

Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board
April 23, 2024
Minutes

LOCATION: Clallam County Courthouse, Commissioner's Meeting Room

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Adolphsen, Clea Rome (ex-officio)

STAFF PRESENT: Christina St John (coordinator), Samantha Fischbein (weed inspector)

GUESTS / AGENCIES REPRESENTED: None

MEETING TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:

Fred Grant called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

Adopt Minutes

Roberta Stoneman made a motion to adopt the January Board meeting minutes. Bruce Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.

Board Updates/Correspondence

None.

Staff Report

Christina introduced Sam Fischbein, the program's new weed inspector. Sam introduced herself and her background, then discussed her approach to the new position. She is focusing on revisiting sites from previous years and interacting face-to-face with landowners, which lowers the number of letters that need to be sent. She has been receiving a positive response from landowners so far this season.

Christina began highlighting items from the coordinator's report. The program worked with HR to increase the hourly wages of the seasonal technicians in hopes of attracting more candidates. Christina hopes that seasonals can start by mid-June. The program has been speaking to different organizations, such as the Crescent Grange, WCC and Peninsula College, and held a volunteer event to remove Scotch broom along City of Sequim roads. The program is now a member of the Weed Science Society of America and has access to the newest weed science research. The program is starting an herbarium so new employees, Master Gardeners' and the public can see samples of weeds and learn how to identify them.

The Lake Sutherland Management District renewal process started in earnest in March. The LMD Steering Committee gathered signatures from landowners within the District

and that petition was submitted to the County Commissioners on April 22nd. Christina mentioned the complexity of the renewal process. There is a new diver removing milfoil for the program and the previous diver and boat tender are training them.

Christina briefly discussed the other projects. The funds from Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act, which pays for the program's work in Olympic National Forest, were temporarily held up but have just recently been released. The Prosecuting Attorney has signed off on the contract and it will be presented to the County Commissioners soon. Forest Service work will hopefully commence in late May. Bruce Paul inquired if our Forest Service work was just in Clallam County, and Christina answered that we also work in east Jefferson County. Christina is hopeful that if we are fully staffed this year, we will be able to get more weed control work accomplished within Olympic National Forest. For knotweed control work, Christina mentioned that she had reached out to the agencies that we worked with last year and we will be continuing those partnerships on the upper Sol Duc with the National Park Service, the Big River with the Makah Tribe, as well as resurveying Ennis Creek. The Olympic Invasive Working Group meeting is being held in the beginning of May to bring together weed control practitioners on the Peninsula.

Joe spoke about the work he has been performing for the Clallam County Roads Department. He mentioned the number of roads and pits that we worked on so far, as well as the manual removal performed during the winter. Manual removal focused on Scotch broom and common teasel. Joe and Christina performed early season herbicide treatments on poison hemlock and Scotch broom and we have been seeing good results. Joe has been in constant communication with the road district supervisors to see what their need are. He is also making sure that the pits are kept clean, since many of them will receive chip rock this summer. Joe also updated the Board about the pollinator plantings at Deer Park and Olympic Discovery Trail. This year we put out 200 pounds of slow-release fertilizers with volunteer assistance. We are excited to see how the plants respond to the nutrients. The program has also recently met with the Master Gardeners to check in the partnership before the start of the season. We also partnered with the Spoke Folk, who has adopted part of the ODT east of Sequim, to treat Himalayan blackberry along the trail with a basal bark treatment. Joe talked about the benefits of treating the blackberry with a basal bark versus a foliar spray. There was a discussion about basal bark treatment as well as a discussion on whether it would be successful on spurge laurel.

Christina mentioned that the warmer than usual winter temperatures allowed poison hemlock to grow throughout the entire winter, so the program has been using an herbicide mix that works well when nighttime temperatures and has been seeing good results. The program has been working with Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe to treat their poison hemlock and spoke to Jamestown Excavating to educate them on how to identify poison hemlock and prevent machinery from spreading it near their Healing Clinic in Sequim. The program has been working with Clallam County Parks to treat lawnweed at Salt Creek Recreation Area. Lawnweed was also found at two City of Port Angeles parks. Christina suspects that this weed occurs in more areas than we realize.

and is spreading via shoes and car tires. The program is continuing treatment at the Lower Dungeness levee project and has started partnering with Jefferson County to treat wild chervil in east Jefferson County roads.

Christina brought a sample of moleplant, which was discussed at the January NWCB meeting. Moleplant is on the noxious weed monitor list and we are recording where it is in the county. We tend to see if where yard waste has been dumped on the sides of roads, pits and abandoned lots.

Joe recently found poison hemlock in a garden La Push and asked the Board if there has historically been poison hemlock on the west side of the County. No one had heard of any infestations around Forks. The group discussed other noxious weeds found on the west side of the County, such as tansy ragwort, orange hawkweed and yellow archangel.

Financial Report:

Christina mentioned that we have not been reimbursed for our contract work yet, but she will be submitting the invoices over the next couple of months. Then she spoke about the program's vehicle issues. The program only has one reliable truck, paid for by the Roads Department, and the other two vehicles are either not working or require a lot of maintenance. Currently there is no used truck to purchase at salvage value. Christina has been speaking with the ER&R department and received a quote for a Ford Maverick, which would allow the staff to carry herbicide and more staff members. Christina explained the County's policy for purchasing new vehicles. Christina spoke about the need for a new reliable truck and asked if the Board would be interested purchasing a new truck for the program. The Board discussed the merits of a Ford Maverick and the program's needs. *Bruce Paul made a motion to approve a purchase of a Ford Maverick, Roberta Stoneman seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

The Board received the financial report and transactions since the last meeting. Total expenses since January 1st were \$47,135.43, and included payroll, equipment rental, travel, county indirect, postage and supplies for various projects. Revenues during January through March totaling \$29,846.85 and were comprised solely of assessment collections. The Noxious Weed Fund balance as of April 11, 2024 was \$207,774.01. Total expenses for the Lake Sutherland Management District (LMD 2) from January through March was \$409.55. Revenues during the same period totaled \$2,300.82. The LMD 2 fund balance as of March 31, 2024 was \$35,701.63. *Bruce Paul made a motion to accept the staff and financial reports, Dan Peacock seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

2024 Work Plan:

The Board received the 2024 work plan for the inspection program and public outreach portion of the Noxious Weed Board. Christina emphasized that the most pressing issue with the program was resurveying to learn what weeds are located within the county and their infestation sizes, especially later-flowering species and weed located in areas

of the county not regularly visited in the past. Christina spoke about the issues with the database and the need for a new system. The program is prioritizing more public interactions and revisiting sites with rare noxious weeds. The website needs to be updated and weed ID guides need to be updated and new guides need to be written. We will also be partnering with the Roads Department to treat weeds that span private property and right-of-ways. Dan Peacock expressed his concern about ditching along county roads was exposing fresh soil that can be easily colonized by weeds. The program promised to monitor those piles for weeds. The Board had no questions about the work plan. *Dan Peacock made a motion to approve the 2024 work plan, Roberta Stoneman seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

Fred Grant asked about the Olympic Invasive Working Group meeting in early May. Christina gave brief descriptions of some of the talks that we'll have at the program.

Christina spoke about the difficulty getting seasonal workers while at the same time, more agencies and departments are interested in paying us to perform weed control services. There is a lot of weed work on the Peninsula but few agencies have the funds to hire a full time person, and CCNWCB could partner with all those agencies and hire a full-time worker to fill in those gaps. Dan Peacock inquired if there were grants available for weed work that we have not been applying for. Christina mentioned that there is salmon recovery money available for noxious weed control along rivers, especially the Dungeness River. In the past few years, the program has not been able to spend all the money in our grants and contracts. The potential full-time worker would be dependent on those grants and at-cost weed control work and would perform weed control work for Forest Service, Jefferson County and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and treating knotweed through the WSDA grant. Christina asked the Board for permission to explore adding a third full-time worker. *Roberta Stoneman made a motion to pursue looking into a third full time position to perform contract work, Dan Peacock seconded the motion. The motion passed, all in favor none opposed.*

Bruce Paul inquired whether the program has contacted PUD. Christina spoke about staff changes as PUD and WSDOT and she is trying to determine who the new contact person is at PUD. There was a conversation about weed control on PUD and WSOT lands and right-of-ways. There was also a discussion about borrowing a dump truck to remove Scotch broom after cut-stump treatments.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board went into executive session to conduct a staff evaluation at 5:38pm. The regular meeting resumed at 5:43pm. The Board declared themselves very satisfied with the coordinator's performance over the past year.

MOTION SUMMARY:

- Adopt the January minutes. RS initiated motion, BP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve a purchase of a Ford Maverick, BP initiated motion, RS seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve staff and financial reports, BP initiated motion, DP seconded, unanimous approval.
- Approve 2024 work plan, DP initiated motion, RS seconded, unanimous approval.
- Pursue looking into a third full time position to perform contract work. RS initiated motion, DP seconded, unanimous approval

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN:

The next board meeting was scheduled for July 23rd at 4:30 p.m. It will be held at the County Courthouse in the Commissioner's meeting room. The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Christina St John, coordinator