

SAN JUAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

F-I-N-A-L MINUTES

Friday, July 18, 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

PRESENT: William Rupp, Chair (Area 2); Todd Goldsmith, Vice-Chair (Area 3); James Frampton, Secretary (Area 4); Kari McVeigh, Council Liaison (District One); Susan Eshelman, Environmental Stewardship; Adam Martin, member of the public; and staff members Michele Smith, Andrew Munson, and Jason Ontjes.

ABSENT: Caitie Blethen, interim WSU Extension Director (ex officio).

The meeting was brought to order at 9:05 AM.

1. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of June 13, 2025. Bill moved to approve the June minutes, seconded by Todd. ALL AYES. MOTION CARRIED. A copy of the approved minutes will be posted on the County website.
2. Updates from Environmental Stewardship (Susan). Susan related her department's busy goings-on in the past month, noting a recent retreat discussion of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the workplace. She remotely attended a San Diego conference that featured AI in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) which, despite its technical glitches, was a "wild" and "futuristic experience". She suspected that the public would have a lot of questions about these tools if used by the County.

9:30—9:45 AM. Public comment time for visitors. Adam Martin attended as a member of the public, making several comments throughout the meeting.

3. News from the field (Michele and Andrew). Michele and Andrew both gave their impression that the summer thus far has been a particularly bad year for certain noxious weeds, such as tansy ragwort, teasel, and poison hemlock. On San Juan, Michele appreciated Public Works' assistance on control of roadside tansy, which had recently filled their dumpster. She and Andrew took on a rare infestation of Class A milk thistle on a property off Mitchell Bay Road, and

she reported good progress on a long-standing infestation of Scotch broom on a Turn Point Road parcel, with perhaps 30% of it treated by an unknown party. On Lopez, Andrew said that the Port of Lopez had recently cleared Scotch broom and would eventually re-vegetate cleared areas with a seed mix “useful to farmers”, altogether spending about \$6,000 on the project. At a meeting this morning, he plans to ask for State Weed Board funding to continue gorse control on Orcas with the Youth Conservation Corps. He’s also working with Erin Andrews, SJC Communications Coordinator, to enhance noxious weed outreach via county channels, focusing on ‘triage’ advice for those dealing with noxious weeds on their land.

Todd began a lengthy discussion about the state of OPALCO’s powerline easements, where recent vegetation clearing within its rights-of-ways has led to undesirable noxious weed eruptions, particularly with Class C thistles (bull and Canada). Adam suggested that re-vegetation with native grass seed mixes would be fairly economical and would help to suppress these weed populations, though Todd believed such work would be better handled by contractors (the Board’s staff does limited noxious weed control on behalf of OPALCO). Jason was instructed to contact OPALCO about the matter.

4. Presentation and discussion of the monthly report (Jason). Jason took questions and comments about the monthly report. Susan liked the offer for training on noxious weeds for other County departments if the opportunity arose.
5. Sportsman Lake update (Jason). Jason said the Sportsman Lake project was still on hold due to a Department of Community Development requirement for a Shoreline Exemption permit, which would involve a lengthy site planning process. Todd expressed his frustration with the delay, given the amount of work that has been invested in it thus far, and the limited time window to control the Eurasian watermilfoil. Kari offered to speak to the County Manager, Jessica Hudson, about the matter. Ecology’s deadline for completing the project is June 30, 2026.
6. Budget status. The Expenditure Status Report for July 16th indicated that 26.26% of the department’s budget had been officially spent thus far in 2025. The Noxious Weed Disposal Project is approaching \$11,000 spent out of

\$15,000 budgeted. A discussion of the weed disposal policy was recommended by Todd for the September Board meeting, given the accelerating costs this year.

7. Other business. Adam recently discovered a rare, non-native clover near Roche Harbor, *Trifolium glomeratum* (clustered clover), and wondered how it might have arrived on San Juan Island, suspecting a load of gravel from the mainland as one possibility. He has recently done some cut-and-daub treatment of noxious thistles on a site with lots of native forbs.

8. Adjournment. Chairman Rupp adjourned the meeting at 10:42 AM.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is on Friday, September 5, 2025 (no meeting scheduled in August due to the County Fair).