



## Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board

1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
(360) 416-1467

### Minutes

Published Meeting  
January 21<sup>st</sup> 2021, 5:30pm  
Skagit County Noxious Weed Board  
Online Via Microsoft Teams

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[+1 929-229-5406](tel:+19292295406),417616446# United States, New York City

Phone Conference ID: 417 616 446#

Chair: TBD

Board members:

- Jason Kleinhuizen
- Jim Sullivan
- Sonny Gohrman

Extension representative:

- Don McMoran (WSU)  
Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Extension  
Faculty County  
Extension Director

Coordinator:

- Joseph Shea

Technician:

- Christie Turner

Guests:

- Michael See

I. CALL TO ORDER

Joseph calls meeting to order at 5:38 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Joseph Shea  
Jason Kleinhuizen  
Don McMoran  
Michael See  
Sonny Gohrman  
Jim Sullivan  
Christie Turner

III. AGENDA

- a. Approval of January 21<sup>st</sup> 2021 meeting agenda  
Sonny moves to approve  
Jason seconded

IV. MINUTES

- a. Approval of October 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 meeting Minutes  
Sonny moves to approve  
Jim seconded

V. GUEST COMMENTS

VI. Public Hearing to review & adopt 2021 Skagit County Noxious Weed List

Joseph: Emailed out the proposed Skagit County Noxious Weed list prior to the meeting and created an excel sheet to add some clarity. The yellow highlighted species are required to control at the State level. The green highlighted species are plants that have been chosen for control at the county level in the past or at least spoken about being chosen for control. Anything that isn't highlighted has not been selected for control at the State or County level. Red highlighted species represent Class C weeds that are more widespread and difficult to enforce on, but should be considered in this proposal. The excel sheet contains scientific name changes.

Don: We spent a great deal of time last year perfecting this list and is pretty satisfactory from the [WSU] Extension's standpoint.

Sonny: Butterfly bush and bohemian knotweed, are not required for control?

Joe: Bohemian and Japanese knotweed are not currently required to control in Skagit County. However, the last several years we have selected these knotweed species for control in our County, mainly due to our WSDA knotweed grant work, and also because Giant knotweed is selected for control. It doesn't make much sense to have only 1 species of knotweed selected, when we have 3 species in the county. Especially because all of the knotweed species encompass the same areas, and can crossbreed.

Some background for a couple of these plants:

-Butterfly bush; we are considering because we have noticed that it is taking over some of our knotweed sites. However it is a fairly common and popular plant, so this one can be debated.

-Bohemian & Japanese Knotweed; very important because of the work we do under the grant program, and to be more consistent with some of our neighboring counties.

-Poison Hemlock; probably the number one phone call that I get.

-Scotch broom; has been selected in the past for control. Not currently selected due to how widespread it is.

Sonny: Would like to suggest considering Italian Arum and Yellow Flag Iris for next year's list, but thinks that the list looks good as is for this year (2021).

Joe: Highlighted Italian Arum and Yellow Flag Iris green to indicate the species have been brought up in conversation. Some more background on a few other species:

-Tansy Ragwort; probably the second most abundant phone call I get. It isn't currently widespread in our county, but we do have a lot of agriculture and Tansy ragwort can cause harm to livestock if ingested.

-Yellow Nut Sedge; brought up last year by one of our previous board members who suggested it for control.

Don: He is bringing in a specialist from Oregon State University to talk about Yellow Nut Sedge control at the Western Washington potato workshop on the third Friday of February. It's been on the top 10 research needs for potatoes for the last 5 or 6 years. It can spread easily and is hard to control with chemicals because it can store energy. So when the foliage is killed, the tuber will grow new foliage. That being said, it can be controlled but most farmers don't want to do the work because it's a headache. We are working on it, but it's a process.

Joe: Sonny, you mentioned Italian Arum and yellow flag iris would be good species to select for control within Skagit County?

Sonny: Yes, we are finding a lot of yellow flag iris out in the flats were we are finding Spartina. He isn't sure how popular it is on private land, but has been it mixed in with knotweed in some places.

Don: Has found it up rivers in wet areas, and agrees it should be considered.

Joe: Yes, we have seen it in the lowland and in sloughs and such. As far as lakes and ponds, the lake management districts seem to be getting a lot of it. So having that required seems very reasonable.

So let's go down the list here; do we think that Butterfly Bush should be required for control in Skagit County for 2021?

Don: After serving on the board, I tore out all the [butterfly bush] plants at my house. I haven't seen it too much, but I don't go up river as often as I used to.

Sonny: I think the problem with butterfly bush is in the riparian areas from nearby gardens. Are we ready to start dealing with gardeners? Which has always been a problem.

Joe: Yes, I think that's fair. I have heard it brought up at garden shows and people don't realize they're noxious or they really just like the plant. It is used often in gardening and landscaping, which will make it pretty hard to enforce on. Although we have been working on butterfly bush on Grandy Creek for two years and have seen a good reduction with manually pulling and EZ-Jecting. I think it would be good to education landowners and focus on areas like Grandy Creek. As far as our ability to enforce on it, I don't think butterfly bush is a reasonable species to require control for.

Sonny: Butterfly bush is on the state list, so for grant and education purposes, it's still a noxious weed. So for education and grant purposes you can still pursue this species, but leave the landscaping stuff alone.

Joe: Yes, we can still educate landowners about how to control it, but we just couldn't enforce control. Moving on; how about Bohemian and Japanese knotweed, do we think they should be required for control in Skagit County for 2021?

Sonny: Yes, I think so.

Jim: I agree.

Jason: Yes, I think so.

Joe: That's consensus; so we'll keep knotweed listed for control in our county. Moving on; how about listing Poison Hemlock for control in Skagit County for 2021?

Sonny: Yes.

Jason: Yes.

Joe: We will keep Poison Hemlock on the list. Moving on; Scotch broom? Should it be required for control in Skagit County for 2021?

Sonny: No.

Jim: Not aware of much scotch broom in the county.

Joe: A lot of scotch broom can be found up river, along rite-of-ways, power lines, etc.

Jason: Probably no.

Joe: Ok, it will not be required for control. Moving on; Tansy ragwort?

Jason: Yea.

Jim: Yea.

Joe: Ok, we will add it. Moving on, Yellow Nut sedge?

Sonny: Yes. If it gets started, it'll be an incredible issue. We have a lot of people that grow crops and move dirt in the county.

Joe: Ok, we will add it. I want to go back to butterfly bush really quick to get confirmation. Do we want to require it for control or not?

Sonny: We want to control it, but I don't think we want to list it, in my opinion.

Jason: I agree.

Joe: Is there motion to add all knotweed species, Poison hemlock, Tansy ragwort, and Yellow nut sedge to the Class B designate weeds required to control within Skagit County for 2021?

Jason moves to approve  
Sonny seconded

Joe: Great, let's move onto Class C weeds. Common teasel, what are your thoughts? I find quite a bit in Anacortes, Sharps Corner area, Fir Island area, Milltown area. Teasel isn't widespread in the county, but teasel sites are generally large and I have had a few landowners contact me. I've never had to enforce on it.

Sonny: Are you finding it with poison hemlock?

Joe: Yes poison hemlock, and with scotch broom and thistle species. For example, Sharp's Corner has a lot of teasel with scotch broom and thistle species mixed in.

Sonny: These seem like all the 'junky area weeds', I guess it depends on how big you want to make your list.

Joe: Right, because teasel isn't widespread I don't foresee myself enforcing on it. Tansy ragwort and poison hemlock pose more of a threat. Teasel can also be maintained easily by the landowners.

Sonny: I could go either way with this.

Joe: We will come back to this. Let's move on to Italian Arum, this one is really hard to control and I'm actually getting calls about people getting rashes from it. I'd love for it to be controlled, right now it's not widespread in the county, but it is difficult to control. I'm not sure of the best management strategy right now, but the research I have done indicates it's really hard to get rid of.

Sonny: It is really hard to get rid of and there isn't a lot around, and really that's the time to deal with it. It's a tough one, and should be gotten rid of before it gets out of hand.

Joe: Yes, and landowners I have talked with are actually trying to get rid of it and I think a lot of landowners would be on board with it being required for control, in my experience. Any other comments on Italian Arum? The next two are Bull Thistle and Canada thistle. Canada thistle is very widespread in our county, it effects a lot of agriculture lands, but can be found literally everywhere. I get a lot of calls about it, it has been selected in the past. Bull thistle is around, but not as common. It is hard to enforce because it is so widespread. Any thoughts?

Sonny: I have a hard time listing one and not the other.

Joe: Jason, what do you think?

Jason: I see it a lot, and try to control it in the pastures. It is everywhere though.

Don: It's everywhere, a huge problem. Board should stay diligent about it, but it would be difficult to control at this point. And people who are chemical sensitive or no spray should be considered.

Sonny: Mowing is a good alternative.

Joe: Mowing doesn't make it disappear, but it doesn't reduce seed source. Large scale spraying would be the most effective way. Even asking for people to mow, they usually only do it once.

Sonny: Control is for seed set and to prevent spread, not eradication.

Don: Either way, you have the paper trail to prove you're making effort to control it.

Joe: It's ultimately up to the board to decide. Let's talk about Yellow Flag Iris. Any comments?

Don: I've gotten a few calls over the last year about it.

Joe: Let's vote on common teasel. Should it be required for control in Skagit County 2021?

Sonny: If I were to let any of them slide, it would be this one.

Jason: If it's not that big of an issue, I think we should take it off.

Jim: I agree with Jason, I think we should take it off.

Joe: We will remove Common Teasel from our Class C list. How about Italian Arum?

Sonny: I say we add it, control it before it becomes a problem.

Jim: I'm not sure what it is.

Jason: I'm not sure what it is either.

Joe: Quick overview; vegetative ground cover, grows through tubers, seed and berries. Causes skin irritation, poisonous for livestock, creates monocultures. Very persistent. I think it should be required.

Jason: I think we should add it then.

Joe: Ok, let's move on to Bull thistle and Canada thistle. Do we keep them on the list or remove them?

Jason: I think we should keep them on the list.

Jim: I think we should keep them on the list.

Sonny: So do I.

Joe: Ok. Let's move onto Yellow Flag Iris. Should we add it?

Sonny: Yes.

Jim: Yes.

Jason: Yes.

Joe: Let's make a motion to approve the Class C Weed selected in Skagit County to include Italian Arum, Bull thistle, Canada thistle, and Yellow Flag Iris.

Sonny moves to approve  
Jason seconds

Noxious Weed List Passes.

VII. Public Hearing to review and recommend applicants to the Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board.

Joe: No current applicants. We are sending out information to Ted Pritchard, who is a beef farmer in District 3. We also need to fill District 4. We are doing our best to reach out to people, but all help is greatly appreciated.

Don: I can send it out over the Skagit Ag. List Service.

Joe: Yes.

Sonny: Why do we need a public hearing to review and recommend applicants for the Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board?

Joe: In the RCW 17.10 we have to have a public hearing to announce and review all of the applicants to the board of commissioners. Any other questions? Close public hearing at 6:28.

## VIII. CONTINUED BUSINESS

### a. Elect a new Chair

Joe: I think it would be good for us to elect a chair, even though it's all online right now. It would be great to have one of you lead and facilitate the meetings, and I'm just supplying the reports and answering questions. Any thoughts?

Jason: I could do it.

Joe: Great, I just need you to read through the agenda and call a vote and those kinds of things. Is everyone ok with Jason running for Chair?

Sonny: I'll nominate Jason to be our chair for 2021.

Jim: I second.

Motion passes. Jason Kleinhuizen is the new Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board Chair for the 2021 year.

### b. Noxious Weed Coordinator Report

\*\*See attached report\*\*

### c. Treasurers Report

\*\*See attached report\*\*

### d. Brassica Ordinance

Joe: Moving forward with it, I have all the information I need and arranging a public hearing to discuss it. I'll send out the dates as I know them.

### e. Inter-local with Sedro Woolley Japanese Knotweed

Joe: Haven't moved any further with it yet. I received an inter-local agreement, but it doesn't include knotweed, so a new one may need to be drafted.

### f. Inter-local with Anacortes Heart Lake Purple Loosestrife

Joe: Talking with Steve Phillips of Anacortes, and writing a short solicitation to WSDA for help with it. There isn't much and it seems contained.

g. Exploration of Noxious Weed Assessment

Joe: This is a funding avenue for noxious weed boards, and Dan Berentsen and Mike See are suggesting we explore this possibility. We have to have all of our board members in agreement first, before we can move forward. I got some metrics back from the county, the numbers aren't exact right now. Skagit County has 68,504 taxable parcels, 404,802 taxable acres. After research; \$3-4 per parcel seems normal for other counties and \$0.10-0.30 per acre fee seems normal. So if we did a \$3 tax per parcel \$205,512 with \$0.20 tax per acre, \$80,960, together is \$286,472 in total. This amount would allow for a functioning program. Any thoughts on assessments, rates, benefits?

Sonny: What is the county going to charge you for the assessment?

Mike: Treasurers office could tell you for sure, but I think it's a \$2 rate, so it would be a total of \$5 per parcel.

Sonny: The additional charge per parcel will make it less palatable, but if that's what we need to do.

Joe: That being said, we would be able to have a functioning program with the numbers mentioned earlier. I think what we need to hone in on now is what and how this will benefit our program. Jason what are your perspectives from being on the board, and one from being a county resident?

Jason: Is it voted on by the public?

Joe: It's voted on by the commissioners, but we hold public hearings to discuss the steps. It will be important to have landowners on board, but ultimately it is voted on by the commissioners.

Jason: Will this replace the general fund you operate under?

Joe: Not necessarily. The general fund restricts the work we can do, for example I can't use public funds on private properties. This assessment opens up the opportunity to work on private properties and allows for fund stability, as the general fund can fluctuate. Assessment funds roll over and budgets do not. Sonny, any thoughts?

Sonny: Consistent funding is important when working with persistent weeds. It's a growing funding source, as parcels are constantly being broken down into smaller parcels. It's a better way to fund the program.

Joe: It's going to be more consistent and reliable and only one of a few counties that operates solely out of the general fund. Even though with a tax assessment requires more work, I think it will benefit the program. But ultimately it's up to the SCNWCB. Jim what do you think?

Jim: I think it will be a tough sell to the public. People who have a lot of acreage usually keep it clean, with the exception of a few. It does add up after a while, especially with the additional fee.

Sonny: In Snohomish County, it was the fee that shut the assessment down.

Joe: I'll talk to the treasurer about the specific details. I agree with Jim, as a lot of agricultural lands are maintained very well, with few exceptions. It will be key to outline what the program will do to use the funds.

Sonny: We all benefit from the noxious weed program, but it's hard to sell, as we aren't working directly on private properties. We work on streams where our work isn't seen.

Joe: Any other comments? I want to find out what the fees will be, what else should I look into?

Don: Timing wise, our farmers are stressed and adding a new tax won't be favorable. Make sure to have them on board if you decide you want to go forward.

Joe: I'll look into the charges and outline the benefits for the program. Is there anything you would like to see?

Sonny: Does the assessment include forest lands?

Joe: Yes, the fee amount is much lower, and I didn't include it into my earlier estimate. State lands are not included either.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. MISCELLANEOUS

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Sonny moves to adjourn

Jason seconds

Meeting adjourns at 7:24 pm