

SLO County Quarterly WMA Meeting

UCCE Auditorium

Video recording:

April 27th, 2023 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Attendees:

- Amy Smart, Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (US-LT RCD), **co-chair**
- James Moore, SLO County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (Ag Dept), **co-chair**
- Sam Alvarez, Coastal Resource Conservation District (Coastal RCD)
- Jenn Fields, Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP)
- Pete Sarafian, independent volunteer
- Kate Montgomery, SLO Beaver Brigade (SLO BB)
- Becky Holt, SLO County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (Ag Dept)
- John Sayers, California State Parks (State Parks)
- Kelli Carlisle, California State Parks (State Parks) Dolores Howard, SLO Beaver Brigade (SLO BB)
- Matt Prendergast, National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Templeton Office
- Zella Redus, SLO County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (Ag Dept)
- Mark Skinner, Coastal Resource Conservation District (Coastal RCD)
- Jocelyn Prieto, SLO County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (Ag Dept)
- Jonathan Briggs, SLO County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (Ag Dept)

Roundtable introductions and organization updates

- (0:19 – 3:18) Ag Department:
 - Ag Dept's new grant starts soon (July 1). It covers rated/4500 list weeds from San Luis Obispo north up the coast. Broadly referred to as the Hwy 1 Grant.
 - As part of this work, the Ag Dept has been talking to NEP about collaborating to control Arundo in the Morro Bay watershed.
 - The grant will also include private land work. James is trying to reach out to State Parks to talk about jubata in the north coast. John Sayers will reach out to facilitate communication.
 - The Ag Dept has full cooperation and financial buy-in from Hearst (to control jubata up there), they just need to find the right drone operator.
 - Another grant goal: the huge artichoke infestation in the north coast.
 - There is also the area of Hwy 41 where jubata is, as well as some outlying jubata in LO
 - If the Ag Dept can support any of the other organizations present using this grant, please reach out.
- (5:39 – 11:18) CSLRCD:
 - CSLRCD has been on an iceplant eradication campaign in Nipomo Dunes, working with State Parks. Priority is the off-highway vehicle park (there are periodic vegetation isles in amongst the sand dunes).

- There is a lot of jubata, narrow-leaved ice plant, *Carpobrotus*, and veldtgrass. The seed bank is reviving due to the rains. They are going after those with glyphosate.
- Also working near Phillips 66 Refinery, west of the railroad.
- A helicopter service sprayed but missed the veldtgrass at the edges along the RR tracks.
- Incidentally, the state parks service road has tons of wildflowers: popcorn flower, owl's clover, and more.
- There is a question of whether, when CSLRCD treats the veldtgrass, the herbicide affects other grasses. In the case of the dunes treatment, it does; they have been using Clethodim, which kills any monocot. However, the dunes barely have any native grasses, so the effect is negligible.
- (11:32 – 17:15) CA State Parks:
 - Not a big year for Sahara mustard and *Emex*. State Park is currently waiting on some funding that is tied up in Sacramento and is earmarked for more iceplant work.
 - *Asphodelus* has exploded this year along the Sierra bluffs. CalTrans has been convinced to spray in years past, and in the places they didn't spray it's extremely robust now. It's on the 4500 list, not rated. However, the Ag Dept may be able to go after it using their upcoming grant. Note: it is very responsive to Telar.
 - Veldtgrass has also exploded this spring.
 - State Parks is spraying behind the middle school, and has also set up some circle plots to test what grows when veldtgrass is and isn't removed. The result is "islands of biodiversity." There have been snails, including lots of shoulderband snails, and lots of native plants [when the veldtgrass is removed].
 - Round bluff trail work on NZ spinach
 - Eucalyptus removal all over the county
 - Petite licorice on the sandspit as well as along Old Creek Road near Whale Rock Reservoir- there were lots of seedlings after the storms. Some at Morro Strand and Moonstone Boardwalk.
- (17:16: – 20:20) MBNEP:
 - Continuing invasive species mapping for *Arundo* along Chorro Creek Watershed. There are some matching funds for this, and MBNEP will probably work with the county on it.
 - Invasive sea lavender project- survey coming up in July. So far only small patches have been noted, and infrequently.
 - Looking into different funding sources for sensitive species mapping with sea level rise plus treatment of invasives
 - Hopefully going to get a grant from CDFW for iceplant work in MB. However, some funding was cut. Yet, MBNEP plan to proceed with ice plant removal in fall even without funding using the 4(d) Rule for the shoulderband snail (see **Resource 1** for explanation).
- (20:28 – 22:36) Pete Sarafian:
 - Hasn't yet taken pictures of the jubata on Broderson Peak due to its difficulty to access.
 - Pete's pesticide application permit hasn't been renewed yet, which will be necessary to treat the Powell property for jubata, but he'll go with someone permitted if anyone would like.
 - Pete brought books from someone who retired from a chemical company. He left them to go through; remainders have been placed in the Ag Department's collection.

- (22:38 – 41:47) Beaver Brigade:
 - The phragmites in the Salinas River (off of Rocky Canyon Road in AT) is worrying, as it may have grown past the point of EDRR treatment, although the flood removed a lot.
 - Beaver Brigade is still working on removal- they have tried many removal methods:
 - First they tried digging, which was very difficult.
 - Next they tried removal by cutting- this requires lots of volunteers, plus detritus piled up.
 - Third: removal by drowning. As soon as that worked, a beaver pond appeared.
 - Next they tried removal by cutting aerial growth. This requires vigilance.
 - The Beaver Brigade would like to request some kind of assistance, not only with removal but with effectively marshalling their resources.
 - Part of the difficulty is that the distribution of the plant means that multiple government agencies are involved, as well as many landowners along the river.
 - We will meet with the BB representatives at the end of the meeting to discuss resources and possible options (delineated in previous meetings as recorded in minutes).
 - The Salinas River Symposium is happening May 5 at the AT library.
- (41:48 – 48:49) US-LTRCD:
 - US-LTRCD is currently working on a few mitigation projects.
 - Also looking into developing a more robust weed management program. This would include classes for landowners on YST and foxtail abatement, covering topics such as prescribed grazing, native competition (please send Amy Smart any information you might have on this topic), fire as a tool. Maybe a series of workshops. Also, creating a taskforce for roadside YST, especially in the Bitterwater/Creston areas- this could be groups that take point in places where the county can't. James and Amy will continue to interface about this.
- (55:34 – 59:36) NRCS:
 - Mostly noticing YST in north county and the relative prevalence of distaff thistle this spring. The latter is hard to graze down even when young.
 - The Ag Department has noticed an increase in distaff thistle as well, with more complaints coming from ranchers. Send any locations to James Moore so he can track populations. Currently there seems to be a lot at Cerro Cabrillo Trail in MB.

Ononis update (3:19 – 5:04):

- Ag Dept found a single plant at its last visit (the week of this meeting).
- The ones in San Joaquin county from CalFlora were ersatz and the observations have been removed.
- The Ag Dept will visit the site again a few more times this year.

Phragmites update:

- This was folded into the BB's update above.

Kiosk flyer update (48:55 – 54:15)

- As part of the grant with County Parks, the Ag Dept created a flyer to be posted in kiosks around various county parks. It contains a QR code leading to the WMA page.

- Because the QR code is connected to the WMA, the Ag Dept is seeking feedback on the flyer and permission to use the QR code/link.
- Non-Ag-Dept members ask if the Ag Department can send a PDF with the flyer for their use. This will be sent out with the meeting minutes.
- Request to translate the flyer into Spanish. The Ag Dept will send this out as soon as it's completed.
- Request to explain the harm invasives can cause on the flyer. While there may not be room for this in the flyer itself, it is something the Ag Dept will look into including on the WMA site.

General discussion (54:17 – 55:22)

- Some discussion of specific locations of purple ragweed at Hearst Castle.

Any remaining comments (1:00:00 – 1:03:37)

- California Invasive Species Action Week will take place June 3 through June 11. The Ag Dept will be installing a display through those dates at the San Luis Obispo Library (more information at **Resource 2** below).
- Please feel free to invite other organizations and individuals to our meetings!
- The Cal-IPC Symposium is coming up this fall. It's going to be partially online and partially in-person. Registration opens next month. See Resource 3 for more information.

Resources:

1. [Service Downlists Morro Shoulderband Snail with a 4\(d\) Rule \(endangeredspecieslawandpolicy.com\)](https://endangeredspecieslawandpolicy.com)
2. [California Invasive Species Action Week](#)
3. [Cal-IPC Symposium – California Invasive Plant Council](#)