

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	July 11, 2018	Time:	1:00 p.m. – 4:10 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Comfort Inn, Shelby, MT
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting (followed by the Marias River Weed Control Project Tour July 12 th)			
2. Attendees			
<p>Council Members: Ben Thomas, Margie Edsall, Linda Eklund, Joel Farkell, Jim Gordon, Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris, Brian Ostwald</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Dan Lucas, Tracy Sterling - MT State University (MSU); Mike Miller - MT Dept. of Transportation (MDT); Carmela Romerio - Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Adam Sieges - MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP); Monica Pokorny (by phone) - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)</p> <p>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Mark Nechodom, Dave Burch, Jasmine Reimer, Carol Bearden</p> <p>Guests: Jeff Littlefield, MSU; Terry Turner, Hill County Weed District; Dan Williams, Lincoln County Weed District; Stephanie Hester, MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)</p>			
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome, Review of Minutes, Council Appointments	<p>Director Ben Thomas called the meeting to order. Ben advised that council members with terms ending June 2018 (Joel Farkell, Brian Ostwald, Jeanette Nordahl, Jack Eddie, and Margie Edsall) had all been re-appointed to the council for an additional two years.</p> <p>Minutes from the March 2018 business meeting and grant hearings were reviewed. Margie Edsall moved to approve the minutes as submitted and was seconded by Kenny Keever. The motion was approved unanimously.</p>		
Pesticide Program Update	<p>Mark Nechodom reported that improvements continue with the MDA and MSU pesticide licensing/training programs. Dr. Cecil Tharp, MSU Extension/Statewide Pesticide Education Coordinator, is organizing an advisory committee that Mark believes will meet in Bozeman this September. The committee will assist with clarifications to ensure transparency in MDA's assignments of point/credits for training events and meetings. Mark will report further on the pesticide program at the January or March council meeting.</p> <p>Mark said legislation being considered by MDA is under review by the Governor's office. Minor pesticide rule amendments, related to pesticide recycling and updates to restricted use definitions, have been sent to the Secretary of State's office. Mark discussed MDA's online MTPlants licensing/registration system and looks forward to more online use and possibly use of an appointment-based testing process.</p> <p>Mark advised the Council that Beth Eiring, formerly MDA's Natural Resources Supervisor, has been selected as the new bureau chief for MDA's Agricultural Services Bureau. Dave Burch and Jasmine Reimer were thanked for the extra duties they took on during the transition period.</p>		

<p>NWTF Project Reviews / 2019 Application Updates</p>	<p>An update on activities with the “Finding the Weed in the Haystack” 2018 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant were provided by Jasmine Reimer. The grant, which was awarded to Garfield County Conservation District, focuses on dealing with the aftermath of donated hay following fire in the area. Area landowners have been contacted, feed sites are being scouted, and samples of unknown weeds are being collected and identified. One non-identified sample remains to be rechecked. Community education is on-going with radio and newspaper articles, ID guide hand-outs and weed ID class on July 16th. A list of known areas that hay donations came from is being maintained by the project coordinators. Jasmine Reimer will follow up on Mike Miller’s question of the number of tons donated.</p> <p>Jasmine provided an overview of projects she has visited this year in Valley, Carbon, Meagher, Sanders, Cascade, and Prairie Counties, noting that perennial pepperweed was found for the first time in Valley County during the project visit. Jasmine reported that proper control methods, flagging, and monitoring are being used in Sanders County with the rush skeletonweed project.</p> <p>Discussion turned to the quantity of ventenata grass observed during site visits and travel through several northwestern Montana counties. Mike Miller asked to meet with Jasmine to determine ventenata roadside locations and pass the information and identification training on to road crews. Dave Burch discussed conversations with Sanders County regarding fields containing oxeye daisy and ventenata being hayed and what additional steps may need to be taken to prevent this. Dave expects petitioning to add ventenata to the state noxious weed list this fall. Jasmine noted that ventenata is currently on the Sanders County weed list. Ventenata control methods were discussed and Jim Gordon reported that California is testing the use of high rates of Milestone with favorable results on ventenata as well as results with Plateau. Jim said the challenge is that herbicide must be applied at the soil profile to be effective. Dave Burch advised that a Section 18 Permit is in place for aerial application of Esplanade for ventenata control throughout Montana. The need for increased invasive grass education and resources was discussed.</p> <p>Jasmine reviewed updates made to the 2019 NWTF grant application forms which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed order of Project Information page • Checkbox added to indicate projects qualifying for USFS Sage Grouse funds • Photo of need section replaced with attaching project map • Prior grant status report information added to continuing grants • EA PDF added for added herbicides or landowners • EA forms combined for General Vegetation, Soils/Water, and Wildlife Habitat/TES • EA checklist added <p>A list of important NWTF dates was reviewed and provided to the council. The list can be found on the MDA website.</p> <p>Dave Burch reported that the noxious weed program was awarded \$161,200 from the USFS Cooperative Weed Management Cost Share program. 2019 NWTF grant awards will utilize \$126,364 of this funding.</p>
<p>Agricultural Experiment Station / Extension Overview</p>	<p>Dan Lucas, Western Region Department Head for MSU Extension, and Tracy Sterling, Department Head and Professor at MSU, provided a written report of Montana State University Extension Service and the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station activities to the council. An electronic copy of the annual report can be found online at http://weedeco.msu.montana.edu/resources.html.</p>

	<p>Dan Lucas thanked MDA for the collaborative efforts going on with Extension and MDA, noting the good working relationship between Extension and MDA field staff. Opportunities to work together on ventenata education utilizing Jane Mangold's invasive grass expertise were discussed. Dan reviewed the number of training hours, attendees, and programs delivered by MSU Extension in 2017, Extension weed management consultations, and MSU researcher and Extension specialists contributing to education and outreach.</p> <p>Dan asked for input on subjects that could benefit from Extension support. Discussion included roadside consultations, landowner/realtor and home inspector education about financial impacts caused by noxious weeds. Realtor training programs are on-going with Jane Mangold and Shantell Frame-Martin, Tracy Sterling will share this discussion with them. Dan encouraged the council to email Extension focus suggestions to him.</p> <p>Tracy Sterling reviewed the MSU Agricultural Experiment Station portion of the report, which highlighted MSU's 2015–2017 NWTF grant projects, 2018 NWTF grant awards, additional funding sources, and a review of MSU departments/staff involved in weed research and education. Publications, research, and resource stewardship were noted as well as a historical perspective on research and education across the state.</p> <p>Jeff Littlefield's years of work with whitetop gall mites was highlighted in the MSU report and Jeff updated the council on recent approval to release mites. Jeff had hoped to release mites this past spring but due to challenges in acquiring a sufficient number of live mites, a release this fall is now planned after building up the number of mites.</p>
MT Invasive Species Council Report	<p>Stephanie Hester, Coordinator for the Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC), provided background information and updates on future activities of the MISC, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive species (IS) law review – few gaps found other than aquatic weeds • IS check stations – time frame for delisting Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs • eDNA testing, policies on invasive mussels • Montana Invasive Species Strategic Framework • Topic suggestions for MISC – ventenata? • DNRC aquatic grant program • Website updates / clearinghouse for IS information • Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3) • Governor's Summit on Invasive Species - Nov. 15-16, 2018 • Interagency response team development
New Invaders Briefing	<p>Terry Turner advised the council of invasive phragmites in Hill County, which is believed to have come in with railroad ballast. Terry has found that after three years of treatment he sees approximately 20-30% of regrowth. Burning the plants prior to treatment was recommended. Meetings with railroad personnel are on-going with Terry encouraging them to increase their treatment areas.</p> <p>Dan Williams, Lincoln County Weed Coordinator, discussed the on-going rush skeletonweed treatments in several northwestern Montana counties. Dan will be utilizing a drone to investigate rush skeletonweed in the Black Eagle Rock sheep range area. Dan discussed the need to continue yearly monitoring on sites where rush skeletonweed was thought to be eradicated as it sometimes returns years later. Dan reported good efforts in Sanders, Ravalli, and Flathead counties. Dan is working with Tom Benson, Lake County Weed Coordinator to address rush skeletonweed control on tribal land in Lake County due to EIS requirements on sites larger than four acres.</p>

	<p>Control of tansy ragwort was reported as going well by Dan, who reported success with biocontrol flea beetles and moths, however, he noted fewer moths in the area due to recent harsh winters. Dan advised the council of the continued tansy ragwort control work on Weyerhaeuser land.</p> <p>Kellieann Morris, Ravalli County Weed Coordinator, reported that blueweed has exploded in Ravalli County this year. Kellieann said a fall treatment is planned for a key area and she is working to prevent transport of the weed on any equipment. Blueweed was recently found in a Gallatin County gravel pit and also spotted in Sanders County. In both cases weed coordinators were contacted and instructed on control methods and monitoring for the sites. Kellieann plans to work with Jane Mangold and share data from her ten plus years of blueweed control in Ravalli County to update the current MSU blueweed publication.</p>
Marias River Tour History	A history of the Marias River area NWTF grant funding was provided by Dave Burch. Trust Fund awards for the project area began in 1985 and continue today with a total of approximately \$500,000 being awarded over the years. Activities in the project area include sheep grazing, biocontrol, herbicide treatment and revegetation.
Other Business	<p>Dave Burch will check on coordinating the January 2019 Advisory Council meeting with the dates planned for the Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) annual meeting. The council was encouraged to provide agenda suggestions.</p> <p>Information on annual grant awards by project type was reviewed by Dave Burch. Dave noted that amounts were calculated for all awards that were made during each year – including Special County/Reservation awards and MDT pass through funding to counties. MDA will provide the council with an additional report that focuses on grant hearing awards only.</p> <p>Director Ben Thomas asked for other business and public comment. None was heard. Margie Edsall moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Jim Gordon. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Report further on MDA pesticide program updates.	Mark Nechodom	Jan./Mar. council meeting	
2	Follow up on Mike Miller's question of the number of tons of donated hay.	Jasmine Reimer		
3	Discuss ventenata roadside locations and share information and identification training with road crews.	Jasmine Reimer / Mike Miller		
4	Share realtor training discussion with Jane Mangold and Shantell Frame-Martin.	Tracy Sterling		
5	Contact Dan Lucas with Extension focus suggestions.	All		
6	Coordinate January 2019 Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council (NWMAC) meeting date with MT Weed Control Association (MWCA) annual meeting in Great Falls.	Dave Burch		Council meeting planned for Jan. 14, 2019
7	Submit agenda suggestions for the January 2019 meeting.	Council members	Dec. 2018	

