

APPROVED: _____

**MINUTES
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 10, 2010**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Sundquist, James LaRue, Jan Nelson, Ross Penhallegon, and Lynn Bowers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jan Wroncy

STAFF PRESENT: Arno Nelson, Orin Schumacher and Steve Smith

BCC PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

John Sundquist called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sundquist said that crop certification comment (Section IV, Page 4 of 5) was incorrect, not needed, and recommended deletion.

J. Nelson said that the Lane Electric Coop can provide a list of trees to plant, not the “electric company” as written (Section VII. Page 5 of 5).

Motion: J. Nelson moved to approve the January 13, 2010 minutes with corrections.

Penhallegon seconded the motion. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion passed.

III. GENERAL COMMENT

Nelson asked after Jan Wroncy, as not present.

Sundquist explained that she is ill and will not be in attendance.

J. Nelson inquired if any applications had been received for the posted committee vacancy.

Schumacher replied that no applications had been received.

Motion: J. Nelson moved to have staff repost the committee vacancy notice. **Vote:** All in favor.

Motion passed.

Penhallegon said that Lesser Celandine will be promoted as a “weed to go after” by the Oregon Department of Agriculture beginning next week, as an effort to reduce the population. He added that it’s a green plant with bulb, approximately eight inches in height, has yellow flowers, likes wet areas, and is widespread.

Sundquist asked where it is being found.

Schumacher added that it is popping up in the Fern Ridge Reservoir area.

Bowers requested a picture, as she is not familiar with that plant.

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Sundquist added that she had inquired about False Broom, too.

Schumacher said that he had a booklet that would provide the requested information.

Penhallegon asked if the committee wanted to support the ODA effort.

Sundquist asked which media will be used to disseminate the message.

Penhallegon said that the ODA will utilize television and radio spots.

LaRue added that he supported the ODA effort, it will be tough to eradicate, but this would be a good way to increase public awareness.

Sundquist suggested that the committee formally support the ODA's Lesser Celandine public outreach. All members agreed.

IV. TEMPERATURE OF THE COMMUNITY

A. Citizen Guide to Right of Way

Sundquist said that he agreed with Jan Nelson's observation that the existing "Citizen Guide to the Right of Way" pamphlet needs to be updated. He added that the IVM program policy should also be reviewed.

J. Nelson suggested that the pamphlet could be formatted and produced as a door hanger, and she inquired how the County has such documents drafted and produced.

Schumacher responded that they are printed by Central Print.

J. Nelson and members discussed pamphlet production options, i.e., tri-folds, size, and right of way definitions, graphics, and production/publication.

Schumacher added that the right of way varies from property to property.

A. Nelson said that right of ways can be a problem, as quite often the road is not centered as might be assumed.

Sundquist asked if the right of way could be described as being County-owned property, except where it crosses Federal land.

A. Nelson suggested that the language used should be reviewed to ensure compliance with Lane Code and that there is no contradictory language.

Schumacher said that the IVM policy should be reviewed, and that he will gather the existing documentation for committee review.

J. Nelson suggested that this topic be added to the next agenda.

Sundquist added that the IVM approach to problem solving isn't done as well as in the conflict resolution brochure.

B. Weed Mapping Project Review

Schumacher informed the members that a noxious weed layer had been added to the County's intranet/internet applications. He added that the information, as mapped by the hired botanist, will be useful when planning road or other construction projects.

Sundquist asked if any other agencies were mapping weeds, too.

Schumacher said that Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has a toll-free telephone number for the reporting of invasive weeds. The ODA sends their Emergency Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) report that lists data from other governmental and public agencies of any reported sightings in Lane County. Other counties are also working on weed inventories, but he did not have specific details.

C. Invasive Weed Discussion

Members and staff discussed the book, "Invasive Biology" that states, in part, that some weeds are potentially hazardous (to agriculture, etc.); however, the author advises not to overreact.

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D. Prescription Management Document

Sundquist said that the document needs to be upgraded, but still maintain compliance with the County's Last Resort and Precautionary Principles policies. The review should include monitoring, prevention, exclusion, citizen input practices, rapid reaction, and what level of action is required up to and including beneficial chemical treatments. Additionally, a County list of dangerous weeds with corresponding action plans would be helpful, an updated Permitted Products List is needed, discuss the use of less toxic control methods (vinegar, lemon oil, etc.), discuss filing the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System certificate (NPDES), determine the lowest toxicity possible for chemical interventions, make it accessible to the public, and to relate it to the GIS and Site Assessment form.

Penhallegon said that this is similar to discussions held for a School District 4J landscaping project. Those discussions ended with the development of simplified, workable steps (pull it, cover it, do nothing) to deal with the complicated subject. He can provide copies of the 4J Matrix for the members, or it is also available on the 4J website.

Schumacher said that this information, decision steps (although not in great detail) are already included in the County's Management Prescription Plan. And that the County will not direct staff to review this document under current policy.

A. Nelson said that the committee could work on this topic, then staff could take it to the BCC, but staff cannot currently work on it until directed by the BCC due to current policy.

Sundquist asked the members if discussion on this topic should continue given current policy.

J. Nelson said that the discussion should continue.

Penhallegon suggested that the committee review the 4J matrix information for additional discussion, and then determine if this topic should be brought to the attention of the BCC.

E. Monthly Meeting Discussion

LaRue said that he thought the members had decided to meet every other month.

Schumacher added that the change would require BCC approval.

Penhallegon said that his schedule for the next six months is too busy for monthly meetings.

Bowers suggested lunchtime meetings, as that would better fit her schedule.

LaRue said that it would not be possible for him to attend daytime meetings due to his business.

Schumacher said that he's busy and in the field too much to attend daytime meetings.

Penhallegon added that he would be unable to attend daytime meetings.

Sundquist asked if the members could attend monthly evening meetings.

J. Nelson said that additional meetings can be scheduled, if needed.

Schumacher added that notice in the newspaper is required to announce extra meetings.

J. Nelson added that a week's notice is required.

Penhallegon said that the subcommittee can meet as often as necessary.

Sundquist said that he favored monthly meetings due to the committee's workload. And Commissioner Stewart mentioned possible work topics for the committee; such as, engineering changes, fences in the right of way, utilities, and easement approaches.

LaRue said that the committee is not qualified to discuss engineering, and it is not one of the purposes of the committee.

Sundquist added that he meant the vegetation aspects of road engineering.

A. Nelson said engineers address the various issues involved in road construction, but the County is not constructing any roads due to a decreasing budget.

Penhallegon suggested prioritizing the committee's large list of agenda items at the next meeting to ensure all are accomplished in an efficient manner.

Sundquist closed the discussion and moved to the next agenda item.

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F. Update Website Discussion

Schumacher displayed the County's redesigned website that incorporates the new "service-orientated" focus, with emphasis on the Public Works Road & Vegetation Division information.

Sundquist suggested that the members with internet access explore the redesigned website.

J. Nelson said she found some older information/format web pages the last time she had looked.

Schumacher said that the changes are being uploaded by division/group, and that eventually all pages will be updated to the new format.

Bowers said that the committee roster document lists her term ending in 2011, but it actually ends in 2010. (Note: Roster typo corrected to show term ending on December 31, 2010)

G. Discuss Adopt-A-Weed Process

J. Nelson asked if staff had written up the amended process

Schumacher replied that the members decided on additional discussion.

LaRue asked if any groups had been contacted to see if there was interest in adopt-a-weed.

Schumacher said that no groups had yet been contacted.

Bowers said one of her neighbors had expressed possible interest.

Penhallegon said that he wasn't sure if any group would be interested in weed pulling after their first time, as then they'll understand the effort required. And that many obstacles remain to be answered; such as, tool supply, training on which are noxious weeds, and the other logistics.

Sundquist said that he thought there were groups interested in removing noxious weeds, and that then more groups may become interested after they hear about the program.

J. Nelson said that the adopt-a-road groups that combine noxious weed pulling could be provided a booklet for identification. Bowers agreed.

Schumacher said that the details need to be determined by member discussion; such as, how to guide the groups, training, and what tools to provide.

Sundquist said that taking care of the weed and the spot with the use of low maintenance ground cover was previously discussed. He added that this proactive approach should be attractive to groups, and now it's more feasible with the support of the GIS weed mapping application.

LaRue said that he was concerned with safety, the groups may stand around discussing which weed is noxious, and if this will create a traffic hazard.

Sundquist asked if staff was in favor of adding noxious weed pulling to the program.

Schumacher replied in favor of the concept, once all details and concerns are fully addressed.

J. Nelson suggested that dandelion fork would be useful, as well as pruning shears to bring back samples for identification if unsure.

Penhallegon said the program information could be made public, may generate interest, they can search in their neighborhoods, and that will keep them off the roadways.

Schumacher said another consideration is if it would be cost effective for the few groups that may add noxious weed pulling, or would a broader educational outreach be more effective.

A. Nelson added that he was in favor of the concept, adding that the Adopt-A-Road litter program has been in place for years without generating a lot of interest.

Sundquist said adding noxious weeds to the field program would be beneficial, as would offering the public an opportunity for weed education and identification.

Schumacher added that the educational outreach could be augmented by adding noxious weed educational information to the County's website, as well as links to report weed sightings to the Oregon Department of Agriculture and other agencies.

Sundquist said that this has been a topic of interest for the committee for the past twelve or fifteen years, and that this subject will be an ongoing discussion item.

A. Nelson said that developing the web-based training video with educational material could be the goal for the first year, and then move to the next step for the following year.

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Penhallegon said that it was same as the Knotweed outreach, as that tells the public to be on the lookout for the plant and to report any sightings. He agreed that an educational outreach would be an effective process.

Schumacher suggested an outreach as the first practical step. The members could then wait and see how successful the ODOT program change proves to be during the first year. The educational information is already present on the County's website, that the public just needs to be educated as to its availability, and then they could file the EDRR for any sightings.

H. Discuss New VMAC Member Applications

Sundquist reported that no applications had been received for the vacant position.

J. Nelson asked if the vacancy would be reposted.

Schumacher said it would be reposted.

Sundquist inquired if a decision had been made to remove the pesticide use questionnaire.

Schumacher replied that it could be removed.

J. Nelson said it wasn't provided when she inquired at the County if any applications had been received and when she asked for the application.

I. Illegal Spray Subcommittee – PSA's & Landowner Letters

Sundquist said he sent members two public service announcements (PSA) in a format that would be appropriate for KRVM radio and asked if other stations are provided County PSA's.

Schumacher said that the County's Public Information Officer (PIO) would have that information.

Sundquist said that the PSA could state, "KRVM and Lane County Public Works remind you that healthy, beautiful roadsides make our lives and economy richer, and that it is illegal to spray herbicides or any toxin in the County-owned right of ways. If you have a problem, you can find out more about invasive vegetation management approaches to conflict resolution by calling the IVM office at 541-682-6908 or by visiting our website." He says this PSA could be released as a way to clarify County policy for the public.

LaRue asked about the "conflict resolution" reference in the PSA text, as the term "conflict" has a negative context.

Sundquist said that there is a Conflict Resolution brochure that offers an approach to conflict resolution for vegetation management and the right of way.

A. Nelson agreed that it would be a good PSA to release via the PIO, but he would not want Orin Schumacher's telephone number listed. He suggested language that would instead direct them to the County's website for additional information and the Last Resort Policy.

Schumacher suggested deleting the phrase "If you have a problem", and that short, quick messages such as Waste Management Division's, "Reduce, Reuse & Recycle" is a very effective message that captures people's attention.

J. Nelson suggested text stating that Lane County no longer uses herbicides on the roadsides.

A. Nelson said that he and Orin Schumacher will prepare and send the draft language to the PIO, her response could be discussed at the next committee meeting, and that he'd thought it could be released by April 1.

Penhallegon said that the language should non-judgmental, as there is no enforcement or consequence for illegal spraying as mentioned in the draft language.

Schumacher suggested the PSA just state, "Lane County Public Works reminds you that Lane County is herbicide free, so please don't spray in our right of way".

Sundquist suggested drafting a couple of versions.

LaRue agreed that someone trained in the field should review the committee's draft PSA, as they may come up with language agreeable to all parties.

Sundquist said that he has not worked on the landowner letter, but he understands that the letter should be shortened. He will send it to the members when drafted.

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J. ODOT (Garrett) Letter Discussion

Sundquist suggested that the committee should respond to the ODOT letter, and referred to using some or all of the statements listed on the handout provided to the members. He added that personal experiences could also be incorporated, that it would support the BCC, and that it would clearly state our position to the Oregon Transportation Commission. (OTC). He asked for opinions on the first statement, “VMAC supports the Lane Commissioner’s harm reduction overtures to ODOT” (corrected first word in sentence to VMAC).

J. Nelson asked if the purpose was to lobby ODOT to change their notification policy.

Schumacher said that the only notification is via their website.

Sundquist said that it’s difficult to obtain information about the IVM program from ODOT or from their website. And he added that the response would be only to the Garrett letter.

Penhallegon said that he wasn’t sure what “harm reduction” meant.

Sundquist said that it was trying to take steps that would be beneficial to roadside management.

J. Nelson agreed that “harm reduction” was vague, and suggested stating that the BCC imposed a moratorium for reducing chemical exposure.

Schumacher asked if the discussion was to have VMAC send a response to ODOT in a letter.

Sundquist said it didn’t have to be in a letter format, and that there was an opportunity to send a response to the Oregon Transportation Commission meeting in Florence in April.

Penhallegon said that he did not support a response that would contain the statements listed in the handout provided, as they might not be correct, could not be proven, were opinions not fact, and he questioned the statement that the County’s maintenance costs have been reduced.

Schumacher said that the only cost reduction is the spray program, but that the County has had to add staff and equipment for the maintenance.

Bowers said that she didn’t see this as an effective method of communication.

J. Nelson inquired if anyone from the county was planning on attending the OTC meeting.

Sundquist suggested that the committee’s response be given to the BCC, and that he has urged them to attend the OTC meeting. He said that County staff had also been invited.

J. Nelson asked what the OTC meeting format and if the agenda was available.

Schumacher said that it will be an open meeting, and their agenda is on the OTC website.

J. Nelson and Penhallegon said that the members could attend as private citizens.

Sundquist agreed that anyone may attend, but that they would not represent VMAC.

K. Discuss BCC Action Items – Easement, Fences, Strips, and Engineering Changes.

Sundquist will send information to the members.

Schumacher said that a meeting with Commissioner Stewart, John Sundquist, and himself was held. There was no direction for VMAC to pursue herbicide topics or fences in the right of ways, and that educational outreach pursuits were discussed. Additionally, urban maintenance strips continue to be problematic. And the engineering change topic deals with roadside ditch design.

A. Nelson said that all the engineering issues under discussion are already considered for any future road construction.

V. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ADVISORY

VI. COUNTY ADVISORY

VII. VEGETATION COORDINATOR & STAFF UPDATES

Schumacher said that he had nothing to report.

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VIII. WORK PLAN UPDATE

Postponed to next meeting.

IX. FINAL COMMENTS

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

Sundquist said that agenda items included IVM Program Policy Document, Engineering Adaptations, adding noxious weeds to Adopt-A-Road, Invasive Weeds, Citizen Guide, New Website, New Member Application Review, Illegal Spray Subcommittee, and Reviewing Draft Public Service Announcements.

Motion: Bowers moved to adjourn.

J. Nelson seconded. **Vote:** All in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Steve Smith

Recording Secretary