

Environmental Quality Council (EQC) Meeting
March 9 - 10, 2016
Noxious Weed Coordination Report

State Noxious Weed Coordinator

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Report submitted by Dave Burch.

Primary duties and responsibilities of the position are to provide statewide noxious weed coordination, management of the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund and Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Programs and supervision of three (3) FTE.

Status Report for FY16 – 3rd Quarter

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Activities January – March 2016:

Program Management:

- Reviewed 87 Noxious Weed Trust Fund applications and forwarded them to the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council (NWMAC) and Environmental Assessment Reviewers.
- Organized a NWMAC meeting to discuss grant and other issues on January 21, 2016.
- Organized and managed the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant hearings February 29 – March 4, 2016.
- Continued to oversee the operations of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program.
- Organized a NWSFF Advisory Council meeting to discuss the 2016 season, reviewed forage production and other issues on February 18, 2016.
- Continued to train the new Noxious Weed Grant Coordinator.

County and tribal weed district support:

- Technical and regulatory compliance assistance to County and Tribal Weed coordinators, weed boards and county commissioners: assisted Jefferson County with weed program responsibilities and discussed incorporating the mosquito program with the weed program; presented an overview of the County Weed Act at the McCone County Winter Workshop with over 50 people in attendance.
- Montana Weed Control Act Interpretation and Implementation assistance; form and process assistance: November – assisted Teton County with municipality weed management issue.
- The program goal is to meet with one-third (1/3) of county and tribal county weed districts annually:
 - January – March have met with all 56 counties over the last 9 months either in person or at organized meetings.

Conduct Training and Outreach:

- Coordinating an EDDMapS (GPS weed mapping system/program) for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and eastern county weed districts in April in Billings.
- Participated in the Montana Weed Control Association Annual Conference held January 13 & 14, 2016. The conference was attended by 300 people.
- Serve as Chairman of the Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign; we are scheduling three new "Adopt A Trailhead" sites for the spring of 2016; in Missoula, Beaverhead and Cascade Counties in conjunction with the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, USDA Forest Service, County Weed District, and the Montana Department of Agriculture.
- Assisting with the planning of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) - Invasive Species Summit to be held April 12-13, 2016.
- Assisting in the final review of the Invasive Species Survey.

Respond to Noxious Weed Infestations:

- Participated in Noxious Weed Task Force issues for Rush skeletonweed with Sanders and Lincoln Counties, private landowners and the USDA Forest Service on protocol for implementing a new program for noxious weeds and fire management. This will include pre-certification of fields so fire command units can set up fire camps in fields that are free of noxious weeds.

State, regional and national coordination:

- Working with the 56 counties to get their county weed management plan updates submitted to the department as required by the Montana County Weed Control Act.
- Assisting State Agencies to complete the legislative biennial weed report for FY 14 and FY 15.
- Participated in a Rush skeletonweed biological control Task Force meeting to help develop a Consortium with the surrounding states to help further this important control method. Montana has limited infestations of skeletonweed but other states like Idaho are heavily infested. If we do not help them with this project this weed will continue to spread into Montana.
- Serve as the Department representative on the Aquatic Invasive Species team, along with departments of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Natural Resources and Conservation; and Transportation. We meet on a regular scheduled monthly meeting (every third Tuesday).
- Serve as a member of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC). Attended meetings and met on sub-committees for the summit meeting and strategic plan.
- Continue to meet and participate in the *Greater Sage-grouse Conservation*: We are refining the development of an Action Plan to help guide state and federal agencies, local governments and private entities in a coordinated and effective approach to addressing this important conservation issue.
- Working with Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Montana Department of Transportation; and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to create a Cooperative Agreement between the four agencies for Aquatic Invasive Species.