

SAN JUAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

F-I-N-A-L MINUTES

Friday, February 7, 2025

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting Held Remotely Via Teams

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

ATTENDING: William Rupp, Chair (Area 2); Todd Goldsmith, Vice-Chair (Area 3); James Frampton, Secretary (Area 4); Mason Wiley, Prosecuting Attorney's Office; Susan Eshelman, Environmental Stewardship; Jane Wentworth, Cyndi Smith, and Kiara McLaughlin, members of the public; and staff members Michele Smith, Andrew Munson and Jason Ontjes.

ABSENT: Caitie Blethen, Interim WSU Extension Director (ex officio); Kari McVeigh, Council Liaison (District One).

Meeting brought to order at 9:03 AM.

1. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of January 10, 2025. Todd moved to approve the January minutes as written, seconded by Bill. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED. The approved minutes will be posted on the county's website.
2. OPMA training confirmation for staff and Board members. Todd and Michele have both completed the OPMA training online. All Board members and staff have now taken the course.
3. Updates from Environmental Stewardship (Susan). Susan gave the Board an update of all the Environmental Stewardship activities that she has been involved with over the past month, including work at Orcas Landing, where the Board's staff has assisted in the past with weed control at a shoreline restoration site. At the Operations Center on Beaverton Valley Road, she is using the new electric weed trimmer to control reed canarygrass at the pond, and she also has plans for Scot's broom control, with possible assistance from Michele if a work party is gathered.

9:30—10:30 AM. Public hearing on the draft SJC noxious weed list, control priorities and enforcement for 2025 (discussion). The Board welcomed three guests from the

public to their meeting. Cyndi Smith of Lopez thanked the Board for its support in volunteer broom removal efforts there over the past year. She observed that in her neighborhood, oxeye daisy (Class C) and English daisy (*Bellis perennis*) were becoming problematic, the latter potentially displacing native strawberries. She recommended more public education about members of the daisy family (Asteraceae), as most people assume these plants are desirable. Bill noted that oxeye daisy could be seen as a sign of poor soil nutrition in hay fields. Kiara McLaughlin, a resident of San Juan Island, related that the Land Bank's Three Sisters Preserve had overgrazed pasture with wild carrot (Class C) along the border of that parcel. She said that she had attempted to contact Lincoln Bormann, the Land Bank's Director, in hopes of correcting the problem (Charlie Behnke, the LB's farm steward, was recommended). Kiara expressed her support of the proposed alteration of land classifications for the Board's property assessment fees. Bill urged the hiring of a permanent County Extension Director to address the issue of pasture and hayfield management throughout the county. Jane Wentworth, resident of San Juan and WSU Extension Master Gardener, asked specifically about the draft 2025 SJC Noxious Weed List, wondering if the two newly listed Class A species (round leaf bittersweet and musk thistle) were found in the county (not yet). As English holly has not yet been listed but is being considered in March by the State Weed Board, she wondered if there was a backup plan should it fail to make the list yet again. More education and exposure were suggested.

4. Approval of 2025 SJC Noxious Weed List (action). Todd moved to approve the 2025 San Juan County Noxious Weed List, seconded by Bill. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED. After receiving input from the public, the Board agreed to pursue Scot's broom as the theme of this year's noxious weed list brochure. Cyndi supported the promotion of volunteerism on the brochure's cover, and Jane agreed, though the photo to be used should be more "eye-catching".
5. Resolution 121-2002 discussion, continued, with Mason Wiley, SJC Deputy PA. Mason Wiley, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for San Juan County, provided the Board with helpful information on the noxious weed property levy and land classifications that determine which parcels are assessed a fee for the department's funding. The Board wanted to know whether the present classifications could be modified to make them more equitable. While the current land classifications exclude government or DOR-exempt owners from charge, he said the State can now be levied (RCW 17.10.240). The federal

government, and in some cases the tribes, cannot. The way the law is written (RCW 17.10.240), he said, land classification examples include drylands, range lands, forest lands or non-use lands. Excepting federal or tribal lands, land classifications are not intended to be based on ownership type. If land receives a benefit from noxious weed control, it can be charged, though different types of land may derive more or fewer benefits. If no benefit accrues to a particular parcel, a zero assessment may be levied (e.g., 100% hardscape). He recommended that the Board focus on the types of land rather than ownership, and whether the parcel derives any benefit, citing examples from other counties (Clallam, Kitsap, King). Even if local parcels are assigned “zero value” by the Assessor’s Office or are not assessed by other junior taxing districts, this does not preclude the Board’s ability to levy these lands, he said, if a benefit can be demonstrated. A future presentation to Council was suggested, and a possible public hearing on revised land classifications if Council agrees to do so.

6. News from the field (Michele and Andrew). Michele reported a lot of downtime in January, impinged by the snow and from contracting the flu. She surveyed local herbicides in Friday Harbor to help advise locals who may ask for certain products. She and Andrew recently experimented with a small chainsaw (Stihl), using it on Scot’s broom in their attempt to become more efficient in its removal. In her recent survey of shiny geranium in town, she said it did not appear to be affected much by the cold weather, and she had plans to control it manually and chemically soon. Andrew thanked the Board for its review of some of his recent publications, such as the English ivy tax insert. He said the plantings at the Lopez Village stormwater swales looked good and were starting to green up. At present, he is working on a PowerPoint presentation for local contractors who may want more training about noxious weed control, as supported by respondents to a survey last spring. From parts in storage, he recently assembled a weed torch or “flame weeder”, which he hopes to use in lieu of herbicides along county roadsides for noxious weeds like shiny geranium or yellow hawkweed. Todd urged caution with the flame weeder and recommended a document detailing its use, with approval from each fire district in the county. Andrew is looking forward to the Feb. 11 volunteer work party on Lopez, which was posted on the county’s website by Communications Director, Erin Andrews.

7. Presentation and discussion of the monthly report (Jason). Jason took questions on the monthly report. Susan asked about Round Up and whether staff advised the public about glyphosate's potential carcinogenicity. Todd expressed his support for having Andrew attend the Agricultural Resources Committee meetings, though he hasn't been formally appointed, yet.
8. Budget status. According to the Expenditure Status Report, the department had spent a total of 3.86% of its budget as of February 3rd. The weed disposal budget total was only \$72.51 spent out of a total \$15,000 allocated for the year.
9. Other business. Susan asked about the status of recruiting new Board members for the vacant positions (a few have expressed interest but haven't applied, yet). Jason apologized for the delay in finishing the last bit of the MOU with Environmental Stewardship, which would compensate the Board for its staff's assistance with restoration projects. Sportsman's Lake grant work continues, he added.
10. Adjournment. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:57 AM.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is on Friday, March 7, 2025.