

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	January 14, 2013	Time:	9:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Heritage Inn, Great Falls
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting			
2. Attendees			
<p>Council Members: Jim Olivarez, Jack Eddie, Dick Zoanni, Todd Wagner, Nico Cantalupo, Margie Edsall, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion (conference call)</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Mike Miller, John Simons, Gary Adams, Steve Shelly, Jim Jacobs, Peter Stevenson, Tracy Sterling, Joe Weigand</p> <p>Guests: Joe Merenz, Jerry Marks, John Moodry, Kellieann Morris, Lisa Rew, Liz Galli-Noble, Shelby DeMars</p> <p>Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Kim Johnson, Carol Bearden, Jeremy Seidlitz, Craig McLane, Shantell Frame-Martin, Libbi Lovshin, Mary Hunt</p>			
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome & Introductions	Greg Ames opened the meeting and introduced Libbi Lovshin and Mary Hunt from the Department of Agriculture. Greg reported that Ron de Yong had been re-appointed as agency director. Introductions were made. Greg asked if there were any additions to the agenda. None were heard.		
Review June 19, Sept. 19, and Nov. 19, 2012 Minutes	Minutes from the June 19, Sept. 19, and Nov. 19, 2012 meetings were reviewed. Margie Edsall moved to accept the minutes from the three meetings as written. Jim Gordon seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.		
Noxious Weed Trust Fund Budget Report	<p>Greg Ames provided information on the \$1,202,490 in funding that is estimated to be available for the 2013 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant hearings. Greg noted a sharp decline in the US Forest Service funds provided for awards compared to previous years. The Council was provided with information on awards that have already been made for FY 13. The Noxious Weed Trust Fund balance was reported at \$10,317,749. Historical information on program revenue, reverted funds, and annual funding amounts available and requested at the March grant hearings was provided to the Council.</p> <p>A report of the FY08-FY12 actual receipt and disbursement activity related to the Department of Agriculture's noxious weed management program was given by Libbi Lovshin and Mary Hunt. Libbi's report categorized expenditures into administrative, council, and program activity within personal services, operating, and equipment costs. Libbi discussed the administrative percentage calculation based on 80-7-814 (5), MCA.</p> <p>Meeting guest, John Moodry, expressed his opinion that the weed program expenditures outweigh the funding. Libbi advised that previous cash balances need to be considered and said she was confident that funds are available to back up grant obligations. Discussion followed regarding incorporating the fiscal year end cash balance amount into the report. Libbi noted that the cash balance amount is only accurate for that specific point in time. Dave Burch advised that the cash balance drops to a negative amount at the beginning of the fiscal year when Special County / Reservation grants are paid and discussed delay of these payments until later in the</p>		

	fiscal year. Tracy Sterling suggested including information in the report showing the encumbered amount of the cash balance. Meeting guest, Jerry Marks, suggested more information be provided on funding used for program activities.
Legislative Update	Donna Rise gave an update on current legislative activities of interest to the Council including HB 160 and SB 18. Donna advised the Council that there are several LC's without language at this time, which may impact the weed program that are being watched. John Moodry provided language for LC 1739 (currently SB 144) designed to sweep the amount over \$10 million in the trust fund for use in grant awards.
Education Program Update	Shantell Frame-Martin updated the Council on her activities since being hired last July, which included a name change for the campaign, updating and moving the website, and assembly of the 450 remaining "What's in Your World" packets. Shantell said she is also working on K-8 curriculum, a social media page for the campaign, development of a Montana aquatic plants guide, and coordinating with Becky Kington on the Montana Weed Control Association's Fight 5 project.
Noxious Weed Program Overview	<p>An overview of weed program activities was provided by Dave Burch beginning with discussion on selecting grant hearing locations and dates for the next three years. The Council agreed to hold the hearings in Helena and a poll will be sent to determine the dates that work best.</p> <p>Applicant presentations were discussed and based on past surveys of applicants and council members, it was decided to continue to allow 15 minutes per applicant – ten minutes for presentation and five minutes for questions from the Council. PowerPoint presentations will continue to be allowed and applicants will have the option of presenting by conference call. A one-hour council discussion of applications each day was agreed on.</p> <p>The fall emergency grant funding process was discussed with questions on how much project work could be accomplished by the time funding decisions are made. Jim Olivarez felt that funding at this time was beneficial even if just for preparation activities. Funding consideration on a case by case basis was discussed.</p> <p>Dave advised that an update of the Montana Weed Management Plan will be prepared by weed program staff with a completion date planned for December 2013. Counties and agencies will be surveyed for information to assist in updating the Plan. An initial draft is expected to be ready for comment and input in June 2013.</p> <p>Activities of the Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council were discussed. Jim Olivarez felt that the intent and expertise of the group was not being utilized and that it had been a disservice to the State Plan to put the council under the Governor's auspices. Greg Ames said that due to the recent change of Governor the status of the Council was unknown at this time. Greg said he would share Jim's comments with Director de Yong.</p> <p>Funding for the noxious weed education position that is currently housed at the Department of Agriculture was discussed. Dave Burch asked for input on continued funding options for this position. Establishing line item funding in the weed program was discussed and several comments were made that stabilized funding was important.</p>
Rush Skeletonweed Update	Kim (Johnson) Antonick updated the Council on rush skeletonweed control efforts in Sanders County. Kim reported that in 2012 the county had worked to get landowners up to a 50 / 50 cost share on control efforts. Kim advised that some landowners had signed weed management plans and were controlling the weed on their property. Kim said an infested area on the golf course had been treated in the spring along with five new locations of small infestations. Sanders County is currently in the process of filling their weed coordinator position.

<p>Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Update</p>	<p>Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage statistical inspection, production, and marker sales information was provided by Jeremy Seidlitz. Jeremy noted that label use is increasing for processed weed seed free products.</p> <p>Margie Edsall expressed concern that there is not a consistent level of quality in the fields that are certified. Discussion followed on certified bales containing cheat grass, and the issue of animals not being put on weed free products early enough to eliminate pass through of weed seeds from other feed. Continued education for inspectors was encouraged along with addressing the requirements for weed seed free forage on state lands. Margie volunteered to address these concerns at the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Council meeting that is expected to be held in February.</p>
<p>Aquatic Plant Update</p>	<p>Craig McLane reported that 13,998 watercraft were inspected at MDA inspection stations in 2012. Vegetation was found on 147 of the watercraft and of those 60 were Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) or curlyleaf pondweed and there was one finding of flowering rush. Craig said boater reaction to the inspection stations had been generally positive at the six MDA stations (two were operated by Valley County), which were operated seven days per week beginning Memorial Day weekend.</p> <p>Craig said that combined survey efforts with other agencies have been completed on 115 water bodies providing good baseline information. Craig reported that every population of EWM that has been found has received some type of control effort.</p>
<p>Weed Seed Dispersal Project Report</p>	<p>Dr. Lisa Rew discussed her research on weed seed dispersal by different types of vehicles on a variety of road conditions. Funding for her overall project included a Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant in 2008 combined with other awards totaling just under \$1 million.</p>
<p>Center for Invasive Species Management Program Update</p>	<p>Liz Galli-Noble gave an update on activities at the Center for Invasive Species Management (CISM), formerly the Center for Invasive Plant Management. An overview of CISM staff, programs, services, financial status, and plans for the future were provided.</p>
<p>Other Business Public Comment Agenda Items Adjourn</p>	<p>Donna Rise asked if there was any other business or public comment. None was heard. No agenda items were brought forward for the March 4, 2013 meeting. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Jim Gordon. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.</p>

4. Action Items

Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Poll council on dates for future grant hearings.	MDA Noxious Weed Staff	ASAP	Open
2	Distribute draft Plan for review.	MDA Noxious Weed Staff	June 2013	Open
3				