

Chelan County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting
7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 12th, 2023
412 Washington St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Board Members Present

Mary Hill
Kirk Laird

Board Members Absent

Joe Grentz
Jim Johnson
Jerrid Higgins

Others Present

Adam Pfleeger, Field Supervisor, CCNWCB
Tayna Russell, Office Assistant, CCNWCB

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Kirk Laird.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

~~The Board reviewed the draft minutes for the June 13th, 2023 regular meeting. _____ motioned to approve the minutes as presented. _____ seconded. The motion carried.~~ We did not have a quorum so the June meeting minutes were not approved at this meeting.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

1. Budget report

Adam Pfleeger went over the 2024 budget. Kirk asked about the increase in salaries for 2024. Adam explained the staffing changes that will occur in 2024. Discussion followed.

Expenditures

Adam reviewed the Expenditure Status Report and answered members' questions about budget overages. We're almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the year, and, although we went over budget in a couple categories, overall, we're still 3% under budget.

Revenues

Adam then went over the Revenue Status Report. Our reserves continue to increase which helps with increased future expenses, including cost-of-living, an increase in hours and med/dental benefits for the Office Assistant position, increased Tort Claims & Insurance, and a Capital Outlay increase to replace a 13-year-old crew truck. Discussion followed.

Mary Hill pointed out that the Status Reports are formatted in a way that makes them difficult to read.
Tayna will format future Status Reports to make them easier to read.

2. Grant updates

Adam gave a quick update on current grant projects. The Flowering Rush Survey & Control Project has been funded again by RCO for 2023/24. However, The Chelan PUD's annual survey resulted in no new plants being found in 2023, so instead of paying a contractor to do control work again this year, we will focus our efforts on removing old bottom barriers.

The Ravenna Grass Survey & Control Project was also funded again for 2023/24 under WSDA's Priority Noxious Weed Control Program. This project, headed up by Adam Pfleeger, has caused a large reduction in Ravenna grass plants throughout the County.

We got Woodland Resource Services to spray the garden loosestrife on Fish Lake this year, with grant funding from WSDA. They did a thorough job and we plan to continue using their services, depending on future funding, on that project in the coming years.

With regard to the Rush Skeletonweed Control Project, field staff got a lot of spraying done in right-of-way areas this season- more than ever before. Rush skeletonweed is a particularly challenging weed to control and many herbicide formulations have been utilized with varying degrees of success. Discussion followed.

3. Field season progress

Adam then went over the new and improved data collection system using ESRI's ArcGIS Online. All 2023 puncturevine notices were sent using the new system, in place of the Act! CRM software we've used in the past. Although some tweaks still need to be made, overall, this new way of collecting data and sending landowner notices has improved efficiency and we have received a higher percentage of landowner responses than in past years. Adam gave the Board a quick demo of how the system is used to collect noxious weed points and explained how the point data get updated. Adam said field staff finished the knotweed project a month early this year, partly due to the efficiency of the new system. Discussion followed.

Kirk asked to be provided with a set of guidelines on how quality control is maintained in our department. Adam said he would like to get through the current field season first, but will add that to his winter project list. *Adam will provide a set of quality control guidelines at the December Weed Board meeting.*

4. Tree-of-Heaven project

Adam went over grant funds received from WSDA to do a pilot project to control tree-of-heaven in Chelan County. A project area has been chosen near the junction of S Wenatchee Ave. and Malaga Alcoa Hwy. Property owners include the City of Wenatchee and KMO Holdings LLC. Young Bucks Landscaping will do the spraying, allow the trees to die and then come back to remove the trees. WSDA said they will have funds for more tree-of-heaven control work in 2024.

5. Education and outreach

We have one last farmers market left to close out the season. Overall, between the 9 markets and 2 Earth Day events, we connected with many local landowners and renters that we wouldn't have otherwise talked to. The vast majority are thankful we exist and seem appreciative of the services we provide.

6. Search for new board members for 2024

Adam reminded the group of the two Board members, Joe Grentz and James Johnson, whose terms will expire in April of 2024 and who have both voiced their desire not to continue with the Weed Board once their terms are up. This means it's time to start looking for new applicants. Discussion followed.

7. Meeting times

A couple years ago the Board agreed to change summer meeting times to 7 p.m. because 3 of them were orchardists and they needed to work later in the evenings during harvest months. It was brought up by new Board member, Jerrid Higgins, in a recent email to Weed Board staff that it won't be possible for him to attend the 7 p.m. Board meetings going forward, due to the long distance he has to travel as well as being father to 2 young children and work commitments. Adam asked other Board members present, to weigh in on changing future meeting times so that all meeting would be held at 1:30 pm. Kirk expressed his desire to continue holding summer meetings at 7 pm as that works better for his schedule. Mary said her schedule is more flexible, so whatever the rest of the Board decides is fine with her. Since Jerrid was unable to make the meeting and no other Board members were present, *changing meeting times will be discussed again at the December Board meeting.*

BOARD MEMBER ROUNDTABLE

The Board members discussed the puncturevine problem in the valley. Kirk brought up an idea to create a "Loop Hoe Brigade"- a group of volunteers that would go to a designated section of the County and remove puncturevine with loop hoes supplied by the Weed Board. Adam mentioned the Goathead Warriors as being one local group that does this kind of work, and asked whether another volunteer group was needed. Adam added that he would like to see the development of an app so that the public can use it and submit puncturevine reports to the Weed Board. They could upload photos, location data, etc. Discussion followed.

ADJOURN MEETING

~~_____ motioned to adjourn the meeting. _____ seconded. The motion carried.~~ The meeting adjourned with no motions due to the lack of a quorum.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 12th at 1:30 p.m.

Follow-up items:

Tayna will format future Budget Status Reports to make them easier to read (increase font and flip on long edge instead of short edge.

Adam will provide a set of quality control guidelines at the December Weed Board meeting.

Changing meeting times will be discussed again at the December Board meeting.