

**NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
(NWMAC) – SOP 2019**

Noxious Weed Trust Fund

Montana Department of Agriculture



NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT TRUST FUND

80-7-811. Noxious weed management trust fund.

- (1) As required by Article IX, section 6, of the Montana constitution, there is a noxious weed management trust fund of \$10 million. The department shall administer the trust fund.

The Noxious Weed Management Funding Act was established by the legislature in 1985 to provide funding for development and implementation of weed management programs in Montana. This program also provides funding for research and development of innovative weed management techniques, including biological control, and supports educational and other research projects that provide a benefit to all Montanans. It is administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Noxious Weed Program.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

80-7-805. Noxious weed management advisory council.

- (1) The director of the department shall appoint a noxious weed management advisory council to provide advice to the department concerning the administration of this part.
- (2) If appointed, the council must be composed of 11 members, as follows:
 - (a) the director of the department of agriculture, who shall serve as presiding officer;
 - (b) one member representing livestock production;
 - (c) one member representing agriculture crop production;
 - (d) one member from a recreationist/wildlife group;
 - (e) one member who is a herbicide dealer or applicator;
 - (f) one member from a consumer group;
 - (g) one member representing biological research and control interests;
 - (h) one member from the Montana Weed Control Association;
 - (i) two members representing counties, one each from the western and eastern parts of the state, which may include a county commissioner, district weed board member, or weed district supervisor; and
 - (j) one at-large member from the agricultural community.

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

State and federal agencies are an important component to the overall function of the Council. They provide expertise and guidance to the Council on a variety of subjects. Agency representatives evaluate and score all applications and provide input during the hearings and deliberations but are not voting members of the Council.

Members represent:

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| (1) MSU Agricultural Experiment Station | (6) Bureau of Indian Affairs |
| (2) MSU Cooperative Extension Service | (7) Bureau of Land Management |
| (3) MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks | (8) Bureau of Reclamation |
| (4) MT Department of Transportation | (9) US Forest Service |
| (5) MT Department of Natural Resources & Conservation | (10) USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service |

(11) USDA Agricultural Research Station

(12) USDA Animal and Plant Health
Inspection Service

ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS AND RE-APPOINTMENTS

4.5.112 Noxious Weed Management Council.

(1) The members of the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council appointed by the director serve two-year terms.

There are no term-limits. Half (5) of the member's terms expire on June 30 each year. When seeking a new appointment to Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council (NWMAC), an application and letter of interest must be submitted to the department; only a letter of interest is needed for re-appointments.

Odd Numbered Years

Livestock Production

Agricultural Crop Production

Herbicide Dealer/Applicator

Biological Research and Control

Western County Representative

Even Numbered Years

Recreationist/Wildlife Group

Consumer Group

Montana Weed Control Association

At-Large Member

Eastern County Representative

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council is an integral asset to the department. The Council meets three times a year: January, June/July, and March. Attendance is required for all meetings and can be attended either in person or by conference call. The meeting in March is held in conjunction with grant hearings, and the meeting in June/July includes grant tours. The agricultural experiment station and cooperative extension service representatives provide an annual report on current and future projects and plans during the June/July meeting. (MCA 80-7-814). Council members who are not government employees are provided a stipend of \$50/day (MCA 2-15-122). All members are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses at the state per diem rate (MCA 2-18-501).

Meeting packets are provided by MDA staff, they contain the minimum:

- Business meeting agenda
- Draft minutes from previous meeting
- Budget calculations for current and previous years
- Council travel reimbursement form

All Council business meetings are chaired by the Director or their designee, open to the public, recorded, and follow Robert's Rules of Order. Members of NWMAC provide input concerning the administration of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTf) and recommendations related to noxious weed management in Montana to the department. They review and provide updates to the state noxious weed plan, and promote coordination and cooperative partnerships among private, county, industry, state, and federal entities. Members provide funding recommendations for NWTf proposals to the Director annually.

NWTF POLICIES

- No Indirect Cost will be allowed on any Montana Trust Fund Grant; 2/1993
- Emergency Funding allowed by application, \$25,000 limit; 2/2002
- Allow 3% (\$1,000 cap) for administration costs on local cooperative projects for non-county or reservation project funding recipients; 1/2017
- Grant recipients are required to use, or share data with, EDDMapS West to map all weed infestations within the project boundaries; 2/2017
- Project funding recipients may be reimbursed for travel expenses (meals, mileage) up to current state per diem rates; 3/2019
- Project herbicide costs may not exceed current state bid prices by more than 15%; 3/2019

NWTF GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

80-7-814. Administration and expenditure of funds.

- (4) The department may expend funds under this section through grants or contracts to communities, weed management districts, or other entities that it considers appropriate for noxious weed management projects. A project is eligible to receive funds only if the county in which the project occurs has funded its own weed management program using one of the following methods, whichever is less:
- (a) levying an amount of not less than 1.6 mills or an equivalent amount from another source; or
 - (b) appropriating an amount of not less than \$100,000 from any source.
- (5) The department may expend funds without the restrictions specified in subsection (4) for the following:
- (a) employment of a new and innovative noxious weed management project or the development, implementation, or demonstration of any noxious weed management project that may be proposed, implemented, or established by local, state, or national organizations, whether public or private. The expenditures must be on a cost-share basis with the organizations.
 - (b) cost-share noxious weed management programs with local weed management districts;
 - (c) special grants to local weed management districts to eradicate or contain significant noxious weeds newly introduced into the county. These grants may be issued without matching funds from the district.
 - (d) costs incurred by the department for administering the noxious weed management program as follows:
 - (e) administrative expenses incurred by the noxious weed management advisory council;
 - (f) a project recommended by the noxious weed management advisory council, if the department determines that the project will significantly contribute to the management of noxious weeds within the state; and
 - (g) grants to the agricultural experiment station and the cooperative extension service for crop weed management research, evaluation, and education.

INELIGIBLE COSTS (excluding Special County/Reservation Grants)

Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant funds may not be used for:

- Application expenditures - developing grant proposals or grant hearing travel expenses
- Purchase of biocontrol agents
- Equipment purchases
- Indirect costs
- Capital improvements
- Annual herbicide for cropland/CRP practices
- Re-seeding efforts for alfalfa fields, grain for wildlife habitat, or other cropland situations

APPLICATION EVALUATIONS

All grant applications are reviewed, and environmental assessments are approved by department staff prior to releasing applications to the Council. Once released, applications are reviewed and scored by each council member and agency representative online at www.fundingmt.org using the forms below. The Council has a chance to change and submit scores after each project presentation during the grant hearings.

EVALUATION CRITERIA – Local Cooperatives	SCORING RANGE
1) This project has matching funds (including in-kind services) from private, state, and/or federal sources. A minimum of 50% hard match is required for commercial application and herbicide.	0 - 15
2) This project meets Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) criteria efforts as described in the Montana State Weed Management Plan.	0 - 10
3) This project involves management of high priority noxious weeds for the project area within the county or counties.	0 - 10
4) This project incorporates measurable objectives that describe how renewable resources will be enhanced.	0 - 15
5) This project utilizes integrated management techniques that are both appropriate and applicable for the noxious weed species to be treated in the designated area.	0 - 20
6) This project incorporates an appropriate annual monitoring plan that will effectively track progress.	0 - 10
7) This project identifies specific education opportunities for land managers targeted in this grant.	0 - 10
8) This grant application was presented well, and the project reflects a likelihood of success.	0 - 10
Numerical Ranking Total:	0 - 100

EVALUATION CRITERIA- Education**SCORING RANGE**

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| 1) This project builds coalitions and partnerships to help the public connect with available weed management resources. | 0 - 15 |
| 2) This project includes collaborative resources from private, state, and/or federal entities. (50:50 match is not required) | 0 - 10 |
| 3) This project focuses upon a high priority education need as described in the Montana Noxious Weed Management Plan. | 0 - 10 |
| 4) This education project will promote public awareness about the impacts of noxious weeds on natural resources and illustrate opportunities for action. | 0 - 15 |
| 5) The project emphasizes hands-on learning that encourages participants to become more knowledgeable about noxious weeds and their management. | 0 - 15 |
| 6) The education programs are based on sound ecological principles. | 0 - 10 |
| 7) This project includes evaluation of its effectiveness using acceptable methods. | 0 - 15 |
| 8) This grant application was presented well, and the project reflects a likelihood of success. | 0 - 10 |

Numerical Ranking Total: 0 -100

EVALUATION CRITERIA - Research	SCORING RANGE
1) This project was developed in cooperation with land managers to address land management needs.	0 - 10
2) This research project is a listed need in the Montana Noxious Weed Management Plan.	0 - 10
3) This research project will increase knowledge of noxious weeds and/or improve an important aspect of noxious weed management.	0 - 15
4) The research will enhance a new or existing method of weed management.	0 - 15
5) This research will provide the foundation for creating a positive long-term effect on natural resources that are challenged or threatened by weeds.	0 - 10
6) The project methods are appropriate for accomplishing the objectives and the researchers have the knowledge and facilities to carry out the proposed work.	0 - 15
7) The research results will be effectively disseminated so it reaches the on-the-ground manager.	0 - 15
8) This grant application was presented well, and the project reflects a likelihood of success.	0 - 10
Numerical Ranking Total:	0-100

NWTF GRANT HEARINGS

Funding opportunities are posted by July 1st, and grant writing workshops are provided by the department staff in October/November. Noxious Weed Trust Fund applications are due each year by midnight of January 6th. Grant hearings are scheduled in March for one full week. Applicant presentations are scheduled Monday-Thursday followed by deliberations on Friday. The hearings begin and end with a NWMAC business meeting.

- Grant applicants are allowed 15 minutes for their presentation, ten minutes for the presentation and five minutes for questions
- Questions are addressed through the council chair and can come from both council members and agency representatives
- Application revisions are done outside the hearings with applicants and MDA staff. Any changes are reported to the Council prior to deliberations
- The Council submits application scores after each day's presentations and discussions. Scores are totaled and sorted in descending order prior to deliberations (see Application Evaluation Section)

Deliberations are open to the public and conclude with a list of funding recommendations from the Council. Projects are deliberated in descending order based on combined scores from council members and agency representatives. Final deliberations are made by recorded vote of the council members.

- Funding motions are always made in a positive manner
- Motions are made by three separate individuals: motion, second, call for question
- Motions and seconds should not be made by an individual if they have a direct or perceived conflict of interest with the project (see definition below)
- Questions are addressed through the council chair and can come from both council members and agency representatives
- Council and public comments addressing an application they have submitted may be heard at the discretion of the chair and Council; if all members agree
- All motions should be made based on the merit of the project regardless of the amount of funding available
- Any additional motions should not be made by an individual who abstained from voting in the original motion
- Council funding recommendations are submitted to the Director for final approval

Conflict of Interest:

Definition pertaining to NWTF deliberations (Per MDA Attorney, Cort Jensen – Jan. 2012)

Voting council members should abstain from voting on and scoring a project if:

- They are actively involved in the project (including the organization they are representing)
- They stand to benefit from the project
- They personally feel uncomfortable in voting on the project
- They would be inclined to vote to fund the project based on the people involved rather than the merit of the project