

Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board
July 25, 2023
Minutes

LOCATION: Clallam County Courthouse, Commissioner's Meeting Room

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Adolphsen, Fred Grant, Bruce Paul, Dan Peacock, Roberta Stoneman

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Clea Rome (ex-officio)

STAFF PRESENT: Christina St John (coordinator), Allison Frick (inspector), Meghan Fallon (seasonal weed technician)

GUESTS / AGENCIES REPRESENTED: None

MEETING TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:

Fred Grant called the meeting to order at 4:41pm. Meghan Fallon, the seasonal weed technician, introduced herself and spoke about her background. The Board welcomed her to the program.

ADOPT MINUTES:

Eric Adolphsen made a motion to adopt the April minutes as drafted. Bruce Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor, none opposed.

Board Updates/Correspondence

Bruce Paul mentioned a property in Sekiu that has a knotweed infestation. Christina promised to follow-up with the owner about treatment. Dan Peacock spoke about the Scotch broom treatment that WSDOT performed along Highway 101. This led to a lively discussion about treatment methods and the techniques used by different agencies. Bruce Paul remarked that some of the timber companies on the west side of the Peninsula wanted to work with Clallam PUD to treat Scotch broom on the right-of-way next to their properties. Bruce Paul also mentioned how prolific the tansy ragwort infestation has become on Highway 101 around Lake Crescent. Christina mentioned trying to assist the National Park Service and that 10,000 Years Institute has worked around Lake Crescent in the past. Dan Peacock inquired about the tansy ragwort on properties along Farrington Rd and Christina and Allison commented and what they observed last year and early this year.

Staff Reports

The Board received a staff report in their packets. Allison began by reviewing the number of properties inspected and the number of people she has interacted with. She has noticed that most landowners are responsive to our letters. Christina spoke about some progress with a landowner with a large infestation of poison hemlock in Sequim.

Christina also mentioned the hard work that Allison has put in to work with a landowner at a development east of Sequim.

Christina spoke about wild chervil, which is a class B noxious weed that is rare in Clallam County. The program found it on two separate sites in the last quarter. The infestations were found on the sides of roads and appear to have been spread on car tires. The presence of two new populations of wild chervil in the County highlights the necessity to work with the surrounding counties to control the spread of noxious weeds. Christina described how to distinguish between wild chervil and poison hemlock.

Since Joe, the new weed specialist, was unable to attend, Christina summarized the work that has been performed on Clallam County Roads, including working with the RWMT, meeting with the district supervisors to identify priorities and performing private pit surveys. The program also worked with a community group to control Himalayan blackberry along the Olympic Discovery Trail east of Sequim. Christina mentioned all the talks that she gave in May about poisonous plants, including to classes at Sequim High School, to livestock owners at a Clallam Conservation District talk and for the Master Gardeners' Green Thumb lecture series. The program has been working with various organizations on the Peninsula, such as Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, City of Sequim and Washington State Parks to teach them where noxious weeds have been found and performing at-cost contract work. The program also received a \$30,000 grant from WSDA for knotweed control work for the 2023-2025 biennial and this season plans on working with the Makah Tribe in the Big River and the National Park Service in the upper reaches of the Sol Duc River. Christina answered questions about tansy ragwort and best management strategies.

Financial Report:

The Board had received the financial report and transactions since the last meeting in their packets. Christina asked if there were any questions. Total expenses between April 1st and July 17th were \$76,426.08 and included payroll, equipment rental, travel, county indirect, and supplies for various projects. Revenues received from April 1st to July 17th totaled \$49,213.08 were comprised of assessment collections as well as payment for services from the Department of Community Development. The Noxious Weed Fund balance as of July 17, 2023 was \$189,575.85. Total expenses for the Lake Sutherland Management District (LMD 2) during April through June were \$629 and were comprised solely of indirect. Revenues during the same period totaled \$8,888.37. The LMD 2 fund balance as of July 17th was \$52,609.32.

Christina highlighted some expenses on the report. A few grants expired at the end of June and the program was able to purchase new equipment. She also spoke about the expenses associated with the small work truck.

Eric Adolphsen made a motion to accept the staff and financial reports, Dan Peacock seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.

New Business:

2024 Budget

The Board reviewed the proposed 2024 budget. Christina provided a comparison of the 2023 budget with the proposed 2024 budget. Christina mentioned that she is hoping to purchase a used vehicle from County ER&R. Christina mentioned the changes in the salaries and benefits lines. Bruce Paul asked about the accuracy of the projected ending fund and Christina spoke about how it is a best guess estimate and the program may be able to acquire more contract work to offset costs. Christina also spoke about vehicle needs going forward. The Lake Sutherland Management District will expire in 2024 and the Steering Committee would like to pursue renewing the District for another 10 years. The budget reflects the expenses required for renewal.

Eric Adolphsen made a motion to approve the proposed 2024 weed control budget and Lake Sutherland Management District budget. Bruce Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.

WEED ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION:

Christina began her presentation by showing pictures of the new wild chervil populations on Blue Mountain and near Salt Creek. She started her assessment discussion with a review on how county noxious weed boards are funded. The current Clallam County weed assessment rates are \$1.50 per parcel and \$0.13 per acre for non-forested parcels and 1/10th of the rate for forested parcels. The assessment has never been increased since it was enacted in 2000, even though operating costs have increased and the program has grown. The biggest change in the program was the addition of a full-time weed inspector in 2019 without an increase in revenue. Even with the inspector working on some grant-funded and at-cost contract work, their part-time inspection work is not fully funded by the assessment and the program has run a deficit every year since 2019 (with the exception of 2020). The transition between coordinators in 2022 also lead to a deficit. The assessment is the only avenue for funding the program to work with private landowners and without an increase in the assessment, the program will decrease its outreach to landowners and increase at-cost contract work.

Christina went through the procedures necessary for increasing the weed assessment. She then proposed three different weed assessment increases: (1) Assessment covers proposed deficit for the 2024 budget; (2) Assessment covers a full-time inspection program that fully funds the inspector position, 75% of the coordinator's position and supplies, vehicle and indirect costs; (3) Assessment covers a partial inspector program that covers 90% of the inspector's position, 75% of the coordinator's position and supplies, vehicle and indirect costs. If the inspection program is fully funded the program can work with private landowners year-round, increase surveys and follow-up inspections, spend more time teaching landowners proper treatment techniques, target rare noxious weeds on private lands, work with more volunteer groups and update the website. State law dictates that county noxious weed boards must work with private landowners to identify noxious weeds and ensure that noxious weed laws are implemented. If the inspector is fully funded for inspection work, the program would need to hire a new crew lead to perform contract and grant work. Christina walked

through a table that describes how each proposed rate increase would affect the average non-forested and forested landowner in the county.

The Board discussed their thoughts on the proposed assessment rate increases. Christina answered questions about procedures and how our rates compared to other counties. The Board expressed support for funding a full-time inspection program (option 2).

Dan Peacock made a motion to approve pursuing option 2, increasing the weed assessment to \$3.60 per parcel and \$0.31 per acre to fully fund an inspection program. Eric Adolphsen seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dan Peacock and Christina spoke about practices to reduce tansy ragwort, such as seeding disturbed areas and cutting down heads before the seeds begin to form.

MOTION SUMMARY:

- Adopt the April minutes. EA initiated motion, BP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve staff and financial reports, EA initiated motion, DP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve 2024 Noxious Weed and LMD 2 budgets as drafted, EA initiated motion, BP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve pursuing option 2, increasing the weed assessment to \$3.60 per parcel and \$0.31 per acre fully fund an inspection program, to present at the public hearing in August, DP initiated motion, EA seconded, unanimous approval

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN:

The Board will have a special 22board meeting on August 22nd at 4:30 p.m. It will be held at the County Courthouse in the Commissioner's meeting room. The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Christina St John, coordinator