

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting and Grant Hearings		
Date of Meeting:	March 2 – 6, 2015	Starting Time:	1:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Jasmine Reimer	Location:	Wingate Hotel, Helena, Montana

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting and 2015 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Hearings

2. Attendees

Council Members: Todd Wagner, Jennifer Vermillion, Jim Gordon, Jim Olivarez, Kenny Kever, Jack Eddie, Doug Dupuis, Kellieann Morris, Dick Zoanni, Bobby LaSalle (Wed. – Fri)

Agency Representatives: Tracy Sterling (Mon, Tues, Fri), Steve Siegelin, Mike Miller, Dan Dobler, John Cook, John Gaskin, Joe Merenz, Taryn Preston

Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Kim Antonick, Carol Bearden, Jasmine Reimer (Mon, Fri)

Meeting Guests: Kent Atwood, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (DES); Burke Honzel, (DES); Stevn Henke (DES); Todd Neel (Wed – Fri), FS; Shantell Frame-Martin (Mon, Fri), MSU

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
Welcome & Introductions Review January 22, 2015 Minutes	<p>Greg Ames welcomed everyone to the meeting. Greg advised the council that Director de Yong was out of town and Greg would run the meeting in his absence and vote only in the event of a tie during deliberations. Greg welcomed two members to the council; Doug Dupuis and John Cook.</p> <p>The minutes from the January 22, 2015 council meeting were reviewed. The action items were discussed; all were completed. Dave Burch said he will send out notices for new noxious weed listing petitions before the end of March, 2015.</p> <p>Kenny Kever moved to approve the minutes as written. Todd Wagner seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p>

Noxious Weed Trust Fund Budget Review	<p>Greg Ames provided a budget report listing the funds available for the 2015 grant hearings. The Council was provided with information on grant awards and expenditures that have already been made or are pending for FY 15. Non-grant expenses for FY 15 were calculated at \$206,210, which is 12% of the prior year's grants awarded.</p> <p>Estimated remaining funds for the March 2015 grants awards were as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>State Special Revenue Fund</td><td>\$1,236,848</td></tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td><td>\$101,159</td></tr> <tr> <td>Forest Service Funds</td><td>\$150,52</td></tr> <tr> <td>5 Unspent past Forest Service Funds</td><td>\$12,117</td></tr> <tr> <td>Reverted Funds</td><td>\$44,435</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total (estimate)</td><td>\$1,545,084</td></tr> </table> <p>The Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) balance was reported at \$10,000,000 where it will remain, since reverted funds are now re-awarded rather than being added back to the trust fund. Historical information on the weed vehicle fee, NWTF interest amounts, reverted funds and March hearing funding requests were provided to the Council.</p> <p>Greg noted that the number of 2015 grant applications was smaller, but both requested funding and available funding were up from last year.</p>	State Special Revenue Fund	\$1,236,848	General Fund	\$101,159	Forest Service Funds	\$150,52	5 Unspent past Forest Service Funds	\$12,117	Reverted Funds	\$44,435	Total (estimate)	\$1,545,084
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Application Changes and Updates	<p>Dave Burch discussed changes and updates in the grant applications and scoring process. He noted that application number T15-064 had withdrawn, but all others remain unchanged. Dave encouraged everyone to wait until the end of the discussion period each day to submit their scoring review.</p> <p>It was decided that the council will receive an emailed score sheet each day and a print out of all application scores at the end of the week.</p>												

<p>MDA 2015</p> <p>Legislative Report</p>	<p>Donna Rise discussed several bills being tracked by the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA). Dan Salomon sponsored HB108, which allows MDA to base non-grant expenditures on 12% of the prior year's grant awards. It was signed by the Governor, assigned a chapter number and was effective upon passage.</p> <p>Dan Salomon sponsored HB109, which allows MDA to provide plant sampling services and recover costs as an official third party. It was signed by the Governor and assigned a chapter number.</p> <p>Jeff Welborn is sponsoring HB167, which increases non-resident use permits of off-road vehicles from \$5 to \$25. It has been amended to provide a portion of the increase to be used in noxious weed mitigation. It would be effective October 1st, 2015 as amended. Next hearing is in the Senate: Fish and Game, March 10.</p> <p>Jeff Welborn is also sponsoring HB329, which would allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) to start an interagency weed abatement project with \$15,000 in appropriations. The bill was last read in the House February 4th.</p> <p>Mark Noland is sponsoring HB525 that would establish a framework for an aquatic invasive species (AIS) trust fund. At this time there is no funding provided, but would allow DNRC to fundraise and accept monetary donations. It has been transmitted to the Senate.</p> <p>Mark Noland is sponsoring HB553, which allows other entities to operate AIS check stations as well as give peace officers authority to enforce AIS statute. It has been transmitted to the Senate.</p> <p>At the time, HB2 includes \$150,000 per year of general funds for MDA to reinstate the position of state weed coordinator. The funds will be used for the coordinator's salary and benefits, operating costs, 25% of the Bureau Chief's salary and indirects to the Central Services Division which include IT, accounting, human resources and legal counsel.</p> <p>Donna extended her appreciation for all the calls, emails and testimonies of support.</p> <p>The appropriations sub-committee was supportive as well, but did not recommend using general fund money for the state weed coordinator program. The bill will go to full appropriations in the House March 5th and 6th.</p> <p>Donna encouraged the council to continue to call, write letters and give testimonies of support. She offered to send a reminder before the bill is heard in the Senate.</p>
<p>Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program Update</p>	<p>Dave Burch reviewed the action items of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) council meeting in February, 2015. The council will be changing the labeling and fee structure for in-state vs. out-of-state pelleting products. They will also be creating a tag for bulk loads, and a zip tag or placard for truck loads. The rule change process will begin at the end of the 2015 legislative session.</p>
<p>Invasive Species Advisory Council Update</p>	<p>Greg Ames congratulated several council members and all that have been appointed a seat on the Invasive Species Advisory Council (ISAC). The first meeting is to be determined.</p>

Hearing Protocol/ Public Comment	<p>Greg Ames reviewed the grant hearing protocol and reminded the council to submit their scores after the end of each day's discussion.</p> <p>Greg asked for public comment; none was heard. He welcomed petitioners and members from Montana's Disaster and Emergency Services who will be observing the hearing process.</p>
Hearings / Wrap Up Discussions	<p>Grant application presentations began at 2:15 pm. March 2nd and concluded March 5th. Each day presentations concluded with a council review and discussion of presentations made that day.</p> <p>It was suggested that future applications include information from the applicant on the percentage of landowner involvement.</p>
March 6 Business Meeting	<p>The council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 6th. Greg Ames advised the council that Ron de Yong was unable to attend the meeting. If Greg needed to leave deliberations, Donna Rise would take over and use the director's proxy vote in the event of a tie. Greg asked for public comment; none was heard. Dave Burch reminded the five council members who are up for reappointment this year to send an email stating their intent to either the director or himself by May 1st.</p> <p>Greg said the application scores submitted by council members and agency representatives had been combined to determine deliberation order. He explained the voting process and how to amend and re-open applications.</p> <p>The total funds available for award were reported as \$1,545,084. Applications totaling \$2,219,086 were received for consideration at the hearings, which left a difference of \$647,002. Deliberations began.</p>

Grant Award Deliberations	<p>Dave Burch asked that \$35,000 - \$50,000 be held back in case of an emergency prior to the fiscal year end. Jim Gordon moved to fund application T15-061 for \$32,000; Jennifer Vermillion seconded the motion. The award is contingent on the funds not being required for an emergency award prior to the fiscal year end.</p> <p>Funding recommendations continued until a balance of \$10,010 of available funds remained. Jennifer Vermillion moved to reduce funding for T15-082, Judith Gap Weed Management Area, to \$10,000 due to an exaggerated pesticide application rate. Todd Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed.</p> <p>Jim Gordon moved to increase funding for T15-069, Rush Skeletonweed Search and Destroy, to \$65,000 which was the original award request. Jack Eddie seconded the motion. Motion passed. \$10,000 of this award is contingent upon funds not being awarded to an emergency project prior to the fiscal year end.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez moved to increase funding for T15-079, Lincoln County Cooperative Rush Skeletonweed Management Project, to \$35,010 which was \$5,010 more than the original award recommendation. Jim Gordon seconded the motion. Motion passed.</p> <p>Jennifer Vermillion moved to reduce funding for T15-083, Upper Musselshell South West, to \$16,000 due to an exaggerated pesticide application rate. Jim Olivarez seconded the motion. Motion passed.</p> <p>Dick Zoanni moved to increase funding for T15-062, North Willow Creek/ Cataract Water Users, to \$49,000 which was \$4,000 more than the original award recommendation. Jim Gordon seconded the motion. Motion passed.</p> <p>2015 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p>
Other Business	<p>Dave Burch gave a second reminder to those council members up for re-appointment this year, to send an email of intent to the director or himself. Dave asked if the council would like to set a similar schedule for the 2015 grant hearings; all approved dependent upon the number of grant applications received. The next council meeting will be scheduled for mid-June and will be conducted through GoToMeeting. Dave asked the council to email him any agenda items or presentation ideas before the June meeting.</p> <p>Dave said he would email the council a list of tours going on this summer and encourages anyone who is able, to attend. He asked the council to send both positive and negative comments concerning the new listing rules and also noted that the latest forage rules will be put into place this year.</p> <p>The meeting was concluded at 1:30 p.m. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dick Zoanni and approved unanimously.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Send out a notice for new noxious weed listing petitions	Dave Burch	4/1/2015	

2	Send an email reminder to council members before HB2 is heard in the Senate	Donna Rise		
3	Advise Dave Burch or Director de Yong of their plans to remain on the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council	Kellieann Morris Bobby LaSalle Todd Wagner Jim Gordon Kenny Keever	5/1/2015	
4	Include information from applicants on the percentage of landowner involvement in future applications	Dave Burch	7/1/2015	