

Island County Noxious Weed Control Board
Quarterly Meeting: October 22, 2024
10:00 am, Island County WSU Extension Meeting room and zoom teleconference,
406 N. Main St. Coupeville, WA 98239

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 10:03 am

Present

Board members present: Mark Systma (chair), Jennifer Carlson, Clark Bishop; Program Coordinator Seth Luginbill. No public present.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve June 24, 2024 ICNWCB quarterly meeting minutes. Clark made a motion to approve, Jennifer 2nd. Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

Weed Control Board vacancy recruitment update.

Coordinator continued to stress that there has been limited activity for either vacant weed board positions. Asked board if we need to explore new avenues or is the “marketing” for these positions need to be tweaked. Put more information out there to really share what the program does and what are the responsibilities the carry.

Coordinator agreed to pull together a position description and recruitment letter for board to disseminate. He will also work on providing better information on the Weed control board webpage.

Budget Discussions

Coordinator shared that the proposed 2025 budget is officially approved.

Coordinator will move to a full time (40/wk) starting January 1, 2025. Seasonal position will increase to 9-month position working full time. Seasonal position will begin in February and run through October of 2025.

With increase in funding, we hope to begin to address the disparity in private landowner compliance with the RCW. This would be able to be done in the following ways. 1) Through increased program regulatory activity, and 2) increases in educational outreach and programs to teach the public and connect them with resources.

Budget also has addressed adding a small amount of time to help maintain public works roads program. Supplementing our budget with grants and contracts from various agencies will continue to support the program for the foreseeable future.

Benefits package for coordinator will be included in this budget.

Coordinators schedule will shift towards a four day a week, or three full days and two half days.

Board asked what we would do if we added additional grants or other funding sources become available. Coordinator said depending on the projects in question we can either re-allocate time from seasonal, or coordinators position to address the increase or if project sufficiently large we may contract out or bring on temporary staff to help complete the work being done. Some additions may only include resource re-allocation (i.e. cost share programs) and would not require any further time to be added to staff.

Coordinator did bring up a potential new grant to fund aquatic projects through Department of Ecology to address weeds. A potential opportunity that might fit well within this grant could be the Greenbank farm management group. Purple loosestrife control at the Greenbank farm has been tried off and on with no continuous efforts. This has meant population is continuing to grow. Mark mentioned there is purple loosestrife and yellow flag iris infestations at lone lake as well that could use attention and to possibly fit within this grant. Coordinator has reached out to management group and is waiting for response.

State noxious weed board public hearing and proposed updates:

Coordinator ran through the list of proposed additions.

WAC 16-750-005 Class A Noxious Weed Changes and Additions

The addition of round leaf bittersweet, *Celastrus orbiculatus*

The addition of marsh thistle, *Cirsium palustre*

WAC 16-750-011 Class B Noxious Weed Changes and Additions

Un-designating shiny geranium, *Geranium lucidum*, in Pierce County.

WAC 16-750-015 Class C Noxious Weed Changes and Additions

Adding wild holly, *Ilex* species not including holly found in managed landscapes, or where commercially or agriculturally grown.

Mark asked for clarification on what Feral Holly means and what the state board is attempting to do by listing *Ilex* under this new moniker.

Board voted to draft and submit a letter to the State weed control board to voice support of the additions of the proposed noxious weed species to the list. **Clark made a motion, Mark 2nd. Passed unanimously.** Coordinator added that he was planning on providing oral testimony at the hearing specifically touching on English Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

Compliance Case:

A brief update was provided by coordinator on regulatory activity. Thirty-nine letters sent out to date with no further cases anticipated by coordinator. Primary poison hemlock, tansy ragwort represented the common weeds in question, but other species included knotweeds, spurge laurel, and thistles.

Coordinator noted that we are beginning to see more 2nd and 3rd notices for different landowners now that we have increased our capacity to do inspections. This hopefully will lead to increased activity in compliance but could also lead the board to have to begin considering more enforcement proceedings moving into the future.

Board discussed the need to find an independent contractor who board could have on retainer to done enforcement control work for us. Coordinator mentioned that there are not many applicators on the Island who do this type of work. It was likely that we would have to find someone off Whidbey who could also serve our Camano needs. Coordinator said he will begin searching out businesses that would be willing to take on this kind of work.

Board asked what of the money spent to enforce comes back to the program. Coordinator explained that all proceeds move back into the Counties general budget.

Website issues:

Mark raised concern about the lack of accessible information and the user-friendly nature of the noxious weed control county web page. Several links were no longer working and some of the information is outdated. Currently the weed report form and noxious weed list for Island County are both old documents. Coordinator had submitted new documents to be included but realized none of these items were uploaded.

Coordinator said he had noticed these issues as well and was actively working on correcting them with the IT department. It was asked if there were additional improvements that the board wished to see. As per the previous discussion about board member recruitment having all the meeting agenda, meeting minutes, and board information was noted to be of value on the webpage.

Board agreed that it is critical to get information about the weed board updated or added to our webpage to better reach our community.

Program Updates

- Program Updates:
 - **Spartina (WSDA grant):** We are wrapping up this seasons work and all remaining work must be completed by October 31. Reporting will be due early December. We did discover a new infestation located just beyond the terminus of Penn cove. A single 1 sq. ft. plant was found on the close to Klootchman rock. In the Port Susan area (East Camano, Livingston Bay) we continue to see the effects of the proliferation of plants from the South Leque Island restoration.

- **Barnum Point/Iverson spit CFF:**

We are wrapping up field work for both parks and have made good progress on treating. We will be asking for an additional year long extension for this project as we still have remaining funding and objectives of this project that have not been completed yet. November will be spent compiling removal numbers and putting end of year reporting together.

- **Barnum point:** Continued to remove English Ivy, English Holly, and other observed weed species from the park. We hosted a weed workshop/pull party in cooperation with Sound Water Stewards on 9/27/24. Removing 380 lbs. of English ivy as well as many English Holly plants were controlled.
- **Iverson spit:** Scotch broom removal in zones 1,3,4, and 5 continues to be the primary work conducted at this site. In zone 2, we continue to find small emergent plants of poison hemlock. On 10/15/24 we manually dug 55 vegetative hemlock plants.

- **Kettles/Saratoga/Ala spit CFF:**

Like our Camano based CFF M & O projects we will be asking for an additional year extension to use up the allocated funds we were initially awarded for this project. November will be spent compiling removal numbers and putting end of year reporting together.

- **Kettles trails work:** Scotch broom removal continued. Main areas of persistent broom plants include Main kettles trails, Alito addition along the cell tower trail access, and along the two areas of the primitive access road on the western boundary of the Alito addition. Two additional control efforts (September and October) to survey and remove any Spurge laurel from the Alito addition portion of the kettles trails also yielded over 100 small new plants controlled. We also discovered some new populations of spurge laurel on breaking bad and plush plunge trails. Tansy ragwort populations continued to monitored and removed with both chemical and manual treatments taking place.
- **Saratoga woods:** Work remaining in this park includes English ivy and Scotch broom removal to the north of parking lot. Late season work included removal of tansy ragwort along the old airstrip and removal of Scotch broom between the park and Saratoga Rd. The field where initial Scotch broom infestation was observed is looking surprisingly good after last years treatment.
- **Ala spit:** Late season follow up on thistle and knotweed plants occurred in August/September. Yellow archangel population greatly reduced but will continue to need to be treated while other species responding well to treatment.

Garlic Mustard grant: We applied for and were awarded \$3800 to help affected landowners continue in their effort to eradicate the South Whidbey population as well as offer support to the one landowner over on Camano. Work will occur primarily in 2025. Treatment will begin in April. Grant will run through June 31, 2025. This is funding awarded by the State noxious weed control board.

Lesser Celandine WSDA grant: We were approached by WSDA noxious weed coordinator with the opportunity to receive funding for a project that was initially part of our grant proposal for the State weed board grant. We only have one known population of lesser celandine here in Island County. We have been working with landowner to try and support

their efforts through technical advice, but infestation remained persistent. This is an opportunity to eradicate a Class B weed before it gains a foothold here. The total amount awarded for this project is \$2,000. Most work will occur over the late winter and early spring months. This project is funded through June 31, 2025.

Public Works: We have currently done survey work on over 329 roads and conducted treatment work on 203 of these. Species treated include: Garlic mustard, poison hemlock, tansy ragwort, yellow archangel, spurge laurel, Japanese knotweed, shiny geranium, wild chervil, hairy willow herb, purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, meadow knapweed, brown knapweed, sulfur cinquefoil, orange hawkweed, gorse, common tansy, Canada and Bull thistle, common fennel, Scotch broom, common teasel, Italian Arum, Himalayan Blackberry, English Ivy, and common St. Johnswort.

- **Other partnership project**
 - **Deer lagoon:** We have handed this project off to WAS and will continue to offer technical support to volunteers.
 - **Ebey's Landing poison hemlock work group:** Nothing new to report
- Education and Outreach
 - SWS weed workshop (Barnum point – English Holly/English Ivy) – (Sept. 27)
 - WSU coached forestry class (Oct. 11)
- Upcoming Education and Outreach
 - Possible workshop series partnership with Land Trust, Greenbank Farm management group (Purple loosestrife, Spurge laurel, Tansy ragwort, poison hemlock) (Spring/Summer 2025)
 - Whidbey Gardening workshop (March 2025)
- Trainings and Professional development:
 - Olympic Invasive Working Group Fall meeting (Oct. 29th)