

**Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, November 17th 2009. 5:00 pm, WSU Learning Center, Port Hadlock

Board Members Present:

Linda Davis, Richard Hild, John Richmond (by conference call) and Jill Silver

Others Present:

Eve Dixon, Cathy Lucero and Patricia Robinson

▪ **Introductions:**

The meeting began at 5:00 with introductions. Patricia Robinson, who lives on the Coyle Peninsula, is willing to serve as the board member for District 5, the position recently vacated by Katherine Ackerman.

▪ **Approval of Minutes of the August meeting:**

Jill moved, and Richard seconded, to accept the minutes as presented. All were in favor.

▪ **Coordinator's Report:**

Some discussion arose regarding various items in the report. Although there is a lot of poison hemlock on Beaver Valley Road, most landowners there make some effort to control it. Next year we should consider enforcing on the few owners that refuse to do so. A resident in the Cape George area wants her neighbor to control tansy ragwort. After much communication the landowner in question did hire a contractor but he did not do a very good job. We need to be more pro-active next year. Linda asked Eve in what way her letters to landowners were becoming more forceful. Eve explained that when writing the second or third letter she has been stressing the fact that letting certain weeds make seed is a violation of state weed law. This usually produces a reaction.

• **Board Member Reports**

Jill reported that a grant proposal she had written for NFWF funding had been turned down, but she has spent some time working with Kate Burke from Fort Worden, writing a proposal to fund young people to remove wetland invasives from shorelines and the Chinese Gardens at Fort Worden.

Jill also reported a lot of success with knotweed eradication on the Hoh River.. She spent 2 ½ months there in 2009, with a smaller crew than previously. She reported that using 1% imazapyr in the spray mix helps to kill the plant, that most plants on the Hoh are now small and quite hard to find, that only 2-3 plants still remain on the original site (30 miles upstream—plants moved from it all the way downstream in 2-3 years). Many sites still had re-sprouts and on about 15 sites the crew found small plants with large leaves, which they assumed to be giant knotweed, and these appeared to be the only plants blooming. A worst-case scenario would be if plants began reproducing by seed! Jill's crew used less than 1 gallon of herbicide during the whole season. In late October they found a new plant growing up through depositional material and began to dig. It turned out to be 3 plants, with roots reaching several feet down and out! While on the Hoh Jill and her crew pulled 100s of bull thistle and all the Scotch broom and tree lupin that they encountered. They also cut back the Himalayan blackberry. And Jill lent a weed wrench to one of the Hoh River landowners, for blackberry removal.

Jill plans to do more Scotch broom projects in Port Townsend and re-vegetation at the Kah Tai Lagoon Park where knotweed was removed. She would still like to see a local goat team, available for weed removal.

Richard asked a question about surfactants and the effect they have on water quality and wildlife. Jill explained that Competitor (the surfactant she uses when spraying knotweed) is safe to use near water and that surfactants are basically oils that reduce the surface tension of water, allowing better contact with the leaf, and that also help the herbicide to stick on the leaves (rather than dripping off) and to penetrate the leaf surface.

Jill mentioned that we have digital copies of King County's Best Management Practices for several noxious weeds, and we have permission to change them to make applicable to Jefferson County. Possibly we could get a volunteer to work on this.

- **New Board Member**

Patricia Robinson had already introduced herself. She is a native plant lover and outdoor adventurer who collects native plant seeds for different groups and projects and is dismayed by the impact of noxious weeds. She had brought her application form, with 10 signatures, to the meeting. Jill moved, and Linda seconded, that we forward Pat's application for board membership to the county commissioners. All were in favor. We discussed making weed wrenches available at a location in the south county—possibly on the Coyle Peninsula, and getting community groups, especially hiking groups, involved in weed control.

- **Letter to County Commissioners**

Eve had brought a printed copy of a letter from the Weed Board to the County Commissioners, asking them to allow Weed Board staff to spot-spray certain weeds on specified county roads, as had been discussed and agreed to at the last board meeting. John said that in some cases the weeds that appear to be on county roads may actually belong to adjacent landowners—road easements just allow the road to pass through. Cathy commented that she is very interested in the outcome of our request, because Clallam County has the same problem (no herbicides allowed on county roads). She would like to be able to use herbicide for 3 years and feels the worst of the problem could be dealt with in that time. Often weeds get taken back to pits, from where they can be spread to all parts of the county. A Mason County landowner has complained that knotweed had been taken onto her land by the county, in spoil material, and had compromised her drainfield. She may be suing the county.

Richard went back to John's point about land ownership and said we need to do thorough research. John added that we should be aware that some roadside ditches are groundwater recharge areas for wells and that water sources are not necessarily on the property of the owner who uses the water and are not always registered or catalogued.

Jill commented that we will be using chemicals in small amounts, carefully targeted, and that the chemical we will use (glyphosate) binds tightly with soil particles and becomes almost inactive at that point. We can use the county's critical area layer to ID what water is present.

All 3 board members present signed the letter, Richard remarking that it was on the understanding that adjacent landowners would be contacted. Eve will mail the letter to John for signing before delivering it to the Commissioners. We will ask to meet with the Commissioners a couple of weeks after they receive the letter.

- **Review of Knotweed and Forest Service Programs**

Clallam County Noxious Weed Coordinator, Cathy Lucero, has for several years been successful in requesting funding from both of these programs. Knotweed funding from the Washington State Department of Agriculture has supported knotweed control in both Clallam and Jefferson Counties. This funding runs from July 1st to June 30th, so funding given in 2009 will run until the end of June 2010 and will facilitate some work in Jefferson in 2010. We will also apply for continued funds.

Funding from the US Forest Service, through Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act, has paid for a crew to control weeds on FS land in both counties, and has in the past paid for the Jefferson County coordinator. This funding has been instrumental in keeping the Jefferson County Noxious Weed program viable and was expected to end in 2008. It was however re-authorized at the end of 2008, but because the Resource Advisory Committee(RAC) which awards it has not yet re-convened, no Title II funding was given in 2009. The Forest Service filled the gap with other funding, but this could only be used for projects ON Forest Land so the Jefferson County program was under-funded in 2009. We are hoping that the RAC will meet early in 2010 and that Title II funding will be re-instated. Cathy also reported that Clallam County now takes 29% in indirect costs from grant funds it administers.

- **Budget and Funding**

Eve told the board that funding from the Jefferson County General Fund has been reduced to around \$13,000 for 2010, and that budget cuts have necessitated the closure of part of the WSU building. Therefore the Noxious Weed office will have to moved into the copy room before the end of the year. Jill commented that she has been working with Sam Gibboney on writing a grant from the EPA for a Watershed Resource Center. If the grant is successful, the Center would be located in Port Townsend and could house Noxious Weeds as well as other groups.

- **Other Business:**

We discussed weed-free hay. The Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board has a program for certifying hay as weed-free and Cathy Lucero is a qualified inspector and can train other people to be inspectors. She does not charge for inspecting fields and certifying hay but some inspectors do. The US Forest Service now requires that any hay taken onto FS land is certified weed-free.

The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) has a list of 58 plants that cannot be in certified weed-free hay and plants that on the Washington State weed list are added to that list in this state. The hay can be certified if weeds are present, as long as no reproductive parts are present. Certified weed-free hay has a higher market value than non-certified and is distinguished by purple and yellow twine, available from the state weed board. The state's program covers straw as well, and because the standards used are national, weed-free products can be sold out of state. Since the Chinese Gardens area at Fort Worden is cut for hay every year, the person who cuts and sells it might be interested in getting it certified. A field can be partially certified if only a portion of it is weed-free. Linda suggested making printed materials available at the Farm Summit on December 5th.

John suggested that, because of concerns about traveling during bad weather, we have our fall meeting in October rather than November. Linda proposed and Jill seconded that we hold our fall meeting in October. All were in favor.

The recent OKWG meeting was discussed. Feed back had been received from some of those present that Chris Grue's research on pesticide effects on salmonids was not conclusive. In essence his research showed that there was little difference between the health, reproduction and longevity of fish in clean water and fish immersed in the "chemical cocktail" representing our urban streams. His research to date used coho, but he intends to replicate his experiments using Chinook.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46

- **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, February 16th, 2010, at 5 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Eve Dixon, Noxious Weed Control Coordinator.