

MEETING MINUTES

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| Meeting/ Project Name: | Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting and Grant Hearings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date of Meeting: | March 4-8, 2019 | Start Time: | 1:15 p.m. - March 4, 2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Minutes Prepared By: | Carol Bearden | Location: | DoubleTree, Helena | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Meeting Objective | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Business Meeting / Grant Hearings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Attendees | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Council Members: Jack Eddie, Margie Edsall, Linda Eklund, Joel Farkell (Mon.* , Tues.-Fri.), Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris, Jeanette Nordahl*, Brian Ostwald, Todd Wagner</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Bob Cloninger, MDT; Dan Dobler, DNRC; John Gaskin, USDA-ARS (Mon.* , Tues.*); Dan Lucas, MSU Extension (Mon., Tues.-Fri.); Joe Merenz, APHIS (Mon.* , Tues.-Fri.); Mike Miller, MDT retired (Mon., Fri.); Monika Pokorny, NRCS (Mon.); Carmela Romero, BLM; Adam Sieges, FWP; Tony Smith, USFS; Steve Shelly, Michelle Cox, USFS (Mon.*); Tracy Sterling, Montana State University (Mon.-Tues., Fri.)</p> <p>Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Ben Thomas (Fri.), Mark Nechodom, Beth Eiring (Fri.), Dave Burch, Jasmine Reimer, Carol Bearden, Rory Ruffner</p> <p>Guests: Stephanie Hester, DNRC (Mon.); Shantell Frame-Martin, MSU (Fri.); Amber Burch, Beaverhead County Weed District (Fri.) ; Mathew Deaton, Missoula County Weed District (Fri.); Trent Brusseau, Corteva</p> <p>*Attended by conference call</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Topic | Discussion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Welcome / Minutes Review | Administrator Mark Nechodom welcomed the council to the meeting and introductions were made. Minutes from the January 16, 2019 council business meeting were reviewed. Jack Eddie moved to approve the minutes as written and was seconded by Kenny Keever. The motion was approved unanimously. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Budget Report | <p>Dave Burch provided an overview of the noxious weed program budget and estimate of funds available for FY 2019 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWNF) grant awards. Previously allocated and pending 2019 grant awards and expenditures were reviewed.</p> <table><tr><td>State Special Revenue & MDT Pass Through Funds</td><td>\$2,107,000 (estimate)</td></tr><tr><td>Non-Grant Expenditures</td><td>- \$ 229,582</td></tr><tr><td>Pending Special County/Reservation Awards</td><td>- \$ 465,000</td></tr><tr><td>MDT Pass Through Distribution to Counties</td><td>- \$ 100,000</td></tr><tr><td>General Fund</td><td>\$ 90,397</td></tr><tr><td>Forest Service-Cooperative Weed Management</td><td>\$ 126,364</td></tr><tr><td>Forest Service-Sage Grouse Habitat</td><td>\$ 130,000</td></tr><tr><td>Re-Award & Reverted Funds</td><td>\$ 84,083</td></tr><tr><td>Balance Available for 2019 Hearing Awards</td><td>\$1,743,262</td></tr></table> <p>Non-grant program expenditures, (noxious weed program operating/personal services, MDA Central Services, and council expenses) for FY 2019 were estimated at \$229,582. Allowable</p> | | | State Special Revenue & MDT Pass Through Funds | \$2,107,000 (estimate) | Non-Grant Expenditures | - \$ 229,582 | Pending Special County/Reservation Awards | - \$ 465,000 | MDT Pass Through Distribution to Counties | - \$ 100,000 | General Fund | \$ 90,397 | Forest Service-Cooperative Weed Management | \$ 126,364 | Forest Service-Sage Grouse Habitat | \$ 130,000 | Re-Award & Reverted Funds | \$ 84,083 | Balance Available for 2019 Hearing Awards | \$1,743,262 |
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| Balance Available for 2019 Hearing Awards | \$1,743,262 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>non-grant expenditures are calculated at 12% of the prior year grants awarded from fund 02068. Fiscal year 2018 NWTF grant awards from fund 02068 totaled \$1,913,180.</p> <p>Historical information related to weed vehicle fee revenue and interest earned from the NWTF, reverted funds, and grant hearing funding requests were provided to the council.</p> |
| Application Updates and Hearing Review | <p>Applications were submitted for 92 NWTF project proposals, however two applications were removed from consideration. Jasmine Reimer advised the council that project T19-030 had been withdrawn by Liberty County Weed District and T19-064, submitted by the Blackfeet Tribe, had not been returned for consideration following requests for corrections. Funding requested for the remaining 90 applications amounted to \$2,165,298 resulting in a funding shortfall of \$422,036 for the 2019 hearings.</p> <p>Applications for consideration were as follows:</p> <p>12 research projects requesting \$316,880 13 education projects requesting \$291,182 65 local cooperative projects requesting \$1,557,236</p> <p>Mapped locations of applications submitted for the 2019 grant hearings were reviewed along with county weed district budget/mill information. Comments from the Research Review Work Group, and summarized council review comments were provided to the council.</p> |
| Grant Per Diem Rate Discussion | <p>Dave Burch requested council input on policy development for grant reimbursed meal expenses. Discussion followed suggesting that meal reimbursement be limited to state or federal per diem rates. Dave noted that legislation is being considered currently to increase state per diem. Margie Edsall moved to set policy to limit reimbursement for meals included in grant awards at the state per diem rate. Jack Eddie seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. MDA staff will develop written policy for council review.</p> |
| State Herbicide Bid Price Discussion | <p>Funding consideration for grant projects utilizing state bid herbicide prices, compared to projects with costs differing from state bid prices, was brought up for discussion by Dave Burch.</p> <p>Discussion followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide purchase from local dealers is required in some counties, • grant applicants are asked to provide an explanation for differences rather than adjusting the acres treated to accommodate higher herbicide costs, • setting a cap or percentage allowed to exceed the state bid price, • reimbursing counties at local dealer costs if required, • having MDA track cost/acre treated at project completion compared to amounts indicated in the project application, and reporting differences to council if future funding is requested, • limiting grant reimbursement to state bid prices, • encouraging counties to become herbicide dealers, • state bid price only available to government/state organizations. <p>Jack Eddie moved to revise NWTF grant applications to allow herbicide purchase at state bid price only. Kenny Keever seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Allowable cost for herbicides not listed on the state bid can be requested from MDA.</p> |

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| Legislative Update | <p>Mark Nechodom discussed current MDA legislative activity, reporting spending authority and FTE approval for MDA’s State Weed Coordinator position. Mark thanked MDA staff for creation of a noxious weed program summary, which was provided to legislators. Copies were distributed to the council.</p> <p>HB 142 revising county weed law definitions and references was reported as moving through the session without issues. Possible impacts to county weed law requirements will be watched for at the upcoming hearing for HB 300 which proposes tax changes. Mark reported that HB 221 requiring MDA and MSU to develop on-line pesticide license testing had moved from the House to Senate. The bill may result in a cooperative agreement between MDA and MSU to provide a testing options report in September 2020.</p> <p>Mark reminded council members that council membership/representation should not be invoked when speaking with legislators.</p> |
| MISC Update | <p>Stephanie Hester, Invasive Species Program Manager at DNRC invited council members to subscribe at misc.mt.gov if they would like to receive weekly invasive species (IS) legislation reports and other IS news. Stephanie provided updates on funding legislation for the invasive species program, legislation to require mandatory decontamination of boats with ballasts and bladders, and HB 404 which aims to provide increased aquatic invasive species authority to counties.</p> <p>A Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC) presentation was provided by Stephanie, covering the MISC purpose, removal of Advisory from the council name as it becomes more of a work group, and review of council members, partners and MISC committees. Stephanie noted a chair being needed for the Tree Pest Committee.</p> <p>MISC accomplishments were discussed including the 2016 Summit, Invasive Mussel Economic Damages Report, IS law review, and the 2018 Summit. Looking forward, the MISC plans to develop an IS list, a comprehensive IS Act, host the second MISC Science Advisory Panel, hold IS Day at the Capitol, and prepare for feral hogs in Montana with the “Squeal on Pigs” campaign. The next MISC meeting will be held April 10th and 11th in Great Falls. Contact Stephanie if interested in MISC membership.</p> |
| Agency Updates | <p>Agency representatives provided brief updates to the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Miller has retired from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and reported that Bob Cloninger would be filling his position at least temporarily. The MDT weed plan has been updated and is going out for review in draft form. • Adam Sieges reported that the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) has voted to approve 4 grant applications for \$1,161,986 in funding. Dave Burch added that previous and current year grants are expected to be in place by June. • Tracy Sterling reported that Dr. Sreekala Bajwa has been named MSU’s Vice President of Agriculture, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Director of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station. Tracy discussed online education partnership opportunities. • Monika Pokorny discussed NRCS education and outreach efforts with phragmites and work with MISC to get invasive species information out to the agriculture community. Changes in EQUIP funding over the next few years are expected with a focus on conservation, managing weeds after fire and ventenata in many areas. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmela Romerio reported staff changes at BLM with Jon Raby leaving for Nevada. Carmela expects confirmation in April of an increase in the overall weed budget. • Dan Lucas sees an opportunity to streamline education efforts and looks forward to working with MDA. Extension agents in each county provide a great resource to disperse information. • Steve Shelly introduced Michelle Cox as the new full-time invasive species coordinator for USFS Region 1. Tony Smith was thanked for serving as the Forest Service representative at grant hearings. Steve reported continued efforts for designated weed free fire staging area sites, and an increase in the acres treated for noxious weeds in Region 1. • Joe Merenz discussed regulatory activities at USDA-APHIS and biocontrol activities between Montana and other states. Joe will be retiring at the end of March. • John Gaskin reported a FS-BCIP grant has provided funds for research on an improved biocontrol for leafy spurge in riparian, sandy habitats. Studies on restoration following Russian olive removal are going on in Miles City. John is running the biocontrol consortium for a field bindweed root feeding fly and working with MSU organic farming research at ARS for field bindweed and Canada thistle. John thanked Melissa Maggio for assistance with Canada thistle rust transects in Eastern Montana. |
| Other Business/ Public Comment | <p>Mark Nechodom reported that the State Noxious Weed Coordinator position at MDA has been posted and interviews will follow in mid-March.</p> <p>Mark advised the council of a concern brought forward that council members applying for grants may have an increased opportunity to discuss their projects compared to other applicants. In an effort to provide equality for all applicants, council members were reminded that council approval is required prior to additional comments following their presentations.</p> <p>Other business and public comment were asked for by Mark Nechodom. None was heard.</p> <p>The meeting was recessed until the conclusion of applicant presentations. The Conflict of Interest definition and Hearing Protocol was reviewed by Mark Nechodom.</p> <p>Monday, March 4th: Applications T19-001 to T19-007 were heard. Tuesday, March 5th: Applications T19-008 to T19-037 were heard. Wednesday, March 6th: Applications T19-038 to T19-067 were heard. Thursday, March 7th: Applications T19-068 to T19-092 were heard. Each day concluded with a review and discussion of presentations that had been heard.</p> |
| Business Meeting Resumed | <p>The council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 8th. Grant deliberation protocol and conflict of interest instructions were reviewed. The meeting was re-opened.</p> <p>Dave Burch advised the council that Jasmine had reviewed all applications and found only two counties with herbicide costs exceeding state bid prices. Application T19-002 from Yellowstone County and Beaverhead County applications exceeded but were within 15-16% of the state bid prices. Yellowstone County is not permitted to compete with local retailers by selling herbicides to grant participants and Beaverhead County purchases herbicide at state bid price, but a handling charge is added. Jasmine Reimer addressed efforts needed for MDA to be able to confirm herbicide reimbursement requests match state bid prices for all local cooperative projects. Discussion followed that the number of acres planned for</p> |

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| | <p>treatment in applications is an estimate and actual herbicide application/acre may vary somewhat from state bid prices. The council was asked to continue identifying and questioning any expenses that appear high, and they will be addressed with the applicant.</p> <p>Jack Eddie moved to rescind the earlier council motion to cap herbicide reimbursement at state bid prices and to recommend to Director Thomas that the 2020 grant cycle include guidelines to set a cap on allowable herbicide prices. The motion was seconded by Margie Edsall and approved unanimously.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grant Award Deliberations | <p>Mark Nechodom explained the deliberation voting process and Robert's Rules of Order were reviewed. Application deliberation order was determined by the combined application review scores submitted by council members and agency representatives. Following deliberations, Mark advised the council that their funding recommendations would be given to Director Thomas for review and final approval.</p> <p>2019 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Business | <p>Director Ben Thomas joined the meeting and reviewed the positive session outcomes expected for MDA, noting a high level of interest from legislators in the noxious weed program. Ben reported that appointments had been made for the newly formed MDA Hemp Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Deliberation voting procedures, including the following were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three separate individuals required for the process of making a motion/seconding the motion/call for the question, • re-opening a project for funding consideration by council members that had abstained from voting on the project, • perception of funding motions made by council members somewhat related to a project. <p>MDA development of a draft SOP for council members was proposed by Mark Nechodom. Ben Thomas suggested coordination with other councils to provide consistency. Input will be included from the council in development of the SOP and Dave Burch will work with the MDA attorney. Mark asked that a draft SOP be available for discussion at the next council meeting.</p> <p>An update on rush skeletonweed control activities and options at the next council meeting was requested by Margie Edsall. Mark advised that MDA staff will be meeting with weed coordinators in rush skeletonweed areas April 2nd or 3rd, followed by the rush skeletonweed work group meeting May 8th.</p> <p>Terms for the following council positions end June 30th. Council members were asked to notify MDA staff of their interest in council re-appointment. Council application forms can be found on the MDA website and are due to MDA by April 12th.</p> <table> <tr> <td>Agricultural Crop Production</td><td>Todd Wagner</td></tr> <tr> <td>Livestock Production</td><td>Linda Eklund</td></tr> <tr> <td>Herbicide Dealer/Applicator</td><td>Jim Gordon</td></tr> <tr> <td>Biological Research & Control</td><td>Kenny Keever</td></tr> <tr> <td>Western County Representative</td><td>Kellieann Morris</td></tr> </table> <p>Other business was requested.</p> | Agricultural Crop Production | Todd Wagner | Livestock Production | Linda Eklund | Herbicide Dealer/Applicator | Jim Gordon | Biological Research & Control | Kenny Keever | Western County Representative | Kellieann Morris |
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| Western County Representative | Kellieann Morris | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>Range Days in Dillion was discussed as a possible activity and location for the summer council meeting. MDA staff will look into this and advise the council.</p> <p>Amber Burch thanked the council for their commitment. Matt Deaton concurred with Amber.</p> <p>Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:25 and was seconded by Brian Ostwald. All in favor.</p> |
| Director Review of Funding Recommendations | <p>NWTF grant funding recommendations from the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council totaled \$1,743,262 for 80 of the 90 grant proposals. Recommendations were provided to Director Thomas for review.</p> <p>Application T19-013, "Stopping a wave of invasion: controlling cheatgrass, encouraging desired vegetation, and preventing spread", submitted by Dr. Lisa Rew, Montana State University was added to the Council's recommendations for full funding of \$48,580. Director Thomas approved the funding recommendation with the inclusion of funding T19-013 for \$48,580. Eighty-one grant proposals were approved for a total award of \$1,791,842.</p> <p>Forest Service Sage Grouse funding reserved for 2020 grants will be reduced by \$48,580 and used to cover the increase in 2019 grant awards. The remaining \$65,222 FS Sage Grouse funding will be awarded in 2020.</p> |

4. Action Items

| Action | | Assigned | Due Date | Status |
|--------|---|---|----------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Submit council membership applications to MDA by April 12 if interested in serving an additional council term. | Linda Eklund, Todd Wagner, Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris | April 12 | complete |
| 2 | Develop written policy for council review, limiting grant reimbursement of approved meals to state per diem rate. | MDA Staff | Prior to 2020 applications | |
| 3 | Develop guidelines for use in the 2020 grant cycle, setting a cap on allowable herbicide costs. | MDA Staff | Prior to 2020 applications | |
| 4 | Prepare draft Council SOP for review and discussion at the next council meeting. | MDA Staff | Next meeting | |
| 5 | Update Council on rush skeletonweed control activities and options. | MDA Staff | Next meeting | |
| 6 | Provide funding percentage breakdown by project type to the council, with inclusion of FY 19 awards. | MDA Staff | Next meeting | |