

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting & Tour		
Date of Meeting:	July 12, 2023	Time:	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Jasmine Chaffee	Location:	Southern Ag Research Center, Huntley, MT / Crow Reservation
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting & Grant Tours			
2. Attendees			
<p>Council Members: Jeanette Nordahl (virtual), Joel Farkell, Amber Burch, Kellieann Sweeney, Brian Ostwald</p> <p>Agency Representatives: David Hopkins - BIA, Jacob Bradford – BOR, Parker Osterloh – DNRC, Adam Sieges – FWP, Jason Allen- MDT, Lovreet Shergill – MSU, Dan Lucas – MSU Ext. (virtual), Gary Adams- APHIS, Natalie West- USDA-ARS</p> <p>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Christy Clark (virtual), Ian Foley (virtual), Jasmine Chaffee, Greta Dige, Josh Wagoner, Sam Yonan, Lori Leaf</p> <p>Guests (in-person): Robert Thompson – BOR, Steve McConnell – City of Billings, Bob Demery - BIA</p>			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome	Christy Clark, Director-Chair, called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Christy gave Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) updates to the group and thanked the council for their time and commitment. She acknowledged their time reviewing and discussing the HB821 Woody Invasive Tree grants and thanked them for their expertise and dedication to invasive species management.		
Minutes Review/Action Items	Council meeting and grant hearing minutes from March 6-9, 2023, were reviewed. All action items were completed. Amber Burch moved to approve the minutes as written; Joel Farkell seconded the motion; minutes were unanimously approved.		
Department Updates	Jasmine Chaffee provided a noxious weed program update. She announced that the department will be starting a new AmeriCorps program called AgCorps and will have up to 11 members serving in 2024 with several different programs. There are three member positions in the noxious weed program: mapping/monitoring, Adopt-A-Trailhead Montana (AATM), and Education Specialist positions. Jasmine noted that the America the Beautiful grant with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to manage ventenata in south-eastern Montana and north-eastern Wyoming was unsuccessful this round, but she will be submitting another next year once more mapping is done. Lastly, Andrew Lam has left his position as the Certified Materials coordinator and Jasmine mentioned that she will not be refilling the position and will coordinate the program's activities herself moving forward.		
Grant Program Updates	Greta Dige noted that she had changed the numbering system on the project evaluation forms slightly to make them more readable in WebGrants and asked reviewers to send her any additional changes or updates asap. Both the County/Reservation Program Enhancement and Emergency Project funding opportunities are posted; all other grant opportunities will be posted in early		

	<p>September. Greta reviewed quickly how to find EDDMapS points for projects and mentioned she will start requiring them for status reports moving forward.</p>
<p>Education & AATM Program Updates</p>	<p>Lori Leaf, MDA's education specialist gave a brief summary of the projects she has been working on since her start earlier in the year. So far she has spent time traveling the state with Greta and Josh on their site visits to learn more about the weeds and add quality photos for publications and projects to the noxious weed database. She has learned how to use EDDMapS better, set up monitoring transects, created vehicle dash stickers for Montana Department of Transportation and county rigs, and has created a noxious weed FaceBook page and will continue to post about what the team is doing, new invaders, and repost other events from other organizations.</p> <p>Sam Yonan, a Big Sky Watershed Corps member serving with MDA as the AATM coordinator, gave a quick summary of the activities she has been up to since the March meeting. These include creating an AATM webpage on the MDA website that includes a map of all known kiosk locations with storyboards for active volunteer groups, she's been traveling with the noxious weed team helping with workdays and monitoring, has been working with several new organizations to create signage and help them install additional kiosks, and created a program brochure and rack card for tabling events.</p>
<p>EDRR Program Update</p>	<p>Josh Wagoner gave an update on the Early Detection, Rapid Response (EDRR) program.</p> <p>He noted that the first genetically confirmed live palmer amaranth plant had been found in a flower box next to a home in Shelby, MT. There was mention of possible waterhemp in Billings; Lovreet is having it tested.</p> <p>Josh talked about the workday with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe (CSKT) to survey and treat rush skeletonweed in an are that had been treated years past, but had burned in 2022. There was about 20 people that volunteered their time including two AmeriCorps members. The group surveyed two sites; the first one was quite clean but the second had a lot of ventenata and may need follow up.</p> <p>The medusahead site in Lincoln County (1.7 acres) has been treated, continues to be monitored, and seems to be under control. The infestations on the CSKT are at about 1,000 acres and some folks in Wyoming have said they believe there is some in Bighorn County but it's unconfirmed.</p> <p>Josh has been working on a new weed, garden loosestrife, a perennial that Washington State says is very invasive. There are small infestations in Ravalli County and Flathead County. All will be treated next week and will be monitored moving forward.</p> <p>Josh noted that he and Jasmine had spent the previous day with Jane Mangold, MSU, and Bob Demery, BIA, monitoring her herbicide trials on the Crow Reservation. The Council will be touring these sites in the afternoon.</p> <p>Josh talked about Sanders County and noted that they are grossly infested with blueweed. Jason Allen toured the county with Josh and a crew member</p>

	<p>learning how to identify it and treat it. MDT will be working on the blueweed in spots along the right-of-way in Sanders County this year.</p> <p>Josh also mentioned that Lincoln County was treating the known rush skeletonweed sites in Sanders County since they have an acting coordinator and the task force doesn't want it to spread.</p>
Member Updates	<p>Jacob Bradford talked about the work they had been doing at Clark Fork Dam in Beaverhead County with MDT including hiring a contractor to spray for noxious weeds like spotted knapweed and spurge. He mentioned that Melissa Maggio had been awarded some Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to monitor for biocontrol at Tiber and Canyon Ferry. He also introduced Robert Thompson, a BOR employee who transferred from Livingston BLM and is now stationed in Billings.</p> <p>Parker Osterloh noted that they are focusing on finishing up their lease evaluations to see what the properties are looking like. Lease evaluations are done on a 10-year schedule, and they are trying collect weed data to build up their database.</p> <p>Jason Allen talked about a section of road with blueweed in Sanders County that they were treating ventenata using esplanade wasn't working on the blueweed. They found new infestations of blueweed on CSKT between Elmo and Hot Springs. He also spent time with crew members surveying and mapping ventenata locations in eastern MT and found none in Custer Co. He will work on the Billings section next.</p> <p>Gary Adams noted that his crews are out collecting biocontrol agents when they are not doing grasshopper work. APHIS is also responsible for handling shipments and pathways. Gary said to let them know if folks are seeing something coming in that should not be.</p> <p>Joel noted that he has seen a lot of education and awareness in the public and it is critical since a lot of people are moving in and around the state.</p> <p>Kellieann offered to provide door knockers to Sanders County for education when they return from the printers and also mentioned Ravalli County created a top 10 invaders signage for trailheads and fishing access sites.</p> <p>Brian noted that he has been seeing a lot of new subdivisions popping up and this year all the dormant seeds from years ago are now growing with all the extra moisture.</p> <p>Natalie West talked about the flowering rush agents they are rearing at the Sydney ARS facility. They've had a successful second year of rearing and just sent a batch to Canada to get them established in the field. She is helping with the pre-release monitoring project and noted they have sites at Flathead Lake and Thompson Falls. She thanked anyone who helped petition or wrote support letters for John Gaskin's position at ARS and said leadership will be holding listening sessions before making a decision and she will send the information to Jasmine when dates are set.</p> <p>Amber said that Kelsey Miller was doing great things as the new Montana Weed Control Association executive director including new software for members to provide better communication and resources. She talked about the Dyer's woad project and that they had dogs at Lima and Mt. Sentinel. Numbers seem to be low despite the moisture. She noted that her, Josh, and Jasmine will be meeting Sweet Grass County folks at the Spring Creek location tomorrow. She also said that a single</p>

	<p>plant was found in Carbon County that was in the same site as one found 10 years ago. Could be new or could be dormant for that long.</p> <p>Dan Lucas thanked the Council and MDA for their continued support and funding of research projects. He mentioned that although MSU Extension has a lot going on right now, they are able to help with educating new MT residents.</p>
HB821 Invasive Woody Tree Funding Deliberations	<p>HB821 was passed earlier this year and tasked the department to administer \$250,000 to woody invasive tree management projects in Musselshell, Stillwater, and Yellowstone Counties. Four applicants applied: Musselshell County Weed District, Yellowstone County Weed District, Yellowstone County Conservation District and the City of Billings. Jasmine presented the scores of each application to the Council and explained the deliberation process. Deliberations commenced in order of application ID. Jasmine Chaffee served as proxy vote for chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>City of Billings - A comprehensive plan for eradicating buckthorn from Billings' residences, business establishments, parks and public lands; Steve McConnell Average Score: 55.75 of 70 Amount Requested: \$45,868</p> <p>Brian Ostwald motioned to fund City of Billings at \$25,000; Joel Farkell seconds – 4 yes, 2 abstain; motion passes.</p> <p>Musselshell County Weed District - Salt Cedar project on the Musselshell River; Meriel Beck Average Score: 50.69 of 70 Amount Requested: \$125,010</p> <p>Brian Ostwald motioned to fund Musselshell Co. Weed District at \$125,010; Amber Burch seconds – 5 yes, 1 abstain; motion passes. Brian motioned to reopen voting, Amber seconds – 5 yes, 1 abstain; motion passes. Brian motioned to fund Musselshell Co. Weed District at \$125,000; Amber seconds – 5 yes, 1 abstain; motion passes.</p> <p>Yellowstone County Conservation District - Cove Ditch Russian Olive Management Project in Yellowstone & Stillwater Counties; Edie Vogel Average Score: 63.19 of 70 Amount Requested: \$113,138</p> <p>Brian Ostwald motioned to fund Yellowstone County Conservation District at \$0; Joel Farkell seconds – 4 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain; motion passes.</p> <p>Yellowstone County Weed District - Yellowstone River Salt Cedar Project - Continuing Project; Joe Lockwood Average Score: 56.72 of 70 Amount Requested: \$250,000</p> <p>Brian Ostwald motioned to fund Yellowstone County Weed District for \$100,000; Amber Burch seconds – 5 yes, 1 abstain; motion passes.</p>

	All recommendations will be compiled and sent to the Director for final approval. Applicants will receive funding letters within the next couple weeks.			
Other Business/ Public Comment	<p>Council appointments were reviewed noting that three members were returning for another two terms, and three members, Steve Tyrrel, Jeff Littlefield and Bill Curran, are new serving in the roles of Herbicide Dealer/Applicator, Noxious Weed Research and Control Interests, and Member At-Large respectively.</p> <p>The winter council business meeting will be held at the Department of Agriculture in Helena on November 8th, 2023.</p> <p>The council was asked for agenda suggestions for the next business meeting and encouraged to contact Jasmine if any come to mind.</p> <p>The meeting was opened for discussion of other business and public comment. None was heard.</p> <p>Jasmine introduced Bob Demery, BIA, and he gave a brief summary of the afternoon’s project tours and presented maps of the area.</p> <p>Jasmine thanked Lovreet Shergill and the Southern Ag Research Center (SARC) for hosting the meeting and the afternoon facility tour.</p>			
Adjourn	Kellieann Sweeney motioned to adjourn, Amber Burch seconds; meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.			
Grant Tours	Council members attended a tour around the SARC facility and learned the different projects students and faculty are working on. Members then traveled to the Crow Reservation and toured Jane Mangold’s grant project looking at herbicide trials for ventenata control.			
4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Contact Greta to make edits to evaluation criteria	Council Members	ASAP	
2	Notify APHIS if is being sold/shipped that should not be	Council Members	Ongoing	
3	Send Jasmine ARS listening session details	Natalie West		
4	Provide Jasmine agenda items for next Business Meeting	Council Members	Sept. 30, 2023	