

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board MONTH Meeting  
1:00 p.m. March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Online/Teleconferenced via WebEx Only due to Covid-19 Restrictions

Handouts provided for meeting:

- Agenda for meeting.
- Draft minutes of March meeting.
- Office report.
- Financial report.

Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Bill Agosta

## Roll Call

Board members present via WebEx:

Allen Evenson	Janet Spingath	Ken Bajema
Bill Agosta	Jennifer Andreas	Todd Palzer
Eric Bell	John "Chip" Magnuson	

Others present via WebEx:

- Mary Fee, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
- Anne Schuster, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
- Members of the Coordinators Conference and the public

## Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the draft meeting minutes for the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. They were approved with edits.

## Board Member Comments

- John Magnuson - he has been getting a feel on what the board does and his role on it.
- Janet Spingath – Was still concerned with Leafy Green Oak being planted in Lakewood. Tom Erler gave her good information on the trees, which she passed onto Lakewood.
- Jennifer Andreas – Field season was starting and she was excited to be working with partners.
- Todd Palzer – DNR brought a couple new hires to the meeting and coordinators conference.

## Office Report

- Anne did several presentations, including 2 with WISC for Invasive Species Awareness Week, one for the Camas Washougal garden club, and one for Grant County Weed District #3 with Mary.
- Anne prepared for and worked at the NW Flower and Garden Show for all 5 days of it in February. She had help from many noxious weed boards, especially King County, in staffing the booth.

- Anne hand filled and prepared 600 seed packets for legislators and their staff. Mary and Anne handed out the packets to many legislators’ offices on February 28<sup>th</sup>
  - We could hold an event at the capitol, perhaps for Invasive Species Week in 2024, with WISC and county staff, to do outreach on noxious weeds.
- Anne and Mary completed normal correspondence, answered questions, assisted counties, and Anne filled publication requests
- Mary attended Flowering Rush Grant coordinating and planning meetings, and a pollinator task force meeting
- Mary and Anne worked on the Biannual Report
- Mary started conversations with many county coordinators about how their county is structured and funded, following a survey.
- Mary continued coordinating between WSDA and counties on billing methods.

## Financial Report

- Some money will be spent on travel for staff and board members who attended this meeting and the coordinator’s conference.
  - Some was also spent for Anne’s travel to the Flower and Garden Show
- WSDA continues to move towards a smaller footprint. This should mean smaller expenses, but that was not confirmed by the time of this meeting.
  - Anne and Mary will be sharing a touchdown office station and a mailing station with other Plant Protection staff.
  - Moving is scheduled for May 26th
- There is around \$18,000 available for printing.
  - Around \$600 had been spent already, on the 2023 weed list brochures.
  - \$12,000 will be spent to reprint Western Field Guides, which were all taken over the course of the last year.
  - \$6,000 will be spent on a reprint of Western GardenWise, which is running low, and was last printed in 2021.
- There will be a small overage by the end of June, but not much.
  - Overall, the budget is tight, and there won’t be a rush to spend funds at the end of June.
- There is \$5,000 available for Jennifer Andreas’ biocontrol project. This is usually allocated around March, to be available for Jennifer to use on travel to and from release and monitor sites.
  - Chip requested more information on how the budget is allocated.
  - Mary will go over the budget more thoroughly with Chip.

<b>VOTE</b>	Janet Spingath	Moved to give \$5,000 for the biocontrol project
	Allen Evenson	Seconded the motion.
	<i>The Board</i>	All in favor, no opposition, motion carried.

- Bill advised the 3 board members who traveled to the meeting (Janet, Allen, and Ken) to talk with Mary about how to fill out the travel forms to get reimbursed.

- Mary brought the forms with her to the meeting, and the faster they are filled out the quicker funds can be released.

### Salary Adjustment Proposal

- Anne automatically receives a 2.5% increase on the anniversary of her hire date, in addition to the usual cost of living increase each July.
- Mary is not on a salary step increase like Anne is, because her position is Civil Service Exempt.
  - She was hired in December 2018 and has not received any salary increases since then, except for the cost of living increases that all state employees get in July.
  - Mary asked for a merit 5% salary increase, at least one time, rather than for each year she has been working for the board.
- Bill stated that this would be good to do now, but could do in January, when the annual staff reviews happen.
- Mary looked at funding, and there is enough this year and in future year's budgets.
  - A payroll adjustment form would be filled out if the board approves her increase.
- Mary also proposed updating the Executive Secretary's job description, to reflect the new tasks the position has taken up in the last few years, including running the public hearing each November.
- Eric Bell stated that Mary has not had much recognition of her work and experience since 2018
- Mary will give the board members a budget handout, for them to vote on this salary increase at the May meeting.
  - Mary will also send out the updated Executive Secretary job description
- The board decided to table this issue until May.

### State Agency Updates

#### Washington Department of Ecology – Wesley Glisson

- Wesley is the Department of Ecology's Aquatic Plant Specialist, and the replacement for Jennifer Parson, after her retirement in 2021.
- Wes summarized a Department of Ecology aquatic grant program
  - 2022 had \$300k awarded for a few species and tasks
  - 2023 has \$400k in funding planned
- Wes summarized the 2022 field season
  - 30 waterbodies were visited, in 15 counties. They were mostly looking for Class A and B species
    - Flowering rush, South American Spongeplant, and Variable Leaf Milfoil were some targets
    - 1 new population of milfoil was found.
    - Some sites are made up of hybrids with our native milfoil

#### Washington Department of Agriculture – Wendy DesCamp

- Wendy spoke in place of Brad White and Greg Haubrich.
- Their current biennium budget is similar to previous ones.
  - The end of the fiscal year looks good, with no impacts to the budget

- Funding will go as expected
- \$100k was obtained as match for tree-of-heaven and spotted lanternfly surveys
  - \$120k will be requested for reoccurring funding from the legislator for continuing tree-of-heaven and spotted lanternfly work
- New Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service funding agreements have been put in place
  - Funds from USFS will be allocated to WSU's biocontrol project, among other grants
  - Part of this funding will go to research on a potential biocontrol species of mite on tree-of-heaven
- WSDA was hiring for a few positions
  - GIS staff are still being hired, and the GIS team is still short staffed
  - Staff for Lake Roosevelt were hired to work on the Flowering Rush agreement

#### Washington Invasive Species Council – Justin Bush

- WISC elected a new chair in December 2022
  - Blain Reeves is the new chair
  - Todd Murray is the vice chair
- Invasive Species Awareness Week was a success.
  - Justin said he is excited to collaborate for 2024.
  - The known social media reach for the week's posts was 40,000 people, over multiple platforms.
- Justin thanked the board for supporting WISC's cost share program with the Army Corps of Engineers for Flowering Rush
  - He has requested ongoing funding, so the program can run for more than 1 year at a time.
- Over the course of 2022, 1.2 million people were reached by WISC on various social media platforms.
- Funding was brought in for invasive species projects in Washington State.
  - Some of this funding went to a Spotted Lanternfly (and tree-of-heaven) action plan, which will be finished in July.
- WISC is hosting a few events around the state, and with neighboring partners.
  - 1 will be in Oregon for green crap response

#### Pollinator Health Committee – Katie Buckley

- Katie finished a report on weeds and pollinators, with sections on what is detrimental and beneficial to the pollinators.
- There are now more outreach materials available on their website
- They hired a bee taxonomist. This staff will finish the Washington Bee Atlas, which will go live later in 2023

#### Washington Fish and Wildlife – Dave Heimer

- Dave was finalizing a report, and will present on it in May.

### Washington Department of Transportation – Ray Willard

- Ray has been in his position for over 30 years!
- He has vegetation management plans for 24 maintenance areas
  - There are approximately 45,000 acres in each area
- He reported that there is not enough funding for roadside maintenance, year after year.
  - They are falling progressively more behind each year
  - There are 100,000 acres of unpaved right of way to manage, plus other types of mileage, like vegetated shoulder miles, corridor miles, and paved right of way miles
  - The total management budget is \$20 million, but that includes many other tasks than just vegetation management
    - If they got another \$5.5 million, they could catch up and fix a lot of problems.
  - They are attempting to get more funding
    - This funding would go to mapping, planning, surveying, etc.
- He reported that they are also short-staffed.
  - During COVID, he lost around half of his staff.
  - They have been rehiring, but retraining and getting pesticide licenses for their new staff takes time and funding.
- There are decades of case studies showing IPM is successful after years of work
- Chip stated that a problem in Spokane County is that the timing and communication of WSDOT vegetation work does not line up well with county work.
  - Ray said that if the county does the work, and bills WSDOT, they will pay them for the treatments done.
    - The lack of funding and crews put them behind everywhere. They are 2 years behind in Spokane.

### Washington Department of Natural Resources – Caleb Dobey

- Todd Palzer's team is made of 5 people, including Caleb, with a small budget
  - They manage all DNR aquatic lands
- Caleb summarized the 2022 season
  - 3,600 acres were surveyed
  - Some areas were prioritized, like the Chehalis River Charge Plain
  - They gave boat assistance to the Lake Roosevelt Flowering Rush project, as well as to Silver Lake in Whatcom County
  - 30,000 pounds of vegetation was removed by DASH divers using underwater vacuums
  - They had 11 Conservation Corps crews, who worked over 119 days around Western Washington and with tribes
  - In WRIA 7, 68 days were spent controlling knotweed and other projects.
    - The Bolt Creek Fire hindered some work there.
  - Spartina monitoring in Willapa Bay was down to around 7000 acres, with 23 plants found.
    - 30 years ago, there were 9,000 plants found.
  - They hired green crab program staff
- For 2023, green crab staff will be working with the funding they received, after being invited to apply for it.

## Discussion Topics

### Rule Making Update

- In November 2022, feral holly was being considered to be listed as a Class C Noxious Weed
  - The vote was tied, 3 to 3, so the proposal to list feral holly was not adopted
  - One board member who had a self-declared interest in the outcome of the vote did vote on the proposal.
- Bill and Mary received multiple complaints from a number of people from around the state about the vote, and the potential conflict of interest
  - Bill began working with the State Attorney General, who is the board’s legal council
  - The AG asked for more time to look into the issue
  - The Executive committee, and the board member in question, want to have a legal and ethical culmination to this issue
- Ken Bajema stated that when he cast his nay vote, he did not do this with a conflict of interest.
  - Bill responded that this was not the time to discuss whether or not this vote was a conflict of interest.
    - Bill added that this question went to the AG and State Ethics Board to determine, and is not up to the weed board
  - Ken stated “Let it be known that I was denied to speak at this meeting.”

### 2023-24 Class A and B Priority Projects Funding and Request for Proposals

- Proposals for funding from the Class A and B Priority Projects are due by Friday May 12<sup>th</sup>
  - The RFP will be out April 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Requesting parties should be present at the May meeting to answer questions about their project
- For last years proposals (Fiscal Year 2023), \$20,000 was approved
  - Brad and Greg told Wendy and Mary that the budget for the Noxious Weed Board should be the same for Fiscal Year 2024.
  - Most years has \$15,000 available, so for FY2023 had more funding

<b>VOTE</b>	Janet Spingath	Moved to have \$20,000 in funding available, the same as last year.
	Allen Evenson	Seconded the motion.
	<i>The Board</i>	All in favor, no opposition, motion carried.

### Use of Drones in Washington State

- Sue Bird found that drones are very effective in surveying and treating hard to reach areas
  - There are companies that can be contracted with to use their service, rather than programs purchasing their own drones
  - The prices for these services are coming down, as more companies get their licenses
  - It uses less man-power, product, time, exposure, and dangers, among many other benefits

- Yakima County has two companies they have used, and a third is licensed.
  - Eric Bell is going to add these companies to their applicator list
- Education and outreach has helped the few landowners, who don't want a drone over their property, be ok with it.
- An audience member questioned if there were any other difficulties?
  - The FAA describes anything being dropped from an airplane or drone as "economic poison" so Sue says that is something that could change, policy wise
  - It takes 18 months to 2 years to get a drone license with the FAA
  - There was legislation moving through the US senate or house of representatives that would disallow many Chinese-produced drones from being used in the US. If something like this passed, it would stop most drone operators from using their drones
- Ray Willard stated that DNR, DOT, and other state agencies are working together to start a working group to have a collective state agency drone program
  - There would be buy in from multiple agencies, and the drones could be used to paint over graffiti, apply herbicide, and work on many other projects
- Sue is asked if she can update the weed board again in the fall, to talk about how the 2023 field season goes with the drone work. Sue agrees.

## Coordinators Forum

- The coordinators in the room and online went around and introduced themselves, but no updates were given

## Public Comment

- No public comments were made

The next board meeting will be on May 25<sup>th</sup>, at 9 a.m., via webinar.

The board meeting adjourned at 3:04

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Bill Agosta, Chairman  
WSNWCB

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Janet Spingath, Secretary  
WSNWCB

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Mary Fee, Executive Secretary WSNWCB