

## MEETING MINUTES

<b>Meeting/ Project Name:</b>	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	January 13, 2020	<b>Time:</b>	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
<b>Minutes Prepared By:</b>	Carol Bearden	<b>Location:</b>	Heritage Inn, Great Falls Conference Call / GoToMeeting
<b>1. Meeting Objective</b>			
Business Meeting			

<b>2. Attendees</b>	
<p><b>Council Members:</b> Ben Thomas, Jeanette Nordahl, Kellieann Morris, Linda Eklund, Trent Brusseau, Jack Eddie, Todd Wagner, Kenny Keever, Margie Edsall, Joel Farkell*</p> <p><b>Agency Representatives:</b> David Hopkins, BIA; Monica Pokorny*, NRCS; Tracy Sterling*, MSU; Bob Cloninger, MDT; Wendy Velman, BLM; Dan Dobler, DNRC; Gary Adams, APHIS; Joey e’Silva, APHIS; John Gaskin*, ARS; Jacob Bradford*, BOR</p> <p><b>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff:</b> Christy Clark, Beth Eiring, Jasmine Reimer, Carol Bearden, Greta Dige</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> Jane Mangold, MSU and Shantell Frame-Martin, MSU; Taelor Anderson, APHIS</p> <p>* Attended by conference call</p>	

Topic	Discussion
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Director Ben Thomas called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Ben reviewed information in the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council (NWMAC) SOP, which was included with meeting documents. Council members were thanked for their attendance and participation on the council.

<p><b>Minutes Review</b></p>	<p>Minutes from the July 18, 2019 business meeting were reviewed. <b>Kenny Keever moved to approve the minutes as written. Jeanette Nordahl seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.</b></p>
<p><b>Action Items</b></p>	<p>The following action items from the July minutes were discussed by Jasmine Reimer.</p> <p><u>Esplanade Section 18 Use License</u>: A one-year extension was approved for Esplanade use for control of ventenata and medusahead on rangeland, pastures, and CRP. The extension expires August 1, 2020. A full grazing label is currently under EPA review, with an outcome expected by April 2020.</p> <p><u>Gallatin County Medusahead</u>: Medusahead plants were found on the Gallatin County Fairgrounds by Jane Mangold (MSU) this past summer. Per Jane, the plants were headed out, but seeds were not mature at that time. John Ansley and Mike Jones (Gallatin County Weed District), worked with Jane and others to remove the medusahead plants, which were found in areas where buildings had been removed and the ground reseeded and mulched with straw. MDA worked with fairgrounds staff to locate the seed source however, the seed lot number information was not available. MDA's seed program manager will continue to work with the seed company.</p>

<p><b>Department Updates</b></p>	<p>Monitoring and survey efforts were continued in August 2019 by MSU and Gallatin County Weed staff. The area had been mowed but a few additional plants were located and removed. Fairgrounds staff has been instructed on cleaning the mowing equipment or not removing it from this site. Weed District staff will continue to monitor the area of the straw mulch source.</p> <p><u>Research Subcommittee:</u> Approximately 40 participants attended the research subcommittee meeting held December 17<sup>th</sup> at MSU. The meeting was facilitated by Jasmine Reimer and Tracy Sterling to improve coordination between researchers and land managers. Meeting discussion included establishing a research clearing house, concern on loss of research positions – especially education related, the need for economic cost analysis, seed viability studies, and social science research to encourage involvement.</p> <p><u>Early Research Application:</u> Mark Schwarzlaender re-submitted his application for the rush skeletonweed biocontrol project, which will be considered for funding at the 2020 NWTf grant hearings.</p> <p>Director Ben Thomas provided MDA updates, which included Rory Ruffner taking on the pesticide/licensing section manager position formerly held by Linda Johns. Jolene Hendrix will be leaving the department in the next few weeks and the training position will be posted soon.</p> <p>Director Thomas discussed testing activities performed at MDA’s Analytical Lab, which has been located on the MSU campus for many years. Director Thomas and Christy Clark reported that a legislatively formed Lab Study Group, which Christy is part of, will meet with legislators January 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss possible relocation and consolidation of labs for MDA, FWP and the Livestock Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. Costs were estimated at \$60 million, with a majority of the expense attributed to the veterinary lab. Ben is eager to maintain lab resources within Montana as much as possible, although fee adjustments may be required and noted that a spot at the Marsh Lab is under consideration.</p> <p>Negotiations with the USDA and MDA are underway on acceptance of a state hemp plan. Montana currently operates under the 2014 authority and Director Thomas expects to come to resolution on the state plan prior to the October 2020 expiration.</p> <p>Ben said hemp production in Montana may reach 60,000 - 80,000 acres in the upcoming season and discussed the cannabis destruction protocol agreements in place with producers to address monitoring and control of volunteer cannabis plants. Impacts from Glyphosate and other herbicides on hemp were discussed, additional information is available on the MDA website. In March of 2019, the Hemp Advisory Committee was formed and discussed the value of a hemp grower assessment, to be used for research and education, primarily through MSU. The assessment vote failed however Ben anticipates further discussion at the upcoming committee meeting.</p> <p>Christy Clark advised the council that weed free gravel pit certification is being considered as an area for legislative interest by the department. <b>Significant need is seen for gravel certification, which is done in some counties however, should this expand to include other materials and/or invasive species? Council input was requested as well as consideration of increased efficiency if this council was to absorb duties of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) Advisory Council.</b></p>
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	<p>Margie Edsall reported recent disconnect with DEQ in her Madison County gravel inspections. <b>Contact with DEQ was suggested and will be address by MDA.</b> Wendy Velman added that BLM is currently working on a nationwide MOU for hay and gravel certification for use on public lands and believed the Forest Service may currently have a process in place. <b>Discussion will be continued at the March council meeting.</b></p> <p>A report on MDA's summer trade mission to Vietnam and Cambodia was provided by Director Thomas.</p>
<p><b>Noxious Weed Program/Trust Fund Program Updates</b></p>	<p>Program updates were provided by Jasmine Reimer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greta Dige joined MDA in August as the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTf) grant coordinator</li> <li>• Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) staff is expected to be hired by April <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A mobile app will be available for use in forage inspections this spring</li> <li>○ NWSFF Advisory Council meeting February 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at MDA</li> </ul> </li> <li>• State Agency/County Weed District Noxious Weed Biennial Reports are currently under review and expected to be available in February</li> <li>• Montana Noxious Weed Management Plan – update by end of 2021</li> <li>• Weed Listing Petitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open for petitions each year</li> <li>○ October work group meeting – looking for participants</li> </ul> </li> <li>• County Weed District Coordinator updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sanders County – Mark Lincoln</li> <li>○ Lincoln County – Mike Bradeen</li> <li>○ Fallon County – Dale Butori leaving in June</li> </ul> </li> <li>• BioControl Meeting – Kenny Keever and Melissa Maggio-Kassner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Charter approved</li> <li>○ Executive Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kenny Keever</li> <li>▪ Hannah Lewis</li> <li>▪ Natalie West</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Status of biocontrol agents provided</li> <li>○ Gary Adams asked for council feedback on holding a biocontrol meeting during the MWCA Annual Conference week</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Phragmites was found in the MDT right of way on Confederated Salish &amp; Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) land during the summer of 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sample clipped and sent to John Gaskin for non-native confirmation</li> <li>○ Area to be treated and monitored in 2020</li> </ul> </li> <li>• WHIP Grant Hearings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beaverhead County Blacktail Project approved for \$155,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Broadwater County Elkhorn Project approved with contingency for \$293,000</li> <li>• MISC – Squeal on Pigs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feral pigs sighted approximately five miles from northern Montana border</li> <li>○ Community workshops in Highline area planned for 2020</li> <li>○ Invasive species cards updated with invasive grasses and trees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NAISMA Meeting – October 6-9<sup>th</sup>, Whitefish, MT</li> </ul>												
<b>Noxious Weed Program Budget</b>	<p>A summary of the noxious weed program budget and estimated funding available for the FY20 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant awards was provided by Jasmine Reimer. State Special Revenue funding (including the \$100,000 MDT pass-through) available for the FY20 MDA noxious weed program was estimated at \$2,142,000.</p> <p><i>Pre-planned State Special Revenue grant awards and expenditures include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$465,000 - FY20 Special \$7,500 County/Reservation grant awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grants will be distributed to five tribes and 56 counties in early spring</li> <li>○ Applications were not submitted by Crow and Fort Belknap Tribes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• \$100,000 - MDT pass through of \$1,785.72 to each county</li> <li>• \$ 13,000 - Estimated council expenses</li> <li>• \$225,290 – Estimated FY20 non-grant expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Amount is based on 12% of the prior year fund 02068 grant awards, which totaled \$1,877,418. Non-grant funds are utilized for noxious weed program operating and personal services costs, and a portion of MDA's Central Services Division costs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Remaining funds for additional grant awards:</i></p> <table> <tr> <td>State Special Revenue Fund (estimate)</td><td>\$1,346,210</td></tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td><td>\$90,397</td></tr> <tr> <td>Forest Service Funding</td><td>\$159,600</td></tr> <tr> <td>Forest Service Sage Grouse Funding</td><td>\$ 65,222</td></tr> <tr> <td><u>Reverted Funds (YTD estimate)</u></td><td><u>\$37,193</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Estimated funds for March grant awards:</td><td>\$1,698,622</td></tr> </table> <p>Historical weed vehicle fee revenue, Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) interest revenue, reverted fund totals, and hearing request totals were provided to the council. Funding requested for the 2020 grant hearings was approximately \$2.649 million, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$950,000. Available grant funds will continue to be assessed prior to the March hearings.</p> <p>A list of grant funds reverted in FY19 and 20 was provided to the council along with budget information for county weed districts as reported on their 2020 Special County/Reservation grant applications.</p>	State Special Revenue Fund (estimate)	\$1,346,210	General Fund	\$90,397	Forest Service Funding	\$159,600	Forest Service Sage Grouse Funding	\$ 65,222	<u>Reverted Funds (YTD estimate)</u>	<u>\$37,193</u>	Estimated funds for March grant awards:	\$1,698,622
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<b>Application Updates and Scoring Review</b>	<p>Evaluation criteria scoring sheets and reference materials were provided to the council for the three types of grant funding. <b>The council was asked to consider as they review applications, if the correct questions are being asked on the grant applications and to make note of benefits they may see in the optional inclusion of individual weed management plans for local cooperative projects. Individual landowner plans are not required this year but could be in the future if found to be beneficial. Jasmine asked</b></p>												

	<b>for council input by February on criteria change suggestions, such as wording and scoring weight.</b>
<b>Project Reviews / Application Updates</b>	<p>Greta Dige advised the council that 87 applications were received for consideration at the March grant hearings. The 2020 applications consist of 19 education, 12 research, 14 new local cooperatives and 42 continuing local cooperative projects. Applications will be available for council review in WebGrants by February 3<sup>rd</sup>.</p> <p><b>Grant hearings will be held March 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena. A business meeting will be held prior to the grant hearings on Monday. Hearings will continue through the week with applicant presentations and conclude Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> with deliberations and funding recommendations from the council.</b></p> <p>A review of the past season was provided by Greta and included reports on the following grants and activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant 2019-032 - Youth Forest Monitoring Program Helena-Lewis &amp; Clark National Forest / Montana Discovery Foundation</li> <li>• Grant 2019-014 - North Bridgers Weed Management Area MSU Extension, Gallatin County</li> <li>• Grant 2019-019 - Duck Creek Area CWMA Yellowstone County Weed District</li> <li>• Grant 2019-701 - Clear Range Weed Management Area Meagher County Weed District</li> <li>• Grant 2019-702 - Smith River Corridor CWMA Smith River Habitat Project, Inc.</li> <li>• Grant 2019-022 - Mendenhall Fire-Continuing Sweet Grass County Weed District</li> <li>• Grant 2019-018GX - Clark Fork River Vegetation Management Area-Continuing Missoula County Weed District</li> <li>• Grant Writing Workshop - Lewistown</li> <li>• EDDMapS trainings</li> <li>• Ventenata infestations found in multiple counties</li> <li>• Invasive grasses workshops provided</li> </ul>
<b>NWTF Grant 2019-007 Noxious Weed Survey Results Presentation</b>	<p>Dr. Jane Mangold and Shantell Frame-Martin, Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign Coordinator, reported on the 2019 Montana Noxious Weeds Survey completed with Dr. Eric Raile, from the HELPS Lab at MSU. The survey utilized a mailed questionnaire and was funded by NWTF Grant 2019-007 as a follow-up to a 1994 survey to assess impacts, changes, and new approaches for noxious weed education. Background information and survey methods were shared with the council along with a summary of findings. The survey found an improvement in Montanans' noxious weed knowledge over the last 25 years, and more so in the last five years. Survey respondents aged 18-29 were identified as a low noxious weed knowledge group, however, websites and social media may be an effective tool in sharing information with younger adults. Friends, family, and neighbors were shown by the survey as a main information source. Discussion followed and feedback on uses for the survey data to improve education was requested.</p>
<b>Other Business</b>	Director Ben Thomas opened the meeting for other business with discussion of the Governors Climate Solutions Council, where Ben sits on the Greenhouse Gas Emissions

<p><b>Public Comment</b> <b>Agenda Items</b> <b>Adjourn</b></p>	<p>and the Adaptations subcommittees. Ben reported that invasive species issues are being recognized at higher levels of state planning and asked the council to contact the department with any legislative issues they would like to discuss.</p> <p>Noting that many members of the research review group are on the council, Jasmine Reimer asked if a research project white paper was necessary. Margie Edsall said she values the white paper information and it was agreed to be provided for the council. Jasmine invited council members to stay after the meeting if they would like a briefing on the WebGrants application review process.</p> <p>Ben Thomas asked for public comment. None was heard.</p> <p><b>March meeting agenda topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue gravel certification discussion</li> <li>• Follow up on MDA discussion with DEQ regarding gravel pit weed management plans</li> <li>• Discussion of possible monitoring changes for grantees</li> <li>• Discuss individual landowner weed management plan benefits</li> <li>• Review of application evaluation/scoring process</li> </ul> <p><b>Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m. Jeanette Nordahl seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</b></p>
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4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Contact MDA regarding legislation suggestions or issues.	All	ASAP	
2	Input on gravel certification and consideration of expansion to include other materials and/or invasive species.	Council	March 2	
3	Discussion with DEQ regarding gravel pit certifications.	MDA		
4	Input on application evaluation criteria changes, such as wording and scoring weight. Are the correct questions being asked in grant applications? Benefits in inclusion of landowner weed management plans?	Council	February/March	
5				