

MCL Invasive Plant Subcommittee

Meeting of November 18, 2015

Agenda

Announcements/Calendar Items/Info Sharing:

- Bay Area Open Space Council Gathering November 19, Berkeley. Agenda now available.
- MMWD board meeting on watershed funding, December 8, 7:30 p.m. Focus on funding for vegetation management.
- Expanding our email list
- Request for guest speakers and topics
- More on the 2010 Sonoma County Biodiversity Plan

Agenda Items

Recent Events

-Status update: draft letter to the Board of Supervisors re the search for a new Parks and Open Space Director, stating our concerns to find a candidate with solid experience managing invasive species. New Interim Director Pat O'Brien.

Current/New Items

- Formation of Friends of Native Habit to focus on IPM on the Open Space District
- Meeting with Dr. Paul da Silva, Professor of Biology at College of Marin and supporter of IPM in Marin Open Space District lands.
- Refocus on our key goals and priorities--discussion
- Paul: review of Tao Orion's Beyond Invasive Species, a Permaculture Approach to Ecosystem Restoration. [postponed]

Mission Statement

The mission of the Invasive Plant Subcommittee of the Parks and Open Space Committee is to educate and inform the citizens of Marin County about the threat to our open spaces posed by invasive plants and to mobilize the human, financial, governmental and institutional resources of our county to take effective action to restore our open space habitats to their natural condition to the maxim extent reasonably feasible.

MCL Invasive Plant Subcommittee

Meeting of October 21, 2015

Minutes

Announcements/Calendar Items/Info Sharing:

- Bay Area Open Space Council Gathering November 19, Berkeley.
- Proposed invitation to Prof. Paul da Silva to meet informally with us and discuss his work and interest in restoration issues [and his letter re Ring Mountain]
- Status update on draft IPM policy—adopted by the board yesterday
- MMWD board meeting on watershed funding, December 8, 7:30 p.m.
- New Book: Tao Orion, Beyond the War on Invasive Species: a Permaculture Approach to Ecological Restoration, Chelsea Green Publishing, June, 2015
- New Book: Fred Pearce, The New Wild: Why Invasive Species Will Be Nature's Salvation, Beacon Press, April 2015.
- OEHHA is proposing to list glyphosate as a known carcinogen, per my email, and to propose a “safe harbor” exposure level.
- Conversation with Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Councilmember for Mill Valley. She requested a proposal for an invasive species ordinance for the council to consider their January retreat, where they prepare a work plan for the coming year.

Agenda Items

Recent Events

-Open Space District Board meeting October 6 on use of glyphosate. See Paul's notes on the meeting, previously emailed to members.

-Report: Yesterday's Blue Circle meeting on The Round-up on Roundup in Half Moon Bay. This was put on by the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District and featured presentations by Dr. Kassin al-Katib, UC Davis, on how to improve the results of herbicide use; Janet Klein, MMWD, on vegetation management issues on the watershed; Ray Kwan, Caltrans roadside vegetation Manager, who said that Caltrans relies primarily on pre-emergent herbicides to control vegetation, with glyphosate follow up spot applications as necessary; Coty Sifuentes-Winter, IPM Manager for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, who described the open and public process he develop for herbicide use; and Fred Crowder, the Agricultural Commissioner for San Mateo County

-Status update: draft letter to the Board of Supervisors re the search for a new Parks and Open Space Director, stating our concerns to find a candidate with solid experience managing invasive species.

Current/New Items

-Presentation by Janet Klein of MMWD: “What does a decade of chemical free weed control look like” and discussion of new funding plan for the watershed.

She has been the Natural Resource Program Manager for 15 years. The watershed has over 1200 acres of French broom and 1,000 acres of fuel breaks, mostly between Mill Valley and Kentfield and along roads. The District used herbicides for only three years starting in 1995, and only on about 50 acres, mostly with stump treatments.

Fire is a major threat, and they have 2-10 ignitions a year. Most of these are small events, but the Pine Mountain fire was 22 acres and the Kentfield fire was 5 acres. They haven't conducted a controlled burn since 2007, and they are only useful for about 50-100 acres. They tried propane flaming on broom seedlings but found it simpler to let broom grow up and self-thin.

The vegetation management budget is about \$680,000/yr for fire, SOD, roadside brushing, and habitat restoration. About 60% of that is for weed management. They mow 400-500 acres/yr and 400 acres of non-weeds. They have 1700 volunteers contributing 3500 hours of weed control/yr, but the volunteer program is not growing. They eliminate 20-50 acres of weeds a year with hand pulling, solarizing, flaming or grazing. They aren't doing any restoration.

Their basic staffing level for vegetation management is 3 heavy equipment operators, 4 full time maintenance workers, and 1-10 seasonal employees, only part of their time being for vegetation management; the rest is for trails, rescues, and other duties.

The overall District budget is \$60M, of which the watershed receives \$5M. The new watershed fee will not go to vegetation management, but to other costs. After several years, the board will ask for another increase for the watershed. After this year, her budget will be less than it is now, with \$540,000 for contractors and \$100-150,000 for employees. Janet had to leave before she could finish and will return to complete her presentation.

-The Precautionary Principle: discussion and a policy?

-Paul: review of Harpers Magazine article re differing perspectives on the control of invasive plants.

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