

# VERMONT PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL (VPAC)

May 28, 2014 MEETING MINUES

## MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Decker, Kathy  
Gary, Lené  
Giguere, Cary  
Hoffman-Contois, Razelle (Chair)  
Levey, Rick  
LaValley, Jenn (Admin)  
Palmer, Eric

## MEMBERS ABSENT

Bosworth, Sid

## GUESTS

Jeff Disorda  
Robert Wright  
Sylvia Knight  
Alan Graham

## Meeting Called to Order

1:06 pm EDT

## Meeting Adjourned

4:09 pm EDT

## Announcements

- Minutes from the May 6, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved with a minor text (R. Levey moved, E. Palmer seconded). Vote- 5 in favor with L. Gary abstaining as not present at May 6 meeting. Will be posted to the VPAC Sharesite.
- VPAC SharePoint site continues to evolve. Documents for posting or requests for removal of posted materials should be sent directly Razelle or Jenn as they are working together to keep the Share running smoothly. Council members, and others who request to be on the distribution list, will be notified by e-mail as documents are posted. The VPAC webpage [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/pesticide\\_regulation/vpac](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/pesticide_regulation/vpac) includes a list of meeting dates/times/locations as well as a link to the VPAC Share site <https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/agriculture/vpac>.
- Cary announced that discussion in underway with 2 potential candidates for the currently open public agriculture seat on the Council. He also announced that Lené Gary has been reappointed to the Council.

## Business

### **Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO)**

Jeff Disorda responded to an earlier request for a summary of pesticide usage data. Based on his research, this information is currently not easily extracted. He will be looking at how to adapt VELCO's existing process so this can be reported in 2015. VELCO's expanded GIS capability, which allows usage to be tracked on a polygon level, may be helpful in this effort. Mr. Disorda also provided a presentation on the recently established Right of Way Stewardship Accreditation Program. VELCO is one of only two entities to have earned accreditation. Recognized as a leader in Integrative Vegetation Management, VELCO was invited to be a pilot site. Mr. Disorda and Cary Giguere described the massive August 2003 electric power blackout and determination of root causes that lead to the development of the existing Transmission Vegetation Management Standard. It was noted that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission assisted the US Department of Energy in determining the root cause. The ROW Stewardship Council was established as a way to recognize excellence in vegetation management on the power grid. Ten principles of ROW stewardship and 32 different criteria have been established. Although initial focus has been on Transmission Lines, VELCO manages all their lines to the same criteria whether required to do so or not. Accreditation is determined via an intense process that involved 13 weeks of multiple types of audits by multiple teams. In addition to paperwork requirements, eighteen site visits were made throughout the VELCO system. An overall audit score of 4.4 out of a possible 5 was awarded. This indicates performance above the individual norms. No items of non-conformance were identified. Mr. Disorda described how this process not only helped VELCO review their whole program in a detailed manner but also allowed for an interdepartmental work effort and improved understanding of each other's roles and helps identify and focus areas for continuous improvement. The process is adaptable to other IVM programs and is hoped to become a widely used model.

### **Mosquito Larvicides**

The Council resumed discussion of the Natular G30 larvicide product. Concerns were expressed that based on the information provided by Clarke, it does not appear that an application rate of 5 pounds per acre will achieve the LD<sub>50</sub> necessary to control the nuisance species of concern. In addition, information was not provided on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> instar as requested but rather on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> instar. Clark has claimed that the LD<sub>50</sub> should be the same for all the instars but no species specific efficacy information was provided. Alan Graham, state entomologist, noted that the product has been receiving accolades and there is feedback that it works. Cary noted that AAFM was thinking of doing a pilot test in either Leicester or Bridport as they represent different environments, however the product is costly and a research protocol would need to be developed for 2014. Any work conducted would be under and Experimental Use Permit issued to AAFM and AAFM would need to provide the staff to conduct such an effort. In 2013, the Council supported use of Natular G which was subsequently added to the permit but has not been used to date. At present the Lemon Fair Control District plane used for all aerial applications is grounded. Helicopter service is available. It was explained that larviciding is paid for by the State while adulticiding is paid for by the Control Districts. After much discussion and consideration of various factors, including but not limited to cost, efficacy uncertainties, public educational outreach efforts, and clarification of species to be controlled (not EEE species), the Council was polled and was in unanimous support of a small pilot study (about 100 acres). It was agreed that Razelle would send the Secretary of AAFM a note regarding the Council's stance. The Council looks forward to a report from Alan Graham this fall or winter regarding study results. It was further noted that Rick Levey would be the lead for the non-target survey component of this effort.

The Council also discussed the proposed addition of Cocobear™ Mosquito Larvicide Oil to the Mosquito Larvicide Permit as a replacement for Agnique® which is no longer produced. The same use restrictions would apply: “Applications may be made only as a rescue treatment for the control of mosquito pupae; [the product] shall only be used in small stagnant areas such as drainage ditches, puddles, detention basins, swales and agricultural field pools that do not actively drain to surface waters.” Both products form a monomolecular film on the surface of the water which helps control populations of air breathing pupae. Cocobear® was noted to be especially effective in controlling one of the top three nuisance species in Vermont. Alan explained that there is a tight 4 day window where such treatment is effective and that it would only be used if larviciding was found to be unsuccessful. The Council discussed the potential implications for nontarget species. Rick Levey agreed to follow up with colleagues in DEC to determine if sampling for potential impact to nontargets had been conducted when Agnique® was originally permitted. It was noted that Cocobear™ contains much less petroleum. Alan stated that in general, Agnique® has been used on less than one acre per year and at less than one gallon per year. In 2013 2.5 gallons were applied in one district which was an anomaly determined to be associated with an application who no longer is employed by the District. Razelle noted that the state toxicologist conducted a review of the inert ingredients listed in the confidential statement of formulation. The review indicated that the proposed limited use of product coupled with the same use restrictions as for Agnique®, would result in negligible risk to public health. Alan and Cary agreed to look into matters and determine if both products would be on the 2014 permit or just the newly proposed. If both are to be present, a clarifying statement will be added that use is limited to one or the other but not both. Based on the information available for review, the Council unanimously voted to support addition of Cocobear™ Mosquito Larvicide Oil to the Permit. If points of concern are identified in the follow up items noted, the Council will be notified and further discussion may occur as warranted.

### **Alternate Railroad Vegetation Management**

The Council discussed the large stakeholder turnout at the May 6, 2014 meeting and the desire expressed by many to investigate the potential for alternative, non-chemical means of control on a stretch of track that runs through Montpelier. The Council will set aside a meeting in the near future to devote to this topic including a review of past efforts, current practices and discussion of potential paths forward with interested parties.

**Next meeting:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 National life Building NOTE: subsequently rescheduled for July 9<sup>th</sup> to accommodate parties interested in participating in the alternate railroad vegetation management initial discussion.