

WELD COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

October 20, 2020

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. Board members present included: Chuck Birkemeyer, Ron Broda, Ralph Anders, Daryl Wiest, Jean Mark and Dennie Kutcher along with Public Works Deputy Director Curtis Hall. Board member Cami Hillman was absent. County Commissioner coordinator Scott James was absent.

Dennie moved and Daryl seconded the approval of the May minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

I 2020 Weed Division Program (and Covid-19) Tina covered the 2020 accomplishments:

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
Nov 4-5	West Greeley Symposium booth display
January 2021	Colorado Farm Show Cancelled

Facebook Posts and Other Outreach:

Facebook: 33 posts on weeds and general plants from March 10-Nov. 10, once a week.

Spraying

Bare-ground Acres: 4.4 this fall

Handgun Acres: 74.93 acres

Roadside Acres: 1372.23 Lane Miles: 8346

Chemical Mow Parkway Acres: 75 Lane Miles: 50

Forest Service Accomplishments: approx. 4214.75 acres inspected; 2821.4 gallons sprayed out = 30.02 acres handgun treated and 18.14 acres boom sprayed. Left to treat this fall is about 50 acres cheatgrass with boom.

Special Spray Projects.

CDOT – Hwy 85 north of Nunn, Hwy 392 and a small portion of Business Hwy 34

Towns – Milliken, Fort Lupton, Dacono and Erie

Landowner Specialists

Field Contacts: 3804 (checking on properties, looking at complaints, meeting with landowners, etc.)

Office Contacts: 5757 (identifying properties, letters, phone calls, follow-up, records, etc.)
Legal Notices mailed: 11 Compliance: 100% Enforcements: 0

Mower Staff

Lane Miles through Oct. 16: 2607. Finishing up CR 49/Parkway and then will mow gravel roads.

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 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. Some grasses are coming up and establishing. Some trees and shrubs survived. About 6-10 wildflowers came up. Will continue to work on this project next spring.

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: \$2,433.36
50% up to \$400	
People signed up: 25	Funds spent: \$7,566.64
People cost-shared with: 22	
West Greeley CD: \$13,401.18	Funds left: \$6,511.77
50% up to \$600	
People signed up: 19	Funds spent: \$6,889.41
People cost-shared with: 17	
Dalmatian Toadflax: \$ 26,000.00	Funds left: \$13,054.54
80% up to \$700	
People signed up: 26	Funds spent: \$12,945.46
People cost-shared with: 24	
Diffuse Knapweed: \$ 6000.00	Funds left: \$3,628.80
80% up to \$700	
People signed up: 5	Funds spent: \$2,371.20
People cost-shared with: 4	

**Up to \$3000 from the Dalmatian toadflax/diffuse knapweed funds will be used to buy new kayaks for purple loosestrife work. The rest of the funds must be returned to the Department of Ag.

Bills before the Colorado Legislature

Covid-19 has slowed the process on 3 proposed bills. So far limited talk of these bills. Working with coalition to be prepared when these bills are introduced again. "coloradostronger.com". Tina also provided a copy of the content on the Colorado Stronger website.

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 - Neonic 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 not for 1 full time person to oversee this.

II 2020 Grant updates

The CO Department of AG grant that the Weed Division received was slow to implement with the late delay in confirming grant fund dollars. This made it hard to spend the money this year in conjunction with the Covid-19 situation. More homeowners opted to mow or pull the Dalmatian toadflax. As a result of not spending all the funds Tina asked the Department of AG if up to \$3000 could be spent on new kayaks for purple loosestrife activities. The current kayaks are getting holes and in rough condition from years of use in shallow water. Also, with new kayaks, Tina would not have to bring her 3 kayaks in for the week. Covid-19 has made it difficult to find kayaks to purchase. They are just getting back in stock at the stores. So, before the grant close-out, Tina will purchase what she can.

The Weld County Youth Conservation Corp also received a grant from the Dept of AG. The grant funded 6 weeks of Russian olive and salt cedar tree removal along the Big Thompson River. They have spent four weeks on one property bordering Two Rivers Parkway. They will be pulling off for a few days to address a couple dozen trees further east on the river across from where a wetland bank is being created; then they will be returning and finishing their time on the other property.

III UAS status

Public Works settled on 2 Anafi units while they learn what they need and what works for them while growing the demand for use. They realize that technology is fast changing. It is expected that the UAS's will have 3-5 years of service before replacement. Tina showed one of the units for an idea of its size along with some of the pictures that has been taken this summer. To date the units have been used to document several job sites. Working to be able to determine stockpile quantities. Collected video of some of Public Works operations for educational purposes. Tina was also able to collect some weed data to see if we can teach software to ID the plants. Tina has a meeting this Thursday with Douglas County on this piece. Beginning of October, the Weed Division rented a fixed wing plane to cover some large areas and give us baseline data. Currently the limiting factor is the office computer that needs to process the data. Curtis commented how he is very excited about the weed ID possibilities. It was asked if Tina was going to spray with the UAS and the cost of a spraying unit. Tina indicated that this option was two to three years down the road. Colorado has to offer an aerial applicator category for the spray license. Then the spraying UAS unit must be purchased and flown with an FAA inspector supervision/testing to get the endorsement. A quality spraying UAS is around \$15,000 to \$20,000 to start.

IV Advisory Board meeting with municipality code enforcement

Tina would like to coordinate this event for next May or June, depending on how things go with Covid-19 this winter. It would be ideal to have as many of the Advisory Board members present as possible. Tina will keep everyone posted.

NEW BUSINESS

I Dept of Ag Pest Control Act proposed changes

Tina shared a handout with the Advisory Board on the changes that the Department of AG is hoping to implement in 2021 through legislation changes. Currently under this act they have limited ability or funding to respond to any issues that might arise – whether its insects or plants. The current act requires a local association to step in and take responsibility for addressing the situation. This was not possible with the recent introduction of the Emerald Ash Borer or the Japanese Beetle. As specific language comes out, Tina will pass along to the Board.

II FIFRA legislation changes at the Federal level proposed for 2021

Tina shared an email and letter that was sent to legislators about the concerns of the proposed changes being made under the Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticide Act of 2020 (H.R. 7940, S. 4406). Tina read off the CO groups signing off on the letter: Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, Colorado Association of Wheat Growers, Colorado Cattleman's Association, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association, Colorado Pest Control Association, Colorado Potato Legislative Committee, Colorado Professional

Beekeepers Association, and Colorado Wool Growers Association. The first Tina heard about this Act was on October 1, 2020. As she learns more, she will pass it along to the Board. Tina did encourage the Board to reach out to their Federal Legislators if they had the opportunity to voice their concerns. Tina also pointed out to the Board that the Weed Division will continue to face similar difficulties in the coming years being able to use herbicides specifically and how the use of pesticides in general terms will continue to be under attack from all directions both on the State and Federal levels.

III ReStORE grant application

Tina is planning to submit another application to this grant opportunity. She is currently tweaking the application that was submitted in early 2020. The Deadline for submission is October 29. The concept will be similar in that it offers cost-share funds at 80% of cost up to different max amounts for ground and aerial treatments to private landowners in Northern Weld County to treat Dalmatian toadflax, diffuse knapweed, Russian knapweed, Canada thistle, musk thistle, Scotch thistle, hoary cress and cheatgrass. A total of \$100,000 is being requested for this component. It will also cover 100% of the seeding costs for 200 acres on private, state and federal lands. The dollars requested on this piece is \$52,000. There is also \$3000 built in for three educational signs with boot brushes on the USFS Pawnee National Grassland at Bakers Draw, Crow Valley Campground and the Pawnee Buttes Trail Head.

IV Advisory Board Questions

Ron asked about the “repeat offenders” and how the summer went. Tina commented that she had worked with her staff to be more proactive with the handful of problem properties and to not allow time to slip between each of the regular steps. Tina confirmed with Jean that things went a little better with a couple of her neighbors. Curtis indicated that the reduced number of legal notices and no enforcements was a good signal that staff was successful.

Ron offered for the Advisory Board to sign off on a letter of support to the Department of Ag highlighting the proposed changes to the Noxious Weed Act and its impact on County programs and lack of additional support. Ron commented on how he saw the changes coming down from the Department of AG as he was retiring.

IV Announcements - None

V Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm