

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FOR THE COUNTY OF TILLAMOOK IN THE STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting the)
Tillamook County Vegetation)
Management Plan Policy)

ORDER

#09- 025

FILED
Tom
MAR 25 2009
Bulza
TASSI O'NEIL
COUNTY CLERK

This matter came on to be heard this 25th day of March, 2009 at a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners, at the request of Liane Welch, Tillamook County Public Works Department Director.

Being fully apprized of the records and files therein, the Board of Commissioners finds as follows:

1. The Tillamook County Road Advisory Committee at their March 9, 2009 meeting recommended that Tillamook County adopt a Vegetation Management Plan to serve as a guideline from which to conduct the County's roadside vegetation management plan.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

2. The Tillamook County Vegetation Management Plan Policy, Exhibit A attached and incorporated here by reference, be and hereby is adopted.
3. This order is to become effective immediately.

DATED THIS 25 DAY OF March 2009.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR TILLAMOOK COUNTY, OREGON

Aye Nay Abstain/Absent

Tim Josi
Tim Josi, Chairperson

Mark Labhart, Vice Chairperson

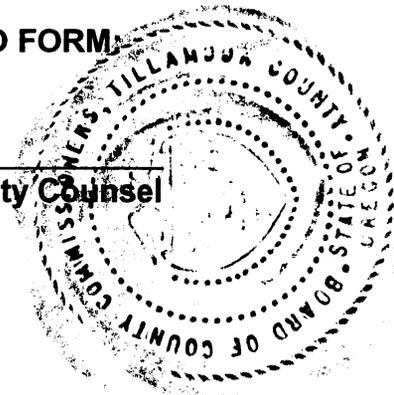
Charles J. Hurliman, Commissioner

ATTEST: Tassi O'Neil
County Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM

BY: *Susan L. Beecraft*
Special Deputy

William K. Sargent
William K. Sargent, County Counsel



Tillamook County

Vegetation Management Plan

Policy Document

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Vegetation Management Program policy document has been established as a guideline from which to conduct the County's roadside vegetation management program.

While an integrated program attempts to include all aspects of roadside vegetation control, it is also understood that vegetation management concepts and techniques need to address social and environmental issues such as, *traffic safety, water quality, threatened and endangered species, wetland protection, native planting, and noxious weed programs*. The combined efforts, knowledge, and experience of staff along with involved community representatives continues to improve the ability to practice techniques which enhance the opportunity for sound stewardship of the environment.

1.1 Background

This policy establishes procedures for use and storage of vegetation management chemicals applied in right of ways under county jurisdiction.

The roadside chemical spray program is based on use of truck mounted sprayer to apply State approved chemicals in the roadside shoulder area to reduce or eliminate vegetation that would otherwise have to be addressed through less cost effective mechanical means (mower, etc) during the course of the year.

Tillamook County Vegetation Management Program will be implemented in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Oregon State Department of Agriculture.

1.2 Vegetation Management Philosophy

The philosophy of the Tillamook County Vegetation Management Program is to embrace sound vegetation management practices which consider safety, statutes, and environmental stewardship. Public safety and integrity of public facilities will be maintained but with careful evaluation of the impacts of disturbance to the watersheds and environment.

The timing of treatments will take into consideration the treatment window for optimum effectiveness and safety. Best management practices will be developed and records will be kept in a data base for roadside maintenance, and the results of treatments will be monitored for effectiveness.

The management techniques utilized may include manual, mechanical, chemical, cultural, and biological methodologies.

1.3 Procedures

1. Chemical storage, application and personnel licensing will be in accordance with Oregon Department of Agriculture and State Fire Marshal requirements.
2. Right of way spraying will generally occur in the Spring and Fall each year consistent with other crew requirements and weather.
3. The Public Works Director is administratively in charge of the spray program and may assign personnel to facilitate handling of citizen inquiries and address policy issues.
4. Tillamook County will provide a news release to local printed media prior to the start of spray season each Spring.
5. Tillamook County will hold annual meetings of sprayers and supervisors to review past complaints, procedures and other related issues.

6. Tillamook County will provide a secure chemical storage area in compliance with State requirements. Only spray quantities needed for the upcoming spray season will be ordered to minimize long term chemical storage.

The program will be based on four principles:

1. Safety for the traveling public.
2. Good stewardship of the environment.
3. Good neighbor to all abutting property owners/residents whose properties are adjacent to the rights-of-way and to those who use the right-of-way.
4. Maintenance and preservation of public facilities.

1.4 Objectives

Develop a uniform practice for maintenance standards, best management practices, and a database for road side maintenance.

Define desirable roadside vegetation management practices and management goals and control techniques.

Develop vegetation management strategies with the long term goal to reduce maintenance activities through suitable low growth native plantings.

2. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

2.1 Spray Zones (Herbicide Applications)

Bridges: Eliminate mechanical or automated spraying from structures located over streams or adjacent to wetlands. Hand spray only on or around structures or riparian areas that require chemical control. Only chemicals approved for use near aquatic resources may be applied.

Shoulders: When it is necessary to control plant species adjacent to wetlands other alternatives will be considered before using chemicals. Then only chemicals approved for use near aquatic resources may be applied.

2.2 Mechanical and Hand Brush Cutting

Road Brush Maintenance: Maintain shade trees along streams or rivers unless those trees are hazardous trees.

Bridge Brush Maintenance: Remove brush to 20 feet on either side and under the structure and dispose of brush appropriately. Maintain trees that lean but pose no danger to structure or facility.

3. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Roadway Safety

Roadway safety is an important element in the Vegetation Management Program. The department is committed to the safety of the motoring public, adjacent property owners, and others who use the right-of-way.

Roadway safety includes maintaining sight distance; maintaining limb height, minimum of 15'; visibility of signs and other fixtures; maintaining the effectiveness of fog lines; preventing standing water on the roadway; and minimizing icy road conditions.

Sight Distance: Maintaining proper sight distance for motorists is imperative. Sight distance can be reduced by tall or overhanging vegetation or by vegetation otherwise encroaching upon the line of sight of the driver.

Future Visibility: Clear visibility of signs, guardrails, and delineator posts is critical where vegetation growth is not adequately controlled. Visibility of fixtures can be impaired resulting in a potentially unsafe situation. Such situations create an increased liability exposure for the County.

3.2 Hazardous Trees

Hazardous trees impose a potential safety concern whenever they occur. These are trees which pose either the threat of injury to motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, or county employees. Where there is a threat of falling trees on the roadway under conditions of high winds or saturated soil conditions, Tillamook County will remove, or work with adjacent land owners, to remove hazardous trees.

3.3 Erosion Control

Erosion control measures can be divided into two basic categories; temporary and permanent. Temporary measures generally apply to techniques employed either during or immediately following construction projects. It is during this time that large expanses of soil and subsoil are exposed to erosive forces, particularly water.

Permanent erosion control measures are those employed throughout the maintenance life of the facility. Planting of permanent erosion control vegetation has a direct bearing on long-term vegetation management requirements. It is consistent with an overall goal of the program to establish low maintenance vegetation by actively planning desirable native species.

4. GOOD NEIGHBOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Establishment of Formal “No Spray Areas:

Another public concern which will be taken into consideration is the strongly held desire on the part of some persons to have the right-of-way in front of their property excluded from any kind of chemical application. The county operates a “No Spray Areas” Private Maintenance Agreement Program for the right-of-way adjacent to areas requiring special consideration. The determination of the areas will be made by the Public Works Director based on the following criteria: individual or group requests to exclude the right-of-way adjacent to their property from any chemical applications or significant environmental constraints, e.g. a threatened or endangered species population. Once a road receives a significant number of no spray agreements, the Director of Public Works may eliminate herbicide use on the entire section of road.

Pursue the development of a “No Spray Areas” Private Maintenance Agreement Program that also includes planting native plants or low-growth wildflowers.

4.2 Noxious Weed Control

The County will consider control of state-listed noxious weeds within the road rights-of-way as a Vegetation Management Program element. The County will seek to include biological control methods wherever possible. This will be carried out through cooperation with other agencies and participate in statewide noxious weed programs. Noxious weed control is consistent with the good neighbor and environmental stewardship principles underlying the Vegetation Management Program.

4.3 Conservation and Restoration of Native Plants

Where the right-of-way is sufficiently wide enough to accommodate the native vegetation without adversely influencing safety and maintenance considerations, the County will strive to preserve it. The County will protect habitat, to the extent possible, near known populations of threatened and endangered species, whether Federally or State listed.

The County will work to restore native vegetation, where appropriate, when the opportunities arise and the proper seed stocks are available. This restoration will consist of planting locally-originating native grass and wildflower

seeds. The plants must accommodate relevant safety, economic, and ecological considerations. The Public Director may direct staff to seek consultation on these restoration and preservation activities.

4.4 Wildflowers

Where native vegetation is inappropriate due to sight line or maintenance constraints, the County will work to establish low maintenance, low growing, grasses and wildflowers. These plants must accommodate relevant safety, economic, and ecological considerations. These considerations include the invasiveness, longevity, growth patterns, aesthetics, and cross-breeding potential of all proposed species. These plants will not be substitutes for the long-term goal of restoring native plants, but will be used in instances when native plants do not fulfill the necessary criteria.