

Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2021

Online Microsoft Team meeting

Board Members Present

Lea Anne Burke
Don Tillman
Joshua Misenaar

Others Present

Geraldine Saw – Coordinator
Scott Moore – SWM Watershed Steward
Mel Reitz – RM Operations Manager

Introductions

A round of introductions were made.

Public Hearing

Gerry gave a power-point presentation on the potential additions and changes in the 2021 noxious weed list. The State Noxious Weed Board held their weed list hearing in November and adopted the State Weed List. They have added Turkish thistle into the Class A list. Turkish thistle has been found in Idaho and Oregon. No known infestation occurred in Washington State. The listing will prevent Turkish thistle from spreading. During the last meeting, we discussed removing the non-native hawkweed within the subgenus wall from the Class B list. The State Noxious Weed Board approved the removal from the County's list. Despite our efforts along the Mountain Loop Hwy, common hawkweed continues to spread widely. Common hawkweed is now growing along the gravel bars in the South Fork Stillaguamish River. Gerry will continue spraying for common hawkweed, focusing on the right-of-way close to the Forest Service trail parking lots and campgrounds. Other changes that need to be made were Latin names changes of annual bugloss, Japanese knotweed, Bohemian knotweed, giant knotweed and meadow knapweed. Let Gerry know if board members have any weeds that they want to add or remove in the 2022 list. Don made the motion to adopt the 2021 noxious weed list for Snohomish County to include Turkish thistle into the Class A list, remove the non-native hawkweed within the subgenus wall from the Class B list and change the scientific names of the annual bugloss, meadow knapweed and Japanese, Bohemian and giant knotweed. Josh seconded the motion and the motion was passed.

Return to regular board meeting

The Board chairman's term was discussed. Lea Anne asked if anyone else would like to be the chairman. Josh and Don supported Lea Anne to continue chairing meetings. Gerry said she had consulted with the State Weed Board and found that other Weed Boards commonly change their chairman every other year or every year. There is no written rule.

Approval of minutes from December 2019

Josh made the motion to approve the December 2019 meeting minutes. Don seconded the minutes and the motion was approved.

Coordinators Report

Gerry gave a power point presentation on her report. She provided a brief summary on the 2020 accomplishment such as road miles treated for tansy and poison hemlock, acreage covered for Spartina and Knotweed, and number of people reached during educational events. Scott's WCC crew have planted more than 1000 native trees along the Stillaguamish River. There was less educational outreach in 2020 due to COVID. Sorticulture, Kla Ha Ya Days, and the Evergreen State Fair were cancelled. We reached out to 85% less people. We didn't knock on doors and crews drove to project sites separately, which increased cost of travel. In the summer, Gerry used the Snohomish Farmer's market as an educational venue and averaged about 70 visitors per market day. Sorticulture and the Arlington Street Fair are planning to open this year.

Three seasonals were hired last year. Unfortunately, they don't have the WSDA pesticide license. Gerry hired two private contractors holding applicator licenses to lead county crews in the knotweed and spartina treatment.

There is a decrease of \$7000 in the 2021 general fund. Less tax revenue was collected. There is about \$7000 left in the Spartina contract which will end in June 2021. We spent all the funds in the WSDA knotweed grant in the Pilchuck, Stillaguamish and North Fork Skykomish River. Gerry will reapply for the biannual WSDA knotweed grant and we hope to receive the Spartina funding again in July. The Salmon Recovery Board Funding (SRFB) funds for the knotweed control in the Stillaguamish River. The SRFB funding is shared with Scott who coordinates knotweed control and tree planting. Josh asked how will COVID affect the State's grant which funds part of our program. Gerry hasn't heard from the State yet. Every year the State's contracts and grants have offered less than the previous year.

Old Business

Proposed changes in RCW 17.10

In 2020, the State Weed Board attempted to make changes in the RCW 17.10, but the substitute bill did not move forward because some state agencies raised concerns. This year, the RCW 17.10 is open for revision. Last week, the public was given a chance to submit written testimony or comment remotely on House Bill 1355. Gerry highlighted two proposed changes. One of the proposed changes is regarding the county's weed board member composition. The proposed change is to have three voting members instead of four that are engaged in the primary productions of agricultural products. The

change will help the weed boards to fill vacant positions. The other change would obligate State agencies to pay an assessment to the county weed boards. Adding this language in the RCW will resolve the legal dispute brought by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) who decline paying an assessment to the county weed board. The bill may go through a financial committee before moving to the Senate.

New Business

New Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Gerry reported that the Snohomish County Council approved the creation of a new department known as the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. SWM, Parks, Department of Energy and Sustainability and the Agriculture Office are consolidated under the new department. Lea Anne asked how the group would feel about creating a proposal to leadership on moving the noxious weed program from Road Maintenance to the new department. As citizen volunteers, the board can give the advice. Scott supported Lea Anne's proposal and is a strong proponent to rehousing the noxious weed program. It will make a stronger connection and broaden the definition of what we do. He added that this would also be a good time to reconsider an assessment for increased funding. There's support from SWM and Parks staff for moving the weed control program from the Road Maintenance Division. Moving away will also give the program more independence in decision making, priorities and be closer to likeminded people. He recalls the weed control program being under Parks before moving to Road Maintenance.

Gerry said that maybe the first step is for Lea Anne or the board to write a letter to Dave Somers. Scott suggested to include Tom Teigan, Director of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in the letter. Josh said he is trying to understand the pros and the cons, and would like more time to consider. Lea Anne suggested perhaps more information sharing could be done before the next meeting. Josh proposed that at the next meeting, members can discuss the pros and cons in bullet points format to itemize why the move makes sense. Lea Anne requested that Gerry include this matter in the next meeting agenda.

Other Business

Potential new Board member - District 5

George Ohlsen decided not to reapply for the District 5 position after his term was up in December because health reasons. Gerry reached out to Dale Kolbe who lives in District 5. Dale Kolbe worked as a noxious weed seasonal for two years before serving as a Habitat Steward with the Department of Parks. She retired last year after two decades. She has completed her application and her application is going through the council approval process.

HB 5253

Scott gave a brief summary on HB 5253 which was heard in legislation to protect pollinators habitat. Several items were recommended including requiring at least 25 percent of landscaping projects to be a pollinator habitat and training pesticide applicators on how to protect pollinators.

Next Meeting Planning and Agenda

The next meeting will be on June 3.

Don made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Josh seconded the motion.

Adjourn at 10:20 am

Respectfully submitted by: Geraldine Saw