

Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board Minutes of the October 14, 2020 meeting

Call to order: Myrn Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order via telephone at 9:08 am. Others present included Board members Dave Robbins (via phone), Tamara Cowles (via Zoom), ex-officio Dan Teuteberg (via Zoom) and coordinator Patricia Grover (via Zoom). Barry Fischer was not in attendance.

Minutes: Minutes from the February 12, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Robbins/Cowles moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Approved and adopted as written.

Coordinator's Update: The coordinator's update is incorporated by reference. Covers about six months of time. All members have received a copy prior to the meeting. Pat highlighted:

- Business as usual from March 18, social distancing and wearing masks. Engaging public in outdoor environment, successful with permissions i.e., poison hemlock which we have been working to obtain permission on for several years. Created an impromptu video comparing poison hemlock to wild carrot. The video has now been posted to YouTube.
- Caleb and Pat completed an initial treatment of a large infestation of meadow knapweed, a class B designate, at Lake Isabella State Park.
- Rock pit surveys, Hama Hama and NW Rock.
- Covid has given us an opportunity to utilize the Puget Sound Corps forage fish crew for several days of field work. Public lands such as Lake Isabella and Potlatch State Parks were prioritized for treatments as they easily met criteria for utilizing these crewmembers. In addition, perennial pepperweed control was completed at the Skokomish estuary with the Skokomish tribe and yellow flag iris was controlled along the shores of Spencer Lake with several property owners volunteering.
- Caleb has been working 2 days/week since June.
- Noxious Weed Control program's contribution to the WSU quarterly report was provided. This report is available online and sent to the BOCC.
- Provided a noxious weed presentation to the new class of Mason County Master Gardeners via Zoom.
- Treatments are ongoing. Knotweed can still be injected until the first killing frost.
- Heidi has accepted a position with Thurston County Noxious Weed Control as a Noxious Weed Specialist 1, her last day at work was September 11, 2020. Caleb has accepted a position with the Mason County Assessor. His last day will be October 15. Announcements are on the street advertising the assistant position.
- Last Olympic National Forest treatment of the year took place last week at Brown Creek campground. The National Forest was extremely busy this season.

Myrn asked about the availability of biocontrol agents. Jennifer Andreas, WSU Biocontrol specialist, makes agents available for multiple species. A questionnaire requesting interest and potential number of releases is provided to counties each year. In Mason County, we know we have Scotch broom and knapweed, so those requests are always made. Availability is based on the number of requests from others in the state, abundance of biocontrols and Jenn's availability or resources to collect.

Dave asked about the effectiveness of biocontrol agents for Scotch broom. Pat replied that the Scotch broom biocontrol agents feed on the seed. Since seeds are viable for up to 80 years, it will be several years before we see a reduction of Scotch broom in Mason County.

Grants and Agreements Update: Received notification in mid-September that we received two grants from WSDA. Each grant was for \$5,000. Projects include:

- 1) survey and treatment of perennial pepperweed and common reed and
- 2) giant hogweed survey and control. Many of our infestations of giant hogweed are now eradicated. This will provide an opportunity for a comprehensive effort for this species.

Notification received that the Forest Service is accepting proposals for Title II projects for FY21. Proposals are due Friday, October 16. FY20 and 21 proposals will be reviewed when they meet in November.

WSDA knotweed grant has been expended.

\$1,500.00 of the professional services contract with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council was expended this year, leaving \$1,500.00 for the 2021 season. The use of selective herbicides at this wetland mitigation site has reduced the competition from bindweed which was taking over the site.

Current 2020 Budget Report: Current budget report is incorporated by reference. Expenditures are on track for the year. Discussion followed regarding the budget process and a better understanding of the process. Also, means of funding the program, general fund vs assessment was discussed. \$36,000 will remain at the end of September. Pat has increased her hours to 40 hours/week until the end of the year. Based on current projections, there will be a balance remaining at year's end.

WSNWCB Proposed Changes for 2021 Weed List: The State weed board met earlier this month to review proposed changes to the 2021 state weed list. Turkish thistle, which is not yet found in Washington State is being proposed as a class A. *Carex pendula* is also being proposed as a class A, with Mason County being one of four counties in Washington State with known populations. The public hearing will be in November. None of the proposed designation changes will affect Mason County. Numerous nomenclature and scientific name changes will affect names on our noxious weed list. Since no meetings are scheduled for November and December, the adopted changes will be brought forward at the next meeting.

MCNWCB Meeting Schedule for 2021 – Pat created a calendar with proposed dates like the meeting schedule for 2020. Scheduled dates are January 13, February 10, April 14, July 14, and October 13 at 0900. Tamara moved; Dave seconded. The proposed calendar for 2021 was approved as presented.

Other Business

In response to a question asked in February re: options for funding noxious weed programs, a spreadsheet compiled by the State Weed Board which documents county noxious weed program budgets and funding sources was provided to Board members. Discussion followed regarding the advantages of an assessment.

Assessments vary from county to county with different rates and methods. Development of an effective program structure can provide a framework for determining a budget and the revenue necessary to sustain that structure. Myrn asked if someone could be available at a future meeting to discuss the details of an assessment. Pat can investigate this.

Pat suggested that she could put together a hypothetical, sustainable program which would include a full-time coordinator, an assistant, administrative support and extra help field staff. She will generate a report on needs and structure for the January meeting.

Question was asked as to whether the program would still seek grant funding. Pat replied that grants are beneficial in that they direct you in a way that is a high priority for the funder. Currently, grants and unused coordinator's benefit allocation pay for extra help staff. Grants also provide employment opportunities in the local community.

This year, in the absence of participation in events, more time was allocated to site visits and field work. How will the Board prioritize work in the future? Discussion of this prioritization was tabled until the January meeting.

Adjourn: There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 09:54 am.

Submitted by Patricia Grover 01/13/2021

Approved by MCNWCB 02/10/2021