

Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration

Virtual Meeting using the WECN system at various locations throughout
Washington State

September 20, 2005

Proposed Minutes

Kurt Volker, Chair

Commission members and staff present at the meeting were:

In Olympia: Chuck Masters, Cheryl Niemi, Gina McCauley, Erik Johansen

In Pullman: Ben Barstow

In Mt. Vernon: Jay Schafer, Bryan Sakuma

In Wenatchee: Byron Phillips, Dan Robinson

In Prosser: Kurt Volker, Jeff Sample, Doug Walsh, Alan Schreiber, Laurie Wishkoski

Member of the public: John Brown

Call to Order

Chair Kurt Volker called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Introductions/ Public Comment/ Minutes

Introductions were made by all present at the respective meeting sites.

There was no public comment.

Chair Volker called for comments on the minutes. Andy Jensen gave Laurie Wishkoski a copy of the minutes with minor editing corrections. Kurt Volker asked for clarification on whether the document referenced in the minutes was a memorandum of understanding or a letter of agreement. Alan Schreiber replied that there were two documents that had a relevance to the WSCPR and WSU relationship. The Memorandum of Understanding had been signed several years in the past and was still in effect. The Letter of Agreement was reviewed and signed on a yearly basis. The document that was referred to in the minutes was a letter of agreement and had been labeled incorrectly in the minutes.

Andy Jensen moved to approve the minutes with the minor editing corrections to be made. Byron Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrator's Report

Alan Schreiber asked for feedback on a proposal concept that had been provided to the Commission. The proposal referred to putting disease and insect models on the PAWS website as decision aids for IPM implementation. The desire was to create a program that would allow online implementation of disease and insect models and control recommendations. The commissioners discussed the effectiveness of the concept. It was also discussed whether the mission of the commission was to fund research or implementation. Alan Schreiber responded that the mission statement addressed implementation as well as research and demonstration. There was also discussion whether or not the project was publication. Doug Walsh told the commissioners that it was not simply a publication. It was a decision making tool that allowed input of weather conditions, trap counts and fruit type. Kurt Volker reiterated that the question posed was whether or not the commission would entertain a proposal of this sort. It was agreed that there was no reason that the commission would not review such a proposal. Ben Barstow asked whether or not this proposal was similar to one submitted for the master gardeners, a proposal that was rejected. A major difference was that this dealt not with training but with decision making in production agriculture. Kurt Volker reminded the commissioners that each proposal stands alone.

Alan Schreiber asked the commissioners to check the contact sheet for accuracy and contact the commission staff. Andy Jensen asked for clarification on the termination date for each commissioner. The end of each term is September of the third year of their term. Each commissioner would ideally have their application, resume and letter of recommendation ready by September. Alan Schreiber replied that there were inquiries being made to the Governor's Office regarding term limits.

Alan Schreiber asked if there were any outstanding travel vouchers. Kurt Volker has a voucher that is being processed.

Alan Schreiber gave an update on the status of the request for proposals. Over 300 copies of the RFP were sent out in a bulk mailing as well as being distributed electronically. It seems that there is a lot of interest in submissions for this first funding cycle. Kurt Volker noted that the word greenhouse had been added to the list of industries in the RFP. Kurt Volker went on to remind the commissioners that the criteria for evaluation are stated on page five of the RFP. Alan Schreiber told the commissioners that the notebooks with the proposals would be delivered at least two weeks prior to the October meeting. That should allow time to study each proposal. The blue scoring sheets would be included in the notebooks. It is advisable to make notes on the scoring sheets but not to actually score the proposal until after the presentation is made at the funding meeting.

Alan Schreiber went over the Letter of Agreement that had been signed by both WSU and the WSCPR. There were very few changes to the document with the exception of changes in the length of time allotted to the formation of the contracts and accounts necessary for the researchers.

Alan Schreiber reminded the commissioners that September is the month in which it is decided whether or not to pursue any legislative actions. Alan Schreiber stated that he had no sense that the commissioners had any desire to take such an action on behalf of the WSCPR. Kurt Volker asked for comments from the commissioners. Jeff Sample asked for clarification and background on this issue. Alan Schreiber provided the information.

Alan Schreiber told the commissioners that an ongoing project is to establish whether or not the matching funds sources, as stated in the funded projects, had delivered documentation of that funding. An update of the current projects will be given at the next meeting.

Budget and Tour Report

Alan Schreiber explained to the commissioners that there has been a 1% cut in the budget from WSU. The total cut is \$8796. This, essentially, will mean that there is one less project that can be funded. The amount of funding this year is \$870,802. The Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration is now receiving 13% less than its original mandate. This is the amount that should be expected for the next year also.

Alan Schreiber explained the expenditures to date since the last meeting. It is the intent that any cost overruns will be taken out of the Pasco account.

Kurt Volker asked if a bill had been received from the Attorney General for the 2004-2005 period. When and if the bill comes, in it will be paid. Money has already been allotted for this expense.

Kurt Volker asked for opinions regarding the benefit of approaching an individual legislator, as opposed to the legislature, in order to make concerns known regarding the reduced funding. Chuck Masters asked for an explanation of what has taken place with regards to Washington State University. Alan Schreiber explained that originally the WSCPR was a line item in the

State budget. At that time there was a general concern that as a line item it would be easy to eliminate the funding. To prevent this, the funding was routed to go through WSU and a clause was inserted that the WSCPR would take whatever cuts that WSU received. The problem with this situation is that WSU spreads cuts across the entire budget but when it asks for an increase it asks for an increase in a specific budget. Therefore WSCPR has not received any replenishment of funding. It is due to this that the funding has eroded even though the legislature has not reduced the commission's funding. The only remedy seems to be through the legislature. Chuck Masters asked if it would be advisable to have the AG office review the situation and give an appraisal of the commission's status. Alan Schreiber told the commissioners that former Representative Gary Chandler had been a strong advocate for the WSCPR. Gary Chandler had stepped down from his legislative post to take a position as a government affairs specialist. It might be good to contact Mr. Chandler and seek his advice and guidance. Kurt Volker agreed with this suggestion saying that the administrative costs have been relatively fixed and reasonable. It is now a fact that these budget cuts are taking away research funding capability. Gina McCauley asked why WSU would not want to revisit the agreement. Alan Schreiber responded saying that it was not in their interest to do so. If our funding was not reduced then any budget cut that the legislature made would have to come out of fewer departments. Keeping the existing agreement with WSCPR allows them to make shallower cuts within their institution.

Alan Schreiber told the commission that he would contact Gary Chandler and report back to the Chair. The Chair would then either give further instruction, refer the matter to the Executive Committee or bring it before the full commission.

Andy Jensen moved to accept the financial report. Dan Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tour Report The responses have been very positive. The participants gave excellent feedback and suggestions for sites to visit next year. A comment was made that more attention needed to be paid to the human element of pesticide issues. It is a goal for the WSCPR tour to be the best tour around. There was trouble getting sponsorships so changes were made in the tour logistics in order to cut costs. Fund raisers had difficulty going out for money for the tour because they needed funding for themselves. Even so the tour was highly successful.

All of the commissioners that participated in the tour felt that it was highly beneficial. Kurt Volker commended the administrator and his staff on a job well done and wanted to see it continue in the future. Alan Schreiber said that he would proceed as if there will be a tour on the east side next year. There are some people who have already asked to be placed on the invitation list for next year.

Biennial Report The commission has, every two years, put a progress report before the legislature. It is not a requirement but generally it is felt that this is a good way to stay in the legislature's eye. Alan Schreiber told the commissioners that he hoped to have draft texts for them to read at the October meeting. Kurt Volker said that it was important to let others know all of the good things that the commission is doing. The commission must advocate for itself and not rely on others.

Matching Funds Policy Alan Schreiber began a discussion on issues that had come up regarding matching funds. One issue is that, on occasion, the funding from another organization is different from the amount that is stated within the proposal. The commissioners voiced opinions on what ratio of matching funds to research funds that were granted by the WSCPR. Another issue raised was the difference of timing in funding allotments. Funds become available to the researcher as soon as the account was set up by WSU. However, funds from other sources...the matching funds...may not become known for several months. The Potato Commission for instance does not make awards until July. Gina McCauley commented that there was no requirement for matching funds in the RFP. Alan Schreiber responded that there was no requirement but the enabling legislation said that matching funds were to be encouraged. Kurt Volker added that examination of the level of the matching funds allowed the commission to see the priorities of the sponsoring commodity group. Cheryl Niemi commented that significant reductions in the level of funding could allow significant changes in the outcome of the desired research. Alan Schreiber said that sometimes there is a change in the scale of the project and sometimes the proposal is simply pulled. It is important that, whatever decision or approach to the issue is taken, the spirit of the commission is maintained. Kurt Volker said that he and Alan Schreiber would work together to create a formal policy for review at the next meeting.

Doug Walsh related problems that he had encountered with a change in the level of scrutiny given to proposal budgets. The university has become stricter in their policy prohibiting the use of federal funds as matching funds. Doug Walsh was concerned that, without the inclusion of the federal funds in the documentation within a proposal, a problem needing research could appear to be of a lower priority than it was in fact. It was proposed that such funding would appear on a separate page entirely and labeled as co-funding or additional support. Dan Robinson asked for an estimate of how many proposals this would affect. Doug Walsh estimated that it would affect about 10% of the proposals.

Elections/New Members/Term Expirations Alan Schreiber informed the group that elections would be in January. The terms expired in September but the policy was to serve until reappointment or replacement. Kurt Volker, Chuck Masters, Art Losey and Jay Schafer are all at the ends of their terms. All four of these commissioners are willing to serve again. Alan Schreiber asked that all of them plan on attending the next meeting.

Upcoming Meetings Alan Schreiber went over the upcoming meetings. The next meeting will be in Ellensburg on October 25th and 26th. The October meeting would be the first funding proposal review of the 2006 fiscal year. The next meeting will be in Portland on January 10th and 11th. It was suggested that the Portland meeting follow the same format as the 2005 meeting. Commissioners were asked to bring their calendars to the October meeting.

New Business Erik Johansen informed the commission that the Washington State Department of Agriculture would be sending out a survey on Section 18's. This will happen within the next two weeks.

Cheryl Niemi spoke to the group about a low interest loan program that was available from the Department of Ecology. The loans involved revolving funds and it was important that the

information be as widely distributed as possible. Alan Schreiber said that the commission would distribute the information electronically. Chuck Masters said that the Washington Friends of Farms and Forests would also distribute the information.

Gina McCauley asked if the commission ever funded an information booth at trade shows such as the nursery trade show of which Gina is the manager. Alan Schreiber replied that trade shows would generally give information to individuals active in nurseries. It is individuals who do the research for nurseries that the commission wants to reach.

Kurt Volker asked if there were any other comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.