



The Idaho Association of NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL SUPERINTENDENTS

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SPRING EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES Lemhi County Extension Office 200 Fulton Street, Room 203 – Salmon, ID 83467 Wednesday, April 5, 2023 – 8:00AM (MDT)

Attendance – Officers & Executive Board:

Chair – Mitch Whitmill
Secretary – Chase Youngdahl
Past Chair – Dave Wenk
Region 1 – Chase Youngdahl, alt
Region 3 – Absent
Region 5 – Travis Ashby, rep

Vice Chair – Mike Ottley
Treasurer – Absent (excused)
Region 2 – Joe Slichter, alt
Region 4 – Terry Lee, rep
Region 6 – Bryce Fowler, rep

Attendance – Others:

Brett Plummer (Region 6 alternate), Jason Parker (Tri-County), Sharayh Krantz (Lemhi County), Cody Clyde (Oneida County – *virtual*), Jeremy Johnson (Madison County – *virtual*), Bonnie Davis (Washington County – *virtual*)

Chairman Whitmill called the meeting to order at 8:12AM following introductions

Reports

Minutes from Winter Executive Board Meeting: Motion by Dave to approve the minutes of the winter executive board meeting dated January 9, 2023, as written, second by Mike. Motion carries unanimous. No further discussion.

Treasurer's Report: Chase presented the financial report due to Alan's absence—as of 4/3/23, there is an account balance of \$20,963.21 with a regular fund balance of \$13,788.21. Actual expenses total \$3,156.89. Chase relayed the following highlights from Alan—all counties have paid their membership dues, the refreshments for the winter executive board meeting was lumped into the annual meeting meals/snacks bill, IAC received IANWCS checks, Chase received travel reimbursement for the NAISMA conference, the website fee was paid, the gifts expenditure was for membership beanies and the retirement gifts was paid out

of miscellaneous. Chase stood for questions, and heard none. Motion by Dave to approve the current financial report as presented, second by Bryce. Motion carries unanimous. No further discussion.

INWCA: Dave reported that the annual meeting was last week and that Terry Lee moved out of the President position into Past President, and that Shawn Strong (with ITD) moved into the President position, with himself moving into the Vice President position. He further reported that they are in healthy financial shape with about \$40,000 in the bank, and \$36,000 in the scholarship fund. He pointed out that Patxi is doing a great job as the Executive Director. H94 was briefly discussed, and Patxi's role in that process. Dave went on to solicit for pictures for the 2024 joint calendar effort. Timeframes for the upcoming slate of meetings was discussed. Chase asked about locking in the Canyon County Administration Building for our annual meeting for the 2 days prior to the INWCA conference. Dave said that he has already been in contact with AJ for that.

Idaho Noxious Weed Advisory Committee: Bryce reported that the last meeting was for the cost share review, and that the upcoming meeting this summer will focus on making changes to the cost share program with hopes of creating more flexibility. He further reported that the cost share administrative fee has been increased, from 5% to 8%.

Website: Chase reported that he has fielded a few requests to post open positions on the job opportunities page, which includes relevant positions in the states of Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming. Bryce asked about web traffic on the job opportunities page, to which Chase responded that he has yet to explore how to view individual page views, and can only view overall website views at this time, but plans to research more refined views later. Chase further reported having posted the 2023 Idaho Legislative Directory, the association's updated By-Laws adopted at this year's annual meeting and updated the slate of officers (for 2023). Mitch mentioned that the Strategic Plan that's posted is from 2013 and indicated that it would be good for us to update the outdated information in it. We agreed to work collaboratively on that document.

IAC Midwinter Conference: With Kali being absent, Mike reported on her behalf that it went well and she fielded a ton of questions, going over the allotted time. She saw some taking notes and nodding heads. Wanted us to know that there are a lot of new commissioners, so this education process is as important as ever.

Regional Updates:

Region 1 – Chase reported that Bonner County saw a BOCC turnover with 2 new commissioners coming into office this year. He scheduled a 1 hour special meeting/workshop with them to go over his program in detail as well as the purpose & scope of a County Weeds Superintendent. It was well received and they seemed very supportive. He further reported that the Idaho State Forestry Contest in north Idaho is returning the Noxious Weeds I.D. station this year, and that he will be participating in it along with Dave (Boundary) and Chris (Kootenai). There was some brief discussion related to the Forestry Contest. Chase then reported that the Shoshone County Noxious Weed Advisory Board has scheduled 2 community spray days and 1-3 cooperative work days with the USFS primarily targeting Houndstongue, and Shelby will be mapping and assessing additional Houndstongue sites.

Region 2 – Joe reported that Alan wants everyone to know in plenty of advance time that he is set to retire in November of 2025. Anthon Larson is the new Superintendent in Clearwater County, but his official start date has yet to be determined. Joe further reported that Nez Perce County is set to begin their bareground program soon, being that the Lewiston area is a relatively mild part of the state for winter—and their noxious weeds of focus will be Yellow Starthistle, Poison Hemlock and Rush Skeletonweed. For Idaho County, Joe said that they have a project coming up in April with ISDA backpack crews targeting Turkish Thistle (statewide EDRR). He mentioned that there has been some recent turnover with the BLM Weeds Unit, so those cooperative projects could be delayed. He concluded by indicating that working on FEMA is his biggest challenge and is time consuming. Mike asked about the steepness of the country in Idaho County, and whether or not mules could be utilized, and offered up contacts if interested. Joe seemed to think that the terrain is too rough for it.

Region 3 – With Region 3 representation absent, Mitch asked Bonnie (on Zoom) if she could report on anything in the region. Bonnie mentioned that Washington County has begun field treatments, and reported that Steve Anderson and herself are planning summer noxious weed tours in their respective counties. She further reported that Dave Humphreys in Elmore County was originally considering retirement this spring, but decided to commit through the field season and will probably retire this fall.

Region 4 – Terry reported that the region does not gather in a formal manner and that the only time they're all together is for the NWFF annual training. He mentioned that he's never seen this much snow in Camas County this late, and has no idea when field projects might be able to commence. He indicated that Kali's area is typically the part of the region that's able to get going first, and that there's a significant disparity in elevation from the northern portion of the region to the southern portion. Jason reported that the contract is out for the roadsides program in the Tri-County area. General discussion surrounding weather and budgets took place.

Region 5 – Travis reported that his area is also experiencing an abnormally long and snowy winter, and not sure when he'll be able to get going in the field. He mentioned that their Goatsrue (statewide EDRR) infestation is going to continue to need maintenance, as it is in a creek bed and can only be dealt with using backpacks. He said that the seed pods float, so if they miss any it will disperse downstream. Some general discussion about Goatsrue biology and treatment took place.

****Chairman Whitmill suspended the regional updates and moved to agenda items in General Business in order to accommodate a call from Jeremey Varley with ISDA****

Negotiated Rulemaking: Jeremey reported that Negotiated Rulemaking has set tentative schedules for virtual and teleconferencing platforms and that the dates for rules related to Noxious Weeds & Invasive Species will be on May 12 and June 1 from 10AM-Noon Mountain Time. He highlighted that they will be taking into consideration whether or not to list Cogon Grass permanently and are encouraging industry experts to weigh in during the meetings. Terry asked if they expect any pushback. Jeremey does not expect it due to strong industry support during the temporary listing process. Chase asked about the timeframe for the department accepting petitions, to which Jeremey responded that the timeframe begins after the Legislature's Sine Die.

CWMA's & Funding: Jeremey reported that 16 cost share agreements have been issued, and that 13 have been accepted. He expects the 3 outstanding agreements to be accepted and mentioned that those are working through some minor bookkeeping issues. He further reported changes with the administrative fee—increasing from 5% to 8%—and an addition to the bidding exemption related to CWMA's serving as vendors for herbicide. Mitch asked about taking input from the SNWAC. Jeremey said that the next meeting will be in May and will go over rulemaking and potential adjustments to the cost share program. The hope is to provide more flexibility in the future with the cost share funding, so that labor & equipment can be considered. He then offered a crash course on CWMA functions and a full disclosure of why paperwork is the way that it is, primarily to benefit the new Superintendents being that there are so many that are new. His hope is to schedule this course sometime before the 2024 cost share handbook is published. He mentioned that funding requests have been trending down and that they want to do what they can to fully utilize that funding. This year's leftover cost share appropriation are going to be utilized for some special projects, as a one-time use; one of those projects is for Turkish Thistle control in Idaho County (as previously reported by Joe), and another project is for biocontrol rearing with Dr. Mark Schwartzlander for agents targeting Dyer's Woad, Whitetop and Yellow Starthistle. Another possible one-time project with this funding could be for Phragmites control in Canyon County. Dave asked about rulemaking sessions for Pesticide Rules. Jeremey replied that tentative dates for meetings for those rules are May 8, May 22 and June 29 from 8:30AM-Noon Mountain Time.

Chairman Whitmill called a recess following the conclusion of Jeremey's call, at 9:38AM

Chairman Whitmill resumed the meeting at 9:57AM and moved back into the regular order of the agenda

Regional Updates:

Region 6 – Bryce reported that Brett Plummer from Custer County is the new Region Alternate. Region 6 usually has a region-wide meeting at some point, but they have yet to schedule it. Bryce then announced that the Henry's Fork & Upper Snake CWMA's have combined into a single area and will be called the Headwaters CWMA. The process is nearly complete and should be signed off on by ISDA soon. It was mentioned that Teton County is still a question mark. Some discussion took place about OT versus Comp Time within the region.

General Business

New ISDA Director Meeting: Mitch reported that he and Mike Ottley met with the new director, Chanel Tewart, on February 28 while they were in Boise to testify before the Senate Ag Committee on H94. Jeremy and Lloyd also joined the meeting (although Lloyd left after just a few minutes). He said that she seems open to new ideas, and is aware of previous tensions but would like to work towards alleviating them. Wants to leave an open door for communication, and wants more stakeholder input in general, including on programs like cost share. Some talks of paperwork being less arduous was a point of emphasis in the meeting. They are willing to formally train when it comes to the ins & outs of documentation. Carrying legislation related to noxious weeds came up as well. Chanel indicated that those kinds of things really should be carried by our group since it just looks like another state bureaucrat with their hand out if they do it. Mitch told us that he intends on making a point of stopping by Chanel's office every time he travels to Boise. Joe asked about her background. Various board members chimed in—she has been in the department for 15 years starting as an administrative assistant and working through the ranks in various positions, including "C-Level" positions within the Director's Office and Deputy Director. She has also taken part in running a sheep farm. General talks of personnel in the department followed.

Licensing Exam Modules & Training: Mitch expressed some frustrations with applicator licensing, credits and training. He talked to Blaine Sterling in the Ag Resources Division about the issues—including scheduling of exam sessions becoming complicated and lack of training resources. The Metro Institute option for exams costs too much; at \$65/test, it adds up with several seasonal employees. The few ISDA proctored sessions fill up too quickly being that the schedule is only released 1 month at a time, rather than for the entire year like it used to be. Joe mentioned that this is affecting his county as well. He opined that the Metro Institute is flexible, but it comes at too high of a cost. Landowners in Idaho County are becoming frustrated with it, as well as in Bonner County. Chase mentioned that he is acting as an unofficial ISDA liaison of sorts for some landowners in his county since they are having issues receiving good customer service from Ag Resources and having difficulties in navigating their web platform. Mitch relayed via Blaine that he is being instructed from up the chain within the division to move towards Metro.

Administration seems to want staff to focus on inspections rather than handling exams. General discussion surrounding labeling, storage requirements and inspections took place. It was also discussed that the free online resources that ISDA claims to have are not as abundant as they seem to indicate. Credit issues were discussed, and that the credit criteria does not seem to be applied equally. Dave chimed in with an idea to petition for reducing the number of credits needed for a professional applicator from 15, down to 12. There seems to be a lot of room for interpretation of presentation abstracts and how they apply to what's in code, so the most clear-cut way to alleviate our issues is for a reduction in the number of credits that Idaho applicators need to obtain. General discussion around private versus professional applicators took place. Motion by Dave to fill out and submit a rulemaking petition to reduce the number of professional applicator license credits needed in a two year period from 15 to 12, second by Travis. Further discussion—Dave will contact Patxi to let him know about IANWCS's intention, and to ask for a letter of support from INWCA for this effort. Motion carries unanimous.

Noxious Weed Legislation: On behalf of Alan, Chase asked the board how hard we want to pursue legislation related to the General Notice (posting on website in lieu of newspaper). When we were working with Patxi at the start of the legislative session, he put some feelers out and seemed to think no one really wanted to touch it. Terry and Brett both chimed in saying that it will be tough if we do pursue it—the Associated Press and newspaper interests will fight it hard, as they have with similar pursuits in the past. This will be revisited at a future meeting when Alan is in attendance. Mitch, Mike, Dave and Chase all reported on H94 having passed. It clarified ambiguity in the individual notice portion of §22-2405, removing the loophole for landowners to evade service if they are indeed served a notice. Patxi was instrumental in working with legislative services on the bill drafting and garnering support from legislators and other groups. Mike’s testimony in committee was significant, as well as having identified a representative to sponsor and carry the bill. Having watched the process, we keyed in on areas where dissenting legislators were skeptical of the bill, and know where to focus our efforts on educating them for the future.

Lava Ridge Windmill Farm: Mike reported having sent the IANWCS letter to Lava Ridge for this specific project, and a separate letter if this were to happen in the future. Mitch said that this project proposal is opening a new can of worms with endangered species habitat (Sage Grouse). Mike stated that the comment period was extended, and now runs through April 23. Our association did not take a stance for or against the project, we simply communicated the importance of noxious weed management being a component of the project to consider.

New Business

IAC Summer Meeting: It was reported that this meeting is in Moscow and the agenda has been released without our association being on it. Chase relayed that Alan sent an email to Seth asking for an explanation for this, and requesting that he amend the agenda to add us—there was no response from Seth by meeting time. Bryce seemed to recall that Seth mentioned during his presentation to us at our annual meeting that we would be given a permanent 30 minute slot on the summer meeting. Chase requested, via Alan, that Mitch also contact Seth regarding this, on behalf of the entire association.

Compensation for Lobbyist: As touched on in the Noxious Weed Legislation report, Patxi served as the lobbyist for the piece of legislation that ended up being H94. As it turned out, the IANWCS is not a registered association through the Secretary of State, and therefore the lobbyist could not file to represent us. Patxi ended up officially lobbying on behalf of the INWCA instead, even though the legislation primarily benefitted our association. Chase suggested, via Alan, that we consider a gift card for Patxi as a token of appreciation. Some board members stressed caution with how we approach this, so as to not violate any lobbying or bribery laws. Mike asked about looking into 501(c)(3) status. Some conversation ensued. It was pointed out that our association needing lobbying services seems to be a rare occurrence, and that it might be more hassle than it’s worth to maintain 501(C)(3) status. Bonnie asked if we actually need to be registered as a non-profit with the Secretary of State as a requirement for hiring a lobbyist, or if there’s a simpler solution. Some conversation followed. Brett suggested drafting an MOU with INWCA in order to piggyback off of them for lobbying services in the future. The board decided to table any kind of compensation for Patxi until questions/concerns about laws regarding lobbying, bribery, etc. are addressed.

LIA Considerations: Dave announced that August 1 is the application submission deadline and that executive board reps get 1st priority, then executive board alternates, then Superintendents, then staff (sponsorship hierarchy in our association). He then outlined some of the general requirements for the application. Joe asked if there was actual, practical knowledge to be gained from the program. Program graduates in attendance chimed in with some of their stories, and all indicated that there’s lots of practical knowledge to be gained, especially related to legislative procedure. It was noted that the DC Experience was cancelled this year, mostly due to cost. It was further reported that tuition has increased, so we might need to consider approving an increase to the LIA line item in our budget if we sponsor someone.

Summer Executive Board Meeting: The meeting date has been set for Thursday, July 27 in Region 6. Some possible locations were discussed. During discussion, Jeremy Johnson proposed Beaver Dick Park & Campground near Rexburg, which is the location that the executive board ultimately agreed would be best. It's on the Henry's Fork of the Snake River and is managed by Madison County. Jeremy agreed to arrange some camping spots for July 26-28 and one of the pavilion shelters for the meeting.

Fall Meeting Facility: Chase announced that he reserved the UI Sandpoint Organic Agricultural Center for our fall executive board meeting on October 4. He emphasized that this an outstanding facility and very comfortable, which is a plus for our fall meeting that also includes our planning workshop for the annual meeting. Additionally, rental of the 1st floor comes with use of the kitchen, where we could prepare our meeting lunch. Further, Chase mentioned having tentatively arranged an onsite post-meeting tour of the orchard, which might coincide with the start of the harvest season. He said that Dr. Prather expressed interest in being a guest at our meeting if we decide to include this tour, which he could participate in giving. Chase presented this to the board due to the facility rental fee of \$220 for the 1st floor of the building for the day. He acknowledged it's a bit out of the ordinary for our group to pay for the use of a facility for a meeting, but indicated that this is a unique opportunity and should be worth it. Everyone seemed to have a favorable feeling towards the proposal. Motion by Dave to approve paying the \$220 facility rental fee for the fall executive board meeting, second by Terry. Motion carries unanimous. No further discussion.

Miscellaneous Business/Open Discussion: There was a brief discussion surrounding attendees at last week's INWCA meeting.

Chairman Whitmill adjourned the meeting at 12:21PM upon no further business or discussion