

Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board

Meeting minutes for September 10, 2009

In attendance

Keith Sarkisian, Carol Schram, George Ohlsen, Phil Cunningham, Steve Russell, Sonny Gohrman, Geraldine Saw, and Dave Schram,

Approval of minutes from July 9, 2009

No corrections were made. The minutes from the July 9, 2009 were unanimously approved.

Coordinators Report

Personnel

A new hire, Anna Lucero worked for us for 1 ½ weeks before she was involved in a car accident. Fortunately, she is ok, but won't be back this season. Today is the last day for one of the crew. We are short 2 crew members at this time and no real way to add more this late in the season. There are 5 seasonal crew members working in knotweed and Spartina.

Upland

Mileage information has not been compiled yet. 14 bags of tansy seed heads were collected as of today, which is about ¼ of last year's total. We found a decrease in tansy complaints at the fair this year as well.

After receiving the email allowing staff to contact owners on a cooperative basis, we responded to all the complaints that had been received and will continue to respond to complaints. No past owners where control is not taking place have been contacted. If we can only work with cooperative owners making contact with owners that we have contacted in person or by letter in the past and they aren't doing the work, then the next contact goes beyond education and the topic of enforcement has to be introduced.

Spartina

All areas have been covered once. It is estimated that we have sprayed about 2 acres so far in covering the same areas as last year. Last year we totaled about 6.6 acres over about 360 acres. We have started a second pass and will cover as much as possible a second time. We will also be working on Warm Beach and survey most of the coastline once the weather gets bad. This will be a balance between weather, tides, and the other projects we have going on.

Knotweed

We started on knotweed in mid August. Most owners have been contacted or have been left messages. Our entry and hold harmless agreements don't require yearly contact, but we feel it's good to touch

bases with them before we start. Hazel Hole is being worked again, retreating areas done before and working deeper into the patch that runs deep into the woods to the north. 24 properties have been sprayed and about 4.4 miles of river was walked and sprayed.

Fair

One thing stood out at the fair; the lack of complaints about tansy ragwort either on the roadside or on private property. We have noticed the reduction on the roadsides, but we did not receive any complaints about “tansy all over the roadsides” like we usually do at the fair. There were only a few complaints about tansy on private properties. We used a hit counter and recorded over 800 people going through our booth and engaged in conversation with many of them. A full box of Garden Wise and a full box of the new weed guide were handed out along with 125 County weed lists and 90 tansy brochures. We found myrtle spurge in a display garden and will notify the nursery. One giant hogweed report from the fair was investigated. Knotweed was the most complained about plant and the most requests on how to control it. There were many questions about butterfly bush and blackberries. The cost to work at the fair is impressive because of labor and the tent rental. Sonny will figure out what it costs and report back to the Board in December.

George commented that the knotweed along the Pilchuck River and Ben Howard Road has been proliferating. Sonny said that Road Maintenance has requested knotweed control on the roadsides. Sonny has told Road Maintenance that if the knotweed is controlled within 10ft of the right-of ways we aren't getting the rest of the patch and will need to spray each year. Sonny feels there needs to be a system that we can spray back into private property with owner permission and treat the entire patch. This would be much more effective weed control. We will be using the spotlight next week along Ben Howard Road and Florence Acres Road and other areas that have been brought to our attention.

Carol believes that there are an exchange or moving of soils along the road between I-5 and Stanwood. She began to notice a lot of St. Johnswort along that stretch of State Route 532.

Budget

Sonny referred to the budget sheet handouts. The budget is current as of July. Of the \$65,000 in the General Fund, \$49,000 has already been spent. \$23,682 was Sonny's wages and \$11,861.00 was Gerry's wages. We have been involved in discussions with Public Works about the program and the incident at Verlot has impacted the General Fund portion of the budget. The Fair was also expensive and not figured into this report. The grants are in good shape. Mel and Sonny have been talking about working on an Integrated Vegetation Plan (IVM). Work on the plan may keep Sonny and Gerry working at a time where we would be using the General Fund.

Sonny asked Curt if he had any information about how secure the general fund budget is and if any further cuts will occur. Curt said that Snohomish County is in a better shape than the other counties. The increase of sales tax to be appropriated for mental health funding may be temporarily channeled into the General Fund. Money would be returned into the mental health fund later. The Executive will come out with his budget a week from tomorrow and the County Council will have the final say.

We were asked to explain how we were over- budget within the right of ways funding during a previous meeting. Sonny explained that it was assumed Road Maintenance had not gotten the money back and after some review, two budget items were not shown as being invoiced. One was for \$4,800 (Spartina Grant) and the other was for \$28,000 (Forest Service knotweed grant). There was a mistake made and the invoices just weren't showing. The grants had been billed. The mistake has been corrected. This brings the last 4 years of budgets into line.

Old Business

Contract with Road Maintenance

Curt reported that they haven't been meeting lately because of his schedule. Mel and Sonny have wanted to meet with the committee, but no meeting has been set-up yet. The proposed partnership will define Sonny's role with the Weed Board. Mel and Sonny have a draft of the proposed partnership. Carol said that historically the Weed Board was under the Parks / Extension Office before moving to Road Maintenance. The partnership will clarify how we can work together with Road Maintenance. Curt added that we are also delayed by the event in Verlot. Sonny thought that they committee should meet to keep the partnership proposal active. The Rules and Regulations are open for review in February. Any changes to the Rules and Regulations would need to be made then.

Sonny added that Gerry and he would not be attending the Weed Conference because of budget constraints.

New Business

Carol handed out copies of her resignation letter. She requested a motion to accept her resignation letter. George made the motion to reluctantly accept Carol request to resign. Phil seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Curt asked if there are any suggestions for replacement. Curt said that the team appreciates working with Carol. She has always come prepared for all meetings and is easy to work with. Sonny thanked Carol for keeping the meetings active and encouraging participation. Carol volunteered to stay on the committee working on an agreement with Road maintenance and the Board gratefully accepted. Sonny said he was sad Carol was leaving, but would start the process of finding a new Board member.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45.

Respectfully submitted by: Geraldine Saw, Sonny Gohrman