

Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
March 6, 2013

Members Present: 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
Michael Kent, Health Services; Tunyalee Martin, Public Member At-Large, Joe Yee, Public Works

(8 members present/5 voting members)

Members Absent: Luis Agurto, Pestec; Michael Baefsky, Public Member At-Large; Dan Jordan, County Clean Water Program; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board

Staff Present: Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Gene Mangini and Larry Yost, Agriculture Department; Ed Swan, Public Works Department

Members of the Public: Susan JunFish and Shirley Shelangoski, Parents for a Safer Environment; Nancy Wenninger, Mt. Diablo Audubon

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

There was none.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

There was none.

4. Approve minutes from February 6, 2013

A motion was made and seconded (~~MFMB~~/JH) to approve the minutes as corrected.

The motion carried (4-0). Tunyalee Martin abstained because she was absent at the February meeting.

5. Hear report from the IPM Coordinator

The IPM Coordinator

- Attended the February 13 Transportation, Water and Infrastructure Committee (TWIC)—Supervisors Candace Andersen and Mary Piepho. Susan JunFish and members of Parents for a Safer Environment asked that the IPM Annual Report not be referred to the full Board of Supervisors because of alleged errors in the report. Because the IPM Annual Report was approved by TWIC in December 2012, the Supervisors directed that the report continue its progress to the full Board of Supervisors. The IPM Coordinator informed the Supervisors that the Data Management subcommittee is planning a special meeting specifically to address Parents for a Safer Environment's issues about the Annual Report. Supervisor Andersen asked that if errors are found in the report after the special meeting, the IPM Coordinator bring the corrected report back to TWIC in May.
- Noted that the special meeting of the Data Management subcommittee will be March 25 at 10:00 AM
- Received an email from Mryto Petreas saying that she must resign her seat on the IPM Committee because of pressures at work. She commended the Committee for its good work.
- Reported that the Data Management subcommittee met on February 19 and discussed the committee's work for the year. The next regular meeting of the subcommittee will be April 16.
- Reported that the Decision Making subcommittee met on February 26 and discussed which pest management situation each County IPM program will put through the Decision Documentation Tree form. The next meeting of the subcommittee will be on March 25.
- Reported that the Bed Bug Task Force should hear soon about the grant submitted to the Department of Pesticide Regulation for a comparison of a bed bug IPM program and a conventional bed bug control program in an apartment complex in the County.

6. Hear updates from the Agriculture and Public Works Departments on their pest management programs and their schedule for pest management actions for 2013

Public Works Facilities Division—Jerry Casey, Assistant Facilities Manager

Responsibilities: The Facilities Division has responsibility for the 4 million square feet of County buildings. The buildings include County offices, adult and juvenile detention facilities, the County hospital and health clinics, and around 20 Head Start facilities. Other responsibilities include traffic signal maintenance and street lighting in unincorporated areas of the County. Libraries are being transitioned to the cities, but the Division still has responsibility for some.

Staff: 8 carpenters, 5 plumbers, 8 electricians, 6 signal electricians, 4 electronics system specialists (fire alarms and sprinkler systems, card access and security systems), and 18 stationary engineers

Funding: There are 2 funding streams: one is the General Fund (there has been a serious loss of funding for buildings over the past 6 to 7 years), and the second is the building Tenant Occupancy Fee.

In the past, the Division was proactive in performing building preventive maintenance, but this is difficult to do without funding. The Division now does more responding to problems than preventing them.

The Division contracts with Pestec for structural pest management. Pestec manages ants, cockroaches, rats, mice, bees, wasps, raccoons, skunks, possums, and various other pests, and makes recommendations to the County about pest prevention. The County is responsible for repairs and sanitation. If unusual situations arise or the Division encounters pests that Pestec does not manage, such as termites, the County hires a contractor with specific expertise. Regarding termites, Pestec staff are always looking for evidence of termites or conditions conducive to termites as they monitor County buildings. County staff also constantly monitor for insect problems, including termites.

Public Works, Grounds Division—Tanya Drlik for Kevin Lachapelle, Grounds Manager

Responsibilities:

- Upkeep of the landscaping and grounds around County Buildings—includes picking up litter
- Associated parking lots near County facilities
- Contracted by Public Works for landscape maintenance for some HOAs and County Service Areas—frontage landscaping, playing fields, some tiny parks and some larger parks
- 127 Sites

Staffing:

The Division is still working on hiring more people.

- Last year, the Division thought they would have 3 new positions by this March, but they have none.
- They currently have a crew of 12 regular, full time employees and 4 full time temps (compared to 45 full time employees and additional seasonal help a number of a number of years ago). They could use 6 to 10 temps.
- Their work load hasn't changed.
- Kevin Lachapelle wants to be able to hire “seasonal” workers—as many as he needs during the growing season.
 - He only needs these extra people during the growing season.
 - CCC doesn't like seasonal workers and there's no way for him to currently have a pool of 20 laborers contracted through a landscaping company that he can call on as needed.
- The Division has been approved for 4 new positions, but the process is moving very slowly.
- If they actually get to hire, this will be the first time in 9 years that they have hired anyone.
- The crew is working more and more overtime, but it's still not enough time to use up the hours that they now have at selected sites.
- Even if particular sites were able to pay more money for grounds maintenance, the crew could not take advantage of the extra hours because they don't have enough staff.

Budget:

- Sources: County Bldg Tenant Occupancy Fee (for County buildings)
Landscaping and Lighting District monies (for Special District Parcels)
- Almost all buildings have less money available for maintenance.
- Almost all sites are still underfunded. For instance, they need a ½ time or full-time employee (20 to 40 hours) at buildings where they have only 1 hour per week now.
- Three years ago, the County walked away from its responsibility to abate weeds on many parcels the County owns. Seedlings have grown into trees, and weeds are rampant, so now there are serious weed problems. Neighbors are complaining. The Division is receiving fire danger notices from the Fire Department. Issues are compounding because of neglect. In many cases, it took 3 or 4 years for the problems to show up, and it will take at least that long to remedy them.
- The crew cannot handle big cleanouts, so Kevin Lachapelle has been working with non-profits to provide inexpensive labor for big hand weeding jobs

Current state of work:

- They are still just fixing things—they don't have time to do new and/or innovative things.
- They get calls that trees are down or that irrigation has failed, and they have to go from one crisis to another.
- Summit Center
They killed much of the vegetation at the site in an effort to try to reduce the maintenance time. They have been applying wood chips to these areas. They hand pull weeds out of the mulched areas but still have to use herbicide in the cracks in the curbs and around the edges of the mulch where roots can go deeper and plants are harder to pull. Kevin Lachapelle has applied for grants and water district rebates to provide funds for re-landscaping the area, but has been unsuccessful.
- Last year the Division was able to buy a sweeper attachment for a Bobcat, a stump grinder, and a chipper. They are now better equipped than at any time in the last 10 years. With the chipper they are able to chip prunings on site and use them as mulch.

Methods for managing weeds (the Division has no time to deal with insects or plant diseases):

- Mulching
- Competitive planting
- Hand-pulling
- Weed whipping
- Mowing
- Disking
- Spot treatments with herbicides

Pesticides:

The Division used about 378 lbs. of active ingredients in FY 11-12. Pesticide use will probably increase this year as they try to get neglected sites under control. In FY 11-12, 96% of the herbicide used was glyphosate (Roundup). It was used on various species. Isoxaben (Gallery) is used as a pre-emergent, especially in areas where it is difficult or dangerous to remove weeds mechanically, by hand, or with spot treatments of glyphosate. Dithiopyr is used as a pre-emergent grass control and season-long broadleaf control. Fluazifop-p-butyl (Fusilade) is used as a contact herbicide for grass control. Triclopyr is used for tough woody plants, brush, and vines. Flumioxazin (Sureguard) is used as a pre-emergent and early post emergent for broadleaf weeds. Dikegulac sodium (Attrimec), is a growth regulator used to prevent olives and laurels from fruiting. The fruit is a tripping/slipping hazard on certain sidewalks.

Agriculture Department—Vince Guise, Agricultural Commissioner

Vince Guise reported that he has been attending meetings of a state level committee formed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to explore how to make 2nd generation anticoagulant rodenticide use safer. DPR is considering making 2nd generation rodenticides restricted use pesticides in California. This would mean that only a licensed pesticide Dealer would be able to sell them, and only licensed professionals would be able to buy them. The baits would be unavailable for purchase by homeowners. Vince had suggested lowering the percentage of active ingredient in 2nd generation products. Other suggestions have included putting rodent bait stations in harborage areas, rather than next to buildings and using “pulse” treatments, meaning that rodenticide bait is put out for 2 to 3 days and then removed, rather than being left out continuously. The final draft of the DPR report will be completed by the end of May.

The Agriculture Department has a wide variety of responsibilities:

- Weights and Measures—To protect consumers, the Department regularly inspects weighing and measuring devices, such as scales, gasoline pumps, and price scanners, throughout the County. This work is done year around.
- Regulation of the 25 certified Farmers’ Markets in the County
- Pesticide Use Enforcement Program—the Department issues permits, monitors pesticide applications, regularly inspects the headquarters of pest control companies, growers, and agencies for compliance with state and federal pesticide laws and worker safety laws. The Department investigates 100% of reported cases of human pesticide illness and takes enforcement action if illegal use is found. The Department also collects pesticide use reports from those required to report, and forwards them to DPR. The majority of permit issuance and headquarter inspection work is done in the winter. Pesticide use monitoring takes place throughout the year.
- Pest Exclusion Program—This program is intended to prevent the introduction and/or spread of plant pests and diseases that may be detrimental to agricultural crops. Exclusion is the first line of defense against invading exotic pests. If exotic pests can be prevented from entering the County, their control would not be necessary, saving money, time and pesticide. The Department also provides an essential service by certifying a shipper's agricultural commodities for compliance with other county, state, and foreign quarantine requirements. This allows Contra Costa agricultural products to be shipped throughout the world. The Department also inspects incoming shipments of household goods and nursery stock for disease, weeds, and insect pests. This work is done year around.
- Pest Detection Program—The Department performs this work under contract to the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The purpose of the program is the early detection of invading exotic pests that are detrimental to agriculture. This is primarily accomplished through insect trapping and field surveys. The target pests are insects such as Japanese beetle, gypsy moth, various fruit flies, and glassy winged sharpshooter, and diseases such as sudden oak death. For the most part, this work is done from March through November.
- Pest Eradication Program—Once a serious exotic pest, such as those mentioned above, is detected, the goal is to eliminate it before it can become established and necessitate large-scale control programs and use of large amounts of pesticides.
- Noxious Weed Program—The Department treats 18 weed species in the County, mostly on private land, with the goal of eradication. All noxious weeds whose biology and infestation size is amenable to hand or mechanical removal are treated that way; however, many noxious weeds must be treated with herbicides because hand or mechanical removal would not be effective or would make the problem worse. The Department surveys around 238,000 acres annually and last year treated 235 net acres for noxious weeds. The bulk of this work is done from March through June.
- Ground Squirrel Program—This is a small portion of the Department’s workload. The Department is contracted by various entities to control ground squirrels, mostly to protect critical infrastructure. Ground squirrels are controlled mainly through the use of broadcast poisoned bait, but also through some use of bait stations and gas cartridges.

The herbicides used for the noxious weed program are mainly dicamba (Clarity), aminopyralid (Milestone), imazapyr (Habitat), glyphosate (Roundup), and chlorsulfuron (Telar). Diphacinone treated grain bait is used for ground squirrels along with gas cartridges.

Nancy Wenninger of Mt. Diablo Audubon wished to express that the article on rodenticides in *Audubon Magazine* that Vince Guise distributed was expressing an opinion that diphacinone is safer than 2nd generation anticoagulants. It is a good article, but not an endorsement by the Audubon Society of diphacinone. There needs to be more research on 1st generation anticoagulants [such as diphacinone] and secondary poisoning, but she agrees that the 1st generation anticoagulants are better than the 2nd generation materials.

Work still continues on Mulholland Ridge using glyphosate on artichoke thistle and purple starthistle. This work was originally funded by a grant, but it is not a research study. Glyphosate kills grasses around the noxious weeds thus opening the area for weed seed germination. Artichoke thistle plants can be removed by hand, but unless 18 inches of the root is removed, the plant will resprout. It is impossible to remove artichoke thistle by hand when there are high numbers of plants over a large area.

Public Works, Road and Flood Control Maintenance Division—Joe Yee, Deputy Director

Responsibilities:

- Maintenance of 660 miles of center-lined roads and 75 miles of flood control channels
- Roadway drainage ditches
- Road signs, road striping
- Road surfacing
- Illegal dumping
- Vegetation control along roadways for safety, line of sight, fire prevention, and prevention of noxious weed dispersal
- Vegetation control along and in flood control channels to allow free flow of water and to prevent noxious weed dispersal
- Trash rack maintenance in flood control channels

Funding: Road maintenance is funded by gasoline tax alone. The gas tax is based on gallons sold and not on the cost per gallon, so gas tax revenues have been decreasing because of more fuel efficient vehicles.

The Division has 7 crews to take care of roads and flood control channels. These are divided into West, Central, and East County and are dispatched from 2 corporation yards, one in Martinez and one in Brentwood.

The work year:

Spring—pavement repairs; tree trimming; spot spraying, weed whacking, and mulching on roads and flood control access roads; treating thistles at the airports

Work in creeks at this time of year is solely for emergencies such as clearing log jams or cleaning trash racks.

Summer—pavement surfacing; making bigger pavement repairs (spring through summer); grazing trials; using goats and sheep in selected areas for weed abatement; managing aquatic weeds in flood control channels (May to September); abating weeds for fire preventions along road and the Iron Horse Corridor (May to July); spot spraying of tough weeds such as *Dittrichia* is done in summer

The Division uses mowing, weed whacking, brush cutting, grazing, mulching, and herbicides for weed abatement.

Fall—preparing for winter; clearing ditches; cleaning out catch basins, monitoring flood control facilities to make sure they are functioning; apply pre-emergent herbicides for weed abatement along roads

Winter—monitoring facilities and taking care of problems

Weed abatement in various forms, including herbicide application, continues throughout the year.

Public Works is responsible for the maintenance of some parks. These are managed by Special Districts, which contracts the work out to the Grounds Division, private landscaping companies, and vertebrate pest contractors. All pesticide use by these contractors is reported and included in the County's summary of pesticide use.

7. Hear presentation on wildlife issues in Contra Costa County from Dr. Jim Hale

There is a great diversity and abundance of wildlife in the County. Unfortunately, urbanization and suburbanization have greatly reduced the habitat for many species. Invasive species have out-competed native species that provide food for native wildlife, and invasive species compete with native species for the habitat that remains. Pesticides and various human activities have also taken their toll. There are however, bright spots: red shouldered hawks are on the rebound, Swainson's hawk is coming back, and osprey have come back after being decimated by DDT and DDE. The highest nesting density of red tailed hawks in the world is found on the back side of Mt. Diablo. Golden eagles are found in the County, and the peregrine falcon has come back. Badgers are spreading west, both north and south of Mt. Diablo.

The deer population is shifting from East County to Central and West County, and is above the carrying capacity of the land. Mountain lions are feeding on and following the deer into urban areas. There are about four confirmed sightings of mountain lions at Lafayette Reservoir per month.

There have been periodic reports of black panthers in the County since the 1970s. These are the melanistic phase of the African leopard. People buy them as exotic pets and then release them into the wild.

In 2012, Wildcare in Marin sent 138 of their animal patients that eat rats and mice to UC Davis for testing. Of those tested, 76 % showed some exposure to rat poisons. Jim Hale noted that not only commercial rodenticide use, but also residential use, is a problem for wildlife.

8. Plan agenda for next meeting

Mt. Diablo Audubon and the County's Clean Water Program will both make presentations in May on their public outreach campaigns involving pesticides.

Respectfully submitted,
Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator