

Environmental Quality Council (EQC) Meeting
September 14 - 15, 2016
Noxious Weed Coordination Report

State Noxious Weed Coordinator

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Report submitted by Dave Burch.

Primary duties and responsibilities of the position are to provide statewide noxious weed coordination, management of the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) and Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) Programs and supervision of three (3) FTE.

Status Report for September FY17:

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Activities July - September 2016:

Program Management:

- Reviewed five new grant applications for Noxious Weed Trust Fund FY17 and had them posted to WebGrants. (County/Reservation, Emergency, Local Cooperative, Education/Development and Research applications)
- Organized and scheduled two NWTF Grant Trainings for October, 2016.
- Continued to manage and oversee the operations of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program.
- Continued to manage and train the new Noxious Weed Grant Coordinator.

County and tribal weed district support:

- Provided technical and regulatory compliance assistance to County and Tribal Weed coordinators, weed boards and county commissioners.
- Montana Weed Control Act Interpretation and Implementation assistance; form and process assistance: continued to assist Petroleum County Weed Board with Weed Program functions and the issue of firing and hiring the County Weed Coordinator, worked with Powder River County Weed District regarding weed district process and equipment, helped Ravalli County with a landowner issue regarding Rush skeletonweed and gaining access to survey for the plant.
- Have started to schedule weed board/commissioner meetings for this fall and winter so that I can meet our program goal to meet with one-third (1/3) of county and tribal county weed districts annually:
- Provided information to the Montana Weed Control Association and the Montana Association of County Officials regarding their potential legislation impacting county weed districts, and enhancing weed program activities and professional development of county coordinators.

Conduct Training and Outreach:

- Coordinated an EDDMapS (GPS weed mapping system/program) for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and eastern county weed districts on April 27th in Billings and again on April 28th for county weed districts in Dillon.
- Serve as Chairman of the Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign; we have two, possibly three new “Adopt A Trailhead” in Missoula (August 27th), two in Park county (September), in conjunction with private landowners, USDA Forest Service, County Weed Districts, and the Montana Department of Agriculture.
- Assisting with the planning and implementation of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) – Montana Invasive Species Strategic Plan.
- Assisting the Montana Weed Control Association with the 60th Annual Conference planning.

Respond to Noxious Weed Infestations:

- Continued to coordinate Noxious Weed Task Force issues for Rush skeletonweed with Sanders, Ravalli and Lincoln Counties.

State, regional and national coordination:

- Continue working with the 56 counties to get their county weed management plan updates submitted to the department as required by the Montana County Weed Control Act.
- Attended a Transboundary Water Weeds & Stewardship Tour between Glacier County, Blackfeet Reservation and Alberta Canada in August. Over three days, 140 participants from both Canada and Montana came together to tour sites along the toe slopes of the St. Mary and Milk River headwaters. Throughout the tour, participants learned about transboundary successes, challenges, and opportunities with water infrastructure, invasive species prevention and management, biological programs, beneficial management practices, drought and flood mitigation. The tour included discussions on how communities, government agencies, and watershed groups can work together to maintain a vibrant community, and improve the health of our watersheds.
- Completed processing the State and County reports for the legislative biennial weed report for FY 14 and FY 15; released the report in July.
- Serve as the Department representative on the Aquatic Invasive Species team, along with departments of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Natural Resources and Conservation; and Transportation. We have monthly meetings (every third Tuesday).
- Serve as a member of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC). Attended meetings and met on sub-committees for the summit meeting and strategic plan.
- Met twice via conference calls with the *Greater Sage-grouse Conservation* Action Team in developing an Action Plan to help guide state and federal agencies, local governments and private entities in a coordinated and effective approach to addressing this important conservation issue.
- Continue to track progress on an MOA sent out for signatures between the Western Departments of Agriculture forming a State Weed Coordinator Alliance. This MOA will strengthen lines of communication and promote and sustain regional initiatives and projects that address regional noxious weed issues that cannot be addressed effectively by single states.

- Drafted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) and the State Weed Coordinator Alliance. The purpose of this MOA among these Parties is to facilitate and enhance cooperation and collaboration among the Parties resulting in more effective management of noxious weeds; provide a forum for intergovernmental communication between the states and federal agencies; and support sound public policies that will further the goals of detecting, managing and, wherever possible, eradicating noxious weeds.
- Staff attended (in my absence) the Blackfeet Noxious Weed Program Planning Seminar. The Blackfeet are planning to revitalize their noxious weed program and held a seminar to discuss what had been done, what is being done and what needs to happen to get their noxious weed program up and running so it can address this issue. Information exchange was the focus of this meeting and it was decided to form a steering committee of stakeholders to create a communications apparatus to continue efforts and work together in all facets of program planning. I will represent MDA on this steering committee.