

Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board

Meeting minutes for May 26, 2010

The meeting was reconvened from the April 8th meeting at 10:35

In attendance

Keith Sarkisian, George Ohlsen, Steve Russell, Louis Stangeland, Roy Scalf, Mel Reitz, Gordon Sivley, Sonny Gohrman, Geraldine Saw

Approval of minutes from April 18, 2010

The minutes for April 18, 2010 were unanimously approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Coordinators Report

Most giant hogweed sites were treated and surveyed using funds from the Class A eradication grant. 2 sites are untreated. Out of the 51 total sites, we now have 10 active sites that required control.

11 applications have been made to mitigation sites. We met with the Environmental Services team last week and received the list of sites that needs treatment.

Sonny spent a day with PUD at Spada Lake to assess their noxious weed management program. No spraying is being done within the basin, but they do spray outside the basin on associated property. Mechanical and some spraying with the vinegar products is the control method in the basin.

A Spartina meeting was held last week and less than 15 acres of Spartina are left of the 1200 – 1500 acres of Spartina in Puget Sound. The Nature Conservancy has less funding this year and we will assist them in Spartina control work in Port Susan.

The Skagit and Stillaguamish Cooperative Weed Management Areas involved with knotweed control have met. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Task Group has taken over the management of the Skagit CWMA from the Nature Conservancy. Our involvement with the Skagit CWMA is limited due to funding. The Samish River CWMA received a \$430,000 grant for knotweed control in that basin.

Sonny presented to the Beach Watchers of Snohomish and Skagit County. Tomorrow, Sonny and Sasha Shaw will be training two WCC crews and some other staff. After this only one other education event is scheduled other than the Monroe Fair.

We still do not have permission to hire a crew. The job description was held in road maintenance for 11/2 months before going to the Human Resource Department. Sonny

admitted that that he didn't submit the job description in a timely manner, but two months to move from Road Maintenance to Human Resources is pretty slow. It is time consuming to do roadside with only two people, so road miles controlled are down. Poison hemlock has been sprayed on Thomle, Eide, Leaque, Pioneer Hwy and the Lowell-Snohomish Road. 17 1/2 miles of common hawkweed was surveyed along the Mountain Loop Highway east of Granite Falls. Spraying started and we covered about two miles of the upper end of the infestation. Stinger was used where water is not present and where water is close, we switch to a glyphosate solution.

The rules and regulations changes were approved by the council on April 7th . On May 12th , Louis Stangeland was confirmed as the new Board member for District 1

Old Business

Ordinance Proposal

Gordan handed out copies of the revised ordinance proposal. The only change that was made is Section 3.42.050. The coordinator position will be classified as a non-exempt union member, instead of an exempt position written in the previous version. 5 minutes was allocated to each member to express their opinion about the proposal. Gordan gave a brief narration of the need for the ordinance and summarized each section in the proposal. Keith said that the county cannot change weed law (RCW17.10). George said that we don't have the expertise on certain services such as payroll and grant administration and he likes the administrative support that shall be provided by public works. Keith felt that public works is trying to take over and he doesn't like that. Louis commented that we should address why Sonny cannot hire yet. Roy responded that the job description is with the human resources department and could take a few more weeks before the crew could start. He advised that we start the hiring process earlier next time.

Roy said that the proposal is not changing the weed law. Public Works is currently providing payroll and administration and there is a need to define Public Work's supervisory role in the Weed Board operations. There is no intent to control the board. An audit could occur and the Board may not pass because no formal supervisory relationship has been established. Gordon said that the proposal is written in compliance with state law since the Weed Board was established by the state weed law. Mel viewed his role as a liaison between the Weed Board and public works. He has a background in vegetation management and looks forward to helping. Steve said that a decision needs to be made on the direction we want to proceed. The board can either accept or propose an alternative. Steve believes that the general fund portion of our budget is woefully underfunded and consequently the Weed Board cannot carry out its mission. Grants we receive from the State do not carry out RCW 17.10. Half of the general fund budget is used to set up and attend meetings such as this. The Board needs to be playing an active role of spreading the message to the council. Steve feels that we need to show the County what they get or don't get with their funding.

Sonny said the hiring of a weed coordinator should be kept separate from the influence of public works to avoid any future conflicts of interest. The intent of RCW 17.110 should remain intact.

Public works assigning an employee and the Board accepting them or not is not how the process is supposed to work. For the years he and Gerry have worked, he felt offended that only 10 days was given to the employees to accept employment under the new terms. Gordon explained that the period could be any number of days. He mirrored the ordinance based on other similar working documents in the county. The intent is not punitive. Sonny suggested 30 days.

Steve asked if Sonny would endorse the proposal. Sonny said that he personally would not support the proposal. At one point, the proposal was a model of the Thurston County's ordinance but is different now. He has concerns about the hiring process because it gives public works the final say which is in conflict with RCW17.10. Roy said that he has to approve the hiring of new employees. A discussion about the definition of supervision ensued. Steve sensed that the board is not going to accept the draft ordinance. Gordon said that if the PA or Public Works proposes their own ordinance there will be a public hearing where the Board and others concerned will be able to address the issue with Council. Sonny recommended that a committee be set up before the July meeting. No action was taken on establishing a committee.

No action was taken on the proposed ordinance put forward by Public Works. The Board will wait to see what action is taken by Public Works and will respond accordingly with their own ordinance or Rules and Regulations changes as the Board feels appropriate to stay within the framework established by RCW17.10.

New Business

New 3 year MOU with Parks for Cloverdale facilities

Sonny explained that a signature from the Board is needed to renew the Cloverdale lease Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Department of Parks. The rent has increased by \$300 a year because of electricity use for the office. Gordon read the contract and said that it is a MOU and recommended that a motion be made for Sonny to sign the contract. Keith made a motion to allow Sonny to sign the MOU with Parks. Louis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2011 Budget Discussion

Sonny handed out a 2011 general fund budget spreadsheet showing both status quo and an increased budget of \$145,000. The extra funds would shift from enforcement oriented inspections to inspector/technicians to work with property owners in a cost share program. The cost share program would involve property owner participation in sharing 1/3 (or other amount decided by the Board) of the cost of controlling noxious weeds on their property. The general fund would also absorb time for training, education and administration of the cost share program. This would give owners a chance to control their weeds in a positive way. Sonny said grants from the State may be lower due to budget conditions and the fact that Spartina has been reduced to such a low level.

George thanked Gordon for doing a good job in putting together the draft ordinance.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Geraldine Saw, Sonny Gohrman