

Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
March 2, 2011

Members Present: Vince Guise, Agriculture; Jim Hale, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Michael Kent, Health Services; Roland Hindsman, General Services; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board; Joe Yee, Public Works; Nancy Stein, Public Works Watershed Program (via telephone); Ted Shapas County Public Member At-Large; Carlos Agurto, Pestec

(9 members present/5 voting members)

Members Absent: Michael Baefsky and Michael Fry, Public Members At-Large

Staff Present: Susan Cohen, Public Works; Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Larry Yost, Agriculture Department

Members of the Public Present: Christine Hagelin, Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

- Jim Hale announced that he is finishing a brochure entitled “Wildlife in Your Backyard”.
- Ted Shapas mentioned a recent article in the paper about rats as pests in cars.
- Vince announced that the PGE-sponsored weed pull in Antioch Dunes will probably be in May. Vince will send a flyer when one is available.
- Michael Kent announced that a meeting on a program initiated by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger called Health in All Policies will be held March 3, 2011 from 10 AM to noon at the International Electrical Workers Union building at Glacier and Arnold in Martinez.
- Tanya Drlik noted that Michael Baefsky has an unavoidable conflict today involving his IPM teaching schedule, Michael Fry is unable to attend today because of his recent eye surgery, and Chuck Jeffries has retired as vegetation manager and Ed Swan will take his place at Public Works.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

There was none.

4. Approve minutes from January 5, 2011

A motion was made and seconded (ML/TS) to approve the minutes.

The motion passed with 4 in favor and 1 abstention (Jim Hale).

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

Agriculture

Vince Guise reported that the Department’s Noxious Weed Program is in full swing. Artichoke thistle is up and visible. The extra rain this year has not really seemed to affect the abundance of artichoke thistle. Areas where there are many thistles are treated by broadcast spraying, and when staff return to monitor the area, any remaining plants are spot-treated.

Later in the season other weeds will be treated. There are 12 to 14 targeted species that cause damage to wildlands, agriculture and open space. The Department does not treat medusa head (a “C” rated weed)

now because it is too widespread for their resources. There are a few acres of barbed goat grass (a “B” rated weed) on Mt. Diablo that the Department treats.

Both barbed goat grass and South American spongeplant are incipient and their spread could be stopped.

Ted Shapas asked if controlling yellow starthistle is a lost cause. Vince Guise explained that yellow starthistle robs the soil of moisture and degrades the land on which it grows. The Department has released a number of bio-controls, but none alone, or together with the others, has made a significant impact on the weed. In Napa the yellow starthistle rust seems to have taken off, but not in Contra Costa. At present, the only hope for control of yellow starthistle is an effective bio-control.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has a list on their website of all the rated weeds in the state.

Facilities

Roland Hindsman reported that the Concord homeless shelter has been battling a series of bed bug infestations. Pestec has been trying to work with the shelter staff on cleaning and washing and a set of protocols for prevention.

There has also been a mouse problem in East County.

Roland noted that the Grounds Division is in the process of removing much of the landscaping at 2530 Arnold Drive in Martinez (the Summit Center) in order to minimize weed problems and reduce the amount of maintenance and the need for herbicide at the site.

Public Works

Joe Yee reported that Chuck Jeffries, Public Works Vegetation Manager, retired after 20 years. Ed Swan is the interim Vegetation Manager. Ed has a Pest Control Advisors license, as did Chuck. With the State budget unresolved, funding to replace Chuck is uncertain, but filling the position is a high priority.

A specialty tree trimming crew went out with the vegetation techs to trim trees. This is done early in the season before nesting birds will be impacted. Most trimming was finished by February 15.

The Department continues negotiations with the State Department of Fish and Game for their Routine Maintenance Agreement (RMA). Revisions are going back and forth. Until the Department has the RMA, they cannot do any herbicide treatments or mechanical weed removal anywhere the Department of Fish and Game has jurisdiction.

6. Hear report from the IPM Coordinator

The IPM Coordinator has been working on filling the newly established Environmental Organization Seat on the Committee: publicizing the opening, collecting applications and support letters, arranging applicant interviews, and acting as staff to the nominating committee.

The IPM Coordinator attended the Annual Weed Science Society Conference in Monterey in January, gave two presentations on the Contra Costa Bed Bug Task Force at two different conferences, met with Supervisor Mtichoff’s office about bed bugs in the Concord area, and served as staff for the three subcommittees of this committee to arrange their meetings and take their minutes.

7. Hear reports from 3 subcommittee: Data Management, Roadside Spraying, Design Review

Chair Michael Kent asked Carlos Agurto to serve on the Design Review subcommittee and Nancy Stein to serve on the Roadside Spraying subcommittee. He also asked Joe Yee to replace Chuck Jeffries on the Roadside Spraying subcommittee. The Chair requested that the IPM Coordinator send out approved minutes from the subcommittees with the agenda packet for the IPM Committee

Data Management—Marj Leeds, Ted Shapas and Michael Fry, chair

Ted Shapas reported that the subcommittee met on January 25, 2011. The committee agreed that data management is “the process or multiple processes used for collecting, organizing, retrieving, updating, analyzing and publishing program data”.

The reasons for collecting data about IPM programs are as follows:

- a. Regulatory compliance
- b. Program administration, goal setting, and performance metrics
- c. Environmental due diligence
- d. To create a benchmark—how does Contra Costa County compare to other counties?
- e. To convey information to those outside the IPM programs such as the Board of Supervisors and the public

The data to be collected should not be pounds of pesticide used only. It should be quantitative data, and perhaps some qualitative data, that will help measure program activities (pesticide use, use of alternatives), program costs (budgets, how funds were used), performance quality (were regulatory obligations met? were any violations incurred?), and training (how many people received training and what kind?).

Parents for a Safer Environment would like the County to track the location of where pesticides are applied including broadcast spraying along stream banks.

The committee would like to interview each Department to determine what kinds of data each currently tracks.

The subcommittee decided its tasks will be to

1. Collect information on what data are collected currently
2. Examine that data
3. Craft a benchmark report for the County
4. Report to the IPM Advisory Committee

Design Review—Roland Hindsman, Kevin Lachapelle, Carlos Agurto, and Michael Baefsky, Chair

Roland Hindsman reported that the committee met on February 3, 2011 and agreed to the following tasks:

1. Put into writing a list of design elements that can prevent pest problems from occurring or reduce the likelihood of their occurring
2. Put into writing the County's process for review of building and landscape plans
3. Determine the best ways and times to have input into the process
4. Use the current remodeling of one building at 30 Muir as a case study and document the subcommittee's findings and recommendations

The committee began a list of structural and landscape elements that will help to prevent pest problems. The structural items will be added to the County's Building Design and Construction Guidelines. Because Roland has discovered that no landscape specifications for County buildings exist, the landscape elements will become the basis for developing those specifications.

Vince Guise asked if there are specifications for replacing landscaping around existing buildings, and Roland said there are not. In the past the County has tried to maintain the status quo, but the Grounds Division is trying to change this.

Michael Kent asked if there are requirements for water use in the landscape and Roland said no, but that he would like to have requirements.

Joe Yee asked if the County is pursuing LEED certification for its buildings. Roland said no, because the process is very expensive.

Roadside Vegetation Management—Joe Yee Nancy Stein, and Michael Baefsky, Chair

Tanya Drlik, as staff to the committee, reported that the committee met on February 17, 2011. The name of the committee has been changed from "Roadside Spraying" to "Roadside Vegetation Management".

The committee decided on the following goals:

1. Produce a status report on the Public Works vegetation management program
2. Look more closely at the impacts of roadside vegetation management on water (ground water, creeks, the Bay)

3. Look at the interactions between roadside vegetation management and fire

The committee's first tasks will be to gather data from Public Works on vegetation management methods, costs (time, labor, equipment costs) for each method, acreage mowed, acreage sprayed, acreage mulched, budget and staff for the program, equipment inventory and age. The committee will also talk to Alameda and Santa Clara Counties about their roadside vegetation management activities.

8. Hear report from nominating committee for environmental organization seat

Marj Leeds reported that the committee met on February 28, 2011 to interview the four applicants: William Feil representing Land for Urban Wildlife; Fred Glaser, representing Friends of Marsh Creek; Christine Hagelin, representing Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation; and Brian Murphy, representing Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. The committee asked each applicant the same set of questions and used a rating sheet to help determine the nominee.

The nominating committee is recommending that the IPM Advisory Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors that Christine Hagelin fill the seat. Christine is interested in a broader view of IPM in the County and did not indicate a narrow range of focus for her interests. She is quick to grasp new information and concepts, and can be a valuable resource for education of and communication with the public since she has spent 30 + years as a teacher.

The IPM Advisory Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to endorse the nominating committee's recommendation. The IPM Coordinator will take the recommendation to the Internal Operations Committee and then to the full Board of Supervisors with the intent of having Christine seated by the May 4, 2011 meeting.

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

Vince Guise reminded the Committee that South American spongeplant is an "A" rated weed that has begun to infest the Delta forming mats so dense that grass can grow on top. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has committed emergency funds totaling \$92,000 to treat hot spots in the Delta. In order to stretch these funds, Vince will offer his staff to augment the CDFA staff that will perform the treatments.

The Department of Boating and Waterways at the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) has authority to treat water hyacinth and Brazilian waterweed, but not spongeplant. Legislation is needed to change this.

Ted Shapas asked if spongeplant is on the label of the pesticides needed to control it. Vince said that both diquat and glyphosate are legal to use on spongeplant.

Members of the public asked if the Contra Costa Water District is (CCWD) involved and if the herbicides used on spongeplant will affect other plants. Vince answered that CCWD currently treats for water hyacinth, and they take water samples throughout their jurisdiction to monitor for invasive weeds. Vince said that if either diquat or glyphosate is sprayed on other plants it will affect them.

Michael Kent asked about control without pesticides if eradication fails. Vince said that this is probably not possible since the State does not have the resources it would take to control spongeplant without pesticides.

The Committee reviewed the draft letters to CDFA and CNRA that Vince had composed and revised the last paragraph of the letter to CNRA to read as follows:

We strongly support and encourage legislation that will enable the California Natural Resources Agency through your Department of Boating and Waterways to control the spread of this pest. We feel that cooperative efforts by both your agency and the Department of Food and Agriculture are needed to effectively stop this pest from spreading and potentially destroying the natural environment of the Delta.

A motion was made and seconded (ML/JH) to send letters to CDFA and CNRA with the changes discussed. The motion passed unanimously (5-0)

The IPM Coordinator will make a simple letterhead for the Committee and will speak to County Counsel and the Administrator's office to make sure the Committee can send the letters.

10. Plan agenda for next meeting

- Discuss IPM Policy vs. ordinance
- Hear a report from Jim Hale on his activities with wildlife in the County
- Hear reports from the Departments
- Hear report from the IPM Coordinator
- Hear more substantial subcommittee reports

Respectfully submitted,
Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator