

Kent County Weed Control Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2018

The meeting was held Friday May 11, 2018, at 8 am at the Kent County Public Works Building, 709 Morgnec Road, Chestertown MD 21620.

Present were committee members Rob Clark, Susan Taylor, Marshall Cahall, Myra Butler, Mark Dixon, Jim Calao and Nancy Metcalf, and Weed Control Coordinator Scott Rowe.

Scott opened the meeting and attendees introduced themselves. Scott began with a review of the purpose of the Program and the Advisory Committee.

Scott discussed how the Maryland Noxious Weed Law allows for cooperative agreements between state and county governments. Kent County has a Cooperative Agreement with Maryland Department of Agriculture that allows Scott and Jim Calao, MDA, to enforce the noxious weed law by writing notices to property owners to control their noxious weeds. Landowners who fail to comply could receive penalties of a maximum of \$500 fine for the first offense and/or imprisonment not to exceed 3 months. For second or subsequent offenses the fine is not to exceed \$1000 and/or 1 year imprisonment. Scott explained they work with landowners to provide advice on controlling and managing noxious and other invasive weeds and offer a fee-based herbicide application service. Scott mentioned MD does have a multiflora rose management law but it lacks “teeth.”

The purpose of the committee is to provide input regarding the setting of the custom application rates and to provide eyes and ears on the ground to identify problems and to provide guidance and direction for the program.

Scott provided the following summary of the 2017 activities:

- Equipment was repaired and set up.
- Contacts were establishment with FSA, NRCS, Extension, SCD etc.
- Thistle was inspected/treated on 104 of 168 total miles of state highway; an average of 0.4 acres of thistle treated per road mile
- One large Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) thistle project was treated on private land.
- *Phragmites* was treated on seven State Highways and four private landowner sites.
- Johnsongrass inspections/treatments were completed on several state highways.
- The program brochure was updated, printed and distributed.
- Several 2018 projects were booked.

Scott shared the attached letter from March 15, 2018 that he sent to the County Commissioners listing his annual accomplishments. He explained the Kent program had been in place for many years but ended in 2013 while it was under County Roads. Thanks to efforts by Jim Calao, the program was re-established in 2017. Scott’s position is part-time 3 days/week reporting to the County Public Works director, Wayne Morris. Scott is spraying State roads in the county while County Roads Division is responsible for spraying the county roads.

Scott provided an update on their equipment and personnel status. County Roads provided a 1994 Chevy ½ Ton 4-wheel drive truck. A pump and motor along with a brush shield is needed for this truck.

There's currently an ad out for part time help 3 days a week to be paid for by the program. Scott is waiting to hear from Marty Hale, Kent County Human Resources, on the progress in hiring.

Jim Calao reported the cooperative work with QA County is ongoing. The QA employee Scott had been working with left so Jim has been helping.

Jim remarked that a successful program requires someone good with people and Kent's program is a success because of Scott.

Scott passed out the updated brochure and asked the committee to provide suggestions for improvement. He mentioned he made a presentation at the Kent Harvest Breakfast and ran an article on the program in the Extension Newsletter.

The following suggestions were made by the committee:

- Marshall questioned whether people were aware of the effort in the county. It was suggested to help get the word out that Scott meet with the Kent Farm Bureau who meets once a month. Jay Douthit is the current President.
- Rob suggested to advertise the availability of the program with a billboard along the highway.

CRP program weed problems was discussed. Landowners don't understand what they're responsible for. There's a need for a weed information pamphlet on how to identify and handle noxious weeds in their CRP. Susan can give pamphlets out at sign-up and with annual CRP maintenance letter.

Jim Calao discussed a new invasive species, the spotted lantern fly that is problematic in fruits, grapes and hops and it's being found all around us.

Palmer Amaranth was discussed. Marshall said it was everywhere around Crumpton and south of Queen Anne's. Since Palmer is glyphosate resistant, private applicators are not willing to take on the liability of spraying dicamba so pre and post emergent sprays are needed to control it early. Palmer can grow 4 inches per day and go from seed to seed in 40 days. It's important to keep the seed out of combines to prevent the spread, so hand pulling and removal from the field may be necessary.

Currently the state is surveying and keeping records where Palmer is found and how it's moving. If it gets worse, bills may be introduced in the Maryland Legislature to add it to the noxious weed list. MDA wants 2 new people with trucks just for Palmer control in the state.

Myra asked about access to water. Scott said he was currently using SHA water but will be talking with Wayne Morris about using the county water.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Metcalf