

## Group will work on control of noxious weeds in the county

Control of noxious and invasive weeds in Columbia County will be addressed by a volunteer group called the Columbia Invasive Weed Control Partnership (CIWCP).

CIWCP is composed of representatives of federal, state and local agencies, as well as individuals and businesses that are active in noxious weed control and management in Columbia County. The group's goal is to coordinate weed control efforts, maintain distribution databases, enhance public education, secure sustainable funding and formulate an overall plan for weed management in the county.

There have been no coordinated weed management efforts in Columbia County for many years. Local entities, such as utilities, county and state road maintenance crews

and timber companies, have been controlling weeds on their own lands, but their efforts lacked coordination and communication concerning identification and spread of species that affect many of these groups.

CIWCP will begin management efforts with information collection, distribution, and survey work to identify new invaders or to determine the extent of established weed infestations.

CIWCP has also started a program called "Weed Watchers." Anyone interested and/or concerned about invasive weeds in the county is invited to become a Weed Watcher. For information about CIWCP or Weed Watchers, call Cindy Ball at the Columbia Soil & Water Conservation District, 503-397-4555, ext. 100.

## Art, Title 1, counseling positions added

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New teachers hired at the high school in language arts, guidance counseling, special education and fine arts (shop) have saved the district \$40,296 because they are starting at the low end of the pay scale.

These reductions in expenses, along with an additional savings in special education home-to-school transportation, resulted in a total reduction from the approved budget of \$76,529.

Funderburg proposed reallocating the funds with staff add-backs of .5 full time equivalent (FTE) each in certified positions for Title I, middle school counseling and art instruction. Adding back the .5 FTE to art created a full-time position and will eliminate the need to use a classroom teacher for art. The same is true for the Title I position, except that the administrator who would have also taught

Title I will be able to handle other duties.

Following the explanation of the reallocations, Jim Krahn opened the budget hearing for comment from the small audience. Noni Andersen thanked the staff for correcting mistakes in the document approved by the budget committee. No additional comments were made and the public hearing was closed.

The board then opened the special board meeting so they could complete their work on

the budget.

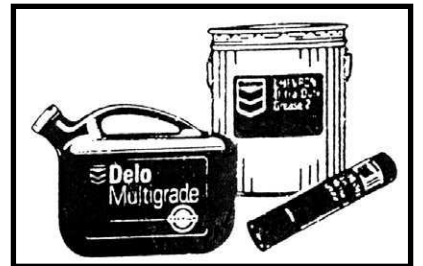
Board member Phil Doyle commented that it was wonderful to be able to add back to the budget. Geinah Cheny thanked the Budget Assistance Team for their thorough job. Krahn praised good management practices, and said "people who are no longer here are not abusing the system," referring to the nearly \$30,000 of savings in workers compensation premiums.

The board unanimously approved the budget as presented.

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