

Local

County: Noxious weeds and dredge tailings

• B2H INFO MEETING SCHEDULED NEXT MONDAY

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Wednesday, August 9, 2017, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, to discuss biological noxious weed control in the region with Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Noxious Weed Manager Tim Butler, ODA Northeast Oregon Weed Coordinator Mark Porter, and ODA Grant Coordinator Tristen Berg.

The Board also discussed draft forms of an ordinance and mineral right lease with County counsel Drew Martin, prompted by the potential mining of the Sumpter Dredge tailings.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin. Attendance also included Baker County Weed Master Arnie Grammon, Art Sappington, Ed Hardt, and Ken Anderson.

Harvey opened the session, and Butler began a discussion regarding noxious weed control with reference to a handout, ODA's five-year Strategic Plan, which includes the mission of "Protecting Oregon's natural resources and agricultural economy from the invasion and proliferation of invasive noxious weeds," according to the plan.

The plan includes, for Years 1-2, developing a funding package and requesting funds for 2017-2019; for Year 3, establishing county weed program base funding; and for Years 4-5, reviewing and evaluating the progress.

A recent study, according to the handout, noted that 25 of 128 state noxious weeds have a yearly impact of \$83.5 million to Oregon's economy, with the potential of \$1.8 billion, if left uncontrolled, and Butler and crew are attempting to assist counties, such as Baker, with the battle, on limited resources, and red tape on the federal level.

Harvey said, "We're rather unique in our position...on this side of the state, because we're so close to the Idaho border. Whatever happens in Idaho—by wind, travel, or what have you..." is spread across the region, so the County Weed Department is the first line of defense. "We appreciate you guys focusing on this side as well," he said.

Butler said he works on the state, regional, and county level, to fight noxious weeds, and over the past 40 years, ODA's program success stories include St. Johnswort, tansy ragwort, musk thistle, and Mediterranean sage.

Emerging successes include the seed weevil *Larinus minutus* (the agent), used to control diffuse knapweed; the *Galerucella* beetle, used on purple loosestrife; and the stem weevil *Mecinus janthinus*, used on *Dalman* toadflax.

Bennett asked why Oregon seems to be slow to develop control agents.

Butler said, "In the

nation, as far as biological control, Oregon is the leader...We have a strong track record of establishing agents..." which includes the introduction of 77 biological control agents, to fight around 34 different species of noxious weeds.

The benefits of biological noxious weed control, according to ODA, include: no harmful residues left in the environment; agents are host-specific, to target weeds; agents have self-sustaining populations; there is long-term control with low follow-up costs; agent attack is synchronized with the target weed; it's economical on low-value range and wildlands; agents have searching ability to locate the target weed; and weeds have a low rate of resistance to the agent attack.

The ODA is working on a new biological control agent to fight Whitetop, also known as Hoary Cress, which Harvey said is exciting, but that process could take several years, and there have been road blocks to the approval process of control agents in general, as outlined in the paper titled "A clogged Biological Control Pipeline: Time for a Solution," prepared by Butler.

After a short break, Martin discussed draft forms of a 10-page general county ordinance, and a nine-page mineral right lease he had prepared, which were prompted by the potential for mining of the Sumpter Dredge tailings on County-owned property by interested parties (two, so far).

Harvey complimented Martin on his effort in drafting the documents, and Martin said, "I can't take much credit for the



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L-R: Tristen Berg, Mark Porter, and Tim Butler talking about weeds.

ordinance—I modified it somewhat... it's Division 71 (Onshore Minerals Prospecting And Leasing Rules) from the State of Oregon (Administrative Rules), for leasing mineral rights from State-owned property..."

Martin said that he removed the provisions for prospecting, because he considered the section unnecessary for the County's purposes.

He explained what would be involved with the lease, including an application and bidding process.

Bennett said the County could be flexible as far as any forfeiture of the partial bit amount goes, in the event the lease may not be executed.

Bennett explained the possible lengthy process with adopting an ordinance, which includes two

public hearings, and he suggested removing certain fees from the ordinance, and placing them in the County's Fee Schedule, which Martin said would probably be fine.

The Board discussed other concerns, including amending language in the documents to address issues such as royalties. Anderson suggested that the County receive some type of royalties, with or without production, which would partially encourage progress, along with language to address an operational time line.

Another issue is how much involvement from the Board in the process would be appropriate and required, versus the involvement from the County Planning Department and Planning Commission, as pointed out by

Bennett.

Martin said, "What we have here is a starting point...very generic language..."

Bennett asked that Martin seek County Planning Director Holly Kerns's assistance with the draft documents, which Martin said he would do.

Near the end of the session, Bennett announced that there will be a Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) transmission line project meeting on Monday, August 14, 2017, 5 p.m., in the Commission Chambers, which will include representatives from the Oregon State Department of Energy.

Bennett said the main goal of the meeting will be to have Department of Energy representatives provide an update on the status of the project.

Kawa Taiko shows off Japanese drumming



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

L-R: Janet Komoto, Ellen Burnell, Pinpaka McCreedy, Caroline Bruton, Morgan Bruton, and Flavia Bruton.

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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On Sunday, August 6th, Baker City Events welcomed Kawa Taiko out of Ontario, Ore. for the Powder River Music Review. They also welcomed local musicians to perform for a jam session.

This event was brought to Baker by the Four Rivers Cultural Center, the Oregon Folklife Network, Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Josh Chrysler, Staff Folklorist at Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario coordinated the event thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Kawa Taiko was formed in Ontario in 2000, inspired by a performance by Portland Taiko in Ontario in 1999.

Their mission statement is, "Kawa Taiko is a non-profit, non-political performance group dedicated to fostering the art of Japanese drumming (taiko) in the Ontario-Boise area.

Members will work together as a team to preserve the history of taiko, develop our identity and sound, promote cultural awareness, and share the joy we find in all aspects of taiko performance."

According to a handout given, "The group is self-taught, but various taiko masters from Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, and Pocatello have generously shared their expertise with KT when they have visited the area. Members have also attended conferences in Seattle, Vancouver BC,



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

Kids and adults from the audience playing on the drums.

Los Angeles, Sacramento and Las Vegas for inspiration, and to advance their taiko skills."

Kawa means "river" in Japanese and Taiko means "drum."

The group is a project of the Snake River Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, a non-profit club.

Their handout explained, "The group likes to have fun and at the same time hopes to educate and entertain the public with a centuries old art form from Japan.

The original founders were mothers who wanted to share this Japanese culture with their children, but currently, the group is comprised of teenagers and adults who are very dedicated to preserving this craft."

Janet Komoto, the founder of Kawa Taiko, explained some of the history of Kawa Taiko in Japan.

She explained that Kawa Taiko was used 2,000 years ago on the battle field to give commands and instructions,

as that was the only thing soldiers could hear. 1,000 years later, it was used in temples and shrines and only priests were allowed to play.

There are 200 Kawa Taiko groups in the U.S and it has spread to South America, Canada, England, and all around the world.

In Japan, there are 2,000 groups.

SEE KAWA TAIKO
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