

Revised Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
March 5, 2014

Members Present: Carlos Agurto, Pestec; Scott Cashen, Mt. Diablo Audubon; Doug Freier, Public Member At-Large; Vince Guise, Agriculture Department; Susan Heckly, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Michael Kent, Health Services; Cece Sellgren, County Clean Water Program; Patti TenBrook, Public Member At-Large; Cheng Liao; Public Member Alternate

(9 members present/7 voting members)

Members Absent: Jerry Casey, Public Works Facilities; Terry Davis, Public Member At-Large; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board; Joe Yee, Public Works

Staff Present: Lucas Patti and Larry Yost, Agriculture Department; Peter Gollinger, Public Works; Jill Ray, Supervisor Andersen's office

Members of the Public: Michael Blankinship, Blankinship and Assoc.; Susan JunFish, Michael Sullivan, Shirley Shelangoski, and Matt Valdin, Parents for a Safer Environment

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

The chair passed around a get well card for Jim Hale, former Fish and Wildlife Committee representative.

Carlos Agurto said that the owls on the roof of the County Administration building at 651 Pine St. in Martinez appear to be very active. He has collected samples of their pellets, and suggested the County consider placing some owl boxes near the building.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

Members of Parents for a Safer Environment provided comment on the Triennial Review document prepared by the Committee in December. (See attached)

4. Approve minutes from January 29, 2014

A motion was made and seconded (DF/PT) to accept the minutes as written.

The motion passed:

AYES: Freier, Kent, Sellgren, TenBrook, Liao

NOES: none

ABSENT: Casey, Davis, Leeds

ABSTAIN: Cashen, Heckly

5. Hear presentation from Michael Blankinship on the 2004 San Francisco Estuary Institute grazing study

Mr. Blankenship reviewed the findings (~~attached~~) of a study on the alternatives to vegetation management published in 2005 ([see the attached PowerPoint](#)). [Note that the summary chart in the Blankenship PowerPoint presentation differs from the summary chart in the original study. The reason for this was unexplained.](#)

Several of the study sites were in Contra Costa County. The study compared the environmental impacts and costs of controlling vegetation in three different settings using conventional pesticides, manual removal and goat grazing. He felt the major take-away message from the study was that using goats causes a temporary increase in environmental impacts but conditions return to normal relatively quickly. Costs of using goats and conventional spraying are similar, and both are much lower than manual removal.

Michael Kent asked if the cost of using goats has increased since the time of the study because the costs he documented were about ten times lower than those found by recent Public Works goat grazing efforts. Mr. Blankenship said he really didn't know how the costs of goats have changed in the last 10 years, but

cautioned that goat grazing costs are extremely variable depending on the conditions, timing and location of their use.

Michael Kent also asked how he derived the cost of the chemical controls used as a comparison to goats and mechanical removal for the study. Mr. Blankenship said he couldn't remember how they derived the chemical control cost number.

Matt Valdin asked if he knew of any other studies comparing the cost of goat grazing to conventional controls using pesticides. Mr. Blankenship said he wasn't aware of any other studies besides the effort currently underway by the County's Public Works Department.

Peter Gollinger from Public Works commented that the costs for the NPDES permit in the study were included in the chemical control cost calculations for at least one of the sites. He further stated that this would have inflated the overall costs for this site because in reality, this cost would have been spread out over many sites.

Patti TenBrook asked if the study looked at other impacts of using pesticides, such as reductions in dissolved oxygen levels, when evaluating the environmental impacts of chemical control, in addition to toxicity. Mr. Blankenship said that other impacts were included in the analysis.

6. Hear update from the Public Works Department on their use of goats throughout the County for vegetation management in flood control channels in 2013

Peter Gollinger explained that the Department has been finding that the purpose of using the goats has varied from site to site. At some sites it is for fire abatement, at others it is for reducing flow impediment in the flood control channel, and at others it has been to reduce the cover around homeless encampments. Each of these different uses has its own cost concerns and other limitations. The costs have varied based on the fencing needs, the size of the sites (small sites are more expensive), the availability of water and the time of the year.

An update on the formal grazing study will be provided later in the year by Cece Sellgren.

7. Hear updates from the Decision-Making, Cost Accounting, and Transparency subcommittees
Decision-Making (members: Carlos Agurto, Cece Sellgren, Terry Davis, Vince Guise, Doug Freier, Michael Kent)

- The first meeting was held on February 24, 2014.
- Terry Davis agreed to be chair.
- At the first meeting the committee developed their work plan and schedule.
- The main goal for the next meeting is to review one of the decision-making documents that were developed last year to help the committee become familiar with the process.
- The committee asked the Agriculture and Public Works Departments to consider a series of questions to discuss at the next meeting so they can begin deciding which pest management issues to run through the decision-making analysis this year.
- They decided that they would pick new pest management issues to work on this year, and will not re-review the documents that were developed last year

Cost Accounting (members: Vince Guise, Susan Heckly, Michael Kent, Marj Leeds, Cece Sellgren, Joe Yee)
The first meeting was held on February 20, 2014. Cece Sellgren agreed to be temporary chair for the first meeting. They discussed their work plan but did not choose a chair person or decide on a meeting schedule.

Transparency (members: Scott Cashen, Vince Guise, Cheng Liao, Patti TenBrook, Cece Sellgren)

- The first meeting was held on February 26, 2014.
- Patti TenBrook agreed to be chair.
- The committee will meet every other month on the first Wednesday.
- Committee goals:
 - Further develop the pesticide use notification website

- Develop a process to address public concerns
- Determine if Public Works can separate their pesticide use reports into flood control use and roadside use.
- Explore how public records requests are addressed

Public Comment on this agenda item:

Susan JunFish said that in the Decision-Making committee Vince said that Public Works could report roadside and flood control pesticide use separately, but when she talked with Julie ~~Burien~~Bueren, Public Works Director, she was told ~~this would be difficult. there is no way to do this.~~ She would like clarity on this issue.

Also, at the Decision-Making committee she was concerned that the committee did not ~~what want~~ to review a pest management practice that had gone through the decision-making process that would incite debate. Isn't this the point of the committee?

Jill Ray clarified that the purpose of looking at a pest management practice that had previously gone through the process was to help the committee become familiar with the process, not to re-evaluate the decisions that had been made.

8. IPM Coordinator report

This item was skipped due to the absence of the IPM Coordinator.

9. Hear reports from the Agriculture and Public Works Departments

Vince Guise provided a handout (see attached) and photos summarizing the Department's recent work and showing their control program for artichoke thistle and purple starthistle.

Public comment on this item:

Susan JuneFish congratulated the Department on the reduction of bait use and asked if the decrease in total bait amount was proportional to the decrease in active ingredient. Vince replied that yes, as the total amount of bait decreases, the amount of active ingredient necessarily decreases as well. ~~Vince Guise said he would follow up with her about this after the meeting.~~

10. Plan agenda for next meeting

- Report from Carlos about options for increasing owl boxes downtown, and about a concern raised by Susan JunFish that she had seen some Clark Pesticides rodent traps at 651 Pine Street
- Update on grazing study from Cece Sellgren
- One of the three priority topics identified at the last meeting depending on what the IPM coordinator can arrange
- Update on the use of IPM at County leased buildings by Cece

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Kent, Committee member from Health Services