

APPENDIX 3

PIERCE COUNTY INTEGRATED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

POLICY STATEMENT: Pierce County manages vegetation within road right-of-way by actions which are generally guided by an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program, to meet the needs of road users, county residents, and workers within budgeted resources.

A. GOALS

1. To establish an Integrated Vegetation Management program involving mechanical, cultural, chemical, and biological control activities appropriate for particular situations.
2. To contribute to a safe road system for use by the public.
3. To provide the optimum amount of sunlight and air circulation to the road surface which increases the life of the pavement and allows the snow and ice to melt faster in the winter.
4. To protect the taxpayers investment in t he road system by preventing pre-mature deterioration of pavement and roadside hardware (signs, posts, fences, etc.).
5. To be a "good neighbor" to abutting properties and communities.
6. To reduce the potential of wildfire originating along county roads.
7. To protect county employees' safety in the work place.
8. To manage vegetation in an economical manner for short term and long term affects.
9. To encourage growth of vegetation that will control erosion and enhance the quality of water leaving the road system.
10. To provide a pleasant and safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists.
11. To provide a safe environment for wildlife crossing county roads.
12. To enhance the road system as a positive aesthetic element within the landscape of Pierce County.

13. To reduce the harboring of plant and animal species that are incompatible with the public road system, neighboring properties, and County ordinances concerning noxious weeds.

14. To promote and preserve a viable "Owner Will Maintain" program.

15. To minimize negative environmental impacts from system maintenance activities.

16. To minimize disruption of emergency services and utility services caused by vegetation, especially during storms.

B. OBJECTIVES

1. Control noxious weeds in compliance with Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board actions authorized by RCW 17.10.

2. Provide support to Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board for establishment of biological control agents which will reduce the spread of weeds along county road right-of-way.

3. Coordinate vegetation management activities of "others" within the road right-of-way.

4. Maintain hydraulic performance of roadside ditches and other drainage features.

5. Create firebreaks at pavement edge and reduce fire fuel within the road right-of-way.

6. Implement actions which address immediate needs and long term benefits.

7. Utilize herbicides as an element of the Integrated Vegetation Management program, along with mechanical, cultural, and biological control techniques.

8. Provide sufficient sunlight penetration and air circulation to the road pavement to extend pavement life and minimize snow and ice persistence.

9. Introduce desirable plant species to roadside areas for long term benefits.

10. Control vegetation which is objectionable to abutting properties, without negatively impacting others or budgeted resources.

11. Meet horticultural needs of desirable plant species.

12. Control encroachment of vegetation that will damage pavement and roadside hardware.

13. Respond to concerns raised by citizens or observed by county employees of potentially hazardous trees within county rights-of-ways.

14. Preserve needed "lines of sight" on curves, to road signs, at driveways, intersections, and pedestrian and animal crossings.

15. Enhance drainage of water from the pavement surface and base materials.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. "Biological Control" - a group of methods involving natural plant predators such as wildlife, insects, diseases, or competing plants which kill or suppress growth of target plants.

2. "Chemical Control" - a group of natural or synthesized materials which, when used properly, causes decline or death to the target pest. These materials are regulated as pesticides, or specifically as herbicides if used to control plants.

3. "Cultural Control" - routine management practices that prevent pests from developing. These include seeding, pruning, thinning, mulching, fertilizing, and the regulation of essential life support functions.

4. "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) - a process or program for control of target pests utilizing the integration of mechanical, biological, cultural, and chemical control techniques based on predicted economic, ecological, and sociological consequences.

5. "Integrated Vegetation Management" (IVM) - a component of IPM dealing exclusively with vegetation as the target pest.

6. "Mechanical Control" - a group of methods including mowing, brushcutting, handpulling, cultivation, and other activities not listed as cultural, chemical, or biological control methods.

7. "Noxious Weed" - a plant identified for a specific level of control by state or local mandates (law, ordinance, etc.).

8. "Target Pest" - the specific pest or grouping of pests at which the control effort is directed.

D. ROADSIDE ZONES

Roadsides are divided into three zones reflecting specific roadside management objectives. Not all zones occur on every road. The three zones can be described as follows: (See attachment A, Road Cross Section)

1. Zone 1 (Vegetation-Free Zone)

When Zone 1 exists on non-curbed roadways, it begins at the edge of the traveled way or paved shoulder and extends to include all unpaved shoulder area, guardrail, and

other roadside hardware to a point where the rock base material intercepts native soil or dirt fill. It encompasses only that portion of roadside ditch inslope that has erosion resistant gravel or rock surface.

When Zone 1 exists on curbed roadways, it begins at the edge of the pavement and extends outward to include the guardrail.

The vegetation management objective in this zone is to maintain the area vegetation free to improve surface drainage, subsurface drainage, fire control, visibility, pollution control, to reduce the breakup of pavement, and reduce the deterioration of roadside structures and hardware.

2. Zone 2 (Operational Zone)

When Zone 2 exists on non-curbed roadways, it begins at the outside edge of Zone 1, or at the curb or pavement edge if no Zone 1 exists, and extend outward to include the roadside ditch or other drainage features, all regulatory signs, and the remainder of the right-of-way involving needed sight distances.

When Zone 2 exists on curbed roadways, it begins at the outside edge of Zone 1, or at the curb. If no Zone 1 exists, it extends outward to include all regulatory and advisory signs and the remainder of the right-of-way involving needed sight distances.

The objectives of vegetation management in this zone is to maintain the functional characteristics of drainage facilities (i.e. ditches, gutters, etc.), preserve or enhance sight distances to signs, on curves, and at intersections, control erosion, control undesirable species, and enhance the motorists' ability to see pedestrians and animals.

3. Zone 3 (Transition Zone)

When Zone 3 exists, it extends outward from the edge of Zone 2, or Zone 1 if no Zone 2 exists, to the limit of the right-of-way.

The objective of vegetation management in this zone is to create a compatible transition area between the operating road and the abutting land.

E. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Utilizing different methods of control, either alone or in combination, is the basis for accomplishing an IVM (Integrated Vegetation Management) Program which responds to the specific site and/or plant community needs. The four methods of vegetation control are as follows:

1. Mechanical Control

Mechanical control techniques involve the use of mechanical tools with power being supplied by the employee (hand tools) or another power source (Tractor/mower). The work involves grass mowing, brush mowing, manual brush cutting, and cultivation.

If the vegetation that needs cutting/trimming is in front of, or within, a maintained yard area, whether on or off of County right-of-way (R/W), then the crew leader and/or Vegetation Supervisor will make a reasonable effort to contact the resident or owner. Contact should be made either in person or by letter, when possible, to let the neighbor know what vegetation is scheduled for trimming and when the work will be done.

a. Grass Mowing

Grass mowing is used to control the growth of planted or natural grasses and other types of vegetation from encroaching upon the edge of the road pavement, gravel shoulder, and flow lines of roadside ditches. In those areas of Zone 1 where herbicides are not used, mowing will be used to prevent plant growth that will obstruct the needed water flow. Mowing grass will be used to meet other maintenance operation needs. Mowing may be used in Zone 1 and Zone 2 as follows:

- (1) On mowed or maintained lawns up to the roadway unless otherwise requested by the resident.
- (2) Signed "Owner Will Maintain" agreement areas.
- (3) Areas designated by the county comprehensive plan as being "environmentally sensitive".
- (4) Adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and running or open water.
- (5) The area up to fence lines adjacent to active pastures.

The actual area mowed should reflect the need to meet specific identified goals and objectives for the particular roadside area.

The actual number of cuts may vary depending on the growth rate of the vegetation, the road locality, the vegetation makeup, and the County resources. The number of times a particular area is mowed should not exceed three between the first cut and October 1st. Generally, arterial road R/W's will be mowed no more than two times per year and most access road R/W areas will only be cut once during the year. The first mowing in the spring should not be accomplished before the grasses start to bloom (set seed).

The cutting height will generally be 4-6 inches above the ground for grasses. The cutting height for non-grass species will generally be no lower than 12 inches above the

ground. Variation from these cutting heights should be cleared with supervisory personnel before mowing is done.

Mowing equipment will consist of tractor mounted rotary and/or flail mowers equipped with grass cutting blades, not brush cutting blades. Trimming/edging tools will usually be hand held string trimmers or blade trimmers and edgers. Hand tools for trimming may be used on special occasions.

b. Brush Mowing

Mechanical brush mowing is used as a control technique to remove the top growth of Blackberries, other brush species, small trees, and other vegetation which is interfering with the safe operation of the road and/or the maintenance of the road system, including the drainage components. This work is usually done in the area beyond the grass mowing limit, most often the back side of the ditch, out to the R/W limit, involving Zones 2 and 3.

Generally, this work is accomplished only once a year. The ideal timing is triggered by the objective of the activity. If the objective is to kill or eliminate the species being cut then it is best to cut during the early summer season, when plants have completed their spring growth. On plants like blackberry and scotchbroom it would be done at late flowering to obtain the greatest level of elimination. If trimming to increase stand density is the objective, then cutting should be done during the winter dormant period to allow remaining stems to activate new growth points by the time spring growth begins. Areas where there is a problem of poor or inadequate sight distance, such as at intersections and driveways, the mowing may have to be accomplished more than once to ensure operational requirements are met on a continuing basis.

Brush mowing can be done in conjunction with herbicide treatments. The timing of the cutting is critical to enhance rather than negate the herbicide activity. Consult the herbicide label to determine the proper sequencing or delay of mowing either proceeding or following the herbicide application.

Mowing brush at some sites is the only way the vegetation control work may be accomplished, short of hand cutting. Sites such as culvert ends, streams, ponds, ditches with water the year around, and other 'herbicide sensitive' sites are best maintained by brush mowing or hand cutting.

The equipment usually involves a tractor mounted boom flail type mower with blades designed to cut brush and small trees. If the brush mowing leaves the cut ends with a ragged appearance, it may be necessary to hand cut the ends to improve the project appearance.

Use of the brush mowers to cut hedges is a specialty type of work. Consult the Supervisor prior to any hedge mowing. If it is determined that mowing is the correct cutting method for the particular hedge, the work should be done after spring growth

has been completed, June or early July. Cutting a second time, in late fall (October or November), will even up the hedge for winter appearance and also encourage activation of dormant growth buds the following spring, making the hedge more dense and less 'leggy'. The desirable cross section of a trimmed hedge will have sides that slope in at the top, ensuring good light exposure to the lower limbs of the hedge. A 1 in 6 batter (one foot in for each six feet of height) will usually give good results.

c. Manual Brush Cutting

Manual brush cutting is used as a technique to control the growth of blackberries, brush species, small trees and other vegetation which can't be controlled by brush mowing, or the amount of work doesn't warrant mobilizing the brush mowing equipment and associated flaggers and signs.

This work is usually done on that portion of the R/W which is beyond the grass mowing limits, in Zones 2 and 3. See Brush Mowing, above, for more information on timing, sequencing in relationship to herbicide applications, number of cuttings, and other special needs that may trigger cutting of the vegetation.

Equipment used in manual brush cutting will be chain saws, brush saws (string, wire or blade types), pruning saws, lopper/pruners or any other type of hand held equipment. Chippers/grinders may be used to dispose of the debris resulting from the cutting operation. Chips should be spread evenly over the site if possible; otherwise the debris would be hauled to a disposal site approved by the Supervisor. Chips left in piles at the work site are not an acceptable method of disposal.

d. Aerial Saw

Aerial saw work is the trimming of tree limbs or the removal of trees. The goal is to promote better public relations and to minimize future damage to County equipment. The following guidelines should be observed when utilizing limbing equipment:

1) Limbs are to be close cut at the branch collar. If it is brought to the attention of county personnel that limbs of trees located off of County rights-of-way are obstructing visibility and the permission of the property owner has been obtained, then those limbs should be trimmed allowing, if possible, some foliage to remain on the ends of the branches. Branches devoid of foliage should be close cut at the branch collar.

(2) No limbs shall be trimmed above 25 feet from the road level without prior approval of the Vegetation Lead or Supervisor. If a tree is on private property, then the private property owner should be consulted prior to any trimming. If permission is received from the private property owner, then the tree should only be cut to the point necessary to enhance roadway visibility.

(3) If any part of the tree is within ten feet of utility lines (power, telephone, cable TV, etc.) it should be referred to the local Public Utility District or other utility owner for determination of proper action and accomplishment of work.

(4) Dead or leaning trees within the right-of-way that endanger the traveling public, the pavement, structures, or any other part of the highway shall be felled. Before removing danger trees outside of the right-of-way, the matter is to be referred to the supervisor and the landowner prior to any action. The supervisor and any tree consultants will inspect the tree in question as soon as possible and make a determination on whether or not the tree is to be removed. This decision is to be documented along with the advise of any other consultants on the condition of the tree and the reason for its suggested removal. This information is to be provided to Risk Management for their information and direction. When all parties are informed on the condition of the tree, and removal has been approved it shall be felled in a timely manner.

(5) Stumps remaining from trees that have been removed may receive chemical stump treatment. See the herbicide label for direction on proper application and timing.

(6) Stumps should be cut as close to the ground as practical.

(7) When trees are removed from the right-of-way, wood can be left at the site. If the property owners do not want the wood, it will be stockpiled at the County shop until it can be given to a charitable organization such as a senior citizen center. Trees removed from the right-of-way may also be sold following the appropriate procedures.

(8) Any limb over three inches in diameter will be cut in lengths of approximately two feet or less.

(9) Chips that can not be spread over the worksite should be disposed of offsite as waste.

Equipment for aerial saw work will consist of hydraulic bucket trucks with hydraulic circular saws (aerial saw truck) and trucks with enclosed boxes and chippers. Care shall be taken to prevent damage to tree trimming vehicles and equipment, or injury to personnel.

e. Cultivation

Disturbance of the soil and/or weeds by cultivation is another method of vegetation management. This method can be used to keep Zone 1 areas free of vegetation or for selective prevention or elimination of weeds around desirable plants in Zone 2 or 3.

Cultivation can be accomplished with either hand tools or power equipment. Hoes and rakes are examples of hand held cultivators. Blades on a road grader and rotovators are examples of power cultivation.

Cultivation is most effective on annual weeds as they do not resprout from their roots once the top growth has been cut off at or below the soil surface. Perennial weeds can be controlled with repeated cultivation (three cultivation's/growing season) which will prevent the top growth from maturing enough to produce stored food in the perennial root system (providing energy for resprouting). Frequent cultivation of the soil surface will prevent germinating weed seed from establishing. This cultivation must be done within a few days of each rainy period during the growing season (April-October).

f. Barriers

Use of Physical barriers can be classified as a mechanical control technique. Barriers stop plant growth originating below the barrier by physically preventing it from growing to the soil surface where it could get the sunlight needed for continued growth and maturity. The plant will then die due to a lack of light. In the case of germinating weed seed above the barrier, control is accomplished by preventing the roots of the seedling from getting into the soil where the moisture and nutrients exist. In this case the plants die of drought and/or starvation.

The barriers can be permeable or impermeable. Landscape fabrics (spun bond or woven) are examples of permeable barriers. Solid barriers are materials such as plastic films, tarpaper, and fiberglass or metal sheeting. Impermeable barriers are not usually recommended as they interfere with water movement, causing soggy or droughty conditions above or below the barrier. The soggy/droughty conditions can cause premature failure of pavements and death of desirable plants that have their roots below the barrier.

Permeable barriers generally must be protected from the ultraviolet rays if the expected life is to be realized. Mulch materials will provide adequate protection if placed three inches thick. Also, the barriers are dependent on the absence of rips or other openings which would allow plants to penetrate the barrier. Improper installation and/or maintenance will cause rips to occur. Accidents and vandalism will also destroy the integrity of the barriers.

Use of plastic buckets and polyester fabric blankets over cut stumps are variations of the barrier concept, which stops sprouts from growing successfully. Care must be used to thoroughly secure these devices below the soil level, as sprouts can exert enough strength at the growing tips to lift the buckets or blankets, allowing light to reach the new leaves for continued growth.

Another type of barrier, mulches, will be discussed in the section on Cultural Control Techniques, as their properties for controlling plant growth are not mechanically based, but rather based on horticultural principles.

2. Chemical Control

Application of herbicides may occur at any time of the year allowed by the product label and the following guidelines.

a. Application

Zone 1 treatments will generally be accomplished by the use of pre-emergence and post-emergence nonselective herbicides applied in the early spring. Zone 2 and 3 vegetation management generally involve the use of selective herbicides. Applications in zones 2 and 3 may be summer foliage, or dormant stem, stump, or modified basal treatments when allowed by the label. Where site conditions or herbicide label restrictions preclude the use of herbicides, the use of mowers and other methods will be utilized.

(1) Prohibited Herbicide Use Areas

Herbicides will not be used in the following areas:

- (a) Mowed or maintained lawns up to the roadway unless requested by the resident.
- (b) In areas where there is a signed "Owner Will Maintain" agreement precluding such use.
- (c) Within protected areas designated by the County comprehensive plan as being environmentally sensitive.
- (d) Within aquatic sites, including streams, lakes, ponds, and any other running or still water.

Note: The County Engineer may approve the use of aquatic herbicides within these areas when deemed necessary to protect the functional use and safety of the county roadway or meet legal obligations. At that time, an individual policy will be made regarding aquatic herbicides after careful consideration of all environmental factors. An exception may be in the case of noxious weed control efforts under the direction of the Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board if herbicides are determined to be the only reasonable form of control within these zones.

- (e) Near the edge of the right-of-way if drift or other movement off of the right-of-way is expected.
- (f) Within three feet of the fence lines in an active pasture.
- (g) Within 100 feet of known water wells or springs used for human consumption.
- (h) Where use is prohibited by the product label.

(i) Where herbicides would likely be washed through runoff water or otherwise into desirable crops or plants.

(j) Within eroded areas where vegetation would be beneficial to control soil movement.

(2) Herbicides Used

Herbicides used on County road rights-of-way will be approved for use by registration with the Washington State Department of Agriculture for such use. All use of herbicides will be in compliance with EPA approved label directions, and other state or local rules and regulations pertinent to the use. Any type of residual herbicide used must have properties that will allow it to strongly bind to the soil to prevent its movement by leaching from the site of application, and/or have other properties which prevent movement by leaching. A review of the herbicides used by the Department of Public Works and Utilities-Transportation Services will be conducted on an annual basis by the department. Use of herbicides packaged in reusable or recyclable containers is recommended.

(3) Application Techniques

Herbicides are available in several formulations which allow many techniques for application. Liquids may be sprayed for "spot" or "blanket" coverage depending upon the number of target plants. Summer and fall foliage sprays, and winter or fall stump, basal bark, or spot sprays are also viable selective treatment techniques. Granular and pelleted herbicides formulations may be available. Product labels will specify proper material rates and methods of application. Any herbicide formulation can only be applied by licensed employees or licensed contractors.

(4) Applicators

In accordance with RCW 17.21, the Washington Pesticide Application Act, any County employee applying herbicides must be fully trained and licensed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, or be under the direct on-site supervision of such a trained and licensed person. Any firm to which herbicide application work is contracted or otherwise accomplished must likewise be fully licensed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture to conduct such work.

(5) Requirements for Application

Application of herbicides must be done in strict compliance with the herbicides, label directions and this policy. Applications will generally be made on days with a wind of less than 8 mph to minimize drift of material, and on days when rainfall is not likely to occur immediately following application in order to prevent displacement of herbicide material. Spray adjuvants (thickeners, etc.) and special spray nozzles may be used to reduce potential for droplet drift off target. No application will be made to designated environmentally sensitive areas or within lakes, running waterways or ponds as

previously stated. Applications of herbicides on berry-producing plants such as blackberries will take place either before any berries form or after berries have dropped. The lowest nozzle pressure recommended by the nozzle manufacturer shall be used to reduce potential drift of sprayed materials. Any application of herbicides will consider and respond to the potential for minimizing direct human exposure both during and after the application. The minimum effective rate of application will be used. Operators shall demonstrate the utmost care for the impacts of herbicide applications with the health of citizens and environmental concerns being the highest priority.

(6) Equipment

All equipment used in the application of herbicides shall be equipment manufactured for that specific task. Because calibration is critical for the safe, effective, and efficient application of herbicides, all equipment will be calibrated monthly, at a minimum, during the season of application.

(7) Personal Protective Gear

Applicators will be required to use protective clothing and other protective equipment as recommended on the label by the manufacturer.

(8) Equipment and Materials Storage and Disposal

All equipment and chemicals used by the County programs will be stored in a safe and secure location as required by Washington State Department of Agriculture rules and regulations. All empty herbicide containers shall be disposed of in accordance with the label directions and the Washington State Department of Ecology container disposal guidelines.

b. Monitoring and Record Keeping

(1) State Law

State law requires that pesticide applicators licensed under the provisions of RCW 17.21 shall keep records on a form prescribed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

(2) County Information

For the purpose of County employee applied programs, the following information will be recorded for each application:

(a) Equipment number of sprayer utilized.

(b) The number of miles traveled during period of application.

(c) The person or firm who supplied pesticide which was applied.

(3) Contractor Information

Contractor records shall meet contract specifications and other requirements.

(4) Follow-up on Complaints

There will be a follow-up on any complaints or concerns logged in regards to this program as soon as possible not to exceed two (2) working days by the director or his designee, and records of such complaints along with the findings and follow-up actions will also be kept on file.

3. Cultural Control

Cultural Control involves enhancing the vigor of desirable plants so that they can eventually crowd out or prevent encroachment by undesirable plants within a plant community. Cultural control techniques will work in zones 2 and 3 only. The use of fertilizers on weak grass stands to enable vigorous grass stands to crowd out weeds is an example of cultural control. Another method of cultural control is prevention. Prevention means stopping a given species from invading an area. This is best accomplished by:

a. Making sure that weed seeds and other reproductive plant parts are not carried onto the area via contaminated crop seed, water, feed, manure, or on soil attached to machinery.

b. Preventing weeds from going to seed.

c. Use of course mulches and ground cover plantings to shade soil, and prevent seed germination or establishment, is also a cultural method of control.

d. Adjusting mowing and/or cutting height and frequency will allow desirable plants to dominate, and undesirable plants to lose the competitive edge, eliminating them from the plant community.

A cultural control method now practiced by Pierce County is seeding, fertilizing, and mulching of denuded soils in conjunction with new development and reconstruction. Thinning of existing vegetation to allow desirable understory plants to develop and dominate is another example of cultural control methods practiced by Pierce County. It is the policy of Pierce County to promote desirable plant growth and prevent the invasion of undesirable plant species. Pierce County will consider the use of cultural control as one of the viable methods of vegetation management in the integrated vegetation management program.

4. Biological Control

Biological control of vegetation involves using living organisms to destroy or compete with the undesirable plant. These living organisms include insects, disease organisms (parasites, viruses, bacteria, fungi, etc.), plants, livestock, rodents, and fish. These natural enemies are usually brought in from areas of the world where the undesirable plant is native and is controlled by these natural predators. These predators are tested to make sure that they affect only the target plant and not any other economically important plants or animals. Once deemed safe, they are turned loose against the target plant. Examples of effective biological control utilizing natural predators used on rights-of-ways are the Cinnabar Moth and Flea Beetle on Tansy Ragwort, and the Chrysolina Beetle on Klamathweed or Goatweed.

Another application of biological control agents involves reintroducing native plants to a site. These competitors are introduced to an area where they grow more rapidly and outcompete existing weeds and exotic vegetation. Native species are well adapted to the conditions of western Washington and most will overtake and outcompete weeds. Managing for natural vegetation and planting native plant species has the potential to be the most successful form of biological weed control.

Biological weed control can be very effective, but it is not without its limitations. The greatest limitation of the natural predator methods is that, by nature, it is a very selective form of control. Every natural enemy is restricted to one of several closely related weed species. Biological control is generally a slow process and does not provide immediate weed control. Typically three to ten years are required before a population is reduced to a non-economic level. Washington State Department of Transportation and other Public Works and Utilities Departments have been experimenting with predator organisms and use of competing vegetation as biological control methods.

Pierce County is considering the use of natural predator biological control methods, and is monitoring other agencies results. Pierce County is currently using competing vegetation as a biological control method by planting and/or preserving native vegetation along areas of new development or reconstruction.

It is the policy of Pierce County to evaluate the benefits of using biological control types as a viable method of weed control within its integrated vegetation management program.

F. ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE

Department of Public Works and Utilities - Transportation Services shall publish an annual notice of the herbicide application program. This notice shall be in two consecutive issues in all weekly County newspapers and also once a week for two consecutive weeks in the daily newspapers within Pierce County. The public notice advertisement shall contain an explanation of how individuals may request their property frontage not to be sprayed.

G. ANNUAL "OWNER WILL MAINTAIN" AGREEMENTS

Individuals may arrange, annually, with Pierce County Department of Public Works and Utilities - Transportation Services for the owner to maintain areas of right-of-way which are adjacent to their property in lieu of County provided vegetation management activities including herbicide applications, brush mowing, and grass mowing activities. The agreement shall give the resident the option of having no herbicide treatments, shoulder only herbicide application, no brushcutting and mowing, or only brush cutting and mowing. The annual agreement shall specify that the resident agrees to maintain these designated zones to meet the following needs. The resident shall clearly post the area(s) of concern with signs provided by the County in accordance with the instructions provided by the Department of Public Works and Utilities - Transportation Services so that the area is readily identifiable to the vegetation management crews or contractors working for the County.

1. Zones of Owner Maintenance

In Zone 1, when requesting no herbicide application, the "Owner Will Maintain" agreement means only mechanical or hand control methods will be used by the resident/owner to keep the area vegetation free. Maintenance of a lawn, by the permittee, will be acceptable in lieu of a vegetation free condition, unless such lawn causes water to pond on the roadway. In Zone 2 and 3, when no mowing or brushcutting is desired, the vegetation should be maintained by the permittee so that it does not interfere with sight distance to signs, curves, intersections, and driveways. Vegetation should not restrict motorists' ability to see pedestrians or animals. Activities performed by the permittee shall be accomplished to meet the needs of each zone, as described earlier in this policy and illustrated on Attachment A. Control of noxious weeds will also be the responsibility of the permittee.

2. Non-Compliance

In the event satisfactory vegetation management has not been performed by the permittee, the County reserves the right to manage these zones by any means deemed necessary to maintain adequate vegetation control, provided that no herbicides shall be applied to such areas without at least fifteen days advance notice to the individual involved.

The maintenance agreement will be nullified by the permittee's failure to perform required activities or at the end of the calendar year, whichever occurs sooner.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any questions regarding this material, contact:

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