

SAN JUAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

F-I-N-A-L MINUTES

Friday, October 6, 2023

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting Held Remotely Via Zoom

and at the Orcas Senior Center, 62 Henry Road, Eastsound, WA 98245

PRESENT: Todd Goldsmith, Chair (Area 5), Bill Agosta, Vice-Chair (Area 1), Bill Rupp, Secretary (Area 4), Laura Rensberry (Area 3), Jessa Madosky (Area 2), Christine Minney, County Council Liaison (District 1), and staff members Michele Smith and Jason Ontjes.

Meeting brought to order. 9:07 AM.

1. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of September 1, 2023. Bill A. moved to approve the September minutes as submitted, seconded by Bill R. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED. Jason will send the approved minutes to Sally Rogers, Clerk of the County Council.
2. Presentation and discussion of the monthly report (Jason). Staff took questions from the Board about the October report. A good part of the discussion focused on noxious weeds in construction activities, whether from contaminated materials or equipment. The Board recommended working with Environmental Stewardship (Susan Eshelman) on contract language requiring weed-free materials for county projects. Jessa suggested contacting Kyle Dodd (Environmental Health) to request attendance at an annual excavators' meeting. Staff monitoring and control of weed infested sites, such as at Island Ex on Orcas, were encouraged.

9:30—9:45 AM. Public comment time for visitors. No members of the public were present at this meeting.

3. News from the field (Michele). Michele reported that she was pretty busy in the field in September, with Scot's broom control projects on San Juan (LaFarge gravel pit area) and Lopez (South Side). Libby Taylor-Manning, our seasonal field technician, was a great help. Michele is now traveling to Lopez each Wednesday to control weeds there, mostly Scot's broom along the

roadsides. The mown patches are “tough, tricky areas”. She has been working with Dan Root (GIS Program Coordinator) on transitioning our field data collection application from iForm to Survey123, which the WSDA will use by the end of February 2024.

4. 2024-2025 Biennial Budget update. The Board discussed the request by SJC Treasurer, Rhonda Pederson, to charge the Noxious Weed Program an administrative fee for handling our special assessment funds. Mason Wiley of the SJC Prosecutor’s Office believed that she did not have a legal means to collect such a fee under RCW 36.29.180, based on the opinion of the Attorney General’s Office (AGO 1994 No. 24) and SJC Ordinance 2.42.080. The Council will ultimately decide if Rhonda’s request should be fulfilled in some measure.

Recalling a past Board agreement, Todd said that noxious weed disposal should be funded and administered by the Noxious Weed Program, doing away with any mandatory contribution from the Solid Waste Program. Bill A. observed that it looks like Council should move in and take care of it, and we should not give up the money entirely (\$7,500 had been allocated for 2023). Christine asked where the results of this agreement were, which staff will try to find if any paper trail exists. Jason will travel to San Juan to present the program’s biennial budget proposal to Council on October 10th.

5. Status on Second Field Specialist Job Announcement. Jason is working with Human Resources Specialist, Nadine Varsovia, on advertising the second Field Specialist position. The recruitment request has been submitted, and HR Director, Angie Baird, has final say on approving the proposed job description, which includes Level I and Level II positions. Once Angie and SJC Manager, Mike Thomas, give their approval, the position can be advertised, perhaps before the next Board meeting. Jason will reach out to the Island Conservation Corps and Washington Conservation Corps for prospective recruits.
6. Status of Noxious Weed Disposal Funds through Sept. Jason said that we had expended about \$7,800 so far on the weed disposal program, well below the \$15,000 maximum for the year. The Board members speculated as to why there were significant differences in charges from Lopez, San Juan and Orcas (contracts, different disposal methods or cultural). Jason reported that invoicing from the San Juan Transfer Station had improved considerably.

7. Budget status. The program's new county cell phones, which are considered "small and attractive assets", caused an excess in spending on that category according to the October 2nd Expenditure Status Report (\$2,245 over). The report indicates that 27.24% of the program's overall budget has been spent so far this year. Jason said he had almost completed this year's review of the tax parcels, which will bring in close to \$320,000 in 2024.
8. Other business. The Orcas Senior Center's non-profit organization may exercise its option to buy out the County for its 49% share of the building at 62 Henry Way, according to information provided at a recent SJC managers' meeting. County workers could lose their office spaces as early as mid-2024, said Jason. Christine cautioned that it may be too early to get overly concerned, with so many variables at play. An appraiser has been agreed upon, but the whole process can take months, she added.

Todd reached out to a prospective new Board member to fill the Area 1 position now held by Bill Agosta, which he will vacate after the November meeting. Jason will probe the interest of a few other people who farm on the southern end of San Juan, as suggested by Bruce Gregory of the Conservation District. The Board vacancy has been posted online and in the local press.

9. Adjournment. After no further discussion, Todd adjourned the meeting at 10:24 AM.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is on Friday, November 3, 2023.