



## Pierce County

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### Noxious Weed Control Board

9200 122<sup>nd</sup> St E

Puyallup, Washington 98373

(253) 798-7263

## MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2020 PCNWCB MEETING MINUTES (Meeting via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by **Beki Shoemaker**.

In Attendance:

Director – Morgan Heilesen, Melody Meyer – Secretary to the Board,  
Beki Shoemaker – Chairperson, Board members: Tom Bertram, Erick Balstad, Janet Azevedo.  
Jim Kropf, WSU Representative.

Review of Meeting Minutes

- January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (General Meeting)
- January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Annual Meeting)

**Tom Bertram moved to accept the January 2020 Board and Annual Board Meeting Minutes.**

**Erick seconded the motion to accept the minutes.**

**The Board is in favor, no corrections, no opposition; motion passed. January 2020 Board and Annual Board meeting minutes are accepted.**

## **Directors Report**

### **Office & County**

#### **Covid-19 Update:**

Due to the many safeguards presented, PCNWCB has taken all precautions required and are following both TPCHD and STOP Facility guidelines concerning our everyday work habits and direct environmental care, including frequent workstation sanitation and social distancing practices.

Melody and Morgan's laptops have been set up through IT so they can be connected online from our homes. We will keep the board updated as needed if or when changes occur. What Guidelines, if any, would the board recommend to us in the office? Feedback is welcome. Since March 19<sup>th</sup>, Melody has been working remotely, Morgan and Melody are working consistently every day via

video conference and chat to be assured that the preseason preparation for field inspectors is accomplished. Training for all inspectors was conducted April 29<sup>th</sup> virtually through Zoom. It has been very successful thus far.

Melody will be in the office more as needed for Field Inspector support, and manual paperwork duties (anything that cannot be done via email or phone – etc.).

### **STAFFING:**

- Chelli is staying to help as we work through these difficult times while we continue the prospect search & hiring process for her position. She is working 3 days a week now
- Applications for the position are on hold. We will continue to receive applications, but interviews will not continue until we have extra time
- Field Inspectors / Extra hires:
  - Interview on 4/15/2020 – Field inspector hired for Port area: Jason Osburn; excited about noxious weed work and joining the team. Field training and CV Web training week of 5/4/2020 completed
  - Zoom training on April 29<sup>th</sup> - (Streamlined / good attention / finished earlier)
  - Inspectors began May 4<sup>th</sup> (Smooth first week)
  - Do not have every area fully staffed with inspector for entire area / Some field inspectors have 1 & ½ areas each.
  - We are asking FI's to place heavy emphasis and increased hand pulling on public areas this season as most agencies have skeleton crews due to Covid-19.

### **TRAINING:**

- Field Inspector training via Zoom meetings to follow Covid-19 protocols and safe social distancing while still accomplishing training objectives; scheduled and had during the week of 4/27/2020
- Additional Covid-19 safety protocol training was included for Field Inspectors for both field and office work.
- STOP Facility Covid-19 conduct guideline implementation:
  - No more than 2 (total) field inspectors in office at cubicle area at one time
  - Days and times for each inspector will be assigned
  - Each cubicle will have implicit directions for cleaning after each inspector use (to be done by inspector / before and after use.
  - Inspector rechecks will be by individual scheduled appointment to comply with safe social distancing
- Start date for Field Inspectors moved to May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

- Though field inspection and Noxious Weed Control has been deemed essential service, per the State Noxious weed Board and Dept of Ag, it seemed prudent to delay start dates.
- Several inspectors will be doing paperwork from home (4 of 7 inspectors). All templates have been sent out. NONWs and WO are emailed to Morgan and Melody and rechecks are done through Zoom or over the phone for those who are uncomfortable with working in the office. So far, we have had no obstacles.

### **iPad Progress:**

- iPad Progress: Meeting held via Skype on March 17<sup>th</sup> with Trisha James and Crew. Results: We may still be able to start up the iPad system, but it will happen slightly later in the season due to the current conditions. A rearrangement of critical priorities for EAM, GIS and IT in addition to the fact that many of them are also now working remotely has influenced making optional changes – we are still able to utilize our current system without trouble – iPads for PCNWCB are not an urgent matter.
- Meeting with Greg Heintz to demo the iPad Collector App, and brainstorm with Morgan and Melody for additional tools that can be added to the iPads for increased inspector efficiency had on 4/21/2020, via zoom (his department also working remotely). Prospects for new and improved efficiency and a large decrease in needed office time looks very promising for us.
- GIS / IT will do the training with field inspectors for using the iPads once we are ready to launch.

### **WINTER PROJECT PROGRESS / COMPLETION:**

- Field Inspector Training: Safety materials / videos included for all inspectors. Refresher training / New hire training implemented. STOP facility safety training topics will be included at each FI meeting – monthly.
- In April Morgan sent an email to all agencies working with our department to gather information on whether they are continuing vegetation management at this time and if they foresee any delays with notices or work orders sent to them. We had responses from everyone we sent to and had a lot of different answers. Almost all agencies are on skeleton crews. Tribal crews, City of University Place, City of Gig Harbor and WSDOT are not currently conducting vegetation management.
- Hot Spot spreadsheet is finished – it is being used in a smaller capacity for inspectors in the field. This database is a collection of our previously known problem properties. Field Inspectors have been directed to check these properties first thing, and continually; upon sight of the very first rosette, a NONW will be created and sent. This starts the process early enough that we can have enough time to provide landowners notice, while having ample time to see the NONW process all

the way through to cleanup well before the risk of seed set. This database will help us with a variety of problem properties such as:

- Large infestations that have historically been reported too late in the season and inevitably hit seed set before we can send them to violation and ensure cleanup.
- Problematic properties where owners have shown a history of “slow-walking” during the NONW process, barely cleaning up at the last minute – but with continual promises to do so (every year), often inadequately (or not at all) to control spread of weeds.
- Problematic lands where reporters have continually called in and not seen results – usually connected to the above two bullet points. This hopefully will be the remedy to the “Why do I have to clean up my property when John Doe across the street never has to clean up his, even though he gets notices too, but he does nothing?” (This is a frequent complaint).

The goal of the Hot Spot database is to encourage better and faster noxious weed control by all landowners, and to help boost public confidence that PCNWCB is not favoring some landowners, but that noxious weed control is critical in any area and we will get it taken care of.

### **Implementation of Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave Resolution 2020-3:**

Summary:

Per Chapter 17.10.060 (1) RCW Noxious Weed Control Boards require County Weed Board employment practices to comply with County personnel policies. Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave Bank should be established for eligible employees based on all qualifications as found in Chapter 3.69.

Monies to fund the HCL will be taken from the general budget in the amount of \$5,000.00 per year and placed in an investment account until fund balance reaches \$50,000. If a qualifying need arises and the Leave Bank is not at capacity, the Fund – Balance – unassigned account will cover the remaining costs.

**Secretary reads Resolution 2020- 3**

**Tom Bertram moved to accept Resolution 2020-3.**

**Janet Azevedo seconded the motion to accept Resolution 2020-3.**

**The Board is in favor, no amendments, no opposition; motion passed.**

**Resolution 2020-3 is accepted.**

**This resolution is to take effect May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

## **Implementation of Shared Sick Leave Resolution 2020-4**

### Summary:

Per Chapter 17.10.060 (1) RCW Noxious Weed Control Boards require County Weed Board employment practices to comply with County personnel policies. Shared sick leave should be established for eligible employees based on all qualifications as found in Chapter 3.69. A benefit method for employees to donate their sick leave hours to other employees in order to provide additional paid leave for eligible employees who would otherwise be in an unpaid status who are affected by a catastrophic medical condition, illness, injury or impairment.

Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave (HCL) and Shared Sick Leave are co-occurring, both policies must be implemented concurrently. HCL must be exhausted before shared sick leave may be utilized. Shared sick leave policy is outlined within PCC Chapter 3 sections 70.010.70 through 70.110.

### **Secretary reads Resolution 2020-4**

**Tom Bertram moved to accept Resolution 2020-4.**

**Erick Balstad seconded the motion to accept Resolution 2020-4.**

**The Board is in favor, no amendments, no opposition; motion passed.**

**Resolution 2020-4 is accepted.**

**This resolution is to take effect May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

### **Financial Update:**

- First half taxes came in at the beginning of May. We received **\$231,892.13** which brings our total cash on hand amount (as of May 6<sup>th</sup>) to **\$501,517.20**
  - Tuition Reimbursement for Melody Meyer, in the amount of 551.30 for the 2020 Winter Quarter at TCC. Class “Global Politics and Environmental Sustainability 240” was finished with a grade of 610/610 (A) and all requirements for reimbursement were met.
  - Due to Covid-19 issues and the additional duty of homeschooling while still working – Melody has dropped her spring quarter classes and will be enrolled in the fall of 2020. She is staying at 35 hours as planned for spring quarter.

## **STATE:**

- SAO Submitted May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. It took a bit longer on a few areas but between Morgan, Chelli and some help from Beki, we were able to correctly submit the SAO
- Washington State Spring Fair: Cancelled due to Covid-19
- Due to Teleworking (Covid-19) Literature pickup from WSNWCB has been rescheduled for once the “Stay Home/ Stay Healthy” order is lifted. State weed board staff is also working remotely and does not have access to the supplies at current time. (Due to Cancellation of Spring Fair, Literature is not an urgent need)
- Reservations for Morgan and Melody for November Washington State Weed Conference made. Morgan had Washington Vegetation Management Association meeting via WebEx on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. As of now they are moving forward as if the Weed Conference will still occur in November.

## **Outreach:**

(Presentations, public outreach & education, articles)

- Many information requests coming in for noxious weed control and best management practices; both designated and non-designated weeds, email information sent out, site visits in February, March and April. (Covid-19 safety measures strictly adhered to for site visits). Weed information requested: Wild & Bur Chervil, Poison Hemlock, Knotweed and Scotch Broom.
- One weed wrench already rented out in April (Covid-19 measures strictly adhered to). Two more rented out at the beginning of May.
- All upcoming presentations have been postponed until the “Stay Home / Stay Healthy” from the Governor’s office is lifted; to include:
  - Lakewold Gardens in cooperation with WSNWCB 3/31
  - WCC / City of Tacoma Weed ID Training 4/2
  - WCC Lacey Weed ID training. 3/31
  - Youth Environmental Summit (YESS) (monthly planning meetings + 4/24 Summit) Melody has let the committee know that she is still willing to hold trainings and help coordinate the summit once gatherings are allowed again, is also happy to be a literature and online training contact for noxious weed education for the middle and high schoolers that were the main participants in the Summit.

- Pierce County Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Washington 4/26
- Article for the Herron Island “Beachcomber” submitted in early April to publish by end of month – alerts residents to Tansy Ragwort presence and problems on the island, with control and contract services information as well as our contact information.

Additional Board questions:

Q: Are we still trying to hire more Field Inspectors?

A: (Morgan) Yes, would like to relieve the load the field inspectors currently have.

Q: Is pesticide recertification still required in WA this year?

A: (Morgan), Yes, in Washington state, but there is a rumor that Oregon may not be requiring recertification credits for 2020 due to Covid-19. There is uncertainty concerning what will be available online for recertification in Washington. Weed Conference is looking at different possible venues – online possibilities and such.

Q: Will minutes from Board meetings be posted on the website?

A: (Morgan) Yes, once meeting minutes are signed, they can be posted on the website.

**Motion to adjourn made by Beki Shoemaker.**

**None opposed.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Melody Meyer, Secretary to the Board.