

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	June 19, 2012	Time:	8:00 a.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Hampton Inn – Southgate Dr., Billings, MT

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting

2. Attendees

Council Members: Nico Cantalupo, Jack Eddie, Jim Gordon, Jim Olivarez, Jim Story, Jennifer Vermillion, Todd Wagner, Dick Zoanni
Agency Representatives: Gary Adams, Mike Miller, Steve Shelly, Steve Siegelin, John Simons, Tracy Sterling, Peter Stevenson
Montana Dept. of Agriculture Staff: Greg Ames, Carol Bearden, Dave Burch, Kim Johnson, Donna Rise, Jeremy Seidlitz
Guests: Hank McNeel, Jim Visser

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Education / Training Coordinator	Greg Ames welcomed the council to the meeting. Greg reported that Shantell Frame-Martin has been hired to fill the education/training coordinator position recommended for funding at the 2012 grant hearings. Greg discussed the background and qualifications of the new employee and reported that Shantell would join the Department on July 16 th .
Review February 27 – March 2, 2012 Minutes	The minutes from the February 27 – March 2, 2012 meeting and grant hearings were reviewed. Todd Wagner moved to approve the minutes as written. Jim Gordon seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
Budget Review	<p>Greg Ames provided a detailed review of the MDA weed program budget with estimates of fiscal year end totals. State Special Revenue funding for fiscal year 2012 was estimated at \$1,336,654 in vehicle registration fees and \$502,000 from interest earned on the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF). Estimated expenditures to be paid from these funds included grant awards (\$1,176,216), weed program expenditures (\$200,583), and administrative expenditures (\$181,269). Greg reported that State Special Revenue funds cover varied percentages of staff salaries for a combined total of 3.5 full time employees. Administrative costs are projected to represent 7.4 percent of the program costs for fiscal year 2012. Greg advised the Council that the Department is following the interpretation of the law related to administrative expenditures given by the Department attorney, which has been confirmed by legislative auditors.</p> <p>Additional program funding sources and expenditures were reviewed by Greg including US Forest Service funding (\$628,010), General Fund (\$101,159), Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) funding transfer (\$100,000), and Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Eurasian watermilfoil survey funding (\$47,300). Dave Burch reported that funds from State Special Revenue were not being used to support the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage program, which is now operating on reserve forage program dollars and funds from the MDA pesticide program. Greg noted that the MDA pesticide program provides assistance to the noxious weed program based on the pesticide program statute. Greg provided trend information related to the pesticide program.</p> <p>Dave Burch reported that Forest Service funds for FY 2013 total \$263,000 for grants and \$19,000 for administration. Jack Eddie asked what needs to be done to obtain the funds above the ten million dollar cap on the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. Donna Rise said a Bill developed outside of the MDA would probably be needed to obtain legislative approval to sweep the excess amount, approximately \$300,000, for use in grant funding.</p> <p>Todd Wagner said it would be helpful to have budget comparisons from previous years. Greg said future reports can include graphed summary information from previous years.</p>
Agricultural Experiment Station Overview	<p>Tracy provided information on MSU biological weed control research targeting Russian knapweed, yellow toadflax, Russian olive, tansy ragwort, invasive hawkweeds, weedy mustards, field bindweed, rush skeletonweed, St. Johnswort, common tansy, oxeye daisy, and spotted knapweed.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez asked for an update on the previously funded NWTF grant for Lisa Rew's vehicle wash / seed dispersal project. Tracy said the information has been published and she will provide it to Jim. Tracy added that Lisa would be happy to present her finding to the council. MDA staff will contact Lisa Rew for a future presentation date.</p>

Cooperative Extension Service Overview	<p>Steve Siegelin, Western Region Department Head for the Montana State University Extension Service, provided a report on recent Extension Service activities. Steve noted the ongoing work being done by Jane Mangold and also reported an increase in the Extension Service addressing the needs of small acreage landowners.</p> <p>Other activities included the hiring of a full-time horticulture specialist in Missoula County, and continued efforts with the Grant Kohrs cattle weed grazing project. Additional studies on this grazing method are planned to evaluate the long term success, which will enable Extension representatives to provide good advice to land managers.</p>
Emergency Grant Funding	<p>Dave Burch and Greg Ames discussed the council's recommendation, in past years, to set aside \$75,000 of State and Private Forestry Assistance funds and \$75,000 of NWTF dollars as a \$150,000 emergency fund designed to meet the need for quick weed control response following fires or new invader threats. Dave had been contacted by Gary Olsen to see if the emergency funding was available for areas affected by flooding. Following discussion, it was agreed that criteria for emergency funds would be flood, fire, catastrophic events, and new invader emergencies. Applicants will need to demonstrate the importance and urgency for funding. A limit of \$25,000 per application was set. Todd Wagner moved to set aside \$75,000 from the NWTF and \$75,000 from the State and Private Forestry Assistance award to fund the \$150,000 Weed Emergency Grant Fund. Jack Eddie seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Information on the availability of emergency funding will be broadcast to interested parties via email and websites. The Department will decide on an application review process based on the number of applications received. Unallocated emergency funding will be utilized to fund grant requests at the 2013 grant hearings.</p>
NWTF Criteria Subcommittee	<p>Council members serving on the Criteria Subcommittee were thanked for their time and efforts in developing three new evaluation forms for the 2013 grant applications. Evaluation criteria will now be statement based rather than formatted as questions, and the scoring has been changed to allow a wider range of scores for each item. Each evaluation form was reviewed with a few wording adjustments being made.</p> <p>Tracy Sterling encouraged revising the application review process to primary, secondary and reviewer roles. Dave Burch felt it was important that voting council members review and score all applications and that agency representatives be counted on to provide expertise on applications in their fields as primary and secondary reviewers.</p> <p>Kim Johnson will prepare the 2013 grant application forms for review by the Council, with an emphasis on matching the criteria sequence on the evaluation forms to the application format and providing an opportunity for applicants to fully address all criteria.</p> <p>Suggested application changes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require long-term projects to demonstrate long term results rather than submitting photos of a same season pre-sprayed and sprayed patch of weeds. • Require pre-treatment photos be included with first year local cooperative project applications. • Encourage applicants to provide more detail when stating "integrated approach", etc. • Increase applicant awareness of competitive process for NWTF grant awards. <p>Applicant hearing presentations were discussed with Tracy Sterling encouraging elimination of presentations at the grant hearings. Dave Burch noted that results of the recent council and applicant survey indicated that the majority favored continuing applicant presentations. Shorter presentations and possible limits on PowerPoint slides were discussed. Additional time for discussion and/or deliberation was suggested, possibly after each day's hearings, or prior to the hearings with a focus on projects with a large discrepancy in pre-scoring.</p> <p>extension agent to discuss the various options.</p>

Other Business	<p>Dates for the 2013 NWTF grant hearings were discussed with agreement that the hearings would be held in Helena and a council preference that they be held at a hotel. March 4-8, 2013 is the likely date of the hearings unless a different venue is found. Final information on the hearing dates and location will be provided to the council in the next few weeks.</p> <p>Dave Burch provided information on Eurasian watermilfoil and reported that MDA is operating four inspection stations 12 hours per day, seven days a week in conjunction with those operated by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. To date MDA had found 11 curlyleaf pondweed and other vegetation fouled boats. Nico Cantalupo, Jennifer Vermillion, Steve Siegelin, Gary Adams, Jim Gordon, John Simons, and Todd Wagner will be added to the mailing list for aquatic invasive species updates distributed by Celestine Duncan.</p> <p>Dave Burch advised the Council that the \$7,500 Special County / Reservation grants were due from applicants by July 1, 2012. It was agreed that a WebGrants report of the applications would be sent to the Council.</p> <p>Public comment was asked for by Greg Ames. Hank McNeel said the meeting discussion was similar to past years and that he likes to see the cooperative efforts that are being made.</p> <p>Agenda items suggested for the January 14, 2013 meeting include the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rush skeletonweed quarantine update • Montana Weed Management Plan presentation • Vehicle wash and weed seed dispersal presentation (Lisa Rew) • Statewide education update • Eurasian watermilfoil update • Legislative update <p>Jim Visser briefed the Council on the tour that he had arranged for the afternoon. Yellowstone County saltcedar projects will be visited and discussed.</p> <p>Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously.</p>
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4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Provide budget comparison information from previous years in a graphed summary format.	Carol Bearden	Jan. 2013 meeting	open
2	Provide an update on the NWTF funded vehicle wash / seed dispersal project. Contact Lisa Rew for a presentation date. Tracy will provide published information to Jim Olivarez.	MDA Staff Tracy Sterling	Jan.2013 meeting	open
3	Add county and sponsor information to the grant hearing deliberation ranking order sheet.	MDA Staff	2013 grant hearings	open
4	Broadcast information on the availability of emergency grant funding to interested parties via email and websites.	MDA Staff	ASAP	open
5	Provide an overview of the 2008 State Noxious Weed Plan discussing what has been completed, new items to address, etc. for the Council	Dave Burch	Jan. 2013 meeting	open
6	Provide the 2013 grant application forms for Council review.	Kim Johnson	ASAP	open
7	Arrange a meeting with Sanders County Weed Coordinator and Extension Agent to discuss quarantine options.	Kim Johnson	ASAP	completed
8	Provide final information on hearing dates and location to the Council.	Carol Bearden	ASAP	open
9	Add Nico Cantalupo, Jennifer Vermillion, Steve Siegelin, Gary Adams, Jim Gordon, John Simons, and Todd Wagner to the mailing list for aquatic invasive species updates.	Carol Bearden	ASAP	completed
10	Send WebGrants report of the FY 13 Special County / Reservation grants to the Council.	Kim Johnson		open