

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Josh Peters, County Administrator

FROM: Sophie DeGroot, Noxious Weed Control Coordinator

DATE: August 25, 2025

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE RE: In The Matter of Amending Chapter [3.65](#) of the Jefferson County Code (JCC) for the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board Assessment Rate.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

In 2015, the Noxious Weed Control Board and the Board of County Commissioners passed an ordinance creating a special assessment fee to fund the Noxious Weed Control Board programming and staff. The fee has stayed stagnant since then, despite the rising costs of materials and labor due to inflation.

ANALYSIS:

The Noxious Weed Control Board budget, supported by the Special Assessment Fee is quickly becoming inadequate to support the program. Increased expectations, demand for services, and the constant pressure to remove noxious weeds has meant the Noxious Weed Control Board needs to increase staff and educational programming. An increase to the special assessment fee will facilitate hiring more staff throughout the year, allowing the coordinator to dedicate more time to education, outreach, and volunteer management, as well as implementing a cost-share program for County residents.

The Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board voted on August 11, 2025 to recommend BoCC pass an ordinance with proposed amendments to chapter [3.65](#) to increase the special assessment fee to the recommended rate of \$5.50 per parcel and \$0.45 per acre.

Previous Ordinance [07-1109-15](#) Establishing an Assessment for Funding the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board, JCC [3.65.020](#) incorporated by reference an “Attachment A,” regarding Land Classification, consistent with the requirements outlined in RCW [17.10.240](#). However, when trying to determine the Special Assessment Fee per land classification type (i.e., forest and non-forest), this inevitably required finding the old ordinance to review the land classification types. In the proposed amendments, the Land Classification language formerly found in Attachment A to Ordinance [07-1109-15](#) is now moved into the body of section [3.65.020](#) JCC. This change has been made for better understanding. All proposed changes to sections [3.65.020](#) and [3.65.030](#) JCC are indicated in the attached proposed ordinance, **Attachment A**.

Attached for Review:

- Hearing Notice setting a public hearing for Monday, September 15, 2025 at 10:00 am.
- Proposed Ordinance recommending amendments to sections [3.65.020](#) and [3.65.030](#) JCC.

- Public Hearing Power Point Presentation.

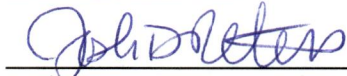
FISCAL IMPACT:

The recommendation from the Noxious Weed Control Board is to increase the Special Assessment Fee from \$4.00 per parcel and \$0.30 per acre to \$5.50 per parcel and \$0.45 per acre. These numbers account for inflation over the last decade, plus the need to increase program staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

BoCC move to approve the Public Hearing Notice as presented and set a Public Hearing on the proposed ordinance for September 15, 2025 at 10:00 am.

REVIEWED BY:



Josh Peters, County Administrator

8/19/25
Date

Please publish 1 time: Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Contact Person: Sophie DeGroot, Noxious Weed Coordinator
Bill to: Jefferson County Noxious Weed Board
121 Oak Bay Road
Port Hadlock WA, 98339

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In The Matter of Amending Chapter 3.65 of the Jefferson County Code (JCC) for the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board Assessment Rate.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing is scheduled by the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners for **Monday, September 15, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** in the Commissioners' Chambers, County Courthouse, 1820 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 (HYBRID). Notice of said hearing is to be published in the official newspaper of Jefferson County.

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend chapter 3.65 JCC in order to reflect reasonable cost of living increases for the Noxious Weed Board's annual Assessment rate codified in section 3.65.030 Rates and update related section 3.65.020 Land classification for consistency with applicable law.

The information is available for viewing on the County website by visiting: www.co.jefferson.wa.us – Board of Commissioners – Boards & Committees – BOCC Agenda Packets – 2025 Weekly Agenda Items – 09 September 2025 – 091525 – HEARING re Noxious Weeds.

You are welcome to participate in this hearing. You will need to join the meeting by 10:00 a.m. using the following methods: **VIRTUALLY:** Via the following Zoom, link: <https://zoom.us/j/93777841705>, **PHONE:** Dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter access code: 937-7784-1705# and press *9 to “raise your hand” to be called upon. Access for the hearing impaired can be accommodated using Washington Relay Service at 1-800-833-6384, or **IN-PERSON** at the address listed above.

In addition, written testimony is also invited beginning on August 25, 2025, and ending on September 15, 2025, at the end of the Public Hearing, unless extended by the Board of County Commissioners. Written public testimony may be submitted by **Email to:**

jeffbocc@co.jefferson.wa.us You may view documents and testimony received by visiting: www.co.jefferson.wa.us – Board of Commissioners – Boards & Committees – BOCC Agenda Packets – 2025 Weekly Agenda Items – 09 September 2025 – 091525 – HEARING re Noxious Weeds.

You can also **Mail** your testimony to: Jefferson County Commissioners' Office; P.O. Box 1220, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Written testimony must be received by the Board of County Commissioners by the end of the hearing testimony period.

Signed this 25th day of August, 2025.

JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
/S/Heidi Eisenhour, Chair

STATE OF WASHINGTON
County of Jefferson

In The Matter of Amending Chapter [3.65](#) of the Jefferson County Code (JCC) for the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board Assessment Rate.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

WHEREAS, the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) created the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board (Noxious Weed Board) on March 23, 1998 by Jefferson County Resolution No. [24-98](#); and

WHEREAS, BoCC adopted new Noxious Weed Control Board District Boards in 2000 by Resolution No. [75-00](#) and in 2007 by Resolution No. [61-07](#); and

WHEREAS, BoCC established an Assessment for funding the Noxious Weed Board's programming in 2015 by Ordinance No. [07-1109-15](#);

WHEREAS, the Noxious Weed Board serves an important purpose in maintaining and promoting the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Jefferson County by limiting economic loss and adverse effects to local agricultural, natural, and human resources due to the presence and spread of noxious weeds on terrestrial and aquatic areas within Jefferson County; and

WHEREAS, the Noxious Weed Board's services are paid for by the annual Noxious Weed Board Assessment authorized by chapter [3.65](#) JCC and monies received from the county's General Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Noxious Weed Board's rates have stayed stagnant since creating an Assessment for funding its programming in 2015; and

WHEREAS, RCW [17.10.240](#)(1)(a) requires the Noxious Weed Board to annually submit a budget to the county legislative authority for the operating costs of the county's weed program for the ensuing fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, RCW [17.10.240](#)(1)(c), authorizes the county legislative authority to levy an assessment against certain lands within the county; and

WHEREAS, like other aspects of local government, the Noxious Weed Board has had to adjust for inflation and increasing costs in order keep up with the volume of work, compounded by a growing demand for services; and

WHEREAS, the Noxious Weed Board offers invaluable services with a high level of local expertise and desires to continue serving the needs of Jefferson County; and

WHEREAS, the Noxious Weed Board held a public hearing on August 11, 2025, and passed a motion to amend the Noxious Weed Board Assessment Rate authorized by chapter [3.65](#) JCC to account for reasonable cost increases based on inflation, subject to BoCC approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, STATE OF WASHINGTON, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Whereas Clauses Adopted as Findings of Fact. The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the above “Whereas” clauses as Findings of Fact.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to amend chapter [3.65](#) JCC in order to reflect reasonable cost of living increases for the Noxious Weed Board’s annual Assessment rate codified in section [3.65.030](#) Rates and update related section [3.65.020](#) Land classification for consistency with applicable law.

Section 3. Amendments to Chapter [3.65](#) JCC Adopted. Amendments to chapter [3.65](#) JCC, including section [3.65.020](#) Land classification and section [3.65.030](#) Rates, as reflected in **ATTACHMENT A**, are hereby adopted.

Section 4. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance or its application to other persons or circumstances shall be fully valid and shall not be affected.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall be effective January 1, 2026.

Section 6. SEPA Categorical Exemption. This ordinance is categorically exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act under WAC [197-11-800](#)(19).

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

APPROVED and *ADOPTED* this _____ day of _____, 2025.

SEAL:

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heidi Eisenhour, Chair

Greg Brotherton, Member

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Member

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carolyn Gallaway, CMC Date
Clerk of the Board

Philip C. Hunsucker, Date
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

ATTACHMENT A

AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 3.65 JCC ASSESSMENT LEVIED FOR COORDINATING NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

Strikethrough and underline indicate recommended changes to code section below.

Section 3.65.020 Land classification.

The Jefferson County noxious weed control board has classified land in Jefferson County pursuant to the requirements outlined in RCW 17.10.240. The classifications of land subject to assessment are defined as forest and nonforest as provided ~~in Attachment A to the ordinance~~ ~~codified in this chapter which by this reference is incorporated herein.~~ below:

(1) Non-Forestry. All real property parcels in Jefferson County that have an upland component or distributed land share and are not classified in another category listed here. Includes, but is not limited to condominiums (timeshares and non-timeshares), State Parks, County Parks, conservation lands, schools, libraires, fire district facilities, churches, agricultural lands, ports, and other real property parcels not-classified elsewhere.

(2) Forestry. Real property parcels in Jefferson County that are in the designated Timber and Forestlands (chapter 84.33 RCW), Open Space, Agricultural, Timberlands (chapter 84.34 RCW), and public lands managed for timber as identified by the Jefferson County land use codes 9710 (County owned timberlands), 9720 (State DNR managed timberlands) and 9725 (State Forest Board timberlands).

(3) Public Roads (State, County, City). State, County, and City roads will each be assessed as one parcel per jurisdictional entity, with an aggregate assessment determined by evaluating the length and functional width of each segment under the jurisdiction of the fee assessment payer and develop an appropriate parcel count and acreage aggregate. The non-forestry rates will be used.

(4) Lands not subject to the Noxious Weed Assessments

- a. Federal and Tribal Trust lands.
- b. Mineral rights.
- c. Standalone tideland parcels and tideland acreage.
- d. Standalone water parcels and water acreage.
- e. Common areas and open space as separate parcels where the land is assessed through other parcels (acreage may be distributed to the other parcels for calculating the Noxious Weed Assessment (NWA) fees).
- f. Private roads as separate parcels where the land is assessed through other parcels (acreage may be distributed to the other parcels for calculating the NWA fees).
- g. Parcels with taxable values exempted under RCW 84.36.015.

- h. Improvements Only parcels (no direct land component).
- i. Parcels determined by the county assessor to qualify for a senior citizen or disabled persons property tax exemption under RCW 84.36.381 on January 1st of the tax year.
- j. If a portion of a real property parcel does not satisfy any exemption criteria specified in this section, then the parcel shall be subject to said fee.

Section 3.65.030 Rate.

(1) An assessment for the Jefferson County noxious weed control program of ~~\$4.00 per parcel and \$0.30 per acre~~ \$5.50 per parcel and \$0.45 cents per acre on all property not classified as forest land shall be imposed annually. Under RCW 17.10.240 forest lands may be subject to an annual noxious weed assessment that does not exceed one-tenth of the weighted average of the per acre and per parcel rate levied on other lands that are subject to the weed assessment. Property classified as forest land, as defined in RCW 84.33.035, which is used solely for the planting, growing or harvesting of trees and which is typified, except for a single five-year period following clear-cut logging, by canopies so dense as to prohibit the growth of an understory ~~shall be assessed at the rate of \$0.40 per parcel and \$0.03 per acre.~~ as specified in RCW 17.10.240(2) shall be assessed at one-tenth the non-forestland rate or \$0.55 per parcel and \$0.045 cents per acre. State forest lands managed under RCW 79.22 shall be considered to be forestland for the purpose of this assessment. The classifications of land subject to assessment are further defined as forest and non-forest as provided in section 3.65.020 Land classification.

(2) Annual Assessment will be adjusted per Annual Fee Indexing. Fixed amount fees established by this ordinance shall be adjusted annually on the first business day of January (adjusted date) by the amount of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPIW). The CPIW is the Consumer Price Index – U.S. City Average for All Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the United States Department of Labor. The annual fee adjustment shall be calculated as follows: The fee in effect immediately prior to the adjustment date will be increased by the percentage increase in the CPIW as reported for the month of September preceding the adjustment date. Increases to the Noxious Weed Annual Assessment will be rounded to the nearest cent for the per parcel rate and the nearest tenth of a cent for the per acre rate. Timber rates are one tenth of each per parcel and per acre rate. A fee shall not be reduced by reason of such calculation. However, fee increases in accordance with this calculation shall not exceed five percent per year.

Noxious Weed Assessment Increase Recommendation

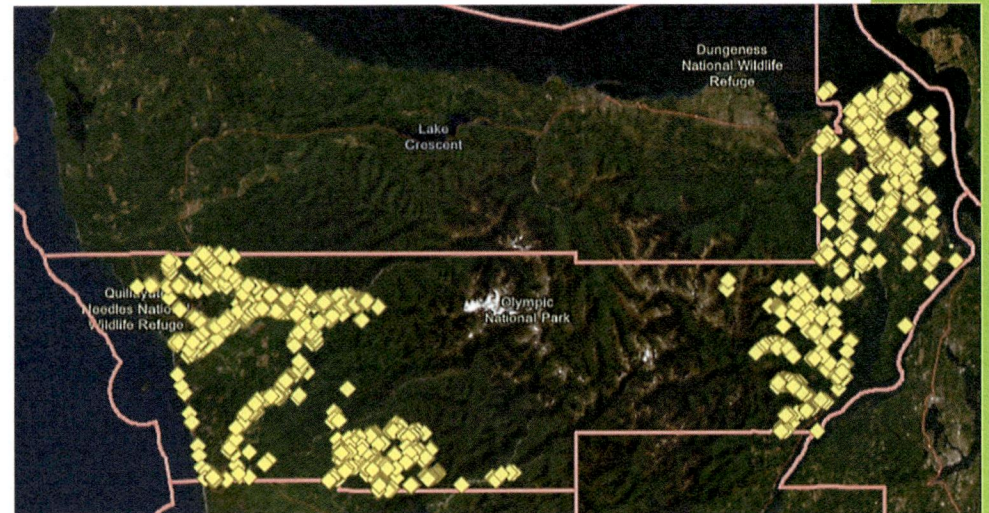
September 15, 2025

Presented by Sophie DeGroot, Jefferson County Noxious Weed Coordinator

Jefferson County Courthouse, BoCC Chambers

Overview

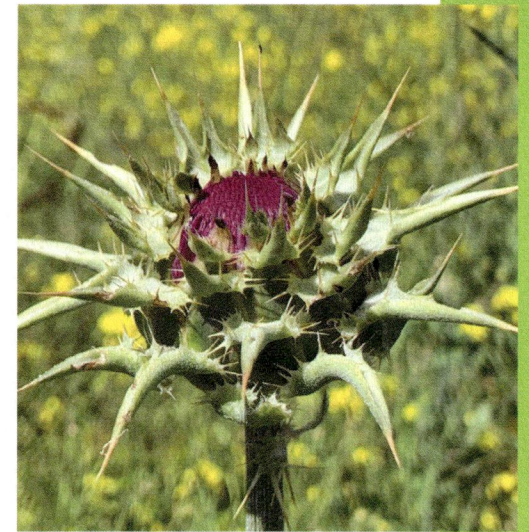
- What is a Noxious Weed?
- What is the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board?
- Weed Board Funding
- Why Increase the Assessment Now?
 - Budget
 - Increased needs
- Proposed Rate
- Forested Parcels
- Inflation Adjustment
- Acre Rate Comparison
- County Rate Comparison
- Procedure for Assessment Increase
- Recommendations



Weed Points in Jefferson County

What is a Noxious Weed?

- Noxious weeds are invasive, non-native plants that threaten agricultural crops, local ecosystems, or fish & wildlife habitats.
- Specific weed species are detailed in Washington's RCW Chapter 17.10. These are required for control within the County and State.
- About half of all invasive, noxious weeds are escapees from gardens.
- The rest are plants accidentally introduced to Washington through human travel and trade borders and oceans.



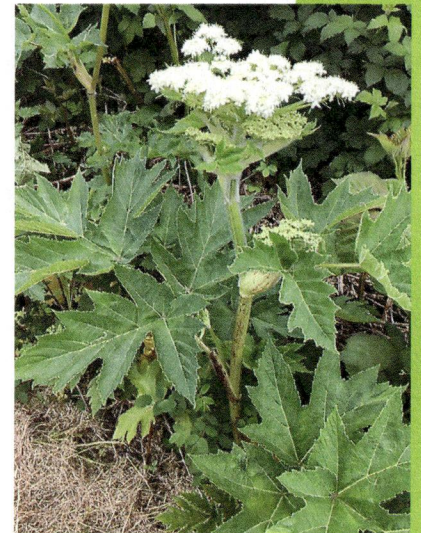
Milk thistle

What is the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board?

- JCNWCB is a regulatory board of 5 members that represent the 5 weed districts of Jefferson County
- Mission: “To protect lands within Jefferson County from the degrading impacts of noxious weeds by educating residents, property owners, land managers, and public agencies in how to serve as responsible stewards and aid in the protection and preservation of the land, water, and natural resources.”
- RCW 17.10.060
 - The Weed Board employs staff to carry out this missions through outreach and education, survey and control, and assisting land owners and managers in preventing and managing noxious weeds. The program aims to help achieve compliance with state and county weed laws.

Weed Board Funding

- State law only allows county weed boards two ways to be funded (RCW 17.10.240)
 - General fund
 - Levy an assessment on property within the county
 - Rates based on land classification
 - Forested lands assessed at 1/10th average rate
- Jefferson County enacted a weed assessment in 2016
 - Non-forested lands: \$4.00 per parcel plus \$0.30 / acre
 - Forested lands: \$0.40 per parcel plus \$0.03 per acre
- Assessment has not been reevaluated or changed in 10 years
- In 2024, \$147,717 was collected in Assessment Funds



Giant hogweed

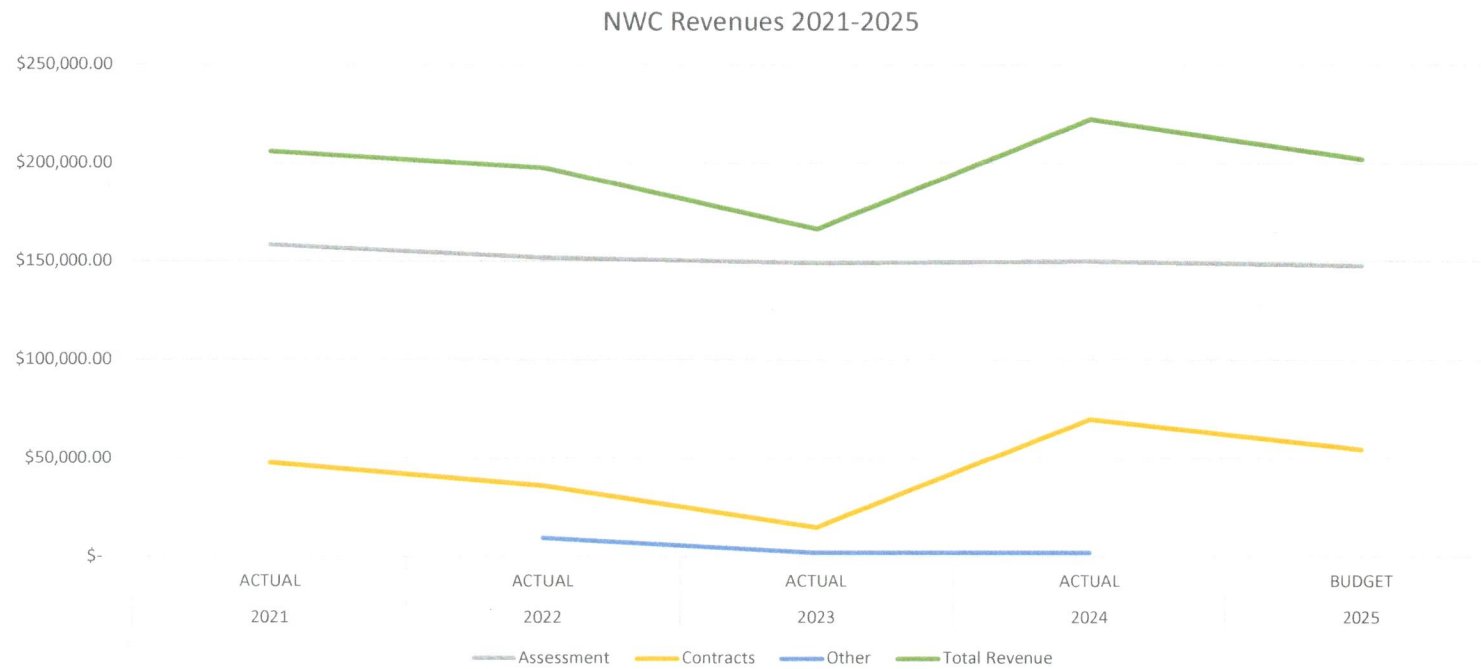
Why increase assessment now?

- Since 2016, inflation has increased an average of 33.94%
- Things are on average, 1.34 times more expensive
- This includes the cost of materials and labor.

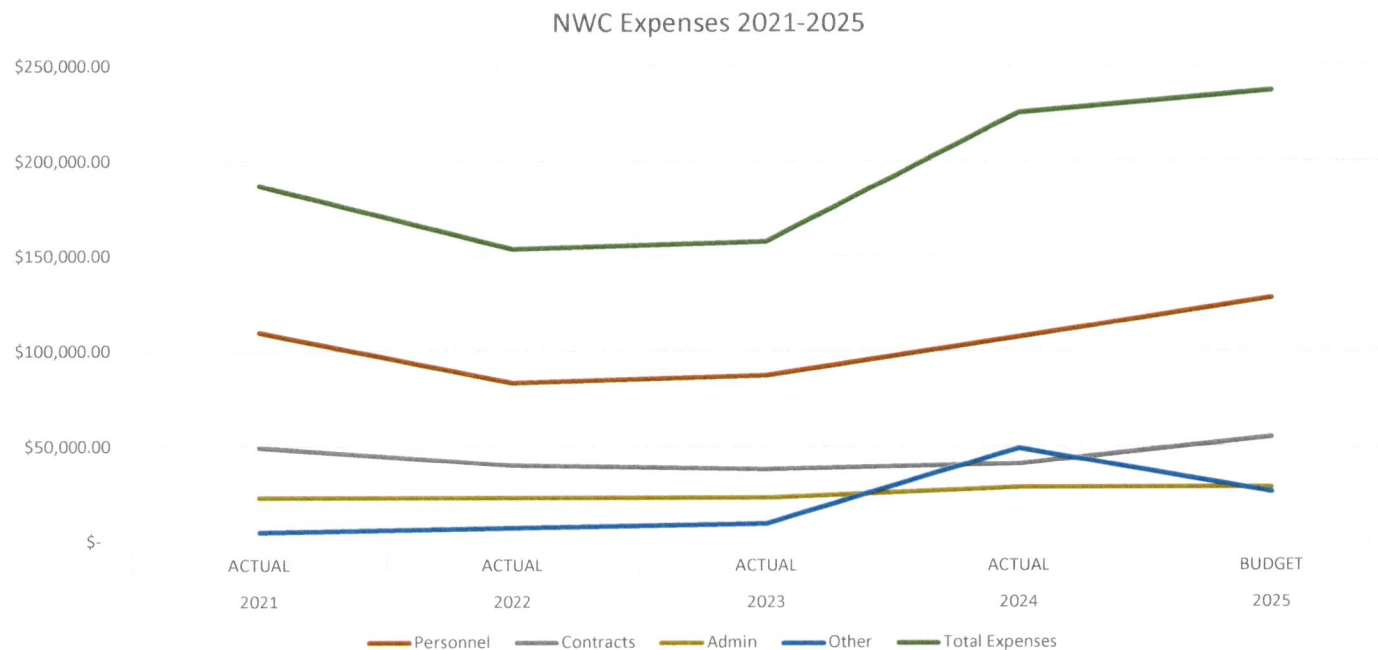


50 acres of holly controlled at
Anderson Lake State Park

Why increase assessment now?

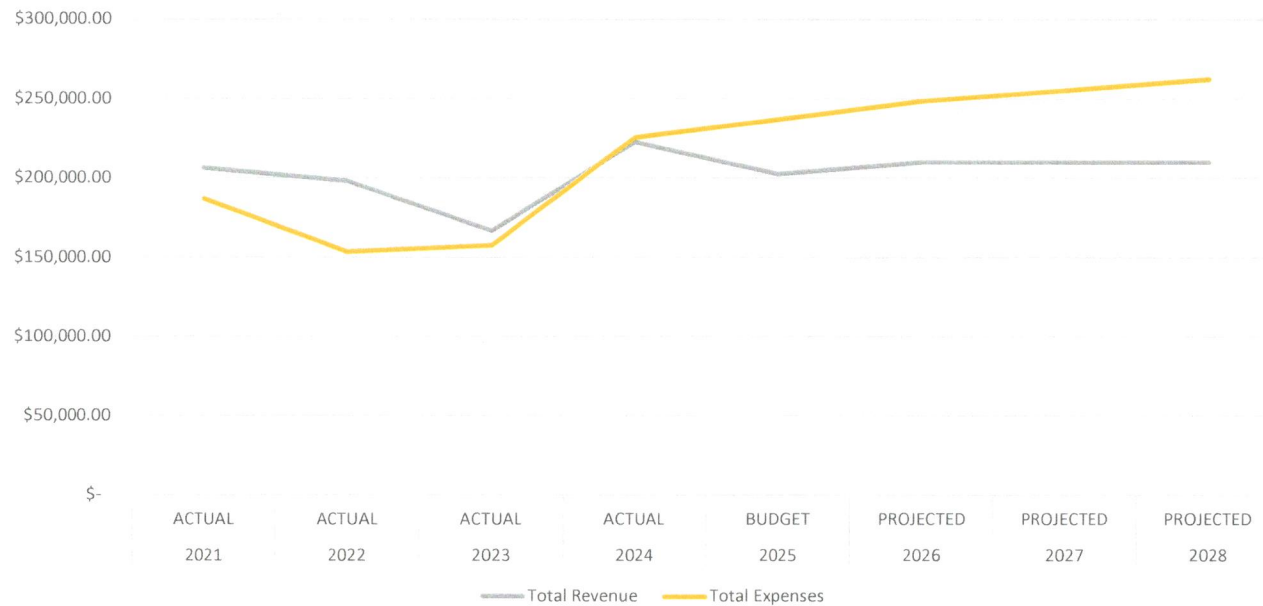


Why increase assessment now?



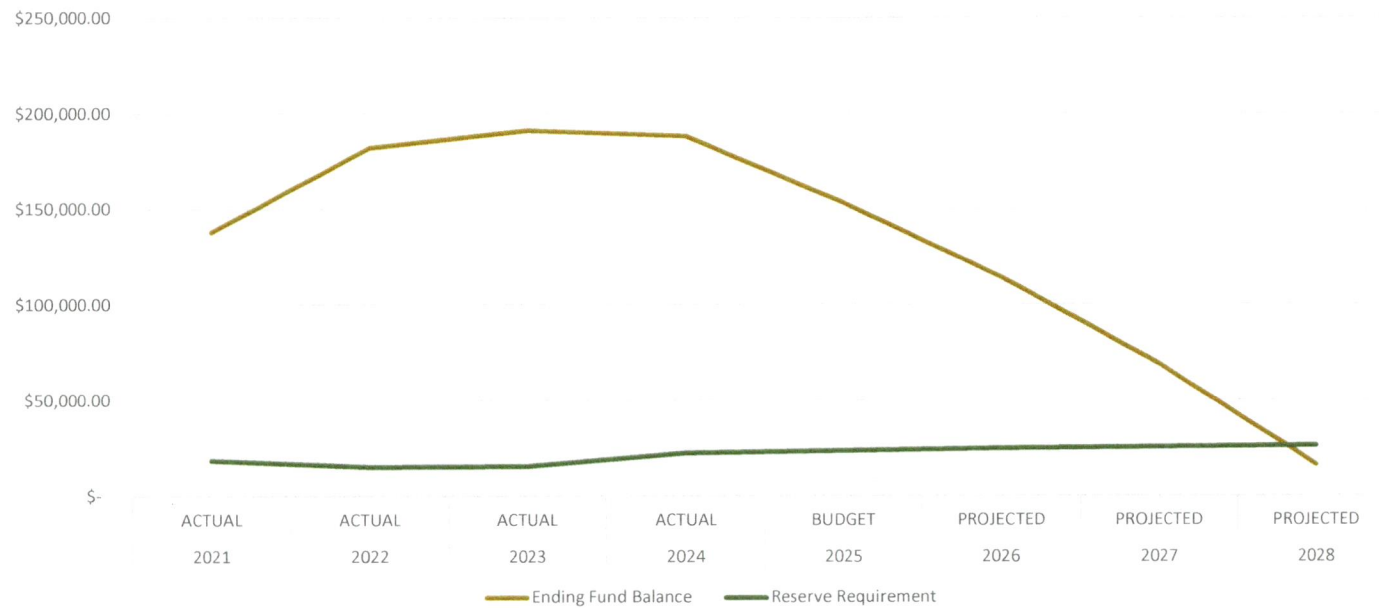
Why increase assessment now?

Revenue vs Expenses, 2021-2028



Why increase assessment now?

Fund Balance vs Reserve Requirement, 2021-28



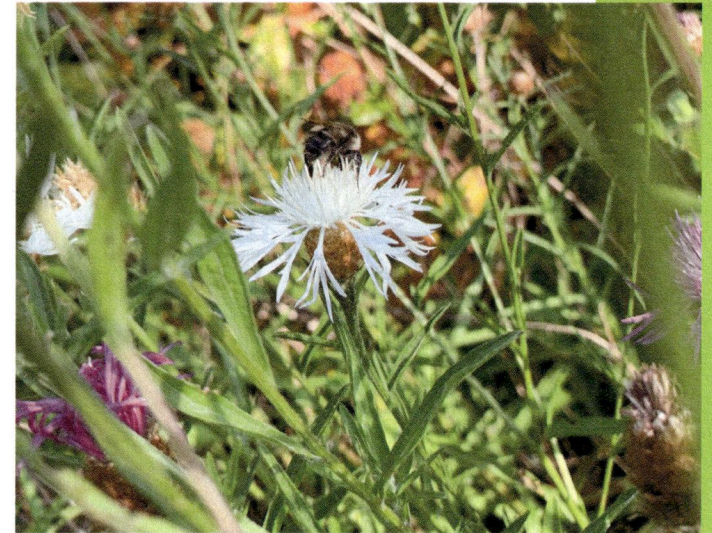
Why increase assessment now?

- Increased staffing levels to meet program mandates and level of service expected
- With no increase in revenue, the program cannot grow to meet high standards
 - Seasonal employees have drastically increased the amount of work we are able to do, but funding for these positions is unstable and running a budget deficit.
 - 2023 totals – no seasonal employees: 150
 - 2024 totals – 1 seasonal employee: 295 acres
 - 2025 to-date – 2 seasonal employees: 230 acres



What can we do with an increase?

- Hire additional year-round staff or more seasonal employees
 - Uphold higher standards of weed control across the County
 - Assist with treatments of rare noxious weeds on private property
 - Continue to survey and improve weed maps
- Implement a cost-share program for County Residents
 - More noxious weeds controlled on private property
- Host Volunteer Events
- Increased outreach and printing of educational materials
- Purchase a second vehicle
- Plantings
- Support increased cost of supplies



Spotted knapweed

Proposed Rate Increase

- Current rate:

- \$4.00 / parcel
- \$0.30 / acre

- \$147,717

- Proposed Rate

- \$5.50 / parcel
- \$0.45 / acre

- \$215,543



Poison hemlock vs bur chervil

Inflation Increase

2016		\$4.00	\$0.30
2017	2%	4.08	0.306
2018	2.80%	4.19	0.315
2019	2.80%	4.31	0.324
2020	2.10%	4.4	0.331
2021	2.10%	4.49	0.338
2022	6.2% (5%)*	4.71	0.355
2023	8.7% (5%)*	4.95	0.373
2024	4.10%	5.15	0.388
2025	2.25%	5.27	0.398
2026	2.25%	5.39	0.406

*There is a 5% cap on inflation rate used. See below.

Proposed Rate Increase

- This rate takes into account the \$1.39 / \$0.11 increases for inflation. The additional \$0.11 / parcel and \$0.09 / acre support the current need to grow the program past what it has been for the last 10 years.
- This rate would support increased permanent staffing. It would also support a full \$10,000 cost-share program.

Non Timber	Count	Rate	Total
Parcels	27,677	5.50	\$152,224
Acres	90,466	0.45	\$40,710
Timber			
Parcels	2,066	0.55	\$1,136
Acres	358,706	0.05	\$16,142
Roads			
Miles*	608	8.77	\$5,332
			\$215,543

Rate/Mile = 7.27 acres * .5/acre + 1 parcel @ 5.5 = 9.14/mile

Acres/mile = 5,280' long * 60' wide / 43,560

Forested Parcels

- **Section 3.65.030 Rate.**
- (1) An assessment for the Jefferson County noxious weed control program of \$____. ____ per parcel and \$____. ____ per acre on all property not classified as forest land shall be imposed annually. Under RCW 17.10.240 forest lands may be subject to an annual noxious weed assessment that does not exceed one-tenth of the weighted average of the per acre and per parcel rate levied on other lands that are subject to the weed assessment. Property classified as forest land, as defined in RCW 84.33.035, which is used solely for the planting, growing or harvesting of trees and which is typified, except for a single five-year period following clear-cut logging, by canopies so dense as to prohibit the growth of an understory shall be assessed at the rate of \$____.____ per parcel and \$____.____ per acre.
- The County will include DNR parcels in this rate bracket.

Proposed Acre Rate Comparison

2 acre parcel					
	Parcel Fee	Acre Fee	Total	Difference (per year)	
Current	\$4.00	\$0.30	\$4.60		
Proposed Rate	\$5.50	\$0.45	\$6.40	\$1.80	
5 acre parcel					
	Parcel Fee	Acre Fee	Total	Difference (per year)	
Current	\$4.00	\$0.30	\$5.50		
Proposed Rate	\$5.50	\$0.45	\$7.75	\$2.25	
10 acre parcel					
	Parcel Fee	Acre Fee	Total	Difference (per year)	
Current	\$4.00	\$0.30	\$7.00		
Proposed Rate	\$5.50	\$0.45	\$10.00	\$3.00	
75 acre forested parcel					
	Parcel Fee	Acre Fee	Total	Difference (per year)	
Current	\$0.40	\$0.03	\$2.65		
Proposed Rate	\$0.55	\$0.045	\$3.925	\$1.275	



12,000 lbs of Scotch broom removed from the PUD corridor this year

Inflation Adjustment

- Annual Assessment will be adjusted per Annual Fee Indexing.
 - Fixed amount fees established by this ordinance shall be adjusted annually on the first business day of January (adjusted date) by the amount of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPIW).
 - The annual fee adjustment shall be calculated as follows: Each fee in effect immediately prior to the adjustment date will be increased by the percentage increase in the CPIW as reported for the month of September preceding the adjustment date.
 - Increases will be rounded to the nearest cent for the per parcel rate and the nearest tenth of a cent for the per acre rate. Timber rates will be one tenth of each per parcel and per acre rate.
 - A fee shall not be reduced by reason of such calculation.
 - Fee increases in accordance with this calculation shall not exceed five percent per year.

Compare to other Counties

County	Parcel Fee	Acre Fee	Last updated	Notes
San Juan	\$9.25	\$1.85	2022	
Cowlitz	\$8.00	\$0.30	2022	
Lewis	\$8.00		2018	
King	\$6.20	\$0.44	2023	
Thurston	\$4.40	\$0.40		\$0.15 per acre for each acre over 5
Jefferson	\$4.00	\$0.30	2015	
Clallam	\$3.60	\$0.31	2022	
Pacific	\$3.00	\$0.10	2019	
Kitsap	\$2.00	\$0.08	2011	
Pierce	\$1.79	\$0.13	2007	

Procedure for increasing assessment

1. Weed Board decides whether to pursue investigating assessment increase and debate preliminary proposals
 - Can occur over multiple board meetings
2. Weed Board public hearing August 11
 - Present proposed rate to public
 - Public comment
4. At board meeting following public hearing, Weed Board discusses and votes on recommendation to BoCC
5. Board of County Commissioners hold a public hearing for public comment on September 15, 2025, then vote to pass or deny the ordinance that establishes new rates starting in 2026.



Recommendations

- On August 11, 2025, the JCNWCB voted to:
 - Raise the assessment:
 - \$5.50 / parcel
 - \$0.45 / acre
 - Add Inflation Adjustment

Sophie DeGroot

sdegroot@co.jefferson.wa.us

360-316-9332



~ 600 lbs of poison hemlock
removed from City of PT 5/19/2025