

San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Board
FINAL Monthly Meeting Minutes – Held via Zoom
WSU Extension Office, Friday Harbor
Friday, January 8, 2021

8:30 AM Meeting Called to Order by Bruce Gregory Chair

Present: Board members Bruce Gregory (Chair), Bill Agosta (Vice-Chair), Todd Goldsmith, Bill Rupp, Laura Rensberry (Secretary), Brook Brouwer (ex-officio), Mark Ingram (SJ County Solid Waste), Cindy Wolf (SJ County Council), and Jason Ontjes (staff)

1. Review and approval of minutes of the meeting of December 4th, 2020.

Bill A. suggested noting the executive session was required for personnel discussion. Brook requested personnel discussions be left private. Bruce agrees. Jason corrects wording on \$7,500 weed disposal funds in place for 2021. MOTION by Bill A, SECONDED by Bill R to approve meeting minutes with changes from December 4, 2020. All AYES, MOTION CARRIED).

2. Presentation and discussion of monthly report.

Discussion regarding office space issue. Bill A suggests writing letter, Brook believes it is helpful to find out the goals of the group working on it and how decisions will be made. Bill A suggests it is a disadvantage to prevent public access to Jason. Todd agrees, Jason needs space to interface with public. Suggests office needs to be large enough to accommodate two staff and extensive library.

Brook welcomes Cindy Wolf. Introductions around.

Todd asks about creeping buttercup on the list. Bruce points out that it takes over fields when overgrazed. Discussion about its spreading habit, caused by overgrazing, acid soil chemistry, wet soils, toxin produced (protoanemonin), and treatment. Jason will ask Laurel Baldwin of Whatcom County NWCB about their efforts.

Discussion regarding AgroGold sold as OMRI organic herbicide but found to contain diquat and glyphosate. Probably result of less stringent testing.

Bill A : question about State Parks contract. Jason will contact Julie Morse again.

9:00—9:15 AM. Public comment for visitors. Mark Ingman joins meeting

3. Field Specialist update—Carlton Burns.

Discussion about new Field Specialist, Carlton Burns. Brook suggests getting a County cell phone for him to give more options. Jason informs that he is living on San Juan Island. Brook states there is a storage container for him to keep tools at Skagit Valley College. Todd asks about WSDA phone use and pesticide license testing. Jason says WSDA phone may only be okay in Friday Harbor and Carlton has been sent online information for testing.

4. Weed disposal program—2021.

Brook will put together meeting with Kendra about the program for 2021. Will try to get clarity on the budget arrangement and how to manage going forward.

Todd feels County will need to provide more resources in order to execute program properly. Important to keep good relationship with public. Program shut down at end of 3rd Quarter though Lopez continued to accept material, claimed not informed. Clear plastic bags and training will cost more money. Can we have program in place for spring growing season? Bruce says 3 times brought this up with Council that the amount is totally inadequate, seemed to be agreement from Council, but nothing done about it. Todd says in previous budget, \$12K was not enough, we asked Bill Watson to fund it at \$15K.

Cindy asks what are the parameters for budgeting for noxious weed activities? Bruce explains this is a legacy program from when Public Works administered solid waste; a way for them to take in toxic noxious weed species that we couldn't do anything else with. Historically, Public Works was working with a really minimal budget (\$6K then up to \$10K), for roadside weed control, fund was slowly "erased" over time. Bruce believes we are using this \$7500 not for right-of-way control but for disposal. Public Works is legally responsible for roadside weed control. Need discussion with Milene, Mark, Kendra to make it a better program and secure funding.

Mark Ingman agrees program is popular but sees the need to move it from the Solid Waste legacy program. Mark is concerned that the Weed Board is property tax-based, and Solid Waste is excise-based.

5. Budget status.

Brook put budget status up on the screen. 83.4 % spent at the end of 2020. 17% unspent. Jason will send email to Milene, requesting unspent 2020 funds will roll over to 2021.

6. Other business.

Todd asks should we change the FTE of Carlton's position? Bill A says we cannot promise without knowing that it would be approved (by Council). Cindy suggests being really careful about promises, since the budget is suffering across the board.

Jason asks to discuss the proposed glyphosate ban in San Juan County. Bruce is involved with the group on the soil health initiative. The agricultural tax deferment program requires they are managing lands for soil nutrition. Bruce believes glyphosate, like any other tool, has a place in the arsenal. Integrated pest management whether chemical, biological, mechanical or cultural. Todd suggests the Weed Board should state a position on it. Brook suggests waiting to see if there is a chance of approval. Cindy has not seen the ban on agenda, yet. Bruce says they are going about it slowly and it may be too complex an issue to codify. Bill A says the State Weed Board has faced this issue recently. The State Board and WSDA are standing by the EPA's guidelines that glyphosate is totally safe (when used as directed). Todd states that Cindy, as our Council liaison, will know when the proposed ordinance will get a first read.

7. Adjournment 9:55 AM.

The Board's next meeting and public hearing on the 2021 noxious weed list are scheduled for Friday, February 12th, 2021 (Zoom).