

# WELD COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

January 15, 2020

## Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:55 pm. Board members present included: Daryl Wiest, Jean Mark, Dennie Kutcher, Cami Hillman and Chuck Birkemeyer. Board members Ron Broda and Ralph Enders, County Commissioner Scott James, and Public Works Deputy Director Curtis Hall were absent. Supervisor Tina Booton was also present.

Introductions were carried out. Denny moved, and Jean seconded the approval of the May minutes.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### I Mapping Update using Collector and data submission – Summary Handout was provided.

Tina indicated that the program went smoothly. All staff loved it. Some “worked around” the limitations that we put in place for only taking points and not allowing polygons. It was awesome having real time knowledge in the field for ownership. This helped staff feel more confident contacting landowners. The upload went very fast. Sam with IT pulled it together. So, Tina only had a few key strokes to send it on to EddMaps. However, after the fact we noticed a few glitches with the data submitted. There were some future dates (by years) accidentally marked that needs to have QC for before submission. Sam is also looking to see if he can lock down the date and make it an automatic fill in piece. The state also has 2 subspecies indicated for Dalmatian Toadflax and Scotch Thistle. EddMaps system will put down double points in these situations as it can’t combine the two subspecies. The state was told about this. Tina hasn’t heard what the plans are to address it.

#### II 2019 Program and Grant projects – Handout provided of 2019 activities

Tina asked in there was any questions on the 2019 program? And briefly highlighted some of the activities and accomplishments that took place. Tina talked about the transition of staff and talked about Greg Hoff, the new Foreman. The summer went as smoothly as possible considering the turnovers.

Tina also provided a copy of some of the analytics for the Weed portion of the County website. Tina found it interesting to see who visited the site in 2019 and what the top 10 pages visited were. She is looking for opportunities to simplify the website and make it as user friendly as possible (within the limitations provided). So, let Tina know if you have any suggestions for anything you think should be added (or removed) to the website. The County is also looking at possibly changing website formats over the next year or two.

The Weed Division had one grant with the Department of Ag. The grant provided \$20,000 cost-share money for Dalmatian Toadflax and \$20,000 for staff time to treat the Pawnee National Grassland. The GOCO Grant that was submitted was not awarded. The project ranked in the top 9 – only 5 were funded. GOCO encouraged Tina to keep looking for other opportunities and

reapply.

### III UAS status

The County Commissioners approved a small budget (\$15,000) for the purchase of UAS's. Tina is currently looking at purchasing two units: one small quad copter for weed inspection along with communication towers, bridges, culverts, etc. and one fixed wing unit for inspecting/surveying gravel pits, roads, weeds, etc. Tina admitted that she didn't have quite enough money to buy everything including the software. She will be speaking with Curtis (her boss) to see what arrangements can be made. Hopefully, Tina will be able to do a demonstration at the May meeting. The option to spray with a UAS is a year or two down the road. The UAS program is moving forward. Tina met with Noble and their consultant in November to learn about their program and thoughts. Noble indicated how much the use of UAS's is saving on responding to issues as well as increasing safety for the responders.

As far as a spraying drone: Tina will need to complete FAA Part 137. There are three steps: 1. have a spraying UAS that is airworthy and approved by FAA. 2. Have her spray license that allows for aerial applications. The Dept of Ag is in the process of adding an aerial category. However, this is 1 to 2 years out. 3. Hands-on demonstration/interview with FAA inspectors that Tina can safely fly the unit and handle any situations that come up. Tina is still hoping that she can get grant funds to purchase this unit as the primary reason behind it is to treat eradication species. The other option to by-pass FAA 137 is to apply for a waiver like one of the Counties in Wyoming. Chuck asked if you can rent spraying drones to test with and try out. Tina is not sure of any that are available. Cost to purchase ranges from \$5000 – 19,000 in the weight range that Tina can fly with the 107-certificate.

## NEW BUSINESS

### I 2020 Weed Division Program and Grant application

Tina went through the 2020 activities to date.

#### Events:

January 28-30	Colorado Farm Show
February 19-21	From Our Lands to Your Hands
February 20	Society of Range Management Sprayer Calibration Presentation x 3
March 3	CALCP Applicator Safety Presentation
April 22	Children's Water Festival
July 29	Weld County Fair – Creative Weeds Contest
July 31	Weld County Fair – Weed Q&A session/booth - tentative
August 17-21	Purple Loosestrife

#### Staff Plans for 2020:

4 Sprayers: Greg, Lee, and Kathy (returning seasonal) and 1 new seasonal sprayer. Start: March 16

3 Landowner Compliance: Kent, Scott (2 returning seasonal) and 1 new seasonal. Start April 13

3 Mowers: Anthony (returning seasonal) and 2 new seasonal mowers. Start May 18

1 PNG staff: Ron (returning seasonal). Start March 16

38 Planned Facebook Posts for the season – still need to be drafted.

#### Cost Share Funds available:

Weld County: \$ 10,000.00  
50% up to \$400

West Greeley CD: \$9,090.19  
50% up to \$600

Dalmatian Toadflax: \$ 0.00  
80% up to \$700

Diffuse Knapweed: \$ 0.00  
80% up to \$700

Tina provided copies of 2 color pages she created for the 4-H Fair book. In the past Weed staff or Advisory Board staff have drawn them by hand. Tina used a computer program to edit a physical picture. Tina provided copies of two new herbicide matrix sheets that was created for landowner education. Tina also gave you copies of the other chemical handouts that she has created over the years. A new product is coming to the market this year that will require her to add it to the lists. The new product is called DuraCor. This led into a discussion between Daryl, Jean and Tina of how chemicals are categorized by groups.

Tina applied for a grant from the Dept of Agriculture for cost-share funds for Dalmatian Toadflax and Diffuse Knapweed eradication in Northern Weld County. She asked for \$40,000. According to Steve Ryder, the State Weed Coordinator with the Dept of Ag: “the grant review committee are reviewing 38 noxious weed management proposals with requests for funding that amount to approximately \$1.2 million” – Tina believes they only have about \$700,000 available. So it will be a tough competition.

Tina indicated that a new grant opportunity just came open Called ReSTORE. Funding is coming from a variety of partners: GOCO, NFWF, DOW, USFS, Gates Foundation and others. The key points are: 1. They want LARGE restoration projects. 2. Minimum request: \$100,000. 3. Match is not required, but helpful. 4. 1 to 3 years to implement project. 5. Deadline to apply: February 27. This is a pilot year project. They currently have \$2.5 million and want to fund 6-12 projects in Colorado. They are hoping to have continued funding available for future years.

The possibility that Tina is thinking of is the northern half of Weld County for all land ownership (private, state and federal) to target Dalmatian toadflax, diffuse knapweed, cheatgrass with restoration efforts of seeding. Partners would be landowners, State Land Board, USFS, Conservation District. Tina is tentatively thinking that some funds could be used for aerial treatments (like 75% of cost up to \$5000 x 5-8 landowners) as well as more for cost-share for smaller landowners (in future years); there could be some large scale seeding projects on the USFS-PNG and State Lands; and anything else that would help with restoration and wildlife habitat. The board all thought it was a great opportunity that should be followed up on. Chuck agreed to write/sign a letter on behalf of the grazing association showing support for the project.

Tina also covered a couple of upcoming bills that are expected to be presented to the legislature this session. The first bill is on listing neonicotinoids as restricted use pesticides. This insecticide is used in a number of applications. The concern is for bee health however, over the last 5 years, there was 455 investigations, 9 bee complaints and 0 cases with neonics involved. There is a push to include native

bees and pollinators in this. However, there is no data or science to indicate issues. Daryl pointed out that this has the potential to have people using products that have higher use rates and may actually be more toxic to people and the environment.

The other bill expected to come forward is one that will limit preemption and give local municipalities control of setting local laws for the use and application of pesticides within their jurisdiction. Tina provided a fact sheet on this bill that highlights why it's being introduced and ways that it might be implemented. The problem with this is that contractors may have to have separate permits to work in each municipality and county. The municipalities and counties will also have to determine how they will fund these programs. Under the current Pesticide Applicators Act, municipalities have the right to limit what is done on their lands and parks as well as to see that their staff are trained.

A group calling themselves Coloradans for Responsible Pesticide Application (CRPA) has reconvened to work against these and any future bills that will be coming out. CRPA is a group of lobbyists, weed scientists, contractors, municipalities, counties and manufacturers. It is expected that bills like these will be proposed with each legislative session up through the sunset of the Pesticide Applicators Act in 2023. Crop Life America has been gracious to hire a "marketing firm" that they have used to help fight other introduced bills. A campaign will be started shortly with taglines like "Colorado Stronger Together" and focusing on healthy and affordable food. Working to create the pause and get people to think. Most likely won't come out directly saying anything about pesticides. Every 3 weeks this group (CRPA) is going to have a conference call to work through issues.

## II Colorado Farm Show January 28-30 at Island Grove.

Tina invited the members to come help/hang out at the booth. The weed booth is in the 4H building. Tina pointed to the display board that has the theme for this year. Tina went with Herbicide Resistance. Tina indicated that on Wednesday from 9-12 in the Event Center we are hosting a weed educational opportunity. She hopes the board can join. Ron Broda has agreed to cover the booth while Tina is moderating the weed talks at the educational event. Tina said she would have parking passes at the front desk of Public Works for Board members after January 27.

## III Handling compliance with "repeat offenders"

Tina indicated that there are a number of landowners that her staff deal with every year over their noxious weeds – but they typically only need a reminder to address their weeds and they get on it in a fairly timely manner. Then throughout the County there are approximately a couple dozen individuals who her office struggle with every year getting satisfactory compliance from. These individuals wait until the thistle (typically) is in the full flower stage and only address portions of their infestations and only after they receive a legal notice and get right down to the point of carrying out an enforcement. Typically, everyone is treated the same each year regardless of history. Friendly contact or reminder for the weed season, let time slip by, possible second contact or mail legal notice, let time slip by, call-nag-tell them ready to enforce (have right-of-entry) and then they do 50-80% of the work – late and only the easy to reach spots.

Cami shared her experience with Hired Gun and one of the landowners who they tried to work with who drug the process out until it was too late and not effective any longer. While Jean shared her frustration with some of her neighbors and talked about the impact to her. Tina shared the length of time staff spends to seek compliance with the out of state owners and trying to track down a contact can really limit what the division can accomplish. Tina also shared that Weld County Commissioners are all about landowners' rights and that sometimes it's a fine line.

Tina asked for suggestions on how to handle these landowners. Should there be different requirements? What would it look like? After how many years of being negligent in addressing their weed problem should we start dealing with them differently?

Daryl shared his experiences serving on the HOA board and seeking compliance with their rules and regulations. All of the board members agreed that some landowners needed to be treated firmer and not allowed to play the system. Tina said she would draft a policy and send it out to the Board to review and comment on before she took it to the County Commissioner coordinator to get their blessing on implementation.

#### IV Advisory Board meeting with municipality code enforcement

The road trip the Advisory Board went on last summer highlighted some of the municipalities and the limited compliance their code enforcement staff have on noxious weeds – whether that is based on staff turn over or lack of education – Tina didn't know. Tina started thinking that it might be nice to offer an educational day for municipalities in Weld County to come and learn about the state law and county code, noxious weed ID, and how the entities can work better together. Tina would like to include a walking ID tour or at least have live samples of the weeds during the meeting for them to see. Tina is thinking 3-4 hours in the morning so people can do their own thing for lunch. She would like this to be sometime in May or late April. Tina would like to have representatives from the Advisory Board present to show support and encourage the municipalities to step up their game. All board members thought this sounded like a good idea and would try to come if their schedules allowed.

#### V Elections

Current president: Ron Broda

Current vice-president: Jean Mark

Daryl made the motion and Chuck seconded the motion to keep office positions as they are.  
Passed unanimously.

#### VI Advisory Board Questions - none

#### VII Announcements - none

#### VIII Adjourn- Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm