

Island County Noxious Weed Control Board
Quarterly Meeting: February 27, 2024
10:00 am, Island County WSU Extension Meeting room and zoom teleconference,
406 N. Main St. Coupeville, WA 98239

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 10:04

Present

Board members present: Russ Holmes (chair), Jennifer Carlson, Mark Sytsma, Clark Bishop; Program Coordinator Seth Luginball; WSU representative Sara Bergquist, Island County Department of Natural Resources Director Jen Schmitz.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve Dec. 11, 2023 ICNWCB quarterly meeting minutes by Russ Holmes, second by Jennifer Carlson. Minutes approved without amendment by unanimous vote.

Weed Control Board Chair

The Board has previously agreed that we would have a rotating schedule for Board members to serve as chair with a two year term of service. District V board member Russ Holmes has been the Chair for the last two years and it is time to appoint the next Board Chair. Jennifer Carlson served as chair prior to Russ Holmes. Mark Systma and Clark Bishop have not yet served as Chair. Clark said he would not be able to serve as the Chair at this time. Mark said that he would be willing and able to serve as the Chair. Russ made a motion to appoint Mark as the next Weed Control Board Chair. Jennifer seconded the motion. Appointment of Mark Systma as the next Weed Control Board Chair was approved by unanimous vote. Two-year term will begin at the Public Hearing immediately following this meeting and run through the spring meeting (typically February or March) 2026.

Russ announced he would be leaving the Weed Control Board at the end of his present term in June 2025 due to age and health.

District I Vacancy

Notice for District I vacancy has been posted in the Whidbey News Times and on County social media.

Budget Discussions

The Coordinator requested Renee, the Public health accounting manager, to put together three salary funding options for the Board to consider for the 2025 budget year.

- a. F/T Coordinator \$73,000 and 2 seasonal techs \$24, 000 each
- b. F/T Coordinator \$73,000 and F/T Weed Tech \$51,200
- c. Program Coordinator (35 hours week) \$69,300 and F/T Weed Tech \$51,200

The Board discussed these options and concluded that option “a” was the best option to meet the current program needs and it was an opportune time to pursue this. Two seasonal techs could allow for one to be dedicated to inspections (as occurs in other counties) and the second could be relied on for control and other duties. The Coordinator said that the budget increases for salary would have to come from increases in the operating budget though grants could be relied on to supplement seasonal techs. Board members agreed that it was imperative to address work that is not getting completed with the current salary funding, the resulting economic and health impacts to County residents with the shortfall and that the County is not in compliance with RCW requirements when requesting operation budget increases to support a F/T Coordinator and two seasonal techs. The upcoming update to the Board of Commissioners scheduled for March 20, 2024 should address these needs and concerns and lay the foundation for the need for a budget increase. Mark emphasized that getting constituent support will be important and that can be achieved only through public education.

Board of County Commissioners Presentation

The annual Program update by the Coordinator to the Board of County Commissioners is scheduled for March 20th. Board members are encouraged to attend, even if by Zoom, to help the commissioners put some faces to names of the Board members and to show support for program.

The Coordinator displayed the summary of the 2023 accomplishments which he will share at the BOC update. The Board suggested as possible outline for the update to include program overview (number of listed weeds in the county, infested acres, etc.), 2023 accomplishments, 2024 proposed work, and issues and concerns (which would include the issues discussed in the “Budget Discussions” above). Clark said it would be important to address miles of County roads and the amount treated last year to emphasize the shortfall. The Coordinator said he would include the number of public requests for information in the update to highlight public interest and concern. The Board agreed that this was an important metric.

Coordinator is putting together a one-page fact sheet/impact statement to share in conjunction with presentation.

Island County Noxious Weed List

Three additions to the State weed list in 2024. The following species were added by the State weed board:

Two Class A weeds:

Palmer amaranth, *Amaranthus palmeri*.

Variable-leaf milfoil hybrids, *Myriophyllum heterophyllum* x *Myriophyllum hippuroides* to the Class A listing of variable-leaf watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum heterophyllum*.

One Class C weed:

European, American, and hybrid beach grasses, *Ammophila arenaria*, *A. breviligulata*, and *A. arenaria* x *breviligulata*.

Mark requested that the meaning for the species in bold print (species documented in Island County) provided at the bottom of the page should also be in bold print and be on top or placed in a more visible position at the bottom of the page.

Compliance Case

Three notifications drafted and sent out in February. All of these pertain to reports of spurge laurel on multiple parcels.

Letter on enforcement case sent out February. Have not heard back from landowner but have received confirmation with PA office that our course of action looks sound. As time comes closer, we will connect with sheriff's office about having a presence during the application. We are also getting confirmation of whether or not we are required to have a warrant to access the property to conduct work. Board recommended that notification to the Commissioners so that they are fully aware of the action.

Program Updates

- **Spartina (WSDA grant):** No activity to report, Submitted end of season report to Chad Phillips (WSDA Spartina Coordinator) in December.
- **Barnum Point/Iverson spit CFF:**
 - **Barnum point:** Early season survey work conducted in February. English Holly plants appear to not be coming back in significant numbers after a secondary treatment was done in Fall 2023. Will work with FOCIP to have a spring workday to continue making progress through the forested infestation. Surveyed and removed scotch broom down along Beach trail and along shoreline. King tides have inundated this area with driftwood so only a few broom plants removed (20). The small patch of Common teasel located at the old House site continues to be present. Seven plants removed.
 - **Iverson spit:** Early season survey work conducted in February. Still small pockets of Scotch broom observed and removed from zone 1, 3, 4, and 5. Totaled only 40 lbs. Some early season poison hemlock (Five plants total) removed along the Dike trail (zone 5). Removed poison hemlock from zone 2 (Native plantings). Working with Parks to get a mower onsite to start clearing the next area of Himalayan blackberry will be a priority for March and April.
- **Kettles/Saratoga/Ala spit CFF:** Field work concluded in November 2023. Despite not getting to sites in earnest till the fall this year weed control staff still managed to remove just over 700 lbs. from the three sites. Plants continue be brought in through outside vectors (horses and recreational users) as well as working with adjacent land managers (WA state parks, WSDOT) to mitigate noxious weed populations will be critical to long term success of these projects.
 - **Kettles trails work:** No updates
 - **Saratoga woods:** No updates
 - **Ala spit:** No updates
- **Public Works:** Submitted end of season report for 2023 work. Moved 2024 Scope of work and interagency agreement through approval and signatures. Early season survey work done on fourteen roads to date. Treatment will begin on poison hemlock in March.
- **Other partnership project**
 - **Deer lagoon:** No updates

- **Ebey's Landing poison hemlock work group:** No update
- **Education and Outreach**
 - Master Gardener training class (December 9th)
 - Aquatic invasive weed class for S. Whidbey ALE program (Jan 8th)
 - Coupeville Garden Club (Feb 1st)
- **Upcoming Education and Outreach**
 - WGW workshop (Class and Educational booth) (Mar. 2)
 - Greenbank Garden Club (Mar 7th)
 - SWS weed workshop series (April)
 - Program update to BOCC (March 20)
- **Trainings and Professional Development**
 - WA ST Weed Coordinators annual Conference (Mar 13-15)
- **Taylor Checkerspot Butterfly:** Seth spoke to one of Representative Larsen's aids regarding the herbicide restrictions under consideration and he said that since that they have his comments, which are part of the official record, another letter from the Board is unnecessary.
- **Riparian Grant Update:** It has become evident that do not have time to find a partner or a watershed we could individually work on so pursuing a grant this year is not possible. Grant money could possibly be available in future years.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Russ, second by Mark. Adjournment approved by unanimous vote.

Public Meeting to Approve County Weed List: Mark, as the new Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:32. No public was present. The updated list was discussed during the previous Board meeting and there was no further discussion. Motion to approve the list was made by Russ, second was made by Jennifer, and the list was approved by unanimous vote.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Russ, second by Clark. Adjournment approved by unanimous vote.