

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	February 6, 2023	Time:	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Jasmine Chaffee	Location:	Delta Hotel, Helena
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting			
2. Attendees			
<p>Council Members: Amber Burch, Brian Ostwald, Jeanette Nordahl (virtual), Joel Farkell, Kellieann Sweeney, Kenny Keever, Dana Weatherford, Jeff Brennan, Karissa Floerchinger (virtual)</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Gary Adams- APHIS; David Hopkins – BIA (virtual); Wendy Velman – BLM; Parker Osterloh - DNRC; Adam Sieges – FWP, Jason Allen- MDT; Dan Lucas - MSU EXT (virtual); Monica Pokorny – NRCS, Michelle Cox – USFS, Natalie West – ARS-Sidney (virtual), Jacob Bradford – BOR (virtual)</p> <p>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Zach Coccoli, Ian Foley, Kima Tranyham, Jasmine Chaffee, Greta Dige, Andrew Lam, Josh Wagoner</p> <p>Guests: Sam Yonan, Kelsey Miller, Liz Lodman, Hannah Lewis</p>			
Topic	Discussion		
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Minutes Review/Action Items</p> <p>Department Updates</p>	<p>Zach Coccoli, Deputy Director, called the meeting to order. Zach gave Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) updates to the group. He announced that Christy Clark had just been confirmed as the Director of MDA, and that a new director for the Wheat and Barley Commission has been hired. He talked about the Department’s ARPA fund grant program which has awarded \$15M to date, mini grants for Stress Assistance programs, and recent trade teams working on pulse, barley and wheat milling. Zach noted that it was legislative session and listed three relevant department bills as part of the Governor’s Red Tape Initiative: removal of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Council (NWSFFC), huckster law, and huckleberry location registration requirement. He mentioned MDA helped host the Innovation Conference for new ag tech recently and the winner was a researcher from MSU who had a new Durum variety. Zach noted recently did a re-org which removed one high-level position and restructured the licensing programs which now have a customer response time of 48 hours or less. Lastly, he talked about a few of the accomplishments the department had regarding the Governor’s Value-Added Initiative: doubled the number of animals slaughtered in the state via grants for meat processing facilities and conducting tours of agricultural businesses to highlight the work being done across the state. He encouraged everyone to reach out to the department for any needs or comments.</p> <p>Michelle Cox gave an update for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and noted that the National Forests got about \$5M from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and that most of the funds went to State and Private Forestry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Northern Region received \$2M of those grants and most of the funding went to Montana and Idaho. She also mentioned that the National Forest was awarded \$14,000 to review the status of each of the 10 unit’s aggregate policies and practices and would be asking for \$10,000 each year until 2026. Michelle will be asking for the Noxious</p>		

	<p>Weed Free Materials program to help them get up to speed with certification standards.</p> <p>Minutes from the July 5-6, 2022, council meeting minutes and action items were reviewed. Kenny Keever moved to approve the minutes as written; Joel Farkell seconded the motion; minutes were unanimously approved.</p>																
<p>Program Updates</p>	<p>Jasmine Chaffee introduced Leigha Bradford who was hired to assess the ability of the department in adding an AmeriCorps program and will be reaching out to stakeholders for feedback on ways MDA could meet the community’s needs. Jasmine also introduced Sam Yonan who is a Big Sky Watershed Corps member serving under a grant administered by MDA, USFS, and Montana State University (MSU) and will be serving as the Adopt-A-Trailhead Montana coordinator this year and hopes to run this program with an AmeriCorps member each year in the future.</p> <p>Jasmine noted that the terms for five voting members will end June 30, 2023. The department is waiting for legislation (HB 93) concerning the NWSFFC to be resolved since it will affect the dynamic and duties of the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council before it posts openings. If legislation passes, the Consumer representative will become a representative for noxious weed seed free materials, and the Biocontrol Research and Control Interests representative will change to a Weed Research and Control Interests representative.</p> <p>Jasmine encouraged council members to attend the Agricultural Research Station-Sidney focus meeting February 9th. They will be discussing how to move forward with the open position vacated by John Gaskin who retired in 2021. Natalie West offered additional information and a zoom link to those who would like to attend.</p> <p>A summary of the noxious weed program budget and funding estimate for the FY23 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant awards was provided by Jasmine Chaffee. State Special Revenue funding, including the \$100,000 MDT pass-through, for the FY23 MDA noxious weed program was estimated at \$2,033,791 which is down a bit from last year. Jasmine mentioned they would factor in an additional month and a half and hoped that that number would increase before the hearings.</p> <p><u>State Special Revenue pre-allocated grant awards and expenditures</u></p> <table data-bbox="446 1402 1498 1717"> <tr> <td>\$450,000</td> <td>FY22 Special \$7,500 County/Reservation grant awards Grants will be distributed to 5 tribes and 55 counties in early spring</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$100,000</td> <td>MDT pass through of \$1,785.72 to each county</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$ 14,000</td> <td>Estimated council expenses</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$230,357</td> <td>Estimated FY22 non-grant expenses (Amount is based on 12% of the prior year fund 02068 grant awards. Non-grant funds are utilized for noxious weed program operating and personal services costs, and a portion of MDA’s Central Services Division costs)</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Funds available for additional grant awards</u></p> <table data-bbox="446 1780 1498 1923"> <tr> <td>State Special Revenue Fund (estimate)</td> <td>\$1,339,434</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td> <td>\$90,397</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forest Service Funding</td> <td>\$333,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Reverted Funds (YTD estimate)</u></td> <td><u>\$34,864</u></td> </tr> </table>	\$450,000	FY22 Special \$7,500 County/Reservation grant awards Grants will be distributed to 5 tribes and 55 counties in early spring	\$100,000	MDT pass through of \$1,785.72 to each county	\$ 14,000	Estimated council expenses	\$230,357	Estimated FY22 non-grant expenses (Amount is based on 12% of the prior year fund 02068 grant awards. Non-grant funds are utilized for noxious weed program operating and personal services costs, and a portion of MDA’s Central Services Division costs)	State Special Revenue Fund (estimate)	\$1,339,434	General Fund	\$90,397	Forest Service Funding	\$333,000	<u>Reverted Funds (YTD estimate)</u>	<u>\$34,864</u>
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	<p>Estimated funds for March grant awards: \$1,797,695</p> <p>Historical weed vehicle fee revenue, Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) interest revenue, reverted fund totals, and hearing request totals were provided to the council. Funding requested for the 2023 grant hearings currently totals approximately \$2.02 million, leaving a shortfall of \$224,333. Available grant funds will continue to be assessed prior to the March hearings.</p> <p>Jasmine provided the council with a summary and history of Noxious Weed Trust Fund account revenue.</p>
<p>Grant Updates and Project Reviews</p> <p>Application Updates</p>	<p>Greta Dige provided a field visit summary, highlighting several of the 40+ past season project reviews of education, research, and local cooperative projects. She provided detailed reports of several grants and trainings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson Creek Preserve- Youth Education Day; Madison County • Montana Biocontrol Coordination Program- Canada thistle rust inoculations • Monitoring Protocols- testing frame sizes and levels; MSU/Sweet Grass County • Saltcedar Bioagent- lab and field visit; MSU • Toadflax Weevil Establishment- lab and field visit; MSU • Whitetop Mite Establishment- field site in Toston; MSU • 4 New CWMAAs – Fallon, Park, Madison, and Cascade County • 5 Continuing CWMAAs – Cascade, Lincoln (medusahead site), Ravalli, Powell, and Park County • IPM Training with Department of Environmental Quality and MSU Extension • Grant writing training, webinars, open office hours • EDDMapS and monitoring trainings <p>Greta advised the council that 55 applications were received for consideration at the March grant hearings. The 2023 applications consist of 5 education, 3 research, 6 development, 7 EDRR/ED programs, and 34 local cooperative projects. Application requests currently total \$1,797,695. Applications will be sent for council review through WebGrants at https://funding.mt.gov by February 13th.</p>
<p>NWSFF Program Update</p>	<p>Andrew Lam presented the 2022 season report for the Noxious Weed Free Materials (NWFm) program. He noted that the amount of certified tonnage and number of inspections had increase some from 2021 and it is heading in the right direction. An overall total of 9,247 tons of certified hay and straw was reported for 2022, and a total of 4,688 acres inspected. A history of forage revenue was provided to the council.</p> <p>Andrew reported five counties had new NWSFF inspectors and that he either helped them conduct their first inspections or for those who have not inspected, with visit with them in 2023 to schedule a visit. Andrew inspected two wattle plants, five pellet plants, and a new out-of-state plant in Sioux City, SD this year. He also certified three gravel pits including a sand pit for Department of Transportation (MDT), a mulch facility, and a soil facility in South Dakota. In 2023, he will be adding additional MDT pits, Knife River pits, and others. Andrew noted there is interest, and he receives 1-2 calls a month about the program. He will be sending county weed districts, MSU</p>

	extension offices, and conservation district offices the new gravel FAQ brochure for further outreach when it returns from the printer.
EDRR Program Update	<p>Josh Wagoner gave a brief update about his new program noting that he did a lot of traveling in 2022 to become familiar with Montana’s new invaders and the task force (TF) leads. He organized or assisted leads in hosting several task force meetings: Tansy Ragwort TF, Rush Skeletonweed TF, Dyer’s Woad TF, Blueweed TF, Bugloss TF, and Palmer Amaranth TF. He worked with groups interested in forming cooperatives for other high priority weeds including invasive riparian trees (saltcedar, Russian olive, common buckthorn), and ventenata. He is working with the North American Invasive Species Management Association to host a webinar and education campaign for ventenata this spring.</p> <p>Josh is starting to build partnerships with neighboring counties of Idaho, Wyoming, and North Dakota, along with a few provincial weed managers. He will continue to reach out to other stakeholder groups and distribute educational materials in 2023.</p>
WebGrant User Training	<p>Greta gave a quick training on how to review and score applications in WebGrants. She provided the council county budget breakdowns and requests for the 2023 funding cycle.</p> <p><u>Application Form Changes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New this year, EDRR and Statewide Education programs applied for 3yrs of funding. This is a separate funding opportunity. • Two proposals for the Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign (MNWEC) are included in this year’s application pool. The MNWEC Steering Committee will be providing a recommendation on which proposal they would like to see move forward. These will be treated as a Statewide Education program and will be requesting 3yrs of funding. <p><u>Evaluation Criteria Changes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptions for scores is included on the evaluation criteria forms to provide the council a basis for their scoring and what should be included in each section. This should also help applicants in providing the necessary information. • One-page summaries for each application with be provided to the council for grant hearing week.
Other Business/ Public Comment Adjourn	<p>The council business meeting and grant hearings will be held at the Delta Hotel in Helena on March 6th – 9th. Hearings conclude on Thursday, March 9th with deliberations and the council funding recommendations for Director Clark.</p> <p>The council was asked for agenda suggestions for the March business meeting and encouraged to contact Jasmine if any come to mind.</p> <p>Jasmine Chaffee opened the meeting for discussion of other business and public comment. None was heard.</p> <p>Jeff Brennan moved to adjourn the meeting; Kenny Keever seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Provide Jasmine agenda items for March Business Meeting	Council Members	March 1st	
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				