

Minutes
Contra Costa County IPM Advisory Committee
Subcommittee on Weeds
June 9, 2015

Members present: Doug Freier, Larry Yost for Chad Godoy, Michael Kent, Cece Sellgren

Members absent: Sonce Devries, Cheng Liao

Staff present: Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator; Peter Gollinger, Public Works; Jill Ray, Supervisor Andersen's office; Chad Godoy, Agriculture Department

Members of the public present: Christine Steck, Michael Sullivan, and Susan JunFish from Parents for a Safer Environment

1. Introductions

2. Public comment on items not on the agenda

Susan JunFish and Michael Sullivan read statements (see attached). Christine Steck read a statement. ~~The IPM Coordinator has requested a copy, but has not received one yet.-(see attached)~~

3. Approve minutes from 4/21/15

Doug Freier asked that his statement at the bottom of page 1 be corrected to read "Turf that exists just for looks should be ~~removed~~considered for removal."

A motion was made and seconded to approve the 4/21/15 minutes as corrected (DF/MK). The motion carried unanimously.

4. Hear staff report regarding the Grounds Division and turf removal.

The IPM Coordinator reported that two contractors have been selected by the Grounds Division after a general Request for Proposal was posted on BidSync. Each contractor submitted a proposal for removing around 70% of the turf at the Pittsburg Health Center and replacing it with wood chip mulch and drought-tolerant landscaping. One contractor has been chosen as the lead contractor and the other will be the backup company. The facilities manager for the County clinics was extremely happy about the turf conversion and would like plans for all the other clinics. The plan for the Pittsburg Health Clinic will save around 1 million gallons of water per year. Work will begin at the end of June.

Susan JunFish commented that she thinks it is great that the County is removing turf, but that the Weed subcommittee was formed to address pesticide use such as "Bad Actors". She asked why Grounds is using "Bad Actors" on turf and what turf removal has to do with IPM.

Peter Gollinger explained that there will be far fewer weeds, and thus less herbicide use, in a landscape with sparse, drought-tolerant landscaping where little water is used, and the soil is mulched.

6. Discuss recommendations to Board of Supervisors on drought actions regarding County landscapes

This item was taken next.

The IPM Coordinator reported that Kevin Lachapelle requested that the recommendation on converting turf in the County exclude parks and play areas in Head Starts. Susan Cohen asked that the IPM Coordinator review the design guidelines in the County's current Landscape Standards in order to harmonize the Standards and the committee's recommendations.

Michael Kent suggested that the recommendations go to the Board of Supervisors and not just be recorded in the IPM Annual Report. He also noted that removing turf frees up maintenance time and that turf often has other pest problems that could necessitate pesticide use. Bringing in a maintenance perspective when designing landscaping results in much better landscapes that can be maintained within the County budget.

The committee decided that the IPM Coordinator will redraft the recommendations using the information provided her by Kevin Lachapelle and Susan Cohen and will bring the draft to the July 8, 2015 IPM Advisory Committee for approval. If the full Committee approves, the recommendations could go to TWIC in August or September.

7. Hear report from Cece Sellgren on grant funding for turf removal

This item was taken next.

Cece reported that there is Proposition 96 funding that might have been used for turf removal, but the County would have had to have been on a list with the County's ideas for turf conversions and costs. Since the County wasn't on the list, that money is not available.

Michael Kent noted that moving water is the number one use of energy in the state. The Bay Area Air District has funding for measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote water conservation, including turf removal.

Susan JunFish noted that reducing turf reduces fertilizer use and reduces greenhouse gases.

5. Discuss grazing decision documentation

This item was taken next.

Peter Gollinger explained the decision document. The committee had a number of suggestions for additions to the document which Peter will take into account in the next draft.

Cece Sellgren noted that the Regional Water Quality Control Board has a new regulation which holds the County responsible for trash and feces that the homeless deposit in the Waters of the U.S.

The committee asked that the decision document include a list of the goals that goats accomplish better than mowing or spraying.

Public comment included the following

- When fecal matter left by goats is washed down the channel, farmers may be blamed for the fecal coliform and be required to perform mitigation. (CG)
- By using a "no-kill" herd (a herd that is not culled for slaughter at the end of the season), the County limits sourcing from within the County and the value of the herd of goats is diminished. (CG)
- A "no-kill" herd is a good idea. (MS)
- Do goats pull out plants by the roots? (MS)
 - Cece Sellgren explained that goats are tearing and shredding animals and leave the plant roots in the soil.
- When grass is mowed and left on the ground it is not good for rare species. (C.Steck)
 - Cece Sellgren explained that the channels are specifically managed to keep out broadleaf plants and rare grasses are rarely found on channels.
- Does the Public Works Department fence off the creek to prevent goats from drowning and keep goats out of the water? (SJ)
 - Cece Sellgren said that creeks are not fenced because the goats rarely go into the water.
- Is the County free to use grazing in the Flood Control District with regard to downstream contamination issues? (SJ)
 - Peter Gollinger said he is operating under that assumption, but he will check with the Department.
- How many miles/acres will be grazed in 2015? How many were grazed in 2014? (SJ)
 - Peter Gollinger will provide this information for the next meeting.

8. Plan next meeting agenda

August 6, 2015, 10:30 AM

- Update on turf removal
- Respond to any issues from TWIC regarding the recommendations to the Board
- Respond to the two questions above from Susan JunFish.