

Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board

Meeting minutes for December 10, 2009

In attendance

Keith Sarkisian, George Ohlsen, Steve Russell, Curt Moulton, Roy Scalf, Shaun Reay, Louis Stangland (guest), Sonny Gohrman, Geraldine Saw

Approval of minutes from September 10, 2009

The minutes from September 10, 2009 were unanimously approved as written.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Executive Session

At 10:40am an Executive Session was called.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 11:15am.

The regular Board meeting was reconvened at 11:15am

Coordinators Report

Spartina

804 affected acres were controlled. All of Skagit Bay that we have been responsible for was sprayed twice. A little over 250 acres were sprayed twice, as were all other areas that we have worked in the last couple of years. We also went back to Warm Beach to survey and spray the Spartina that was found there. One small clone and a few scattered seedlings were found on the mud flats near mid Warm Beach. The marsh in front of the conference center was worked for the first time in several years and some Spartina was found. We'll need to control this area again for the next couple of years, but it was nothing like it was when we started in 1996. The crew walked from Warm Beach to Kayak Point and from the Everett Navy Base to north of Mukilteo surveying past sites and looking for new infestations. No Spartina was observed. Funding looks secure for next year with about half of the two year grant being expended.

Knotweed

We sprayed 123 affected acres of knotweed in WRIA 5 along 13.25 rivermiles. 13 new entry and hold harmless agreements were signed, bringing the total to 203 cooperators this year. Results are about the same as in the past. Funding for next year is dependent on grant availability, but about \$75,000 should be available in 2010. Council has finally signed the Salmon Funding Recovery Board (SFRB) / Task Force grant. A report should be done by the end of December.

Roadside

No mapping has been done at this point so total road miles aren't available. Basic monitoring indicates the roads look good. A number of sites were sprayed for knotweed along Ben Howard Road, Fales Road, Elliot Road, Highbridge Road, Lowell-Larimer Road and Rivershore Road. The knotweed on

these sites is primarily a sight distance issue. Spraying the knotweed will prevent mowers from spreading knotweed further and remove the sight distance problem.

Education

Sonny gave a presentation to the Cascade Horse Club in November. Future presentations have been planned for the Snohomish Garden Club, Cattlemen's Winter School, Master Gardener Training and the Skagit and Snohomish County Beach Watchers Training.

2009 Budget Current Status

Sonny referred to the 2009 General Fund Budget Current Status handed out before the meeting. The projected surplus on December 31st is \$1,042.95 for the general fund portion of our budget. The Nissan was auctioned for \$2200 which provided some needed cushion in the General Fund. Sonny gave a summary of the 2010 budget. If all grants and contracts happen as planned there will be a budget of \$265,000. We are capped at \$275,000 after counting totals from all grants and contracts.

Old Business

Committee Report

Steve Russell referred to the flow chart that the committee had drafted and handed out prior to the meeting. The chart was drafted based on: RCW17.10 and WAC 16-750, the County Ordinance Regarding the Noxious Weed Board, the 1995 Coordinators Handbook and the Snohomish County Noxious Weed Coordinator's job description. The chart assigns supervision authority to various positions and optional partnership the Weed Board had foster. It also shows mandated RCW 17.10 activities. The committee will give the chart to the Board's assigned attorney before moving forward with the document. After review the committee feels that presenting this and other committee findings to the County Executive may be the next step. Steve made reference to the 2010 budget which was depicted in a pie chart. Grants and contracts makes up most of the total budget. Not enough time or funds were available to accomplish the Weed Board mission to fulfill the requirements of RCW 17.10. Code enforcement is not funded. Steve said that a grant pool needs to be set up for the Weed Board to fix the current way we are funded through Road Maintenance. Steve said that other agencies have grant pools as a standard way of doing business. The current method makes it hard to track expenditures and may not withstand an audit. Steve and the committee will continue to work on the accountability issue with Roads and work on solutions for focusing work on the requirements of RCW17.10

The committee has come up 4 solutions or scenarios. One was cancelling grants and contracts and shutting down current control operations and concentrating on the Board's mission. Sonny said that the program would cease to function since the general fund portion of the budget is so small. Steve said that the solutions are still in draft form and he welcomes other ideas. Sonny said the current solution of going part time is getting harder to manage with the general fund budget getting smaller. Roy said that the IVM project is still available to the Weed Board and the Board needs to take the initiative to work on it. Sonny said that no charge code was set up for the project and he was unaware of any directive to work on the IVM plan.

Curt suggested an assessment. The Conservation District has been approved to charge an assessment parcel. Keith mentioned that we faced a lot of resistance from the county when we proposed for an assessment. Sonny and Keith both talked about the need for the treasurer and assessor to hire additional staff to collect the assessment and how additional money needs to be collected to cover this

expense. Sonny will contact Bobbi Lindamulder from the Conservation District to find out possibilities of how we could assist landowners with noxious weed problems. Steve said that they would not buy the product unless they know what they are buying. We have to tell our story. Steve proposed a cost share approach with the property owners. We would supply a crew to control noxious weeds if the owners would provide the chemicals or some similar approach. Sonny said other counties are using cost share incentives effectively. Cost share also establishes a good relationship with the public. For example, the Conservation District is always selling their services at the Cattleman Association meeting.

Sonny said that another possible option is we don't do any tansy contact unless there is a complaint. We could cancel buying purple loosestrife bugs for next year since we had released so many over last 10 years. Sonny added that we have threatened enforcement, but have never actually had to do one. We have to tell people that we are regulatory. Sonny will also mail the State's Weed Board's biennial report to all weed board members and will also be sending them to County Council members and County Executive.

New Business

2010 Work Plan

Sonny presented the Board with a revised work plan for 2010 very similar to the 2009 plan. The basis of the strategy is going after the noxious weeds we can actually control and working on other wider issues such as tansy with what's left. Sonny said that one of the strategies for 2010 is to send out non-threatening postcards instead of the standard tansy mail. It is much cheaper and will at least act as a reminder in areas that we know have had tansy in the past. An issue that is going to force a change in our approach is our inability to do adequate follow up and the information we have is getting very out of date. The solution is getting the budget for two inspectors. The knotweed project is where the board can implement RCW17.10. Mapping and detecting new infestation is not happening. We can handle the hay and mulch inspections to a limited degree since we seem to be somewhat stuck with it, but the requests for gravel pit inspection are beyond the program completely. The State is thinking of setting up gravel pit inspection protocols, but this is not the Board's responsibility nor does the State want to make it one. Sonny asked for guidance for next year's work plan by February.

Open Board Positions in District 1 & 3

Phil Cunningham from District 3 has declined to serve another term because of his busy schedule. He will continue to serve until his replacement is found. Louis Stangland and Dick Sass have expressed interest in the District 1 position. Sonny will put out the announcement in the Everett Herald and get the recruitment process started. The announcement will also be on our website. Board information is currently being updated to the Executive office and our website. Applications for the position will be available online or by mail. Application forms were given to Louis Stangland at the meeting.

POO2 Ford Ranger Replacement Options

POO2 is due to be replaced. The options are two used vehicles, similar to what we already have. Both vehicles are about the same as what we have. Ideally, a 4 door Chevrolet Colorado or Nissan Frontier would fit our needs to haul more people to project sites. If we get a used truck, we start a slide down to only having used or surplus vehicles. If we decide to get new at the end of the life of one of the used ones we are being offered the Board needs to make up the difference of value. At this time, the grants are absorbing most of the vehicle cost anyway. Roy mentioned that in road maintenance, vehicles used for grant contacts have hourly rates. Roy also felt that the rates we were quoted were high for the

Colorado. He said he'd check into it. No decision was made, but Sonny will consult with the Board when replacement timing becomes an issue.

Motions recommended by the Committee to help clarify the Board's mission and establish the annual election of officers for the Weed Board.

Sonny reminded the Board that changes to the Rules and Regulations could only be made at the February hearing and Weed Board Meeting.

Steve made the motion to put the Weed Board's mission statement into the Weed Board's Rules and Regulation in February. Many agencies list their mission statement in their Rules and Regulations or By-laws to clarify what their agencies role is. Doing so would clearly state the Board's mission, adding an important section to the Rules and Regulations. George seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed.

The committee feels there needs to be a formal structure to elect a chairman and vice-chairman every year. RCW 17.10.050 (3) says to elect officers as necessary. This would go into the Rules and Regulations in February. Council must approve any change in the Rules and Regulations. Steve made a motion to add a section to the Rules and Regulations that requires the nominations and the election of a chairman and vice-chairman at the beginning of the March Board meeting. Sonny felt March would be good timing because of the hearing in February. Sonny stated that in the past Board members have used an informal process of choosing a Board President, but Keith was always chosen. George seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. Sonny will work on the wording for the new sections on this and the mission statement.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30

Respectfully submitted by: Geraldine Saw, Sonny Gohrman