

WELD COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

May 20, 2020

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm. Board members present included: Chuck Birkemeyer, Cami Hillman, Ron Broda, Ralph Enders, Daryl Wiest, Jean Mark and Dennie Kutcher along with Public Works Deputy Director Curtis Hall. County Commissioner coordinator Scott James was absent.

Introductions were carried out. Dennie moved and Chuck seconded the approval of the June minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

I 2020 Weed Division Program (and Covid-19)

Tina shared a press release from the state that this week is Noxious Weed Awareness week.

Covid-19 has cancelled many of the events and activities that we do as indicated by the strike through. Several of the weekly staff meetings are now done via skype. We continue to practice social distancing. This situation has provided the ability to participate in a lot more webinar trainings. Tina has been able to hire her staff and conduct business.

Financially we, as a County, are ok. Budget requests are status quo for 2021 and a possible 15% reduction for 2022 – 20224.

Tina was accepted to the Pesticide Advisory Committee for another 3-year term.

Dennie is excited about helping make a safety/demo video for mowing and tractor maintenance. We will be working to coordinate this sometime this summer/fall. We plan to use a movie camera as well as the UAS.

City of Greeley personnel have been furloughed most likely through June 10th. This includes Code Compliance and most of their Open Space employees. So noxious weeds like spotted knapweed and the thistles are not being addressed in a timely manner.

Jean commented how wonderful the Farm Show was with the scheduled talks on cheatgrass control and herbicide resistance. Tina indicated that because we had such a great turnout, we might be asked to coordinate talks again for next year's Farm Show.

Events:

January 28-30	Colorado Farm Show
February 20	Society of Range Management Sprayer Calibration Presentation ~ 12 people
March 3	CALCP Applicator Safety Presentation ~ 300 people
March 13	Severance Ag Classes ~ 45 students
March 18	Severance Ag Class

April 20	Earth Day Expo @ Greeley West High School
April 22	Children's Water Festival
May 16	Frederick DIY Event
May 20	Code Enforcement Training Class
June 13	Northern Water Conservation District Garden Fair
July 29	Weld County Fair – Creative Weeds Contest
July 31	Weld County Fair – Weed Q&A session/booth - tentative
August 17-21	Purple Loosestrife (maybe with VOC)
October 21	Children's Water Festival

Facebook Posts and Other Outreach:

Facebook: 38 posts on weeds and general plants from March 10-Nov. 3, once a week.

Spraying

Staff: Greg Hoff – Foreman; Lee, Ron, Kathy – returning seasonal staff and Antonio – new seasonal

Bare-ground Acres: 32.75 this spring: For 2019/2020 year we did: 67.14 acres

Handgun Acres: 29.5 acres

Roadside Acres: 20.75 Lane Miles: 118

Chemical Mow Parkway Acres: 75 Lane Miles: 50

Forest Service Accomplishments: approx. 115.1 acres inspected; 539.5 gallons sprayed out = 4 acres handgun treated and 12.2 acres boom sprayed.

Special Spray Projects.

CDOT – Hwy 85 north of Nunn, Hwy 392 and a small portion of Business Hwy 34
Towns – Severance, Milliken, Fort Lupton, Dacono and Erie

Landowner Specialists

Staff: Kent, Scott and Ron – returning seasonal staff

Field Contacts: 670 (checking on properties, looking at complaints, meeting with landowners, etc.)

Office Contacts: 1182 (identifying properties, letters, phone calls, follow-up, records, etc.)

Legal Notices mailed: 0 Compliance: 100% Enforcements: 0

Mower Staff

Staff: Anthony and Wade – returning seasonal staff and Dennie – new seasonal

Lane Miles: 55 plus

Special Projects

Geisert trail and Grader Testing area: This spring we planted about 850 trees and shrubs donated by West Greeley Conservation District. Hauled in composted bean hauls to the slopes and flat area and seeded wildflowers and grasses. One small section will be planted to an herb garden. The goal is to create habitat for pollinators. We may transplant some of the trees and shrubs to other areas if we have a high survival rate in a couple of years.

East Davis Stockpile Site, LNG area, and CR 38 Comm Tower: Sprayed for the noxious weeds last fall

and again this spring. Will look at seeding this winter with a combination of grasses and flowers.

Cost Share Funds available:

Weld County: \$ 10,000.00	Funds left: \$9,200.00
50% up to \$400	
People signed up: 4	Funds spent: \$800.00
People cost-shared with: 2	
West Greeley CD: \$13,401.18	Funds left: \$11,393.68
50% up to \$600	
People signed up: 8	Funds spent: \$2,007.50
People cost-shared with: 4	
Dalmatian Toadflax: \$ 26,000.00	Funds left: \$25,320.00
80% up to \$700	
People signed up: 4	Funds spent: 680.00
People cost-shared with: 1	
Diffuse Knapweed: \$ 6000.00	Funds left: \$6,000.00
80% up to \$700	
People signed up: 0	Funds spent: 0.00
People cost-shared with: 0	

Bills before the Colorado Legislature

Covid-19 has slowed the process on 3 proposed bills. Waiting to see if any of them will be picked up and pushed through once they reconvene the session. It is doubtful, especially with the budget shortfall and needing to get that passed in a short turn around. Tina also provided copies of each of the bills language as well as the fiscal note details. Daryl indicated that these are a result of people making decisions and working from emotions and not science.

SB20-101 – Investigation Process for Pesticide Applicators: requests that cases are resolved within 18 months. When Marijuana regulations came on board, the department got behind and backed-up for 2-3 years. Usually most complaints are resolved in 12-18 months. Under this bill if not resolved within the 18 months it would be sent to EPA to handle and bring about compliance. This bill has a fiscal note attached for 2 full time staff. It had past JBC committee before state shut down.

HB20-1180 - Neonics Ban: Made it through the house. Has a fiscal note for a full-time position built in. Predominantly, affects homeowners and limits them from purchasing and using neonics.

SB20-189 – Preemption: The bill is far reaching legislation of any bill proposed in US to date. It gives local government control. EPA only works with 1 state agency. This could be a logistic nightmare for the Dept of Ag to coordinate. EPA discussed their issues which include local governments regulating pesticides; money; knowledge of pesticides and interpreting labels; concerned the cities would become overwhelmed and ask the state to enforce their wishes; and that cities would try to skip working with the state and go directly to EPA. EPA is not required to work with local governments. Additionally, there would be no money to the cities to help them run their individual enforcement programs. EPA also said

that they feel cities probably wouldn't have qualified people to carry out inspections – so they wouldn't count. The regional Administrator for Region 8 might have a meeting with Commissioner Greenburg to discuss the issues that the passing of this bill might bring on. At this point there is a fiscal note for 1 full time person to oversee this.

II 2020 Grant updates

In the Department of Ag Grant we asked for \$40,000. We were awarded \$32,000. However, \$6,000 is guaranteed and \$26,000 is based on the 20/21 budget that hasn't been passed yet. Waiting expectantly to hear what happens after legislation comes back into session. With the budget shortfall concerned that these funds won't be available. These funds are for Dalmatian toadflax and diffuse knapweed cost-share.

The ReStORE grant was not awarded. Will try again whenever the opportunity arises. All partners were very encouraging about continuing to apply.

III UAS status

Tina received a grant from DART Drones for training. Phil Kinnison and Tina have been working through the online training. They have a hands-on flying class June 13th (rescheduled).

Tina is meeting with Curtis and Jay on May 21 to discuss the UAS needs for Public Works. At this point we are looking at the Anafi as a small unit to start with because its camera can shoot straight up and would possibly allow us to inspect under a bridge.

Daryl and Ralph asked about the opportunity to spray with a UAS. Tina indicated that it was a few years down the road. The State needs to offer an aerial spraying category for the spray license. They are looking at adopting a western regional option for this. However, it is a couple of years out from happening. Then Tina will have to go before FAA and do a hands-on flying test and verbal interview with the actual spraying UAS that will be used to demonstrate air worthiness. Or Tina can get a full pilots license. Or there is the option to apply for a waiver, which is how a County in Wyoming is doing it. Ron asked about the cost of a unit. Tina indicated that a decent one can be purchased for \$5,000-\$20,000.

IV Handling compliance with “repeat offenders”

Tina did draft a plan for these landowners but didn't feel comfortable with it after sharing it with Curtis and thinking about the existing rules and regulations that staff already work within. Tina determined that the issue was more in internal communication than policy. Tina also didn't want new staff to confuse the situation especially not knowing the history. So, this year, the plan is for Tina to visually check on the situations and to communicate with staff to start the process early and stay on top of it until it is resolved. Consistent/regular communication on these parcels is being done. Progress is being made. If this goes smoothly, this will be the plan moving forward – otherwise, a new plan will be made next year. The board was good with this.

V Advisory Board meeting with municipality code enforcement

Tina had wanted to hold a training for local code enforcement personnel about weed ID. Thanks

to Covid-19, this wasn't the best year to do this. Tina will look at scheduling this next spring. That way it is fresh in their minds and hopefully they will be fully staffed. Tina is considering drafting a letter to mail to each of the code enforcement departments to remind them about the State law and offer one on one assistance if they need some help with plant ID.

Daryl asked about the towns need to comply on their own properties as they require landowners to do. Both Ron and Tina explained that yes towns are required to comply on their own properties based on the Noxious Weed Act. However, the County has no jurisdiction over the towns to make them. And multiple times it has been brought to the state's attention over the years and they have not enforced the state law, as of yet. So, the only thing Tina can do at this time is bring to the town's areas infested with noxious weeds and hope that they will address them sooner than later.

NEW BUSINESS

I Dept of Ag proposed Rules changes

The state is proposing the following changes/updates to some of the list B noxious weeds in the state. These are the recommendations for Weld County: **Absinth wormwood**: eliminate; **Hoary cress**: contain in western part of Weld over to Hwy 85 and then eradication; **Diffuse knapweed**: contain in northern Weld County next to Nebraska, eliminate everywhere else in county because we did not submit enough mapped data for the river bottom lands to be containment also; **Spotted knapweed and diffuse hybrid**: eradicate/eliminate; **Canada thistle**: suppress; **Yellow Nutsedge**: was changed from suppress to eliminate. I finally got enough "mapped data" submitted to have it set back to suppress in the two areas where we have it the most; **Houndstongue**: eliminate; **Russian Olive**: contain; **Leafy Spurge**: eradicate; Tina went around and round with Lara about the river bottoms. How its private property. We can't see all of it. Tina submitted estimated acres and how extensive it is on the river bottom. Lara didn't feel my estimated acres were correct. She wanted Tina to go into EddMapps and change/justify. Tina was locked out and couldn't make changes. Lara has the data. Then Covid-19 hit and everything stalled on our communication; **Salt Cedar**: eliminate; Other species addressed in this rule that don't really impact Weld County are: Plumless thistle, Chinese clematis, black henbane, and oxeye daisy.

It was a very important experience to say that every choice the Department of Ag makes from here on out is going to be solely based on electronically mapped data. Period. This means staff will do a lot of mapping so that there aren't any blank areas where weeds aren't identified.

There was a lively discussion between the Board members with Curtis about how this will impact us. Why leafy spurge is set for eradication. The cost to achieve this. Along with the work landowners would have to put in on the river bottom land. Tina ended with saying that she would check with the Department of Ag and see what the status was with these requirements. They may not have been past with the Covid-19 shutting things down like it did. Tina has a fine line to walk with the Department of Ag. As she applies for grant funds from them. Tina will update the board as she learns more.

II New weed species required mapping

Tina shared Lara's current email that is providing the next set of list B species to focus on through 2022. The focus for mapping is the teasels and toadflaxes. Yellow toadflax is

going to be difficult with it hiding on the river bottom. Weed staff will continue to map the other species to fill in missing data. So, we aren't caught like we were this year. While still remembering our priority is on landowner compliance and not just running around mapping weeds.

III Advisory Board Questions

Daryl asked about the chemical mowing and which product was used. Tina said that the product used was Derigo. The west side was treated with 1.5 oz/acre and the east side with 2 oz. The first important lesson learned was that the treatment should have been made in early April instead of late April. Derigo we know works well on smooth brome and cheatgrass. Just don't have much information on Rye. Derigo is also used on a regular basis in eastern United States. Where they have much more moisture/precipitation they are using substantially higher rates. Tina will try again next year. The Parkway (or County Highway – CR 47/49) was treated from Hwy 392 to CR 18 approximately 25 miles. Staff will mow the road in the fall.

Jean asked about the chemical to control cheatgrass was asked about along with the grazing option. Tina indicated that EPA was reviewing it, things were slowed down with Covid-19. However, it is expected to have it available by this late summer/fall. Esplanade 200SC will be for industrial uses and a different name will be used for the grazing version. Ralph and Daryl also talked about Esplanade EZ and how it's used on rocks and around homes. Esplanade EZ contains Diquat, Glyphosate and Indaziflam.

Ron asked when the next meeting was. Tina indicated that it is set for October 21.

Ralph asked about having a weed tour this year. Tina said she would see what she could figure out working with the president of the board, Ron.

IV Announcements - None

V Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm