

Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board
April 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 (weed inspector)

GUESTS / AGENCIES REPRESENTED: Alexander Gordash (Clallam County IT), Charlie Commeree

MEETING TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:

Fred Grant called the meeting to order at 4:33pm. Introductions were made all around.

Board Updates/Correspondence

Bruce Paul mentions that the Noxious Weed Board staff have been working in the west end of the county in the last few weeks. Christina and Allison mention that they were out there four times in the past two weeks. Eric Adolphsen remarks that he has seen the Noxious Weed truck frequently while traveling around the county. Christina discusses the vehicle situation and how the program retrofitted the smaller truck so it can now be used to transport herbicide.

Staff Report

Staff reports had gone out with the Board packets. Allison Frick, the weed inspector, formally introduced herself to the full Board. She has been using the past few months to familiarize herself with the regulated weeds, introducing herself to landowners and learning the steps (or not) that each landowner is taking to control weeds. She has also been spending time updating the weed database that allows us to track weed infestations and landowner interactions. Christina emphasized how important the weed database was to program operations. The weed specialist position has not been officially filled yet but the position was offered and the candidate passed the background check, so the new hire was expected to start May 15th. Christina described the candidate's qualifications and the importance of the weed specialist position. Christina also mentioned that there had been issues posting the seasonal job announcement but that those issues were being resolved and she expected the position to be posted in the next few weeks.

Christina then summarized the program report. She spoke with all three County road district supervisors about their weed control priorities. Himalayan blackberry control was the number one priority, especially on the west side of the county. The program has

been working with many different County departments and state and local organizations, including with the Department of Community Development on the Lower Dungeness River Floodplain Restoration project, Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Program on wild chervil removal, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on the garry oak restoration site in Sequim and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe on regulated weeds on tribally owned properties.

Christina summarized the program stats for number of landowners contacted, number of weeds pulled and number of roads and pits worked on. She highlighted that wild basil savory, a class B designate noxious weeds, has been found on numerous county roads, with the largest patch found along the eastern end of Old Blyn Highway.

Financial Report:

The Board received the financial report and transactions since the last meeting. Christina asked if there were any questions. Roberta Stoneman asked about why the assessment revenues fluctuate between months and the Board discussed that the assessment revenues are dependent on when landowners pay their tax statements. Total expenses since January 1st were \$62,725.89, and included payroll, equipment rental, travel, county indirect, postage and supplies for various projects. Revenues during January through March totaling \$39,130.61 and were comprised of assessment collections as well as WSDA and Forest Service Title II payments for services during all or a portion of 2021. The Noxious Weed Fund balance as of March 31, 2023 was \$216,748.85. There were no expenses shown for the Lake Sutherland Management District (LMD 2) during January through March. Revenues during the same period totaled \$2,660.98. The LMD 2 fund balance as of March 31st 2023 was \$44,349.95. *Eric Adolphsen made a motion to accept the staff and financial reports, Bruce Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

2023 Work Plan:

The Board had received the proposed 2023 Work Plan in their packets. The 2023 Work Plan was very similar to the 2022 Work Plan because the loss of staff last year limited the amount of work that could be accomplished. The only difference was a new emphasis on updating the website to include more up-to-date photos and information on weeds. Christina highlighted the section of the Work Plan that focuses on assisting landowners with treating uncommon regulated weeds, preventing them from spreading and getting established in the county. This year's focus was common tansy, which, although still found in small numbers, has been spreading quickly in the county. *Eric Adolphsen made a motion to approve the 2023 work plan, Bruce Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

Before starting the weed assessment powerpoint and discussion, Christina discussed some of the challenges the program has had controlling poison hemlock in County pits. She discussed some of the treatments they had been experimenting with and showed the Board a few before and after pictures of a few of the treated patches.

WEED ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION:

Christina began the discussion of the weed assessment with a short discussion of the State Weed Board's report on assessing Washington Department of Transportation right-of-ways and parcels. She then gave a presentation describing what the weed assessment is and Clallam County's current rate. Fred Grant commented on how much the weed assessment cost him each year and how it was small compared to other assessments and taxes. Christina then discussed why there was a need to increase the weed assessment, including increased operational costs since the assessment was begun in 2000 and the public's expectation of what programs and services the Noxious Weed Board should provide. Next, Christina detailed the steps necessary to increase the weed assessment. She then described how lands within the county are classified and how those classifications determine the rate of assessment. She mentioned that there appeared to be a misclassification of some lands primarily owned by state agencies that caused them to be assessed at an incorrect rate and that some right-of-ways were not currently assessed. Christina then detailed the steps to add new land classifications or modify how some lands were classified. There is some ambiguity about whether the assessment increase and changes in land classification should happen simultaneously or can be separated.

After the presentation, all Board members commented on the necessity of increasing the assessment. There was then a discussion of the preferred timeline, with some consideration of how pursuing the assessment and modifying the land classifications would take time away from training new staff and treating weeds during the growing season. The Board decided that Christina should speak with the County CFO and Assessor's office and hear their recommendations. *Bruce Paul made a motion to approve for the coordinator moving forward with researching an increase in the assessment and determining the appropriate time frame, Eric Adolphsen seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board went into executive session to conduct a staff evaluation at 5:50pm. The regular meeting resumed at 6:11pm. The Board declared themselves very satisfied with the coordinator's performance over the past year.

MOTION SUMMARY:

- Adopt the January minutes. EA initiated motion, RS seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve staff and financial reports, EA initiated motion, BP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve 2023 work plan, EA initiated motion, BP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve coordinator moving forward with researching an increase in the assessment and determining the appropriate time frame, BP initiated motion, EA seconded, unanimous approval.

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN:

The next board meeting was scheduled for July 25th at 4:30 p.m. It will be held at the County Courthouse in the Commissioner's meeting room. The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Christina St John, coordinator