

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE
February 16, 2006
Knight Law School

ATTENDEES: Ben Farrell, Christine Thompson, Jim Blick, Bob Jones, Kyla Coy, Christine Thompson, Robyn Hathcock, , Anne Forrestel, Mike Filippelli, Rosie Sweetman, JR Gaddis, Cathy Soutar, James Hiebert Guests: Mark Maguire, Tim King

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

The Occupational Safety Officer/Contract Administrator for the office of Environmental Health and Safety, Mark Maguire oversees the IPM Program. He introduced Tim King, Exterior Team Supervisor for Facilities Services. Tim manages about 85% of the campus grounds maintenance, Athletics 10%, and Housing 5%

Mark passed out copies of the written program and a list of approved treatment procedures. IPM is state mandated and stipulates that a product is never applied unless there is a current pest issue. Applications may not be applied on a calendar basis. Mark explained that his charge is to review every material on the list to choose the least obtrusive material, applied in the safest manner, in the smallest amount and the fewest number of times. He believes that this campus is exemplary. Taking into account its size, UO is extremely green. The amounts we use here are miniscule. Some weeds are acceptable, and we prefer to use methods to strengthen desirable plants in order to keep out the undesirable plants.

Four years ago the state enacted legislation requiring that we report the pesticides used. UO has been collecting data for the past three years. On January 1st the state finally funded the mechanism to collect this data.

Anne asked what it would take to be able to have the entire exterior area of the University certified as organic. Tim replied that he is not aware of any official program for certifying entities such as the campus. Mark said it would be extremely difficult because we have different use and standards on the main campus, and for example Athletics. If we were to use entirely organic certified methods in exterior areas, labor costs would rise and the appearance of campus would change significantly. Tim thinks it is a reasonable goal to work toward a chemical free campus. We are already using as many prevention and organic methods as possible, and the grounds keepers are very motivated to do so.

Anne asked why blackberry plants are sprayed rather than mowed. Tim said that most of this activity is over by the River Front Research Park. Tim would like to be able to use mechanical methods; however, it is a very large undeveloped area. They spray selected areas in December with low dosages, and then mechanical control is also used. Anne suggested utilizing goats to eat the plants. She is also concerned that Japanese Knotweed is being grown at the Urban Farm. Although it is not near a waterway, she is concerned that people will see it and think about using it in their gardens.

Jim suggested that a good treatment for controlling wasps is to vacuum them up. He can recommend someone in Cottage Grove that will do this for free. Tim said this method is used indoors only, and he will consider Jim's suggestion.

Ben asked about fertilizer use. Tim's crew uses just the right amount of slow release at the right time. The River Front field drainage system is regularly tested for nitrates. Very low concentrations were found whenever it's been tested. Mulching lawn mowers and compost teas are also being used.

Jim suggested purchasing rechargeable backpack electric leaf blowers. Tim would be interested in finding out more about these blowers.

Overall, the committee was very impressed with the integrated pest management program as presented by Mark and Tim. They are doing the right thing with the resources available and should be encouraged to continue moving in such a positive direction.

A few recommendations will be forwarded to Frances Dyke such as the possible use of goats to control blackberries, posting a notice on site when areas are sprayed, controlling outdoor wasps by vacuuming, encourage more native species plantings, and purchase of rechargeable backpack electric leaf blowers.

Green Dorm Room

Kyla met with Housing representatives about the possibility of setting up a green dorm room. They had concerns regarding finding a dorm that would be suitable, what financing is available, and requested more details and a proposal. Kyla spoke with Frances Dyke, and Frances offered to draft a letter of support. Kyla will send her more specific information.

Computer Use

Jim reported that George Hecht will arrange to have e-mail reminders sent out on a regular basis to encourage people to shut off monitors, computers, printers, and other electronics devices when appropriate. He is also interested in having the campus surveyed about computer equipment and energy efficiency, which could then be used by the Computing Center to make purchasing recommendations.

The next Environmental Issues Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16, from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Knight Law School, Room TBA