

## Study Session Minutes

**Board of Directors of the Red Rock Road Enhancement Maintenance District  
June 12, 2017 -9:00 a.m. at  
Village of Oakcreek Association, Board Room, 690 Bell Rock Blvd., Sedona, Arizona**

*District Board Meeting Guidelines: The meeting will be held in accordance with A.R.S. Title 38 Open Meeting Laws. Board and attendees participation shall be civil and courteous. Any disruptive behavior could result in removal from the meeting. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting Jennifer Bartos, Improvement District Services, Inc. at (928) 443-9484. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation. Requests for copies of Board Meeting minutes or other District documents, inquiries, or complaints should be submitted in writing to: Improvement District Services, Inc., 1965 Commerce Center Circle, Suite A, Prescott, AZ 86301.*

**Call to Order** - Dave Norton, Joanne Johnson, Ann Crossland, Paul Gazda, Ruth Kane present.  
Also present and participating in the meeting: Dave Grondin and Mark Price of Green Earth.  
Several members of the public also present.

**1. Study Session: Discussion regarding Integrated Pest Management and its possible applicability to the RRREMD landscape maintenance program.**

Mark Price from Green Earth is invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

No public comment period will be allotted for this study session.

The Board discussed information provided by Directors Gazda and Crossland that had been requested at the study session held on February 9, 2017, and also heard comments and answers to questions provided by Mr. Grondin and Mr. Price of Green Earth, the current landscape contractor for the RRREMD.

Director Gazda said he envisions the IPM trial as a partnership working with Green Earth. He and Director Crossland have knowledge of IPM and would research non-toxic or less toxic products and then talk with Green Earth about specifics of how and when they could be used in the RRREMD. Increased manual weeding is another option. We should also consider the possibility of replacing some existing plants with ground cover plants to reduce the area available to weeds. The Board would make funds available for additional staff and products required for the trial. The trial will always have a fallback to Roundup if nothing else works. For the IPM trial to be worth the time and effort, it will need to be approached as a project in partnership with Green Earth and have good record so we can evaluate the trial.

Mr. Price said he has hired another person to help with manual weeding, but spraying with Roundup is still needed.

Mr. Grondin said if the Board can give Green Earth direction on what we want done in the IPM trial, they would be happy to do it. He said it would be possible to provide additional staff if the Board provided the funds. However, he cautioned that he and many other contractors in the Verde Valley are facing challenges hiring people. He suggested a 3 month trial from August to October when monsoon rains typically give rise to an abundance of weeds. Director Gazda said he would prefer a full year trial that goes through all the seasons, and wanted us to make our very best effort as a focused project to see if we can get Roundup and similar products out of the maintenance program.

Director Kane expressed concerns that we do not have enough funds to be doing research in an IPM trial. Director Gazda responded that it would not be research. We have existing published research to base our product decisions on, and have enough money in next FY budget to fund an IPM trial without affecting taxpayers. The IPM trial would not be doing research, not writing papers, not trying products that have not been tried before or using procedures that others have not already used.

Director Kane and Vice-Chairman Johnson asked that we keep in mind the promise that was made to the people in this community who signed the petition to create RRREMD that there would be no big increases in their tax.

Chairman Norton asked about the list of approved herbicides that Boulder, Colorado was developing. Director Gazda said he would follow up to see if it is available yet.

Chairman Norton asked if estimates could be obtained on the cost differential of what we're using now vs. what we would use in an IPM trial. Director Gazda said he didn't think we could get good figures at this point because there are too many uncertainties on where and how much of the products would be used in the RRREMD. He would prefer to set a ceiling for the trial based on the RRREMD landscape maintenance bids in 2011 for toxin-free maintenance. The average difference between conventional and toxin-free maintenance was \$20,000. Because prices have gone up and it's a trial where we may try some things that aren't effective, a figure of \$25,000 as a ceiling on the trial might be a better approach. Director Gazda offered to put together a proposal on how money in the 2017-18 budget could be reallocated to fund an IPM trial.

The Board discussed information provided by Director Crossland indicating there may be a \$5,000 grant from the Western IPM Center that we could apply for if a trial is approved by the Board. Other grant possibilities were discussed that come up in future months. Chairman Norton said we need to find out if the Board can use grant money and said he would contact Jennifer Bartos of IDS in that regard.

Director Crossland offered to get some cost data comparing the purchase price of alternative herbicides with Roundup.

Chairman Norton expressed concerns that an IPM trial might be seen as an experiment and felt uncomfortable using tax dollars for an experiment. Director Gazda said he did not think the IPM trial is an experiment. The IPM framework has been around for many years. It has specific tools and principles. We are employing the tools of IPM which are known. We would be using standard manual methods and sprays that have existing research on their effectiveness. Every environment is unique and will have a somewhat different IPM approach, but by no means is it an experiment. Director Crossland agreed it is not an experiment and that we can do it without increasing taxes.

Chairman Norton asked what happens if we run out of funds before the trial is finished. Director Gazda said if that happens, we bring it to the Board, talk about what we have done, how it worked, what was the cost, how much further we have to go, how much more it might cost. Then the Board decides whether to continue or end the trial. At every Board meeting we would be reporting on the trial.

Chairman Norton asked about the mechanism for approving the use of a more toxic herbicide if weeds are getting out of hand and alternatives are not working. Director Gazda responded that in the February 9 study session Director Crossland volunteered to be the contact for such approvals because of her background as a pesticide compliance officer. Director Gazda would serve as backup. Approvals can be made quickly.

Director Gazda offered to contact the IPM officer in Boulder, where they have used one of the alternative products (Avenger), to see if they have any data comparing the amount of Avenger needed vs. Roundup.