

W76

AGENDA COVER MEMO

DATE: June 4, 2003

TO: Lane County Board of Commissioners

DEPT.: Public Works/Parks

PRESENTED BY: Rich Fay, Parks Manager

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Order/ Authorizing the Parks Division to Use Herbicides as Part of a Forestry Management Plan to Comply with the Forestry Practices Act at Blue Mountain Park Timber Areas.

I. MOTION

MOVE APPROVAL OF THE ORDER AUTHORIZING THE PARKS DIVISION TO USE HERBICIDES AS PART OF THE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN TO COMPLY WITH THE FOREST PRACTICES ACT AT BLUE MOUNTAIN PARK TIMBER AREAS.

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

Shall Lane County use herbicides on Blue Mountain Park timber area forests to control unwanted vegetation associated with reforestation efforts?

III. DISCUSSION

A. Background

Since 1986, Lane County has been harvesting timber from Blue Mountain Park. The proceeds from the harvests have been used to assist the Parks Division with capital improvements throughout the parks system. The Blue Mountain Park Timber Management Plan calls for a series of staged harvests over 20 years. After each harvest the Division, working with the services of Woodland Management has completed re-planting as per the industry standard of 400 trees per acre.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Forestry Practices Forester, Tom Berglund wrote to Lane County Parks Division, On February 4, 2002, as previously presented in the Board packet on August 28th, 2002 which referred to his recent inspection of Lane County land near Blue Mountain. Mr. Berglund states, "without management of the grass and blackberries on the site, replanting may be necessary and achievement of the

Forest Practices requirements will be in jeopardy.” Woodland Management has recommended that the County use limited herbicides in the planting area to minimize competition between the seedlings and the surrounding vegetation. Woodland Management’s proposal was previously presented in the Board packet on August 28th, 2002.

On August 28th, 2002, the Parks Manager presented the Agenda item “Order/In the Matter of Authorizing the Parks Division to Use Herbicides as Part of the Reforestation Efforts on Forestlands Managed by the Division.” The Board directed staff to research the feasibility of options including the use of manual and mechanical means or herbicides to control unwanted vegetation and bring the information back to the Board. On April 9, 2003, the Parks Manager discussed with the Board in a work session the options available to control unwanted vegetation associated with reforestation efforts. The Board directed the Parks Division to direct funds toward implementation of the use of manual and mechanical means to unwanted vegetation associated with reforestation efforts.

B. Analysis

Because of the timing and need to proceed this season with a cost effective plan as a part of the reforestation efforts, the Parks Manager is presenting the option of using herbicides in combination with adequate buffers a solution to a more cost effective approach to the plan.

Woodland Management is recommending that the County spray selected herbicides using ground-based equipment in the areas needed. This equipment includes a backpack sprayer and a tractor-powered sprayer. The proposed herbicides, Oust, Accord, and Garlon are low toxicity chemicals and are similar to those used on road rights-of-way by the Engineering Division. Hood River and Coos Counties use similar herbicides on their forests. Contract crews under general supervision of Woodland would apply the herbicides. A buffer area of 50 feet of no spray around any streams and developed County Roads or areas would be maintained as recommended by Woodland Management and approved by the Board. The industry standard for this type of ground based spraying is 10 feet. In fact, Woodland Management has worked to provide at least a 100 feet zone of no activity of harvesting timber adjacent to streams.

The proposed use of herbicides at Blue Mountain Park is consistent with standard forest practices and with the Division’s general policy of minimizing exposure to surrounding properties and park visitors by providing greater than standard buffers around streams, roads, and park areas of high use. In Map A- Blue Mountain Park, the distance from nearest timber harvest Area A and the Blue Mountain School is 1,200 feet; from Area A to an un-named year round stream is 700 feet; from Area B and Mosby Creek is 500 feet; and from Area C to Mosby Creek is 200 feet.

In "Attachment C- Options Comparisons" which was previously presented in the Board packet on August 28th, 2002 reveals the costs of the various methods. The ninety- five acres of Blue Mountain Park timber areas are divided into four areas of similar characteristics. The estimated cost of spraying is \$100 per acre per application using ground based equipment requiring two entries, one in the first year and one in the third year. Included in the estimate of \$100 per acre are mechanical and manual clearing costs for buffer zone areas, as indicated, and areas where unwanted vegetation has overgrown replanted trees. The total one entry cost estimate is \$9,500 per application. Therefore, two entries will be required and cost \$19,000 to allow trees to achieve "free to grow" status and meet the requirements of the Forestry Practices Act.

C. Alternatives/Options

1. Direct staff to use selected herbicides and a combination of manual and mechanical means to remove unwanted vegetation at Blue Mountain Park Timber Areas.
2. Direct staff to use a combination of manual and mechanical means to remove unwanted vegetation

D. Recommendation

Staff recommends the lowest cost alternative of herbicide use.

E. Timing

Depends on Board direction.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP

Survival of the replanted trees will be reported back to the Board within 3 years with or without the use of herbicides as a vegetation management tool.

V. ATTACHMENT

Map A- Blue Mountain Park

ORDER NO.) IN THE MATTER OF AUTHORIZING THE PARKS
) DIVISION TO USE HERBICIDES AS
) PART OF A FORESTRY MANAGEMENT
) PLAN TO COMPLY WITH THE
) FOREST PRACTICES ACT AT
) BLUE MOUNTAIN PARK TIMBER
) AREAS

OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

Map A Blue Mountain Park

