

**Minutes**  
**Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee**  
**January 9, 2013**

Members Present: Luis Agurto, Pestec; Michael Baefsky, Public Member At-Large; Jerry Casey, Public Works Facilities; Scott Cashen, Mt. Diablo Audubon; Michael Fry, Public Member At-Large; Vince Guise, Agriculture Department; Jim Hale, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Dan Jordan, County Clean Water Program; Michael Kent, Health Services; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board; Tunyalee Martin, Public Member At-Large

(11 members present/8 voting members)

Members Absent: Joe Yee, Public Works; Myrto Pretreas, Public Member Alternate

Staff Present: Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Gene Mangini, Mortay Mendoza and Larry Yost, Agriculture Department; Ed Swan, Public Works; Cece Sellgren, County Watershed Program; Monica Murphy, County Public Health

Members of the Public Present: Stella McMillan, California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Susan JunFish, Renee Adams, Michael Sullivan and Shirley Shelangoski, Parents for a Safer Environment; Kent Fickett, Mt. Diablo Audubon; Al Dentone, Abol Rodent Control; Robin Bedell-Waite, El Sobrante

1. Introductions

2. Elections

Michael Kent was nominated for the position as Chair (MF/ML). He was elected unanimously (8 to 0). Michael Baefsky was nominated for the position of Vice Chair (JH/LA). He was elected unanimously (8 to 0). Tunyalee Martin was nominated for the position of Secretary (MK/JC). She was elected unanimously (8 to 0).

2a. Other business

Scott Cashen, the new Environmental Organization representative from Mt. Diablo Audubon, introduced himself.

It was agreed to take Item 9 before Item 8 on the agenda.

3. Announcements

Cece Sellgren will replace Dan Jordan as the County/Unincorporated County Stormwater representative on the Committee.

At Susan JunFish's invitation, Al Dentone and Steve Hebert attended the meeting. They both perform rodent control. Susan JunFish brought 4 rodenticide papers to the meeting.

Michael Baefsky announced that the Association of Applied IPM Ecologists will hold their annual conference in Napa on February 3, 4, and 5.

4. Public comment on items not on the agenda

Shirley Shelangoski, Renee Adams, and Michael Sullivan read letters on their concerns (see attached). Susan JunFish explained her memo to the IPM Committee (see attached).

5. Approve minutes from November 7, 2012

A motion was made and seconded (MF/JC) to approve the minutes as corrected.

The motion carried (7-0) with Marj Leeds abstaining.

6. Hear reports from the Agriculture and Public Works Departments

*Agriculture*

Staff has been working on ranch maps for the noxious weed program. These maps show the property and entrance gates, and some will have historical weed sites marked. The noxious weed program will begin in February. The Department has been involved in the management evaluation of a site where perennial pepperweed has been found growing among ~~California-Contra Costa~~ goldfields. ~~California-Contra Costa~~ goldfields is an endangered plant species, so care must be taken in managing the perennial pepperweed; however, if the pepperweed is not managed, it could take over the site and displace this remnant population of ~~California-Contra Costa~~ goldfields.

The Department will conduct its ground squirrel control program from June and through October.

*Public Works Facilities Division*

The Division will continue to work on sealing pest entrances to buildings. Luis Agurto, CEO of Pestec, will replace Carlos Agurto as the Pestec representative on the Committee for at least the next 6 months. Pestec will be conducting a quality control assessment of its IPM program for the County. Luis Agurto and the IPM Coordinator will visit the Concord Homeless Shelter to assess the progress on the bed bug management program since the installation of metal beds and the loss of the staff person who checked beds daily for bed bugs.

*Public Works, Creeks and Roadsides*

The Creeks Division is planning to use grazing again this year where appropriate. Tony Medina would like to expand the use of goats and sheep, but this will depend on the availability of funding.

There had been a question about the consequences of dam decertification because of lack of burrowing rodent control. The Army Corps of Engineers requires flood control facilities that it certified to be maintained free of rodent damage or infestation. If a dam were decertified and the area were to experience a flood event, the County would have to bear the cost alone and could not expect any help from the federal government. This would be very costly. With a decertification, homeowners downstream would be required to obtain flood insurance, something they are not required to do now.

7. Hear report from the IPM Coordinator

The IPM Coordinator

- presented the IPM Annual Report to the Transportation, Water and Infrastructure Committee (TWIC); the report will go to the full Board in February
- received two applications for the Committee's environmental organization seat and attended the Internal Operations Committee where Supervisors Mitchoff and Andersen selected Scott Cashen from Mt. Diablo Audubon as Christine Hagelin's replacement
- worked with Andrew Sutherland, Cooperative Extension Urban IPM Advisor, and Pestec to submit a grant to the Department of Pesticide Regulation to compare IPM and conventional methods of managing bed bugs in Contra Costa County

The IPM Coordinator briefly presented the Pesticide Hazard Identification Tool to the Committee and explained that it is a tool to help with the pest management decision-making process. It is only a part of the discussion in choosing a pesticide. The Departments will also be looking at label restrictions, efficacy, cost, and other factors. Responding to a question from Michael Fry about locations of endangered species habitat covered in court injunctions, the IPM Coordinator said the injunctions specify precise locations of habitat using Township, Range, and Section.

9. Hear presentation on anticoagulants from Stella McMillan, Department of Fish and Game

Stella McMillan from the State Department of Fish and Wildlife gave a presentation on anticoagulant rodenticide effects on wildlife (see attached). Stella distinguished differences in finds of first generation versus second generation anticoagulants. The predominant problem is with second generation products, though she noted that there are no rodenticides that can be used without danger to non-targets. To reduce that danger, managers must employ careful use practices that include monitoring before use, evaluation after use, and reporting of secondary poisoning. Secondary poisonings must be investigated and regulations must be improved. The different communities that are involved must work together to solve the problem for land managers while protecting wildlife.

The discussion that followed included the following points:

- Is it an issue of how the product is delivered? Would a shift away from broadcast applications of treated grain bait to putting the bait into the ground squirrel holes make a difference in secondary poisoning? (MF)
  - Both piling grain bait or placing it in ground squirrel holes are illegal uses. Canids can dig out the bait and poison themselves. (VG)
- The County, or citizens, can send any animals suspected of being poisoned by rodenticide to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis. (SM)
- The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has sent a letter to the Department of Fish and Wildlife agreeing that secondary poisoning is a problem. DPR has sent out a white paper for review, and Fish and Wildlife is hopeful that something will be done about the problem. There may be a new licensing category for applicators using rodenticides. (SM)
- Fish and Wildlife is not doing anything with retail education, but is working on regulations to reduce accessibility to rodenticides. Stella McMillan regularly speaks at applicator training sessions. (SM)
- There is concern about not only second generation rodenticides, but also first generation rodenticides. We have no idea what the secondary impacts are and therefore should err on the side of not using any rodenticides. (member of the public comment - KF)
  - The Agriculture Department only uses a first generation rodenticide (diphacinone) and Pestec does not use any rodenticides. (VG, LA)

8. Hear report from the Agriculture Department on ground squirrel trapping

Mortay Mendoz presented the report for the Department (see attached).

The discussion that followed included the following points:

- The Department sometimes uses carbon monoxide smoke cartridges to kill ground squirrels, but these must be used when the soil is moist enough to trap the gas in the burrow. The best time to use smoke cartridges is in the spring when Department personnel are very busy with the noxious weed program. There is also concern about other creatures inhabiting ground squirrel burrows that would be accidentally killed. Aluminum phosphide can be used as a fumigant, but it is more toxic. (VG, MM)
- Perhaps there is a better way of evaluating the cost per ground squirrel eliminated. There should be a baseline estimate of the number of squirrels present before control measures are taken. (SC)

- Ventura County compared a number of control methods for ground squirrels including trapping, anticoagulant baiting, and many others. Jim Hale will provide the reference to the IPM Coordinator. (JH)
- There are significant flaws in the study such as, February is the best time to trap squirrels; a week of observations is not enough; it was done on an isolated field; it was not a scientific study; there are no statistics on the number of ground squirrels killed or what else was killed. The County roads need to be upgraded and owl boxes should be erected beside roads. (member of the public comment - KF)
  - A study comparing trapping to poison baiting could not have been done in February for two reasons: UCIPM advised that it was important to use proper bait to attract squirrels into the traps, and rolled oat grain bait is not very attractive to squirrels in February when they are eating vegetation; anticoagulant baits cannot be used in February because green grass contains high levels of vitamin K, which is an the antidote to anticoagulants. (VG, MM)
  - Owls are not an effective ground squirrel predator because none, with the exception of the great horned owl, is big enough to take ground squirrels. Also, the biology of the owl and that of the ground squirrel is different. Owls hunt at night, while ground squirrels activity is during the day. (VG)
  - The isolated stretch of road was chosen to reduce tampering with the traps by the public, but the traps were still tampered with thus exposing the public to bites and disease vectors. (VG)
  - The study was not meant to be a publishable scientific study. It was an internal Department trial. (VG)
  - Ground squirrel numbers were not recorded, but it was estimated that the number of ground squirrels along the whole strip of road was fairly homogenous. During the pre-baiting period many ground squirrels were observed in the study area. After the poison baiting, very few grounds squirrels were seen in the poison-baited areas. Squirrels from surrounding areas invaded the trapped areas, but it is unclear why this happened. This does not occur in baited areas. (VG, MM, GM)
  - From specific surveys that were done, no non-target carcasses were found in the study area where bait was used, but this does not guarantee that no non-targets were killed as a result of the baiting. (VG)

10. Discuss 2013 priorities for the Committee

It was agreed to discuss this item at a special meeting on February 6. The IPM Coordinator will set up meetings for the Data Management subcommittee and the Decision-Making subcommittee in January and/or February.

11. Plan agenda for next meeting

Discuss priorities for the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator