

**Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, May 17th, 5:00-8:00 pm, WSU Office, Port Hadlock

Board Members Present:

Richard Hefley (by phone), Patricia Robinson and Jill Silver.

Others Present:

Eve Dixon, Dean Shinn, Norm Norton, Gail Chatfield, Ali Dyche, Rosie Taylor, Pat Kahn, Herb Evanson, O'Neill Louchard, Neil Morgan, Michael & Jan Berman, Elizabeth Warner, John Hacko, Craig & Evelyn Howton, Trish Gibson and Alex Huelsdonk (standing in for board member John Richmond by phone). (A few people came in late and I may have missed their names).

▪ **Introductions:**

Everyone present introduced themselves briefly and stated where they lived.

▪ **Approval of Minutes of February 16th Meeting:**

Jill proposed and Richard seconded, to approve the minutes as presented. All were in favor.

▪ **Coordinator's Report:**

The only comment on the Coordinator's Report was that the ListServe needs some adjusting per requests by the public.

▪ **Board Member Reports:**

Jill reported that she spent 48 hours working on Blue Heron poison hemlock, coordinating between the School District, volunteers and a contractor. She has also spent 130 hours on wild chervil outreach, research and coordination, and pulling plants on Eaglemount Road. She has given two presentations to community groups on invasives generally, and two more to the North Beach Neighbors on yellow archangel, and is concerned about the spread of yellow archangel in Port Townsend, and the fact that it is still being sold. Large quantities have been pulled at 2 North Beach locations, but it keeps coming back. Covering with mill felt as used by others in dune restoration at Fort Worden is an option worth exploring, and Jill has called the mill to request some.

▪ **Approval of Dean Shinn as Board Member**

Dean Shinn's application for board membership has been approved by the Commissioners. He left the room temporarily so the current Weed Board members could vote to approve him. Jill proposed and Pat seconded to approve Dean Shinn as a Weed Board member. All were in favor. Dean will represent District 2 (Cape George and Discovery Bay).

▪ **Clarification of County Road Weed Work**

Jill clarified that the \$4,000 per year which Public Works has agreed to give to the Weed Board will be used as has been the practice in the past – largely to cover costs of manual control, with mechanical control coming next, and chemical control as the last resort as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. In the past Weed Board staff have spent many hours pulling weeds on county roads—a minimum of \$4,000 worth of work every year. Herbicide may be used on county roads. Also, Jill clarified that the reason Eve is a licensed applicator is because WA State Weed Law requires county coordinators to be licensed pesticide applicators. Also, it had been

stated at a previous meeting that the Weed Board has sprayed weeds on county roads since 2003. This is untrue: the only spraying done by the Weed Board was in 2010 and 2011, as shown on the pesticide application records and in the tracking spreadsheet, both provided to the public upon request. And finally, with one minor exception, spraying has taken place just once on each site, not multiple times.

▪ **Public Comment on Wild Chervil**

A question was asked about the length of time chervil persists. Jill explained that seeds in the soil continue to germinate after plants are removed, whether removal is manual or chemical. The length of time that seeds persist in the soil is not known—likely 3-5 years.

A question was asked about using goats to control chervil—hiring a goat team is too expensive for this project but Jill is working to start a goat team for weed control in both east and west Jefferson County. Someone asked how they could be contained if they were used on roadsides. New Zealand temporary electric fences combined with a ‘goat wrangler’ are the answer.

A question was asked about how herbicides kill plants. Glyphosate (the herbicide that would be used), is translocated from the leaves to the plant’s roots and kills the roots so the plant cannot regrow. Someone asked who produces glyphosate (different chemical companies make glyphosate-containing products—the questioner wondered where glyphosate itself is produced). No one on the Weed Board knew the answer to that question. Norm Norton stated it is likely made in China, and the quality might be suspect.

O’Neill Louchard asked about the impacts to flowers and the bees that utilize them. Jill explained that spray is applied when the plants are not in flower—in fact, herbicides are less effective on biennials once they are in bloom and we need to use herbicides at the most effective time. That can be a problem because plants bloom at different times, so extra mowing and weed-whacking will have to be conducted in order to align the bloom times of the plants.

Rosie Taylor, of the Jefferson Conservation District, stated that her board, which is composed mainly of farmers, all approve of controlling wild chervil through the ‘judicious use of herbicide’. Farmers consider wild chervil to be one of the worst weeds they ever encounter and in some of the eastern states it has put farmers out of business. Farmers in Vermont are at their wits end as to what to do about it. Conservation District board members are all familiar with herbicides and one of their staff members is a licensed applicator who sprays streams, mainly to control reed canarygrass. It is important to the farming community that this weed be controlled, and herbicide is the most cost-effective way to do so. This is important, given the Weed Board’s limited resources. Rosie also commented that it can cost \$400 an acre to re-till and re-work a field, which can be devastating to a farmer. Jill said that she had spoken to Karyn Williams of Red Dog Farm, who said she produces \$30,000 worth of carrots and parsnips each year, which could potentially be impacted by pests that can be carried by wild chervil. Karyn would support spraying, as long as advance notice was given, and great care was taken to not allow any drift to her crops.

John Hacko mentioned that he has wild chervil on his property on Larson Lake Road, which has expanded rapidly in a short time.

Rosie mentioned that it is starting to invade clear-cut areas on Lind Road and possibly others.

Norm said that he has 25 acres that he hays and that 35 years ago it was badly infested with Canada thistle, but now the thistle has gone and chervil is there. He also said that Lind Road has been sprayed by Pope, and he asked what invades after wild chervil.

Gail Chatfield asked if pulling weeds is necessary and read a letter from Forest Shomer (attached to these minutes).

Evelyn Howton asked to go on record saying that she has watched people pull or dig and observed that plants regrow very quickly. She is in favor of judicious spraying.

John Hacko asked what a background weed is (referring to Forest's letter).

Norm said that he has acquired a lot of information on glyphosate-based herbicides that he is willing to share. He can be contacted at norm@eaglemount.com

Ali Dyche asked two questions—how individual plants could be sprayed, and about the effect on bees. The answers were that the spray-wand can be positioned close to each plant, and regarding bees, no spraying will take place when plants are in bloom. Ali was concerned about the stickiness of the surfactants affecting the bees (she is a bee-keeper).

Elizabeth Warren stated that there is researcher who has said he would rather use DDT than glyphosate.

Michael Berman asked if flaming would work as a means of weed control. The reply was that flaming would just kill the top growth and the plants would grow right back, just as they do after mowing.

Elizabeth asked if any grants might be available to help fund the work. Eve replied that very few grants are available to government agencies. Jill remarked that many counties' weed boards are funded by a parcel assessment and asked how many people would be willing to pay a small amount extra on their annual property tax to fund the Weed Board. Most people raised their hands.

Neil Morgan asked about the negative impacts of wild chervil. The answers were—out-competing forage or other crops, causing mold in hay and harboring pests that can attack carrots or parsnips. Also, serious ecosystem impacts by virtue of crowding out native plants, reducing biodiversity and also reducing food and habitat for native wildlife.

Jill drew everyone's attention to the Weed Board's mission, which is "To serve as responsible stewards of Jefferson County by protecting the land and resources from the degrading impact of noxious weeds". We are also mandated with upholding WA State Noxious Weed Law, which requires control of wild chervil. Someone from the State Weed Board has already been out to look at the problem the county is facing.

Ali commented that wild chervil looks a lot like several other plants, most notably bur chervil, and asked if the Weed Board was thinking of spraying that too. The answer was most definitely "No".

Gail asked if there is any evidence that wild chervil impacts carrots and parsnips. Jill replied that there is literature on the impacts, and that the Weed Board will research and get the information to her.

Evelyn commented that next year we may be able to get high school students to help, as part of the Community Service hours they have to do, or even have one or two students take it on as a Senior Project.

Other people mentioned some groups we may want to contact to get volunteers—the FFA, 4H, and Jonathon Safir, who works with young people.

O'Neill mentioned the need for safety when working on roadsides, and that people need to know where to go, when, and they need to have the right tools and know how to do the work. This was agreed to by the Weed Board.

The Weed Board needs more tools and Ali said we should apply for a Master Gardener grant in the fall for that purpose.

▪ **Work Session on Wild Chervil Control—Decision?**

Eve passed around a spreadsheet showing all of the known wild chervil sites in the county, with their history, current status and a severity rating. Many of the sites have already been pulled once this year by Weed Board staff, and will be monitored. Some are on private land and the owners have been contacted or will be. Eve also passed around a spreadsheet of different control options. There are 9 county roads where some plan is needed and we went through them. We are facing the problem that wild chervil is in full bloom on all the roads, will be making seed in a few weeks (or less), and herbicides are much less effective on biennial plants once they are in bloom, while mowing and other mechanical control will be very expensive if done every three to four weeks as necessary.

Larson Lake Road has one of the heaviest infestations and almost all landowners in the infested area want the Weed Board to spray. As mentioned above, plants should not be sprayed when in full bloom. Therefore, Jill motioned that the Weed Board mow and/or weed whack and then spray wild chervil on Larson Lake Road, except where adjacent landowners object. Pat seconded—all board members voted in favor.

Jill motioned that the Weed Board prepare a flier asking for volunteers to come forward, send it out to service clubs and other groups, and then take a tiered approach, focusing volunteer efforts on **Eaglemount Road** and thereafter working on **Leland Valley (E & W)** and **Boulton Road**. John Boulton, a landowner, has offered to help with his backhoe. Included in this motion was Norm Norton mulching wild chervil on **Old Eaglemount Road** and possibly **Peterson Road** as well, using cardboard and wood chips (this will be instead of mapping infestations on Center Road, which he had previously offered to do). Also, the Weed Board conceptually supports the plan by volunteers who are working on an experimental plot on Jim Davis' property (which is between Eaglemount and Old Eaglemount Roads). The 15' by 15' plot will be mowed, covered and mulched, and results reported on some schedule to be developed. Pat seconded—all voted in favor.

Jill motioned that Patricia Robinson (board member) surveys **Center Road**, taking GPS points and mapping wild chervil populations. Roger Short, a landowner on Center Road, has wild chervil on

and near his property. If volunteers come forward, that area will be controlled manually. If not, the weed board will partner with Mr. Short to mow and/or weed whack and spray. Richard seconded—all voted in favor.

Jill motioned that Ali Dyche and O'Neill Louchard, with support from Eve Dixon, pull or dig wild chervil on **West Valley Road**. Pat seconded—all voted in favor.

Neil Morgan commented that every option on the list includes using mulch and replanting native plants, both of these are expensive to buy and labor-intensive to spread or install. The Weed Board agreed, noting that salal plugs are \$1 each, and will require additional resources to plant and then maintain to success. Jill mentioned that the Port Townsend Paper Company gives away “mill felt” which has been used as mulch in local restoration projects. It is probably available only one 20’ by 20’ sheet at a time. It is apparently impregnated with chemicals used in the mill process—we do not at this point know what.

The Weed Board reported that we intend to initiate an Adopt-A-Road-Mile program. The county already has something in place, but only for litter pick-up. We need something similar for weeds. Using the Chain Gang was suggested, but Jill said that they charge for their services. Contacting Greywolf School for help was also suggested.

Eve suggested giving people a chance to control manually, and spraying if that does not work. Gail said it should not be an either/or option.

Norm commented that he has not found it a problem with hay—he has plowed and it has disappeared. The roadsides cannot, unfortunately, be plowed.

Dean Shinn said that he has spent 50 years as an ecologist and that many entities, including state and federal agencies, use herbicides regularly and responsibly. He commented that some people have fixed ideas, that the Weed Board has a responsibility to control weeds, that it takes hands and feet on the ground, OR spraying. He also stated that the Weed Board should not let other people’s notions alter Weed Board policy or responsibility.

▪ **Other Business**

There was no other business.

▪ **Schedule Next Meeting/Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:0 pm. The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 16th, at 5 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Eve Dixon, Noxious Weed Control Coordinator.

To Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board and Coordinator:

Before approving any herbicide program for Jefferson County roadsides, I urge you to rethink the approach you have taken toward *Anthriscus sylvestris* (wild chervil).

This species is now likely to persist in Jefferson County for decades to come, in view of its presence in hard-to-find locations and the abundance of seed already in the soil. The environmental damage that may be inflicted by glyphosate (or other herbicide) is immeasurably greater than the presumed harm of the weed itself. A great deal of scientifically-sound testimony has already been submitted to you about the danger of glyphosate, while at the same time, statements like "wild chervil will displace native plants" is speculative, unproven. What is more certain is that the broad-scale nature of the herbicide will directly harm existing native plants at a spray site.

Marking with blue dye is effective only as long as the dye persists or the marked plants remain standing or in leaf. Humans will need to know what the dye represents; wildlife will unfortunately not "read" the blue dye and inevitably wander into sprayed areas. Further, it would be most responsible if a skilled observer or professional examine the target sites before spraying to locate wildlife already present such as nesting birds and burrowing animals. Such creatures are innocently in the line of fire when spraying occurs.

In my experienced viewpoint, wild chervil will become a 'background' weed in Jefferson County in a fairly short time. There have been previous rapid invasions like this one during the 33-year Moratorium; even without any herbicide use, invasives have subsided on their own and dropped below the level of Class B status.

Prior to 1981, the county roadsides were free of Queen-Anne's lace (wild carrot). Unfortunately, someone on Marrowstone Island using that species in dried flower arrangements decided to grow it as a garden plant, and it quickly escaped via seed onto roadsides where mowers spread it widely. For a few years it was a dominant roadside plant everywhere in the Tri-Area; then it naturally abated to background levels.

Around 2003, there was a sudden massive outbreak of white sweet clover, a plant which attains a height of four to five feet and forms nearly pure stands; great numbers of these plants appeared around the Boat Haven and elsewhere in the drier parts of the county. Within a couple of years, it had nearly disappeared. Native plants that lined the Larry Scott Trail were at first somewhat hidden under the clover, but soon reemerged and today, that area is full of native shoreline species and virtually no clover.

I could give more examples from my 30-plus years of local observation, but I think that intelligent people will recognize truth, and choose to withhold herbicide use during 2012 while non-lethal responses to the chervil outbreak are studied and applied.

Sincerely,

Forest Shomer

Inside Passage Seeds and Native Plant Services Port Townsend, WA, USA www.insidepassageseeds.com