

Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
January 5, 2011

Members Present: Vince Guise, Agriculture; Michael Kent, Health Services; Roland Hindsman, General Services; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board; Joe Yee, Public Works; Michael Baefsky, Michael Fry and Ted Shapas County Public Members At-Large

(8 members present/5 voting members)

Members Absent: Jim Hale, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Nancy Stein, Public Works Watershed Program; Carlos Agurto, Pestec

Staff Present: Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Robin Bedell-Waite, Health Services; Chuck Jeffries, Public Works

Members of the Public Present: Susan JunFish and Karen Perkins, Parents for a Safer Environment; Phillip Ciaramitaro, Sustainable Martinez; Christine Hagelin, Sustainable Contra Costa

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

Chuck Jeffries announced that the Weed Science Society of California will hold its annual conference in Monterey January 18-21.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

There was none.

4. Approve minutes from July 20 and November 3, 2010

A motion was made and seconded (MB/MF) to approve the minutes for each meeting with the following correction: On July 20 there were 6 voting members present.

The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

5. Hear report from the IPM Coordinator

On November 23, 2010, the IPM Coordinator and Chair Michael Kent took the matter of environmental organization seats before the Board of Supervisors. The Board's decision was to add one seat to the IPM Advisory Committee for a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) environmental organization. The Board asked that the IPM Committee screen and interview the applicants and make a recommendation to the Board. On December 13, 2010 an announcement of the vacancy was sent to around 30 organizations/individuals/list serves along with the IPM Committee email list, all libraries in the County, all Supervisors to send to their contacts, and the Health Services Media Department to announce on Twitter, Facebook, and to send out a press release. Applications must be sent to the Clerk of the Board and be post-marked by January 12, 2011.

On December 20, 2010 the IPM Coordinator presented the IPM Annual Report to the Transportation, Water, and Infrastructure Committee (TWIC). Interns from Parents for a Safer Environment attended the meeting with a presentation on County pesticide use. TWIC requested that the IPM Coordinator address the concerns raised in the presentation and provide that information to the Board of Supervisors along with the Annual Report.

6. Select members for a nominating subcommittee for the new environmental seat

An ad-hoc nominating committee was formed and Chair Michael Kent appointed Marj Leeds, Ted Shapas, and Michael Fry to be on the committee. Susan JunFish commented that Parents for a Safer Environment has filed a petition with the Board of Supervisors to bar IPM Advisory Committee members from serving on the nominating committee if they have expressed opinions in previous meetings in opposition to adding an environmental seat to the Committee.

7. Hear IPM updates from Agriculture, General Services and Public Works

Agriculture

Vince Guise sent out via email the 2009 Department of Pesticide Regulation report on pesticide use in California. It demonstrates how little pesticide the County is using compared to all the users in Contra Costa that are required to report their usage.

The Department is not doing any pest control work at this time but is getting ready for the Noxious Weed Management Program work that will begin in February. There is no winter work on ground squirrels; that will start in June.

The Department is finishing its yearly inspections of pest control companies.

Facilities

Roland Hindsman had nothing to report.

Public Works

Chuck Jeffries reported that major tree-trimming has started along roads, and roadside residual pesticide treatments are being applied when weather permits.

The Flood Control grazing study scheduled to begin this year may be postponed because of a problem with the Routine Maintenance Agreement from California Fish and Game Department. The Public Works Department has been paying its fees for the permit, but has not received it yet.

Susan JunFish asked to give a presentation on the information that Parents for a Safer Environment provided the County's Transportation, Water, and Infrastructure Committee in December when the IPM Coordinator presented the IPM Program Annual Report. The Committee agreed to hear this at the end of the meeting, time permitting.

8. Hear report from Agriculture on the South American spongeplant and consider a letter of support to the State on the seriousness of this new invasive plant

The South American spongeplant (*Limnobium laevigatum*) is a new invasive aquatic weed that was found in July 2010 in the Delta (among other places). The plant was most likely introduced through the aquarium trade, and then someone dumped it out of an aquarium in a location that allowed it to get into the Delta waterway. The spongeplant can form acres of mats that resemble water hyacinth mats. Spongeplant produces large amounts of small, sticky seed as well as little seedlings that can easily be picked up by waterfowl and boats and moved around. The seeds last at least 3 years, but the outside limit of their viability is unknown. The seedlings can move through irrigation pumps, unlike water hyacinth.

If the spongeplant is in a pond or a canal, it is possible to remove it mechanically, but the area that is cleaned must be closely monitored for re-infestation. It is fairly easy to treat with the herbicide diquat, which is already being used in the Delta for water hyacinth.

The most alarming thing about the South American spongeplant is its potential to seriously damage waterways and aquatic life. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has \$92,000 in emergency funds to do a survey this April and treat hot spots as they find them. Vince Guise would like to see the Department of Boating and Waterways perform treatments in waterways freeing CDFA to deal with other places the weed might be found.

Susan JunFish asked how community organizations could help, and Vince Guise replied that they can help by making people aware of the issue—what the plant looks like, why it should not be purchased and used in aquariums, and its potential to cause damage in California’s aquatic ecosystems.

Vince will draft a letter of support to CDFA for the IPM Committee to review. Michael Baefsky would like the letter to be written in an IPM context suggesting early detection and response, expressing the Committee’s concern about pesticide use issues, and encouraging exploration of alternatives to pesticide treatments. Michael Fry will draft a letter to alert other stakeholders to the introduction of this weed

9. Discuss 2011 priorities for the Committee

Discussion centered on these topics:

- Data Management/Metrics
- Moving toward Full IPM Implementation
- Pesticide Use
- Education of Committee Members on Departmental IPM Programs
- Engaging the Public

Data Management/Metrics

- Include cost/labor elements for pesticide use and for non-pesticide treatments (MF, MB)
- Quantify non-pesticide aspects of pest management such as monitoring, mechanical weed abatement, hand abatement (MB, Public)
- Include tracking of best management practices and regulatory violations (MF)
- Create and archive base-line monitoring records; will be useful for next generation of staff (MB)
- Create cost/benefit analyses that evolve into budget estimates for Supervisors (CJ)
- Collect cost/labor data from other counties’ IPM programs (CJ, JY)
- Put the pesticide use by County operations in perspective with the rest of reported use in the County (CJ)
- Better inform the public
 - Make data more understandable and available to the public (TS, Public)
 - IPM Coordinator should post more information on website, e.g., planned pesticide treatments, pesticide use figures (Public)
- Are we tracking all pesticide use data? (Public)

Moving toward Full IPM Implementation

- Encourage pest prevention by design; involve the IPM Committee from the beginning in the design process for buildings and landscapes (MB, RH)
- Review Public Works contracts for adherence to IPM principles (CJ)
- Educate County employees about conducive conditions in order to facilitate better structural IPM (RH)

Pesticide Use

- Research alternatives to “bad actor” pesticides (either materials or methods) that are economically feasible for the Ag Department’s target noxious weeds (VG)
- Explore roadside vegetation management alternatives to find economically feasible options that could work in the County, explore policy changes that could reduce pesticide use (RBW)
- Explore using volunteers as well as workers paid minimum wage to pull weeds (Public)
- Explore equipment and technology that can reduce pesticide use (Public)
- Work with CDFA to understand whether South American management practices for the South American spongeplant would work in CCC (Public)

Education of Committee Members on Departmental IPM Programs

- Continue to educate IPM Committee members about County operations and constraints to help the Committee provide the most well-informed advice (JY)

Engaging the Public

- Consider creating conducive conditions for barn and screech owls as an example of an IPM tool for rodent control that could engage the public in a positive way (TS)
- Engage Home Depot and other big box stores to make sure they are doing the right thing in regard to pesticide and invasive plant sales (CJ)
- Publicize at least one good success story to inform the public and to help model IPM behavior for the rest of the County (ML)
- Involve community and state colleges in helping to research pesticide alternatives (Public)

Other Priorities

- Pesticide use criteria (the IPM Coordinator will be working on this with the Departments)
- Continuing to review departmental IPM Plans
- IPM policy vs. IPM ordinance

The Committee came to a consensus on the following priorities for 2011 (not in any particular order):

1. Roadside vegetation management: understand the County's current roadside vegetation management program and explore alternatives to herbicide use
2. IPM and design review: understand how design of buildings and landscapes is approved in the County and consider ways to incorporate attention to pest prevention and maintenance costs in the process
3. Data collection and management: understand the data currently collected by the County with respect to pest management and consider which data are important to collect and why, in order to characterize and track the progress of the County's IPM program
4. Consider whether the County should adopt an IPM ordinance
5. Review revised IPM Plans from the Departments

The Committee decided to form three subcommittees to work on the first three priorities listed above. Chair Michael Kent chose the following people for each subcommittee:

1. Roadside Vegetation Management: Michael Baefsky, Chuck Jeffries (Nancy Stein, who was absent, was also recommended for this subcommittee. Michael Kent approved this recommendation pending Nancy Stein's acceptance.)
2. Design Review: Roland Hindsman, Michael Baefsky, (Kevin Lachapelle, Grounds Manager, and Carlos Agurto who were not in attendance were also recommended for this subcommittee. Michael Kent approved this recommendation pending their acceptance.)
3. Data Management: Michael Fry, Marj Leeds, Ted Shapas

Chair Michael Kent asked if the Committee would like to meet more frequently or for a longer period each meeting. The consensus of the Committee was that the current schedule is working.

10. Plan agenda for next meeting

- Discuss nominating committee's recommendation for the environmental seat
- Discuss letter of support to CDFA on South American Spongeplant
- Hear reports from the Departments
- Hear report from the IPM Coordinator
- Hear subcommittee reports

Respectfully submitted,
Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator