



Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board

1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 416-1467

Minutes

Published Meeting
April 20th 2017, 6:00pm
Skagit County Noxious Weed Board
Board of Commissioners Hearing Room
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm April 20th 2017 by Joseph Shea

II. ROLL CALL

1. Jim Hinton (Board Chair)
2. Victor Jensen (Board Member)
3. Jim Carsten (Board Member)
4. Joseph Shea (Coordinator)
5. Dan Berentson (Guest)
6. Kevin Anderson (Guest)
7. Alison Halpern (Guest)

Quorum was met.

III. AGENDA

a. Approval of April 20th 2017 Meeting Agenda

Jim Carstens and Victor Jensen: Move to approve the April 20th 2017 Meeting Agenda

Vote: Yay 3, Nay 0. Motion Passes.

IV. MINUTES

a. Approval of January 20th 2017 Minutes

There were no minutes generated from the January 20th 2017 meeting. All minutes will now be recorded and published after approval at the next quarterly meeting.

Jim Carstens and Victor Jensen: Move to approve our meeting minutes from the April 20th 2017 meeting at our next quarterly meeting on July 20th 2017.

Vote: Yay 3, Nay 0. Motion Passes.

V. GUEST COMMENTS

Kevin Anderson, Swinomish Tribe Natural Resource Land Manager, is interested in future cooperation between the Tribe and Skagit County. Kevin said that he is excited to work with Joseph Shea, the Interim Skagit County Noxious weed Coordinator, in the

Chair:

- Jim Hinton

Board members:

- Jim Carstens
- Tom Dellinger
- Victor Jensen
- Brian Waltner

Extension representative:

- Don McMoran (WSU) Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Faculty County Extension Director

Coordinator:

- Joseph Shea (Skagit County)

Guests:

- Alison Halpern (WSNWC) Executive Secretary
- Dan Berentson (Skagit County) Director of Public Works.

years to come. Swinomish Tribe wants to use the County for future projects in the upper watersheds of Skagit County. Right now there is no funding for Knotweed groups outside of their reservation. Skagit River Systems Cooperative (“SRSC”) does most of the restoration activities outside of tribal lands. Habitat restoration with SRSC is a big priority and the possibility to partner with SRSC and Swinomish tribe is great in the future. Kevin has also found Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) in Anacortes off of Tommy Thompson trail and requested the Skagit County Noxious Weed Board (the “Board”) update the Skagit County Noxious Weed List with this weed.

VI. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Coordinator Hiring Process (see attached document)

Joseph: Upon final approval of the edited job description we will post the position and then refer the most qualified applications to the Board for final appointment to the Skagit County Noxious Weed Coordinator position. Suggested edits to the job description include:

- Rearranging education and outreach job duties to the beginning of application since it encompasses the majority of the coordinator’s time.
- Increase equipment and safety knowledge.
- Increase educational requirements from a high school diploma to a Bachelor’s degree in natural resources or a related field.
- Add more physical requirements as well as leadership expectations.

b. 2017 County Noxious Weed List (see attached document)

Alison: Will give us a document to help with creating our 2017 weed list. By law, every county adopts A and B designates then Class C and B non-designates are decided. We must hold a public hearing to see what will be added to our A or B designates from our C and B non-designates. Iform will help with point data and will help with gaging success of these designated weeds as well as showing landowners our purpose. We must advertise that we are making changes to our noxious weed list at our next meeting. State weed list is accepting changes from Jan 1 to April 30th. Then in November they will hold a public hearing for the weed list that will be adopted for 2018.

Jim C: Wonders if teasel is still a class C.

Alison: Yes it was added per Skagit County’s request.

Jim C: We are interested in changing the designation of Teasel.

c. Recommendation of Board Member Applicants to County Commissioners (see attached document)

Kevin: What are the requirements to be on the Board?

Joseph: Four of the five board members must be active in primary production within the County. Additionally, our County is divided into five different districts of which all five of the board members must reside within the five different weed districts. Anyone can fill out an application for appointment to the Board and must reside in the weed district specified as vacant in order to apply.

Alison: Is currently updating working on updating RCW 17.10 in 2017 with contributions from various weed boards in Washington. The hope is to reduce difficulties between the coordinator, the weed board and county commissioners as well as streamline required documents. Streamlining the process would include:

- Changing the four/five requirement due to counties not having agriculture or difficulties finding volunteers.
- Move away from primary production and focus more on natural resources as a whole.
- Requiring three board members or five board members member rather than requiring five.
- Remove the required ten signatures of registered voters.
- Elaborate and minimize concerns of coordinators pertaining to authority of the county commissioners and the county weed boards.
- Updating processes to encompass online capabilities to reduce budget loss to advertising as well as reduce paper waste.

One application for appointment to the Weed Board was received after a Notice of Vacancy was published in the Skagit Valley Herald. After review of the application, it was determined that Victor R. Jensen was qualified to sit on the Weed Board.

Jim Hinton: Moves to approve advancement of the application for Victor R. Jensen to the Skagit County Board of Commissioners.

Vote: Yay 3, Nay 0. Motion Passes.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Permit and Grant Status

Accounts:

- **Knotweed \$ 3,994.30 till June 30th**
- **Spartina \$ 24,211.98 till June 30th**
- **General \$ 72,458.06 till December 31st**

Joseph: We are expecting a large cut in grant availability due to forecasts of natural resource budget allocations. We anticipate receiving \$30,000 from the Department of Agriculture for Spartina treatments from July 1, 2017, to June 20, 2018, as well as \$11,000 for Knotweed treatments during the same time frame. These are subject to change and will need to be reviewed at our July 20th meeting once funds are known. We have completed our NPDES permit and have sent it to Olympia for ratification we should get our permit back by the first of June. Grants expire on June 30th, and on July 1st we begin our next grant cycle.

b. Summer Hire Process

Joseph: We have posted all summer seasonal positions, we are hiring:

- Two Noxious Weeds Aides
- One Spartina Coordinator
- One Spartina Technician

Job postings close on April 23, 2017. We will review the online applications the week of April 24th and will schedule interviews during the 1st week of May. Summer seasonal hires will start on June 1st or June 16th.

c. Large Purchases Approval

Jim C: Would like to be informed about purchases and would like a consensus from the Weed Board before any purchases of equipment and chemicals are made. Must inform the Weed Board about purchases to be more communicative. This can be done by telephone, email, texting or at our regularly scheduled Weed Board meetings.

Joseph: Currently, we have inadequate spray equipment and no mechanical or cultural tools for noxious weed removal. A well outlined and backed proposal is needed for future equipment purchasing. Any item over \$5,000 must be approved by the Weed Board as well as by the Director of Public Works (Dan Berentson).

d. Skagit County Noxious Weed Board Policies and Procedures Manual

Joseph: Will begin to develop a policies and procedures document modeling the Thurston County and Whatcom County examples. This will establish our roles and responsibilities at a County level. These policies will need to be updated once the suggested RCW edits are approved by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

Alison: Creating forms and posting online helps the public see what we do as well as how we do it. Having policies posted will help demonstrate accountability to the public and our partners. With changes with the RCW in the midst we will need to update our Coordinators Handbook (dated 1998).

e. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group Contractual Agreement

Joseph: New opportunity to survey and treat Knotweed on the Skagit River. The new project will be continuing treatments further downstream from their current projects with upper Skagit Tribe and Seattle City Light. The Weed Board shows interest in taking over the Knotweed program and writing grants to improve our coverage and efforts of Knotweed eradication. This project will be a contractual agreement between SFEG, NFWF and Skagit County. The agreement could be made for two years of work with \$30,000 for grant writing and program development. This could potentially help fund a full-time position all year. In the fall, we will create a proposal to become a lead entity in Knotweed removal on the Skagit River.

Kevin: The Swinomish Tribe would like to become a part of the Cooperative Weed Management Area ("CWMA") and be active in Knotweed treatments. Brent Miller is now the Coordinator for the CWMA and is in charge of organizing meetings. Michelle Murphy left the program. Joseph will forward the information to Alison and Kevin.

Jim C: Tulalip Tribe and Stillaguamish Tribe often help outside of their areas due to treaty right borders. They might want to join the CWMA as well.

f. Tax Assessment Budget Proposal Plan

Joseph: I have talked with Dan Berentson regarding a tax assessment to help address the budget problems in Public Works. This would remove reliance on the Road Fund and could help with landowner interaction. The assessment would change the mindset from being regulated or ticketing people to providing them with a service. We would be able to inform landowners and treat the properties for free and could improve our relationships. We could take mapping data to demonstrate the need as well as use a fee schedule for unwilling landowners. There are currently no funds to improve our program due to the relative difficulties of finding long-term funding.

Dan: We need to develop a more robust program to ask for an assessment. Our budget is relatively small. We can go to the natural resource committee, the agricultural community and general citizens and develop a need for a more robust noxious weed program then we can go the County Commissioners to present a proposal for a local land assessment. With structure and an active

Weed Board we can demonstrate the resources we can provide and why this is of value.

Alison: Of all the counties, due to agriculture and forestry, I would expect that Skagit County would have a need and an active Weed Board. When a citizen sees you as a resource rather than an enforcer then the community and Commissioners are very receptive to new plans and ideas.

Dan: Also with an assessment we would have a better estimate on annual budgets.

Jim H: Okanagan County has an assessment and has increased it many times as well as edited the general fund contributions.

Jim H: Would like Alison to send him different options of notification letters. Printed form of a generic noxious weed notification for landowners. Letter includes, the time frame needed to treat, numbers of people to help, information of the plant and treatments etc.

Joe: I am creating generic outlines for specific forms to help with notifications and publications.

Alison: There are specific notices that need to be sent. First notification is needed with weed information and treatment information. Alison will send us examples of forms.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

a. Adjusted 2017 Weed Budget (see attached document)

Joseph: There will be a slight change in budget due to different hourly rate as well as 40 hours a week instead of 35 hours. Additionally we are expecting a large cut in grant availability. Our current budget is:

- \$3,994.30 Knotweed
- \$24,211.98 Spartina
- \$72,458.06 General

For 2017-2018, we are expecting \$30,000 for Spartina and unknown for Knotweed. We will be purchasing roughly \$5,000 of safety and work equipment. Items include:

- Two iPhones
- One iPad
- Three Brush Cutters
- One Chainsaw
- Three Shovels
- Three Weed Wrenches
- Three McLeods
- One Truck Water Tanks
- Two Sprayer Units

Jim H: I would like to be informed about purchasing we should purchase a spray unit for the work truck.

Kevin: Why is the budget so high in Spartina?

Joseph: We didn't hire the 2 additional employees in the 2016 season and the funds that were budgeted for repairs were unused.

Jim H: Buys from spray supply co for spray equipment in Othello and can get joseph purchasing information.

b. Equipment Status/Requests

Joseph: The Argo has been maintained and taken care of by our County Shop. Since we did not have a contract with Dave Loman we were unable to bring it to him for service. Chain tensioner was broken and was fixed. Currently the Argo is ready for treatments. The Argo has been in service since 2005. Jim there has been a lot of abuse on the equipment and that's why it doesn't work. Quad is doing well.

Kevin: Is also having troubles with Argo and would like assistance with maintenance as well as help with equipment on their sites until they have equipment. There should be a manual or book with all work done to Argo documented.

Jim H: Requests that we create a contract with Dave Loman for future work.

Dan: Joseph will talk to Jim Mickel about creating a contract.

c. Board Member Pictures for State Board Directory

Alison: The State Board would like for the board members to get a picture and forward it to the State Board to be added into the directory to show their service. This is completely optional but it's a nice way to get some recognition. Please talk with Alison for more details.

d. Land Owner Communication

Joseph: I am recreating liability and entry documents, updating landowner agreements for general fund treatments as well as adding more authorities to the documents rather than just the coordinator.

Dan: Also there are documents for no-spray agreements for citizens who do not want their rights of way to be sprayed?

Jim H: What about noxious weeds on no-spray zones due to organics? We should have a letter that will address the landowner and the treatment that will be made.

Allison: There are selective herbicide agreements on county roads. With this you would develop a contract with no-spray landowners stating if they can't address their weeds then we will do chemical treatments. Clallam County is pushing for planting native species in right-of-ways too. Maintaining weeds but not taking care of them doesn't help the right-of-way. Also organic buffer zones are on their property and do not encompass the right-of-way.

e. Coordinator Quarterly Report (see attached document)

Joseph: Our Skagit County Code is outdated and needs to be replaced. No real verbal or written boundaries were set to the five different weed districts. This is needed for web page and applications. We also need to update information with new technologies.

For Weed Board vacancies we are required to post and follow appointment of board members per RCW 17.10. This can be problematic since newspapers are expensive for postings.

With regards to equipment Joseph has concerns about using Argo in aquatic environments. It is destructive and clunky. Chemical residue stays in lower reaches of equipment. It is rough in river terrain as well as hard to maneuver in water.

Alison: suggests talking to Jon Still about new boats.

Jim H: believes that Argo is still effective and safe to use herbicide chemical inside of it.

Joseph: We are currently using a new mapping program that can map all weeds and can develop better data for the State. We already have the devices and will have funds to purchase additional equipment. I am working with Sean Carson, in our GIS Department, to make a Geo Skagit map layer that can be populated with our data. In the future it could be a useful tool for assessors.

Joseph: I am now certified to provide the Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch ("WWHAM") service. There are nominal fees for certain parts of the certification. It is not a requirement but it is advised to increase our ability to help our citizens. Private organizations could profit and through the certification and I could improve the local economy.

Alison: Cautions doing gravel certifications due to the problem with identifying gravel lots. We will advise but will not certify. Create weed management practices with a company to limit their spread of noxious weeds is a good service but with seeds hard to find on top soil it is hard to be 100% accurate.

Jim H: Would like to focus and enforce on gravel pits with large infestations. Gravel pits are filled up then vegetation grows on them and needs to be treated once vegetation emerges. The plant waste areas get quickly invaded. Let's stay away from certifying gravel.

Joseph: (Clarification) There is no official authority for gravel certifications. It's more of a service than a certificate.

Jim H: Would like there to be some work still done in gravel areas. Certifications should only be a one year. Or cutting like WWHAM.

Alison: No more than 14 days before cutting looking for weeds on WWHAM. There are different clarifications of weed presence and the corresponding acceptable land use of that product. It can either exceed standards, meet standards or comply with minimum standards.

Alison: Is delighted to see changes happening in the Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board. She is printing booklets on protecting animals and livestock with poisonous noxious weeds. It also teaches pasture management. This empowers landowners to manage their pastures even when plants are dry because they can be toxic. This could help landowners before buying hay or cutting hay. It's 60 pages long and was created by a Masters graduate. Also our new seed packets are all native perennial species. Toxic lupine species in bag so don't plant in pasture lands. Only gardens and lawns.

Jim C: We need to do a much better job at education and outreach so this type of information could help.

Alison: I will send a copy of edits to Dan Berentson for review of RCW 17.10.

Dan: Inmates are very helpful for service projects. Could be very helpful for large sites. Selected for behavior and they gain credits. Garbage crew has been working well for many years. Helps keep people out of trouble.

Joseph: This also helps these probationers gain skills and network for their future.

Joseph: I have passed my agricultural, aquatic, and rights-of-way endorsements and will be taking ornamental weeds on May 2nd.

Dan: For the selection of the Noxious Weed Coordinator, we will have the hiring committee select one individual for selection by the Weed Board. We will have our Weed Board either sit in on the interviews or send applicant information to the Weed Board. Once the Weed Board has made a decision they will appoint a Coordinator. Katie will send applicant information to Weed Board.

Joseph: I will send documents to the Weed Board about RCW and build a binder for all Weed Board members with all RCWs, WACs, and rules and regulations.

Jim H: Will give a list of places to visit and treat to Joseph as well old places to survey.

Jim C: We should create a recurring article in the paper as well as the radio. KAPS and the college even Concrete news station can be used for publishing.

Dan: We can make 3 minute videos on Facebook. Bronlea Mishler, our Communications Coordinator for the County, can assist us with that. Additionally, we can create a social media strategy, including the master gardeners, newsletters and articles.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Jim H: Moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm.

Vote: Yay 3, Nay 0

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm



Skagit County Noxious Weed Coordinator

January 20th - April 20th Quarterly Report

1800 Continental Place

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

(360) 416-1467

Landowner calls

- Steven Shepard Knotweed treatment June 27th Anacortes
- Scotch broom Butler Creek rd. TBD
- Poison hemlock pack in Burlington, highway 20 and Avon. Steve Dryer
- Knotweed farm to market rd. Dave Olsen
- Gravel pit certification USFS rd. 17
- Reed canary grass consultation Fisher Slough
- 6991 San Juan Hill Ln, encroaching *Lamium galeobdolon* on Skagit land trust land

Office

- Review and renewal of land entry and liability forms
- Formulation of County specific policies and procedures
- County code (Weed district 1)

Purchasing

- iPad and iPhone
- Argo Repairs
- Spotlight
- Waders
- Crew gear (boots, gloves, county shirts)
- Chemical for treatments
- 2 x Brush cutters
- 2 x Weed wrenches
- 2 x Shovels
- 2 x Chainsaw
- 2 x hand saws
- Equipment tools
- Tractor Brush cutting training
- Water storage tanks for new truck
- Gator no amphibious. Use small boats for areas in water.

Data collection changes

- Universal data collection guidelines
- Universal data collection soft wear and equipment

Projects 2017

- Lower Skagit River survey SFEG and Upper Skagit Tribe and Skagit County 2017
- County weed survey (iform, collector)
- Renew landowner agreements for all projects (Grandy Creek, Samish River)
- 2018 SFEG \$30,000 for Knotweed expansion and takeover (grant writing and program management)
- WWHAM “Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch Certification”
- Weed free gravel certification
- Collecting information and gaining support for an assessment for program funding

Education and outreach

- Mount Vernon Science Fair 27th
- Skagit County Fair August 7-12th
- PNW IPC invasive workshop May 9th
- Earth day event SFEG April 22nd
- Pesticide training and calibration Swinomish tribal May 11th
- State Weed Board May 18th
- Olympic Knotweed working group may 16th
- Inmate supervisory training April 17th
- Scotch broom training May 23rd
- CWMA meeting April 10th
- Master Gardeners training Padilla bay April 5th
- Agricultural and right of way pesticide tests April 4th



Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board

**1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273**

**Budget Report
April 20th 2017**

Knotweed Grant K1750

- \$19,286.00 Budget total 2017 Remaining
- \$21,000.00 Grant Actual
- \$11,000.00 Yearly Actual
- \$ 3,994.30 Remaining Actual

Landowner Agreements are to be renewed during the month of June and will use most of the remaining funds before June 30th.

Spartina Grant K1710

- \$24,660.00 Budget total 2017 Remaining
- \$65,000.00 Grant Actual
- \$32,500.00 Yearly Actual
- \$ 24,211.98 Remaining Actual

Roughly 5,000 will be used for wages and salaries for work completed in June.

Roughly 5,000 will be used for supplies and safety equipment. (IPhone, IPad, life proof cases, life vests, Survival coat, waders, eye and ear protection)

Roughly 5,000 to be used for spray equipment, sprayers, water tanks, volume calibration, and partial repair of Agro.

Skagit County General GL: 5240000

- \$72,458.06 Budget total 2017 Remaining
- \$100,053.00 General Actual 2017
- \$100,053.00 Yearly Actual
- \$72,458.06 Remaining Actual

Roughly 3,000.00 on brush cutters, weed wrenches, shovels, McLeod, chaps, face shield, repair and maintenance tools and a chainsaw.