

## SAN JUAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

### F-I-N-A-L MINUTES

Friday, April 4, 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); Caitie Blethen, Interim WSU Extension Director (ex officio); Kari McVeigh, Council Liaison (District One); Susan Eshelman, Environmental Stewardship; Paul Andersson, San Juan Islands Conservation District Executive Director; Alex McNeil, documentary filmmaker; and staff members Michele Smith, Andrew Munson and Jason Ontjes.

Meeting brought to order at 9:09 AM.

1. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of March 7, 2025. Todd moved to approve the March minutes as written. Jim seconded it. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED. Staff will post an electronic copy of the final minutes online.
2. Updates from Environmental Stewardship (Susan). Susan presented the highlights of the past month for her department, covering topics such as eDNA sampling, the Great Islands Cleanup, impervious surfaces auditing, comparing mooring buoy mapping to marine habitat data, and updates to the Comprehensive Plan. At the Beaverton building, she and Michele have been working together on weed control (blackberries, holly, spurge laurel).

9:30—9:45 AM. Public comment time for visitors. Paul Andersson of the Conservation District spoke to the Board about the desire for more monetary support for the Youth Conservation Corps, to which the Board has contributed \$6,000 per year for the past several years. The CD's application to the "No Child Left Inside" grant was not successful this biennium, and the YCC program "has been in deficit mode", he said. The Conservation District is pursuing a \$1.5 million endowment for the YCC to fund it "in perpetuity", with potential support from private and public donors, like the Weed Board. Costing about \$1,000 per day for a crew and adult staff, the YCC operates on Lopez, Orcas and San Juan, lasting about 8 weeks each summer and providing stipends for participating youths (up to \$800

each). He suggested a thirty percent increased contribution (\$2,400) from the Board. Later in the meeting, the Board discussed the request, and Todd made a motion to increase the Board's 2025 YCC funding (one year only) by \$4,000 (\$10,000 total), seconded by Bill. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED. Because the County Council must approve this budget amendment request, staff will present a proposal along with a new contract for the additional labor (or rate change) that is expected from the YCC (Kari pointed out that the money could not simply be gifted to the Conservation District).

3. News from the field (Michele and Andrew). Andrew described a few of his recent activities, including his blog post on the County website, the recent introduction of "flame weeding" to noxious weed control, and collaborations with DNR and the Conservation District. He has met or communicated with landowners on Lopez for a variety of weed species (poison hemlock, oxeye daisy, yellow hawkweed, meadow knapweed, Scot's broom). Michele has worked with Environmental Stewardship's Susan Eshelman on noxious weed control at the Beaverton facility, and she has done some shiny geranium work at Sutton Road in collaboration with the Town of Friday Harbor. She has lately communicated with the Land Bank about some of their noxious weed projects, and she will be teaming up with their education specialist, Tanja Williamson, for the Saturday Farmers' Market. She has also recently met with two volunteer work groups (Peace Island-Peace Health and the North Forty) and SJC Parks on their respective projects. Via WSU Extension, a lot of homeowners are contacting us now, she said, some of whom are new.
4. Presentation and discussion of the monthly report (Jason). Jason provided a brief recap of the monthly report and took questions.
5. Land classifications discussion, continued. Kari received the draft slide show that Jason put together for the land classification proposal, which she and County Manager, Jessica Hudson, will discuss with Jason during an April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mason Wiley (Deputy Prosecuting Attorney) was consulted on the subject as well.
6. Budget status. According to the Expenditure Status report published on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the department has consumed 13.03% of its budget so far in 2025, with an Ending Cash balance of \$225K. The weed disposal budget, Jason said, was still

in fine shape due to relatively low quantities of noxious weeds being brought to the transfer stations this time of year.

7. Other business. Caitie said that the Master Gardener outreach tables are starting up, so they will be represented at the Farmers' Market every weekend until September. They would be happy to share noxious weed information, she added. Jason informed the Board that its staff would soon be traveling to Posey Island, which is owned by BLM and managed by State Parks. They will use both a weed torch and an electric string trimmer to combat shiny geranium (herbicides are currently disallowed on BLM lands).
8. Adjournment. Chairman Rupp adjourned the meeting at 10:35 AM.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is on Friday, May 2, 2025.