

Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
May 6, 2015

Members Present: Carlos Agurto, Pestec; Jerry Casey, Public Works Facilities; Doug Freier, Public Member At-Large; Larry Yost for Chad Godoy, Agriculture Department; Susan Heckly, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Michael Kent, Health Services; Cece Sellgren (Chair), County Clean Water Program; Patti TenBrook, Public Member At-Large, Allison Knapp, Public Works; Cheng Liao, Public Member Alternate

(10 members present/6 voting members)

Members Absent: Terry Davis, Public Member At-Large; Sonce Devries, Island Watch Conservation Science; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board

Staff Present: Jill Ray, Supervisor Andersen's office; Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Peter Gollinger, Public Works; Larry Yost, County Agriculture Department

Members of the Public: Andrew Sutherland, University of California Cooperative Extension; Susan JunFish, and Michael Sullivan, Parents for a Safer Environment

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

There were none.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

Susan JunFish commented that the Weed subcommittee was rescheduled for a time that no one from PfSE could come.

4. Approve minutes from March 4, 2015

- Susan JunFish asked for changes to the minutes. See attached.
- Susan JunFish said that the IPM Advisory Committee was formed to focus on County programs as opposed to bed bugs.
- Michael Sullivan read a statement. See attached.

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

The motion carried unanimously:

AYES: Freier, Heckly, Kent, Liao, Sellgren, TenBrook

NOES: None

ABSENT: Devries, Leeds

ABSTAIN: None

5. Hear presentation on herbicides from John Roncoroni

John is the U.C. Cooperative Extension Advisor for weeds and is housed in Napa. He has worked with weeds for 35 years and has been an Advisor for 8. The following are some of the points made in John's presentation:

- Weeds are managed for fire fuel reduction and for traffic safety.
- Weeds will not go away.
- Resistance to herbicides is an inherited trait. If a weed was previously killed by an herbicide but cannot be currently killed with that herbicide, the weed is resistant to that particular herbicide.
- Tolerance to an herbicide means that the weed was never killed by the herbicide.
- Worldwide the number of resistant species found
 - along roadsides is 31 (many municipalities use just a single herbicide, which can increase the likelihood of creating resistant weeds)
 - in wheat is 71

- in corn is 61
- in rice is 51
- along railways is 14 (railroads often have the ability to use several different herbicides in rotation which decreases the likelihood of creating resistant species)
- Alternatives to herbicides along roadways
 - Paving under guard rails
 - Mulches and weed mats (these must be cared for and replenished or replaced)
 - Dense plantings (do we have the water to irrigate these?)
 - Dense grasses (natives must be watered during dry periods for at least 3 years to get them established, and if the plants are allowed to become dried up, they become a fire hazard the same as any non-native grass)
 - Cultivation (creates greenhouse gasses, dust, erosion, and the safety of the operator must be considered)
 - Mowing (if not timed properly may have to be done several to many times per year, creates greenhouse gasses, changes the composition of weed species so that other control methods may become necessary, requires considerable of labor to manage traffic safety during mowing)
 - Grazing (difficult to use on medians and the sides of roads)
- If you only use one control method for weeds, you will always have other problems.
- Weed management is specific to the site.
- Our drought is selecting for weeds that will grow with very little water.
- Weed seeds can stay in the ground for 10-20 years waiting for the ideal time to sprout.

Comments from Peter Gollinger, Public Works Vegetation Manager

- He and his crew are always monitoring the weed situation along roads.
- They try to attack weeds when they are easy to control, coordinating treatments with the biology of the particular weed.
- Regulations from each fire department vary, but generally require a specific number of feet from the side of the road to be free and clear of weeds.
- The Division uses some pre-emergent herbicides to prevent weeds from sprouting and reduce the amount of labor needed. These herbicides are rotated to lessen the chance of creating resistant species.
- There are some places where it is impossible to mow.

Questions from the public and the Committee with answers from John Roncoroni

- What does monitoring include? (SJ)
 - Monitoring is continual. You have to know species you have and what stage they are in, and then you must assess the effectiveness of your treatments.
- Are there any low weeds that are not a fire hazard? (SJ)
 - That is a question for the fire department.
- Are there weeds that can be used to out-compete other vegetation? (SJ)
 - Weeds cause other problems. Russian thistle breaks off and rolls around causing road hazards.
 - The issue is not necessarily the “weeds” on the side of the road, but just any plants. Fire officials dictate the look of roadsides.
- Can controlled burns be used on roadsides? (MS)
 - This is rarely done in confined areas, such as a roadside. Weeds must be green or barely dry.
 - It is difficult now to get a fire permit for any purpose.
- Is there a particular number of years/cycles that you can use an herbicide without creating resistance? (MK)
 - John Roncoroni didn't know the answer to that.

- Herbicides can be mixed together as a strategy to prevent resistance, to kill different weeds, and to kill weeds at different life stages.

6. Discuss procedural issues

- The IPM Coordinator explained membership, quorums, and voting in the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees as per County Counsel:
 - Subcommittees can be composed of both voting and non-voting members of the IPM Advisory Committee, but no more than 4 voting members of the full committee. A subcommittee can have no more than 6 members, otherwise the meeting is considered to be of the full committee.
 - Anyone on a subcommittee can vote, regardless of whether that member is allowed to vote on the full committee. There must be at least 4 “yes” votes to pass any action item.
 - Non-voting members are not allowed to vote on any items in the full committee, and may not make or second motions.
 - The public member alternate is allowed to vote when one or more of the public members of the Committee are absent. These include the PEHAB, Fish & Wildlife Committee, and environmental organization representatives along with the 3 at-large public members.
- The IPM Coordinator explained video and audio taping of advisory committee meetings by the public
 - Any member of the public may video or audio tape a public meeting and is not required to announce that they are doing so.
 - County Counsel does not want advisory bodies to record their own meetings.

7. Hear reports from the Weed and Bed Bug subcommittees

Michael Kent reported for the Weed subcommittee:

- The committee focused on turf conversion at County buildings to reduce water waste and maintenance, and to improve pest management.
- The committee has come to understand that the funding mechanism for landscapes around buildings is not conducive to long-term planning.
- The subcommittee has come up with the following recommendations:

Work with Susan Cohen (Special Districts), Kevin Lachapelle (Grounds) and other relevant County staff on the recommendations below:

1. Develop a Countywide policy to convert turf to drought tolerant landscaping.
 - a. Develop ideas for a funding structure that is not dependent on the particular building or the departments in the building.
 - b. There is a need to aggressively pursue outside funding for turf conversion. Direct the appropriate, knowledgeable Public Works staff to look for outside funding. Perhaps the position of Sustainability Coordinator, when it is filled, could pursue grant funding for sustainable landscaping projects.
 - c. Employ a design for the turf conversion that uses the least amount of pesticide in the preparation of the site.
2. Develop a County policy that would ensure that lifecycle costing is used when landscapes are renovated or created and that the renovated landscapes reduce maintenance and water and pesticide use.
3. Develop a County policy to take decisions on the type of landscaping around buildings out of the hands of the tenants of that building in order that long range plans and long term investments can be made.

The IPM Coordinator expressed concern that she had not yet been able to discuss the recommendations with Susan Cohen and would like to wait until the next meeting to vote on sending the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Michael Kent moved to pass the recommendations on to the Board. No second was needed.

The motion did not carry.

AYES: Kent

NOES: Freier, Heckly, ~~Kent~~, Liao, Sellgren, TenBrook
ABSENT: Devries, Leeds
ABSTAIN: None

Patti TenBrook reported for the Bed Bug subcommittee:

- The committee will review bed bug ordinances from other jurisdictions and discuss the value of the County having its own bed bug ordinance.
- The committee will work on outreach to County citizens that goes beyond the County website.

8. Hear report from the IPM Coordinator

The IPM Coordinator has been working on

- arranging and staffing the subcommittees.
- turf removal with the Grounds Division Manager—the Health Services Department is eager to convert more turf to drought tolerant landscaping at its clinics.
- the IPM guidance manual for Contra Costa municipalities—she will work with Beth Baldwin of the Contra Costa Clean Water Program and Stephen Pree of El Cerrito to present a workshop on June 16 for city personnel on IPM and how to use the manual.
- providing assistance and advice to a senior/disabled residence in Martinez and a family shelter in Martinez on how to cope with their bed bug infestations.

The online pesticide notification and posting site is operational: www.cccounty.us/PestPostings.

Jill Ray commented that the Triennial Review of the IPM Advisory Committee was discussed at the Internal Operations Committee, and the supervisors are pleased with what the Committee has accomplished. However, they want the IPM Committee to provide the Board with more recommendations and to move away from focusing solely on the details of County Departments' operations. The Supervisors would like to see the Committee move to work on outreach about IPM and pesticide use. Jill Ray also noted that the IPM Coordinator will now be reporting annually to TWIC instead of quarterly.

9. Hear reports from the Agriculture and Public Works Departments

Larry Yost reported for the Agriculture Department

- The Department is in the middle of their noxious weed work—mostly artichoke and purple starthistle.
- In the past the Department had a year around noxious weed program, but it will now be adhering to a June 1 cut-off date for all herbicide treatments. If all contracted work is finished before June 1, the Department will begin work on uncontracted work.
- The Department is only performing noxious weed work under contract and is no longer providing this service for free.

Peter Gollinger reported for Public Works Maintenance:

- Crews are in the middle of fire season weed abatement on parcels and rights-of-way. They are using machine mowing, manual mowing, and grazing.
- The fire season weed abatement dead line for most of the County was May 2. This is one month earlier than usual, and the County was only notified of this change at the beginning of April.

Because the meeting was running over time, the Committee did not hear reports from Carlos Agurto and Jerry Casey.

9. Plan agenda for next meeting

- The Committee agreed to move the July meeting from July 1 to July 8.
- Revisit the recommendations from the Weed subcommittee to vote on them
- Possible presentations—Joe DiTomasso, weed expert from U.C. Davis, someone from Yolo County to describe their native plantings on the roadsides.

Next Meetings: July 8, September 2, November 4

Respectfully submitted, Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator