

Harney County Weed Board

March 7, 2023
Courthouse, County Court Room
3:00 PM



The meeting was brought to order at 3:03pm.

Those in attendance were: Jesse Barnes, Dan Brown, James (Red) Campbell, Grant Nikkels, Jeff Dorroh, Sam Cisney, Tyler Goss, Bonnie Rasmussen (via phone), Judge Bill Hart, and Weed Control Jim Campbell

Approve August 30, 2022 minutes- Motion to approve with grammatical corrections, Dan Brown, Second, Jeff Dorroh.

- **Special business:**

- Jesse Barnes had the room introduce one another to the newly enacted Harney County Judge, Bill Hart. After introductions, Jesse Barnes and Bonnie Rasmussen gave Judge Hart a brief description on the background and function of the county weed board. They explained that the board works closely with the Harney Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) which has representatives on its board from each agency located within Harney County. Bonnie went on to explain that the weed control enforcement authority lies within the counties but we try to educate and assist people instead of using enforcement.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. During the January weed board meeting there were discussion about the county cost share program. In the past we have allowed residents to submit their cost share applications but have only reviewed them during the December weed board meeting. This could cause residents to have to wait up to seven months for their reimbursement cost share payment. The board discussed changing the review to every board meeting to decrease this wait time. In addition, the board discussed changing the cost share maximum herbicide cost share from "up to 50%" to "up to 100%". This will allow the board the flexibility to cost share on the herbicide at a higher rate if the funds and/or the project elevates itself to the level the board deems deserves a higher cost share percent. One additional topic was discussed about the cost share program and that was allowing cost share on "C" rated county weeds. In the past the noxious weed needed to be either on the "A" or "B" list to qualify for cost share. The board wanted the flexibility to allow "C" weeds for cost share in unique situations that may deem it appropriate. All three of these changes were opened for a motion for approval by Jesse Barnes. Dan Brown made the motion to approve them as presented and Jeff Dorroh seconded it. There were none opposed.
 - a. The board asked Jim to put the cost share changes out in the newspaper and on local social media to alert the public to the changes. Jim will also have the Harney County web site updated with the newly edited forms.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Jim provided the board with an update on the ongoing African rue project. Last summer Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) plant division manager Tim Butler along with ODA grant specialist Tristen Berg and ODA area manager Bonnie Rasmussen joined myself and Tyler Goss from the Harney Cooperative Weed Management (CWMA) and Harney County Weed Board chair Jesse Barnes on a visit to the African rue site. We have been working on this noxious weed infestation for about 13 years now and have reduced its net infested acres from around 200 down to 1.6 net acres last summer. The issue is the noxious weed still infest every original location, but at a much-reduced population obviously. After discussion with the ODA staff, we came up with a plan moving forward. Harney County weed control will perform a very focused treatment plus re-seeding on one landowner to see if we can drive it out from a location. Of course, we will still survey and treat for this weed across the entire project location like we have in the past as well. The group agreed we should try this modified approach. In 2023 we will try this and if it works, we will replicate it across the project area.
2. Bonnie Rasmussen from ODA gave the board an update on the Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) meeting that was held last week. The OSWB was approving their grant applications for the 2023 cycle. Harney County and the Harney CWMA got all of their grants they applied for. This will give Harney County residents about \$60,000 worth of broad leaf noxious weed control funding for a variety of projects across the county.
 - a. Bonnie also talked to group about the Hoary alyssum that was located in Devine Canyon north of Burns in 2021. She notified Jim Campbell from Harney County Weed Control and the Linda Watts from the local Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Jim and Linda went to the site and hand pulled and bagged the weeds then treated the site with herbicide. This site was monitored by Harney County, BLM, and ODA for the past year plus with no observed plants. We will continue to keep our eye on this as this plant is not known to be anywhere else in the county and is highly invasive and highly toxic to horses.
 - b. Bonnie then informed the county board that the OSWB wished to re-visit the Buzzard Complex fire site east of Burns. The OSWB had visited this site the same year of the fire which burned almost 400,000 acres in 2014. They wanted to see how the landscape had recovered from such a devastating fire. Bonnie reached out to Jim and Tyler to get their thoughts. After a short discussion we recommended they wait another year so we can start to see the effects of the newly available annual grass herbicide Rejuvra (Indazaflam). This herbicide is showing exciting possibilities and the Harney CWMA managed the application of roughly 15,000 acres across Harney County in 2022. Included in these 2022 treatments were landowners that reside within the boundaries of the Buzzard complex fire and this would provide a perfect demonstration of this new tool. Bonnie believes they can convince the State Weed Board to wait until 2024 to visit.
3. Tyler Goss from the CWMA gave the board a quick overview of the projects they got funded through the OSWB grants. The CWMA had three grant proposals, all of them were fully funded. The CWMA has a project that focusses on the Mediterranean sage infestations across the county. They have identified about six sites that we either know have Mediterranean sage infestations or that we suspect do. This project will provide the

funding for the CWMA to survey and treat these sites. The second project is a re-visit of the Poison Creek Spotted knapweed site north of Burns. We toured this site last year with the ODA staff as well, and during that tour Houndstongue was discovered at the very northern portion of the project area. ODA recommended the CWMA apply for this grant again and to include the newly discovered Houndstongue. Tyler did this and they funded this project for 2023. The last application was centered around our ongoing battle with Purple loosestrife, which located in the Stinkingwater Creek drainage from the Lamb Ranch to the middle fork of the Malheur River. The CWMA will be working along with Harney County Weed Control on this effort. The ODA is going to be sub-contracting Harney County to survey and treat the BLM sections of the drainage and the CWMA will be using the OSWB funding and be covering the private sections.

4. In additional topics Jim provided the board with a copy of his high level 2023 annual operating plan for review. Also, Sam Cisney, from the BLM office informed the board that she would be available with maps to show any interested member where the BLM is going to be treating Medusahead rye in 2023. The Burns BLM is planning on treating an unprecedented 100,000 acres this year!

With no further topics the meeting was adjourned at 4:26pm.

The next meeting date was set for June 6th at 5:00pm.