

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting and Grant Hearings		
Date of Meeting:	March 3-7, 2014	Starting Time:	12:30 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	State Capitol, Rm# 317, Helena, Montana

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting and 2014 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Hearings

2. Attendees

Council Members: Jim Gordon, Jennifer Vermillion, Todd Wagner, Jack Eddie, Jim Olivarez, Dick Zoanni, Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris, Nico Cantalupo (Monday – Thursday), Bobby LaSalle (Thursday - Friday)

Agency Representatives: Mike Miller, Joe Merenz, Taryn Preston, Dan Dobler, Joe Weigand (Monday – Tuesday), John Gaskin (Wednesday – Friday), Steve Siegelin (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday), Tracy Sterling (conference call for Monday meeting, Thursday – Friday)

Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Kim Johnson, Carol Bearden, Cort Jensen

Meeting Guests: Margie Edsall, Madison County; Jeff Littlefield, MSU; Carol Randall, USFS; Bryce Christiaens, Melissa Maggio-Kassner, Missoula County; Jill Allen, Jefferson County; Brian Ostwald, Carbon County

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
Review January 22, 2014 Minutes	<p>Greg Ames welcomed everyone to the meeting. Greg advised the council that Director de Yong was out of the country and that Greg had been given the Director's proxy vote in the event of a tie during deliberations. Greg advised the council of Larry Beneker's retirement and the passing of Jim Visser.</p> <p>The minutes from the January 22, 2014 council meeting were reviewed. Jack Eddie moved to approve the minutes as written. Todd Wagner seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p>
CABI Update	<p>Dr. Jeff Littlefield from Montana State University (MSU) provided an update on the biocontrol process and overseas research with CABI. Jeff discussed the phases of research including identification of the problem, pre-release studies, identification of potential biocontrol agents, monitoring and evaluation, and activities of the release phase. The flow of funding for the scientific research done with CABI was discussed and Jeff noted that CABI Switzerland was the primary group working with Montana researchers. The last ten years of Montana funding to CABI were reviewed as well as other funding sources.</p> <p>Jeff identified DNA analysis as the biggest change in biocontrol over the last twenty years and advised that biocontrol should not be judged on short term results.</p>
CABI Contracts	<p>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) attorney Cort Jensen addressed the council regarding the CABI contracting changes discussed at the January 22nd meeting. Cort explained his reasoning for suggesting changes, which had followed review of the 2013 Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant contracts. As some biocontrol contracts were a pass through of funds from MSU to CABI, direct contracting with CABI had been suggested. Cort said he spoke recently with MSU legal staff who are willing to assume contract liability. Based on this discussion, Cort said there would be no change going forward with the MSU / CABI contracts. Greg Ames asked for council input. Discussion followed with agreement that CABI grant funding will continue to be contracted through the University.</p>
Application Updates / WebGrants Hearing Review	<p>Minor changes to applications were noted by Dave Burch and use of the WebGrants system during deliberations was reviewed. Dave noted that council member and agency representative application scoring would be combined to determine the deliberation ranking order.</p>

Other Business	<p>Greg Ames discussed the adjustments that have been made to council terms, which allow an unlimited number of terms to be served, with appointments and re-appointments being made every two years. In order to maintain staggered term ending dates, five council member terms will end June 30, 2014 and five will end June 30, 2015. The following council terms were identified as ending this June:</p> <p>Jennifer Vermillion – Recreationist / Wildlife Group Representative Jim Olivarez – Consumer Group Representative</p> <p>Jack Eddie – Montana Weed Control Association Representative Nico Cantalupo – At Large Representative</p> <p>Dick Zoanni – Eastern County Representative</p> <p>The council members listed above were asked to send an email or letter to Director de Yong advising of their interest in remaining on the council for an additional two year term.</p> <p>Greg said the Department is always in the process of looking for people who are interested in serving on councils, and asked that letters of interest or recommendations from industries and organizations be sent to Director de Yong. Donna Rise asked that information on which position they are interested in, as well as qualifications, be addressed in the letter to the Director.</p> <p>Information on MDA councils and boards can be found on the MDA website.</p>
Hearing Protocol / Public Comment	<p>Public comment was asked for, none was heard.</p> <p>Greg Ames advised that the business meeting and hearing proceedings are open to the public and reviewed grant hearing protocol. Council conflict of interest was discussed and the council was asked to not score or vote on applications that posed a conflict for them, although they were free to participate in discussions on all applications. Jim Olivarez asked to have future discussion on grant application forms.</p>
Hearings / Wrap Up Discussions	<p>Grant hearing presentations began at 2:00 p.m. March 3rd and concluded March 6th. Each day of presentations concluded with a council review and discussion of presentations made that day.</p> <p>End of day discussions included Mike Miller suggesting that future applicants be encouraged/required to make contact with the appropriate coordinator (education, biocontrol, etc.) and that the coordinators participate in a review of the related projects. Kellieann Morris suggested that grant applications include a check box asking if contact had been made with the coordinator. Discussion followed. Tracy Sterling suggested that the call for proposals state that it is highly recommended that contact be made with the appropriate coordinator. Jack Eddie noted that the MWCA education committee had reviewed education applications in the past but found a conflict as many of the reviewers had submitted applications. Dave Burch said he will visit with the education and biocontrol coordinators about review of the 2015 applications. Joe Merenz asked that applications request the number, type, and location of biocontrol insect releases in the project area.</p> <p>Permanent funding recommendations for coordinators and/or the Natural Heritage program was discussed and agreed to be discussed further at the June 2014 business meeting.</p>
March 7 Business Meeting	<p>The council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 7. Donna Rise advised the council that Greg Ames was unable to attend the meeting and had passed Ron's proxy vote on to her in the event of a tie vote. Donna said that application scores submitted by council members and agency representatives had been combined to determine deliberation order.</p>

Budget Review	<p>Donna Rise reviewed the grant budget, including awards that have already been made and planned expenditures. Donna advised the council that \$1,103,483 was available for grant funding from State Special Revenue funds, \$101,159 from General Fund dollars, and \$146,349 from the US Forest Service. In addition, \$33,921 from unspent previous Forest Service awards, and reverted funds totaling \$33,568 would be re-awarded. The combined total funds available for award at the hearings was reported as \$1,418,480. Applications totaling \$2,148,532 were received for consideration at the hearings, which left a shortfall of \$730,052.</p> <p>Dick Zoanni inquired if all funds were required to be awarded or if funds could be held over for later awards. Dave Burch discussed this with MDA administrator, Libbi Lovshin, and reported that if funds were not awarded it would result in the loss of appropriation authority, but that could be requested to be restored if needed.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez suggested awarding the available funds as far as they would go by beginning at the top of the score ranking list, and also include any applications suggested by the council to move up in the list. Discussion followed with comments that all applications should receive deliberation. Jim Olivarez moved to use the ranking summary sheet to fund applications in that order, and to discuss other projects that the council felt strongly about funding. There was no second on the motion.</p> <p>Donna Rise reviewed grant deliberation protocol and voting procedures. The council was advised that their funding recommendations would be provided to Director de Yong for his approval. Deliberations began.</p>
Grant Award Deliberations	<p>As funding recommendations progressed, funding of aquatic projects through the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) was discussed. Dave Burch contacted Alicia Stickney from DNRC who could not commit to what projects they would be able to fund until all applications were submitted and reviewed by their committee. Application T14-069, Biocontrol Agents for Flowering Rush – Year 2, was recommended for funding at \$27,284 if it does not receive funding from DNRC.</p> <p>Funding recommendations continued until a balance of \$21,125 of available funds remained. Dick Zoanni moved to hold the remaining funds and was seconded by Kellieann Morris.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding T14-073, Montana's Noxious Weeds Mobile App, which subsequently had the original award recommendation increased by \$6,000. Todd Wagner moved to identify grants to fund at a higher amount, on a contingency basis if the remaining \$15,125 of funds were not needed for an emergency. Dick Zoanni seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Jim Gordon moved to identify applications to be increased from the original funding recommendation, contingent on funds not being required for emergency use: T14-089 for an increase of \$5,000 and T14-010 for an increase of \$10,125. Todd Wagner seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> <p>2014 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p>
Other Business	<p>Other business was asked for by Donna Rise.</p> <p>Kenny Kever invited those interested in a July / August weed tour via jet boat to contact him.</p> <p>Mike Miller asked that MDA come to a decision on funding aquatic projects through the Noxious Weed Trust Fund, and advise future applicants of the decision. It was agreed to discuss this further at the June council meeting. The council was asked to provide additional agenda topics prior to the June meeting, which was tentatively scheduled for mid-June.</p> <p>Agenda items for the June meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss changes to grant application forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ categories – mapping / other ○ specific biocontrol information ○ coordinator contact • Determination on aquatic project funding • Discuss permanent funding for coordinators and/or the Natural Heritage program <p>Public comment was asked for. None was heard.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 2:45 p.m. and Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Council members with terms ending in 2014 were asked to advise Director de Yong of their interest in remaining on the council.	Jennifer Vermillion Jim Olivarez Jack Eddie Nico Cantalupo Dick Zoanni	ASAP	open
2	Update applications to request the number, type, and location of biocontrol insect releases.	MDA Staff	June 2014	Open
3	Discuss future application review with education and biocontrol coordinators.	Dave Burch	June 2014	Open