

SAN JUAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

F-I-N-A-L MINUTES

Friday, February 6, 2026

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting Held Remotely Via Teams
and at 531 Fern Street, Eastsound, WA 98245

PRESENT: Bill Rupp, Area 2; Todd Goldsmith, Area 3 (Vice-Chair); Jim Frampton, Area 4 (Secretary); Caitie Blethen, ex officio (WSU Extension Director); Susan Eshelman (Environmental Services); members of the public Ed Lago (OPALCO) and Kiara McLaughlin; and staff members Michele Smith, Andrew Munson, and Jason Ontjes.

ABSENT: Adam Martin (Chair), Area 5; Jane Fuller, Council Liaison (District 3).

Meeting brought to order. 9:07 AM.

1. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of December 5, 2025. Bill moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Todd. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED.
2. Review and approval of Environmental Stewardship 2026 MOU. The Board reviewed and approved of the draft MOU provided by Susan, though she is waiting on further input from Carolina Ramos, the county's procurement officer (Public Works). Susan expressed her gratitude for the assistance on Environmental Stewardship projects. A final MOU should be ready to approve at the March meeting.
3. Updates from Environmental Stewardship (Susan). Susan again conveyed that the Environmental Stewardship Department is grappling with budgetary issues at both the state and federal levels, experiencing difficulties in obtaining grant dollars for projects already in place. "Our team is stretched now", she said. There have been multiple native planting projects on San Juan and Lopez, involving the Conservation District and others. She is working on a public surface water database amongst other projects.
4. Updates from WSU Extension (Caitie). The Master Gardener Native Plant Sale is open for online pre-orders, with pickups in March. The Ag Summit is scheduled for February 27th and 28th (Michele and Andrew plan to attend).

9:30—9:45 AM. Public comment time for visitors. Ed Lago of OPALCO met with residents Jane Wentworth and Laura Derevensky to consider revegetation ideas and management of a powerline easement near MacGinitie Road (Michele and Adam were also present). He would like to tour other sites in the future. Kiara shared her experience with fence construction in order to keep out dogs and other animals.

5. Review of the 2026 San Juan County Noxious Weed List. Jason said that the state noxious weed list is now about 160 species, which makes expansion of the current San Juan County brochure challenging. He provided the Board with a few options in future, including an abridged version that only includes noxious weeds known to exist here. The group discussed other possibilities for what the list could look like, with Susan, Todd, and Andrew suggesting that the current list is too long for the general public. The list needs to be approved by the Board by the end of March, with a hearing planned for earlier that month at the next scheduled meeting (March 6th).
6. News from the field (Andrew and Michele). Andrew presented a preliminary PowerPoint slide show that will be used for outreach to landscape professionals and the public on noxious weed control and disposal. The “trainings” will be on Lopez, San Juan and Orcas, with food and beverages provided. Fliers will be used to advertise the event countywide (the venues and dates have not yet been decided). Caitie expressed an interest in collaboration with the Master Gardeners, and other potential participants were discussed. She suggested March or October as possible times to hold the trainings.

On Lopez, Andrew continues to focus on “industrial areas” like Lopez Sand and Gravel and Lopez Ready Mix. He and Michele recently traveled with State Parks staff to some of the remote parks in the county, including Sucia, Patos, and Posey Islands. On San Juan, Michele continues work on OPALCO and Public Works rights-of-way, as well as Port of Friday Harbor parcels. This time of year, she is focused on winter perennials and woody weed species (holly, spurge laurel, Scot’s broom). She has partnered recently with Kiara on OPALCO projects and is pleased with their work together.

7. Presentation and discussion of the monthly report (Jason). Jason briefly went over the highlights of the monthly report, which included a paragraph about

Rich Lee, the program's founding coordinator in the 1990s. Bill provided a historical perspective on the program, recounting that the unfortunate deaths of cattle believed to have been poisoned by tansy ragwort (owned by former Board member, Joyce Nigretto, and her husband, Andy) led to the effort to form a noxious weed board in San Juan County. Former WSU Extension Director, Tom Shultz, helped to make it happen, and the Board chose to emphasize education rather than enforcement (Rich and his colleague, Judy Jackson, did not want to be 'weed cops'). Since those days, the Weed Board has established credibility, and the public looks to it for its expertise. Rich passed away in January.

8. Budget update. According to the Expenditure Status Report printed on February 2nd, five percent of the department's budget has been spent thus far in 2026. Jason noted that the clothing allowance for staff, which is deposited directly in their accounts, was at 120% (\$600).
9. Other business (possibly personnel discussion). Due to strict rules on the use of executive sessions in open public meetings, the personnel discussion did not take place. Jason said there were certain procedural steps that needed to be taken beforehand. He did not go into details about what the matter was about. Andrew asked the Board if they would be interested in having an informal in-person gathering during the March meeting.
10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned by the Vice-Chair at 10:58 AM.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is Friday March 6th.