Vegetation Task Force – Summary Document:

**15.500 Purpose:**

Current Language:

1. The County promotes environmentally sensitive roadside vegetation management that protects the health and safety of the public and County's employees.

2. The County shall use non-herbicidal control methods, including prevention, as its preferred tools for roadside vegetation management. Permitted herbicides shall be used only as a last resort when other options have been proven ineffective.

3. The listing of Willamette River Steelhead and Chinook Salmon under the Endangered Species Act has heightened awareness of the impact that common practices have on the environment. Recent studies documenting the presence of herbicides in area streams and effects of herbicides on salmon point to the need for public agencies to serve as models of environmental stewardship in landscape management. *(Changed to new section in revised recommendation – Section Environment 15.501)*

Recommended Language:

1. Lane County promotes roadside vegetation management practices that emphasize environmental protection, health and safety of the public and employees to support vibrant communities and preserve infrastructure. Lane County shall serve as a positive model for environmental stewardship.

2. The County shall use non-herbicidal control methods, including prevention, as its preferred tools for roadside vegetation management. Permitted herbicides may be used when other methods/options have been ineffective.

**15.501 Environment** – *New Addition, did not exist in old policy document*

Recommended Language

1. The listing of Willamette River Steelhead and Chinook salmon under the Endangered Species Act has heightened awareness of the impact that common practices have on the environment. Studies documenting the presence of herbicides in area streams and effects of herbicides on salmon point to the need for public agencies to serve as models of environmental stewardship in landscape management.

2. Impacts to other species, including pollinators and amphibians should be considered in maintenance activities.

\*Primary Change: Impacts to pollinators and amphibians considered in decision making process

**15.502 Data Collection and Analysis** *– New Addition, did not exist in old policy document*

Recommended Language:

1. Noxious and Invasive species management will be supported by inventories and roadside monitoring on a three year cycle. County inventories will be made available to the public.

2. Collaborative efforts will be sought where possible to share information and resources from other agencies, public members and partners.

3. Maintenance methods and tools will be selected based upon findings of results and prioritization within a defined decision matrix as part of the Management Prescription Plan.

\*Primary change was the addition of a new section in the policy, adding noxious weed inventories, promotion of collaborative work on projects and the addition of a decision matrix in the current Management Prescription Plan

**15.505 Definitions**

Current Language:

As used in this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

Herbicide means any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any plant from growing where unwanted.

Recommended Language:

As used in this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

Herbicide means any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating plant growth. (Revised by Ordinance No. 12-03, Effective 9.11.03)

Emergency – Any public health, economic or other event deemed an emergency by County, State or Federally declaration.

Threshold – The point at which maintenance is required to insure set standards are maintained.

**\***Primary change was the addition of two new definitions in the policy, defining emergency and threshold.

**15.510 Roadside Vegetation Management Plan**

Current Language:

Non-herbicidal control methods including prevention, mechanical, manual, biological and other alternatives shall be the County’s preferred tools and most actively pursued methods of vegetation management on county roadsides.

Recommended Language:

Lane County’s primary roadside vegetation control methods will be data driven. Preferred options will be selected based on efficacy and promotion of public and environmental health and safety. Mechanical and manual methods will continue to be the primary tools within our program.

\*Primary Change: Language about decisions being data driven and focus on mechanical and manual methods as primary tools for maintenance.

Current Language:

 (1) Prevention Techniques. Vegetation prevention techniques encourage the desired plants, animals, and other organisms and discourage unwanted ones. Prevention techniques and least-toxic pest controls include:

(a) Good planting techniques, mulching, composting, irrigating, fertilizing, and use of native and pest-resistant plant species to avoid conditions where undesirable plant species, disease, and pests can develop into problem conditions.

(b) Mechanical pest control techniques like hand pulling weeds, string trimming, flaming weeding (where practical and allowed), mowing, aeration and thatching, vacuum removal, and thermal.

(c) Increasing vegetation tolerance thresholds.

Recommended Language:

1) Prevention Techniques. Vegetation prevention techniques encourage the desired plants, animals, and other organisms and discourage unwanted ones. Prevention techniques and least-toxic pest controls include:

(a) Maintaining a monitoring program sufficient to enable a data driven process promoting effective and timely vegetation management practices.

(b) Increasing vegetation tolerance thresholds, while maintaining current roadside safety and infrastructure standards.

(2) Mechanical, manual and other alternative vegetation control methods that evaluate and address existing vegetation problems or problems that may develop on County roadsides in spite of prevention techniques, the Department of Public Works shall follow the approach outlined below:

(a) Monitor roadside vegetation growth to determine if thresholds have been exceeded and/or control is needed (See Section 15.502)

 (b) Use physical, mechanical and other alternative methods to control vegetation to prevent impairments or damages to roadways.

Primary Change: Removal of specific methods for vegetation control for Prevention techniques. Now more defined by evaluation of issue, define a threshold and