

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting and Grant Hearings												
Date of Meeting:	March 2-6, 2020	Start Time:	1:00 p.m. - March 2, 2020										
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Great Northern Hotel, Helena										
1. Meeting Objective													
Business Meeting / Grant Hearings													
2. Attendees													
<p>Council Members: Trent Brusseau, Jack Eddie, Margie Edsall, Linda Eklund, Joel Farkell, Kenny Kever, Kellieann Morris, Jeanette Nordahl, Brian Ostwald, Todd Wagner</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Jacob Bradford, BOR; Bob Cloninger, MDT; Michelle Cox, USFS (Thurs. & Fri.); Dan Dobler, DNRC; Joey e’Silva, APHIS; David Hopkins, BIA (Tues. – Fri.); John Gaskin, USDA-ARS; Dan Lucas, MSU Extension; Monika Pokorny, NRCS (Mon. & Fri); Adam Sieges, FWP; Jeff Mosley for Tracy Sterling, Montana State University (Fri.); Wendy Velman, BLM</p> <p>Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Ben Thomas (Mon.), Christy Clark (Mon.), Beth Eiring, Jasmine Reimer, Carol Bearden, Greta Dige, Liz Ekola (Mon. & Fri.), Zach Coccoli (Mon.)</p> <p>Guests: Anton Bekkerman, MSU/AES</p>													
3. Meeting													
Topic	Discussion												
Welcome Council Terms Minutes	<p>Director Ben Thomas called the meeting to order and introductions were made.</p> <p>Council terms ending June 30th were discussed and are listed below. Council members were asked to send a letter of interest to MDA staff by May 1st if they would like to be considered for re-appointment.</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Recreationist/Wildlife Group</td> <td>Jeanette Nordahl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Group</td> <td>Joel Farkell</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Montana Weed Control Association</td> <td>Jack Eddie</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At-Large Member</td> <td>Margie Edsall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eastern County Representative</td> <td>Brian Ostwald</td> </tr> </table> <p>Minutes from the January 13, 2020 council business meeting were reviewed. Kenny Kever moved to approve the minutes as written and was seconded by Jeanette. The motion was approved unanimously.</p>			Recreationist/Wildlife Group	Jeanette Nordahl	Consumer Group	Joel Farkell	Montana Weed Control Association	Jack Eddie	At-Large Member	Margie Edsall	Eastern County Representative	Brian Ostwald
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Budget Report	<p>Meeting documents were reviewed by Jasmine Reimer, including an overview of the noxious weed program budget and estimate of funds available for FY 2020 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant awards.</p> <p>Allowable non-grant expenditures are calculated at 12% of the prior year grants awarded from fund 02068. Fiscal year 2019 NWTF grant awards from fund 02068 totaled \$1,877,418. Previously allocated and pending 2020 grant awards and expenditures were reviewed.</p>												

	<p>State Special Revenue (estimate) \$2,042,000 MDT Pass Through Funds \$100,000 Council Expenses (estimate) -\$13,000 Non-Grant Expenses (estimate) -\$225,290 Pending Special County/Reservation Awards -\$457,500 MDT Pass Through Distribution to Counties -\$100,000 General Fund \$90,397 Forest Service-Cooperative Weed Management \$159,600 Forest Service-Sage Grouse Habitat \$65,222 Re-Award & Reverted Funds \$38,662 Balance Available for 2020 Hearing Awards \$1,700,091</p> <p>Historical information related to weed vehicle fee revenue, trust fund interest, reverted funds, and grant hearing funding requests were provided to the council.</p>
<p>Application Updates & Hearing Review</p>	<p>Applications were submitted for 87 NWTF project proposals, however two applications (T20-035 and T20-052) were incomplete and removed from consideration. Funding requested for the remaining 85 applications amounted to \$2,582,556 resulting in a funding shortfall of \$882,465 for the 2020 hearings.</p> <p>Applications for consideration were as follows:</p> <p>12 research projects requesting \$327,071 19 education projects requesting \$577,131 54 local cooperative projects requesting \$1,678,354</p> <p>Mapped locations of applications submitted for the 2020 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>
<p>Evaluation/Scoring Discussion</p>	<p>Jasmine Reimer requested council input on how well scoring and evaluation criteria information was met through grant application review. Monica Pokorny noted that some applications don't fit within a project type and the application description section may not fully address evaluation questions. Director Thomas asked that such projects be flagged for further discussion.</p>
<p>Grant Monitoring & Landowner Plans</p>	<p>The council was asked by Jasmine if there was a benefit to applications that had included landowner plans, which were optional for 2020 local cooperative projects. Goals for the plans included an increase in landowner commitment and clearer long- and short-term goals. Discussion followed that plans submitted in 2020 varied, but in general provided good information. Margie Edsall noted that some counties use similar forms with landowners and think of management plans for longer term, such as 5-10 years. Jack Eddie suggested requiring management plans and commitment letters for future local cooperative applications and increasing monitoring efforts.</p> <p>The need for monitoring standards was discussed with a variety of suggestions and resources including EDDMapS, Jane Mangold, Bryce Maxell, and SIPPA. Lindy Garner is looking into a regional version of SIPPA, which could provide environmental impact information and a standard for environmental prioritization and comparisons. Discussion will be continued at a future council meeting.</p>

<p>Gravel Certification</p>	<p>Jasmine recently surveyed weed coordinators regarding gravel certification. It was reported that 19 of the 56 counties replied to the survey with ten of the coordinators confirming pit certification in their county. Jasmine believes six additional counties conduct gravel inspections and certifications, with a variety of fees being charged.</p> <p>Jasmine has met with Ed Coleman, Bureau Chief at DEQ, regarding the DEQ gravel pit approval process. At this time gravel pit owners are required to notify the county of new pit sites, however a disconnect is felt by some counties. Jasmine plans to meet with DEQ stakeholders in May to discuss further.</p>
<p>State Herbicide Bid Price</p>	<p>Herbicide costs allowed for 2020 local cooperative projects were restricted to a maximum of 15% over state bid prices. Jasmine reported seven counties exceeding state bid prices, with two being due to county purchase requirements, and five utilizing the additional 15% since it was allowable, however it was not believed that herbicide pricing was being misused. Jasmine addressed the efforts required by MDA to confirm herbicide reimbursement requests fall within the allowed price range for all local cooperative projects. Discussion followed and Jack Eddie moved to eliminate the bid price restriction and to look at herbicide costs on a project by project basis. The motion was seconded by Kelliann Morris and approved unanimously. Jasmine advised the council that local cooperative grant applications will continue to include a yes/no question regarding herbicide cost exceeding state bid price, and a list of projects exceeding state bid price will be provided to the council prior to future grant hearings. Greta Dige encouraged the council to ask applicants any herbicide pricing or other project questions following each grant presentation.</p>
<p>Agency Updates</p>	<p>Monika Pokorny reported activities at NRCS involving county level long range planning with TIPS - Targeted Implementation Plans. Monica encouraged agencies and weed districts to partner together for these opportunities.</p>
<p>Other Business/ Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Ben Thomas provided an update on Montana hemp activities and recent submission of a state plan to USDA. • The council was advised of discussion at the February Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) Advisory Council meeting considering elimination of that council and a shift of authority to the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council. Ben reported strong opposition from NWSFF council members and plans to maintain the NWSFF Council as it is. Recommendations were requested to fill current council vacancies. • Palmer Amaranth was discussed as a concern by Director Thomas. Although not currently found in Montana it has the potential to be introduced through contaminated out-of-state seed. Director Thomas asked for input and plans to take early action. <p>MDA attorney, Zach Coccoli reviewed possible council conflict of interest in voting on and scoring grant applications, and council protocol during grant hearings. The council was reminded that they cannot initiate or second motions, or vote on projects, which they are associated with. Council discussion outside of a public meeting and perception issues were discussed by Director Thomas who noted that funding recommendation decisions are made by the full council.</p>

	<p>Other business and public comment were asked for by Director Thomas.</p> <p>Anton Bekkerman, Associate Director of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station addressed the council with an interest in increasing council interactions with MSU Extension and Agricultural Experiment Stations. Anton discussed opportunities to leverage funding and increase impacts on the region and state with innovative research to meet national needs and goals.</p> <p>The council was thanked for their time and the hearing process was reviewed. Beth Eiring accepted a motion from Margie Edsall to recess the business meeting until the conclusion of applicant presentations. Kenny Keever seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Monday, March 2nd applications T20-001 to T20-006 were heard. Tuesday, March 3rd applications T20-007 to T20-034 were heard. Wednesday, March 4th applications T20-036 to T20-062 were heard. Thursday, March 5th applications T20-063 to T20-087 were heard. Each day concluded with a review and discussion of presentations that had been heard.</p>
<p>Business Meeting Resumed</p> <p>Grant Award Deliberations</p>	<p>The council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 6th. Todd Wagner moved to re-open the meeting and was seconded by Jeanette Nordahl. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Grant deliberation protocol and conflict of interest instructions were reviewed. The deliberation voting process and Robert’s Rules of Order were reviewed. Beth Eiring had voting proxy for Director Thomas in the case of a tie vote. Application deliberation order was determined by the combined application review scores submitted by council members and agency representatives.</p> <p>Following deliberations, Jasmine advised the council that their funding recommendations would be given to Director Thomas for review and final approval. 2020 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p>
<p>Other Business</p>	<p>Other business was requested.</p> <p>July meeting location suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellowstone County saltcedar project • Liberty County project float tour • Ravalli County blueweed float tour • Sanders County project tour <p>July meeting agenda topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant monitoring requirements • Out of state project funding • Task force coordinator / strike team • Gravel pit certification <p>David Hopkins suggested above 50% for project match be recognized, which can be considered further when updates are made for the 2021 project application forms and scoring criteria.</p>

	<p>The meeting was opened for public comment. Amber Burch thanked the council for their commitment.</p> <p>Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 and was seconded by Jeanette Nordahl. All in favor.</p>
Director Review of Funding Recommendations	<p>NWTF grant funding recommendations from the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council totaled \$1,700,091 for 67 of the 85 grant proposals. Recommendations were provided to Director Thomas for review. The council funding recommendations were approved by Director Thomas.</p> <p>Forty-five local cooperative projects were funded at a total of \$1,154,600 or 68% of all dollars awarded including Trust Fund, General Fund, FS Sage Grouse, and Cooperative Forestry. Ten research projects were funded at \$265,556 or 16%, and twelve educational projects were funded for \$279,935 or 16%. Combined research and educational projects funded total \$545,491 or 32% of all funding available.</p>

4. Action Items

Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Submit letter of interest to MDA by May 1 st if interested in serving an additional council term.	Jeanette Nordahl, Joel Farkell, Jack Eddie, Margie Edsall, Brian Ostwald	May 1	Complete
2	Review and address applications that don't fit well within a project type or fully address evaluation criteria.	MDA Staff		Complete