODF&W is used. Staff also works with watershed councils, the forest service, and grant opportunities. An average lifespan for an aluminized pipe (galvanized steel) is 75 years.

Manewal reported that full-width mowing (6-10' wide mowing at one time) is near completion in Zone 4 (Veneta area), and 20 miles worth of work remains in Zone 3 (Big Fall Creek area), and some work in Zone 2 (London Rd and a portion of Row River Rd. Brush mowing will happen later in those areas that A. Nelson reported as prep work for next summer. Manewal said he has two employees out on injuries, and the two floating positions typically for his Vegetation crew have been temporarily shifted over to another zone, which has slowed progress. He said he's getting two new brush mowing machines to replace older ones some time in January. Scattered tree work is in progress in all zones, except Zone 5 (Florence), which they take care of themselves. His crews are gearing up for anticipated high winds being reported in the next couple of days.

Miscellaneous:

Sundquist asked if road funds are lost, will vegetation management suffer or need help. Stewart responded that currently the County does not have any Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding. He said that it's gone, but they are doing all they can within the next six months to get it reauthorized, but there's absolutely no guarantee that the County will get the reauthorization. It may take the new Congress 3-4 months just to figure out their offices and how they will operate. County staff is not optimistic and is preparing two different budgets, one that represents the authorization (with a \$3 mill cut), and one that represents no funding, which will include some smaller program eliminations (\$50 mill cut total for Lane County, \$25 mill from the Road Fund and \$25 mill from the General Fund). Snowden had mentioned to Stewart that perhaps in February, VMAC should have an agenda item to discuss and add comment to help with the budget process. Stewart said that the County is looking at different funding mechanisms, which will take a vote from County citizens. The current budget stands for the fiscal year, which ends June 30<sup>th</sup>, but it could be that in Mar/Apr, the County may be contacting certain departments and employees of cuts at that time. Stewart hopes that in January or February, if the new Congress can bring itself to even consider passing some of the bills that they need to get through and get SRS added to them for at least one year's worth of funding, then that would help. Those helping lobby for SRS funds are the National Association of County Schools, Tony Beida (Lane County Gov. Affairs), and various other government figures, including Stewart. 42 states receive some funding from this act and are representative of the need. Stewart said that he hopes to have dollar figures and County program information available for discussion at VMAC's February meeting. Penhallegon added that the generality is that SRS funds are a huge chunk of County budget and that the public needs to realize what they are asking of the Commissioners when decisions are being made. Stewart added that part of the cuts in budget will effect law enforcement, and there are other services that are mandated and cannot be cut. Stewart said there's a funding formula, and areas that don't receive much money in comparison to Lane County's \$50 mill, which may also effect what kind of funding we may get in relation to other states.

**X. REVIEW OF 2006 VMAC WORK PLAN – COMMITTEE & STAFF**

Updated.

**XI. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., JANUARY 10, 2007:**

- Welcome & Introduction of New Committee Members – Staff/Committee

- Review & Approval of Annual Report (Work Plan 2006) – Staff/Committee

## **XII. FAREWELL TO OUTGOING MEMBERS BODNER & CLEMENTS**

Clements said he's learned a lot during his tenure on VMAC and he appreciates all the earnest dialogue and heart-felt efforts from everyone. He said he's been really impressed with County Staff's empathy toward the opinions and concerns of VMAC members, and that he believes that Staff is integrated in VMAC and its function.

Bodner said that being on VMAC has been one of the most valuable experiences of her life. She said when she first came on the committee (8 years ago), she was "no-spray, period". Being on the committee has been an eye-opener and has taught her objectivity, compromise, and she appreciates County Public Works expertise and responsibility to really look at the concerns of the public for herbicide use. She said that Lane County is some of the best trained around regarding using herbicides and she wished that more of the public could see that, being that her concern is for the public. She asked that all remaining committee members be nice to each other, that they are a team, and added that she doesn't want contention or name-calling to be part of the meetings. She also added that she would like the committee to continue to work on looking for alternatives per the Last Resort Policy, and asked that members look at their own responsibility to the public and come to all meetings as able, and leave any political agendas at home.

Schumacher gave out letters and certificates of recognition from the Lane County Board of Commissioners to Bodner and Clements. Schumacher said he's only been on the committee for a year and has learned a lot. He thanked both members and invited Bodner and Clements back for Public Comment, and that they may re-apply for membership after one year.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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Stephonee Freeman, Recording Secretary