

Northwest Weed Management Partnership

3060 NE Riverside Loop
McMinnville, OR 97128
(971) 241-2173

February 11, 2008

To Lane County Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the 130+ partnering organizations in the Northwest Weed Management Partnership and the partnering organizations in the Upper Willamette CWMA to provide you with input regarding the topics on invasive weed control and/or the use of herbicides by Lane County Public Works. Per the request posted by Lane County, my opinions are as follows:

Question #1: Should Lane County be in the business of Noxious and Invasive Plant Control?

Yes, by all means. The reasons are many:

- Noxious weeds on public lands are a threat to human and animal health. A number of noxious weeds are toxic to humans and animals (e.g., tansy ragwort, spurge laurel, others), and there are other noxious weeds that cause extreme skin reactions such as photo-dermatitis, rashes, sores (e.g., hog weed, poison oak, cow parsnip, others). It would be extremely negligent on Lane County's part to not control these species for the common good.
- Noxious weeds in road right of ways block visibility and may encourage the likelihood of car/deer collisions.
- Roadside rights of ways are a known vector for the spread of noxious weeds. If allowed to proliferate along right of ways, noxious weeds will spread to private properties, causing taxpayers loss of aesthetics, property values, and if the weeds pose a threat to human/animal health - safety. Moreover, these weeds will pause an economic burden to property owners who will have to invest time and money on control

Question #2: Should Lane County use limited herbicides for the County approved Permitted Products List as part of our integrated Vegetation Management program, for management activities listed in the 2007 Lane County Annual Report.

While the Northwest Weed Management Partnership and the Upper Willamette CWMA are proponents of Integrated Pest Management, and stress the use of mechanical invasive weed control when and where ever possible. However, experience has shown that in certain circumstances vegetation managers need to use all the tools available to them, and at times, this means using herbicides in a safe and judicious manner.

In my work, I assist well over agencies and organizations in 15 Oregon counties as they plan, develop, and execute invasive weed control projects on both public and private lands, and I can honestly say that without herbicides many of these projects could not be successfully completed. This is due in large part to the wide variety of invasive weeds whose seed dispersal and/or root systems simply are more than a match for mechanical control. Some examples include (but are not limited to): knotweed, false brome, various species of knapweed and thistle, and others. Moreover, new invasives such as garlic

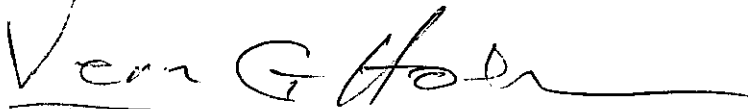
mustard will soon be invading Lane County, causing further loss in habitat and taking over roadside ditches.

Lane County is an active participant in the Upper Willamette Cooperative Weed Management Area and is in a very strong position to work with others on projects where roadside rights of ways connect to private or public lands. Allowing the use of herbicides would provide an excellent venue for controlling invasive weed populations rather than the current "shotgun" approach, which is neither time nor cost effective.

From what I have learned at various meetings, it is apparent that Lane County Public Works' Vegetation Management staff has done all it can to control invasive weeds without the use of herbicides, but they cannot keep roadways safe and clear of visual obstructions using current staff and methodologies.

On behalf of the 130+ partnering agencies in the Northwest Weed Management Partnership, I encourage you to continue to be active in noxious and invasive weed control as well as allow the limited use of herbicides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vern G. Holm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vern Holm
Partnership Coordinator
Northwest Weed Management Partnership