

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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# **Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Program**

## **Grant Guidelines**



## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### History

The Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant program was established by the 1985 Montana Legislature to provide funding for the development and implementation of weed management programs. As required in the Montana constitution, there is a noxious weed management trust fund of \$10 million.

Interest or revenue generated by the trust fund is utilized to fund research, education, and local cooperative noxious weed management projects. Funding assistance is provided to counties, local communities, researchers, and educators in their efforts to solve a variety of weed problems in Montana.

An eleven-member Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council reviews grant applications submitted to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund and provides funding recommendations. The Council is appointed by the Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture.

All grant applications and proposals should complement and enhance the Montana Weed Management Plan. The [Montana Weed Management Plan](#) can be found on the Department website or by contacting the Department of Agriculture.

### Legal Authority

MCA Sections 80-7-801 – 80-7-823 (Montana Code Annotated)

ARM 4.5.101 – 4.5.113 (Administrative Rules of Montana)

### Contacts

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## Noxious Weed Trust Fund

Montana Department of Agriculture



## NOXIOUS WEED TRUST FUND APPLICATIONS AND GRANTS

**Applicants may apply for up to \$75,000 per application. Grant funding is provided as reimbursement for completed project expenditures.**

Applications are submitted once per year to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) for Research, Education/Development, and Local Cooperative (landowner cost share) projects. Requested funds should be planned for use within one year.

All grant projects should complement and enhance the [Montana Weed Management Plan](#) and focus on state or county listed noxious weeds.

**\*\* Applications for NWTF grants are due January 6<sup>th</sup> of each year. \*\***

### HOW TO APPLY

**Grant applicants collaborate with an organization, such as those listed below, that will administer the grant and serve as the recipient for funding reimbursements from the NWTF.**

- County Weed District
- Tribal Weed District
- Extension Service
- Educational Institution
- Conservation District
- Other Established Organizations

**Apply Online** - Application forms are submitted electronically and can be found at <https://fundingmt.org> using the online **WebGrants** system. Applications are available beginning in July / August. Information on using the WebGrants system and specific application instructions can be found in the links section of the Montana Department of Agriculture website at <http://agr.mt.gov/Noxious-Weed-Trust-Fund-Grants>

### GRANT PRESENTATIONS

Submitted applications are reviewed by Department staff and the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council. Council members attend the NWTF Grant Hearings in February / March, where applicants provide a ten-minute presentation (PowerPoint, photos, etc.) for their project. An additional five minutes per application is allocated for questions from the Council.

Grant applicants will be notified of the date and time of their presentation following the application submittal deadline. **The grant hearings are held in March in Helena; please check the website for updated information.**

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## **FUNDING DELIBERATIONS / PROJECT SELECTION**

Selection of successful projects is a competitive process. Applications are evaluated based on the degree to which it addresses specific criteria found in these guidelines. Following applicant presentations at the grant hearings, the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council provides their funding recommendations to the Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture. Final funding is approved by the Director.

## **GRANT AWARD PROCESS**

Applicants selected for funding will be notified approximately three weeks after the NWTF grant hearings. Successful projects are funded through contractual agreements that outline each party's responsibilities. A contract will be developed to define all project terms, conditions and responsibilities of the applicant. The contract will clarify all legal patents and proprietary rights that will result from the proposed activity and will incorporate the successful application among its provisions.

Once the contract is reviewed and signed by all applicable parties, the recipient will be able to request reimbursement for eligible costs incurred as outlined by the terms of the funding award. Costs incurred prior to final signing of the contract will not be reimbursed unless otherwise noted in the contract. The contract is effective upon the final signature(s) and date.

Projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required before grant reimbursement is issued.

Applicants not approved for funding will be notified in writing of the decision.

## **GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Project status reporting is a condition of receiving grant funds. Award recipients are required to submit status reports, online through WebGrants, in April and November of each year that the grant is underway as specified in the grant contract. Status reports address project activities from the preceding time period and planned activities for the upcoming period. Grant recipients are required to submit a completed final report form summarizing the activities, impacts, and results of the project.

## **SPECIFIC PROJECT TYPES**

### **RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Research projects may include chemical, non-chemical, biological, and integrated approaches to weed control. Creative proposals for investigating new weed management techniques are encouraged. Research proposals from agricultural experiment stations and the cooperative extension service for crop weed management research, evaluation, and education may be submitted for funding

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consideration. Matching funds are not required for research projects but can be included in budget information. In-kind matches or forgone indirect costs can be noted in the application.

*Applicants are requested to contact the State Biological Control Coordinator at 406-258-4223 to discuss and collaborate on biological control components of the project.*

- Research projects should support the research needs listed in the Research Plan of Action section of the [State Weed Management Plan](#),
- be developed in cooperation with land managers to address land management needs,
- increase knowledge of noxious weeds and/or improve an important aspect of noxious weed management,
- enhance a new or existing method of weed management,
- provide the foundation for a positive long-term effect on threatened natural resources,
- contain specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely project objectives,
- explain the purpose of the research, what research has been done in the past, and what improvement and/or increased knowledge the project will produce,
- effectively disseminate project results to end users, and
- provide a time schedule for beginning and completing all phases of the project.

## **EDUCATION/DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

Education/Development projects include mapping, monitoring, planning, and education. Matching funds are not required for education/development grants, but are encouraged. In-kind match can be noted in the application.

*Applicants are requested to contact the State Education Coordinator at 406-328-4785 to discuss and collaborate on educational components of the project.*

- Education/Development projects should support and focus on educational needs listed in the [State Weed Management Plan](#),
- build partnerships and include collaborative resources from weed management resources,
- promote public awareness about noxious weed impacts and illustrate opportunities for action,
- be based on sound ecological principles,
- include a detailed action plan of how the project will be completed,
- contain specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely project objectives,
- specify how project success will be monitored and measured, including long-term evaluation, and
- provide a time schedule for beginning and completing all phases of the project.

## **LOCAL COOPERATIVE PROJECTS (Continuing and New)**

Local Cooperative projects involve on the ground treatment of noxious weeds and **require the participation of a minimum of three adjacent landowners**. Participating landowners must have a committed dollar amount for the acres to be treated prior to application submission. Project area landowners will develop a cooperative weed management area, map noxious weeds in the project area, and develop long term weed control plans.

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Local Cooperative projects are **required to have a minimum of 50% hard match for commercial application, herbicide, and revegetation costs**. Projects are funded only if matching funds are available from grantees. All matching funds that are part of another government cost-share program must be specifically outlined in the grant proposal.

Local Cooperative projects (new and continuing) may request **administrative costs up to 3% of the grant total**, maximum of \$1,000, for project coordinators not receiving a Special County/Reservation grant.

Local Cooperative project areas must be part of a county or tribal noxious weed management plan and a current county weed management plan must be on file with the Department of Agriculture. Tribes may submit or reference management plans from the county where they are located, multiple county plans, or their specific tribal weed management plan.

- Local Cooperative projects should support the [State Weed Management Plan](#) and meet Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) criteria as described in the State Weed Management Plan,
- adhere closely to herbicide costs listed in the State Term Contract for agricultural chemicals. **All herbicide costs must either be at the state bid price, or no more than 15% of the state bid price.** See vendors and prices here: [State Bid](#).
- include all project herbicides - additional herbicides cannot be added to the project,
- have measurable objectives that describe how renewable resources will be enhanced,
- have completed weed mapping of target noxious weed infestations and completed one year of cooperative work within the weed management area,
- utilize appropriate integrated management techniques,
- provide a time schedule for beginning and completing all phases of the project.
- incorporate an annual monitoring plan to effectively track progress, and
- provide educational opportunities for land managers.

**New Local Cooperative projects** with chemical use, and non-chemical weed control, require completion of an **environmental assessment (EA)** for the project area. It is important to allow enough time to complete the requirements of the EA. Requests for information required to complete the EA section of the application should be started by October. EA requirements under the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (May 2010) include:

- **Chemical Weed Control Projects**  
Vegetation type, soil type, water resources, air quality, habitat of fish & wildlife, threatened, endangered and species of concern, and historical and archeological sites.
  - **Non-Chemical Weed Control Projects** (grazing, cultural, and mechanical projects)  
Vegetation types, habitat of fish & wildlife, threatened, endangered and species of concern, and historical and archeological sites.
  - **Maps**  
Surface and groundwater (identify all surface waters by name on the surface and groundwater maps), and soil property maps.
  - **Letters**  
MT Natural Heritage Program and MT Historical Society.
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- **Lists**

Well locations and depths, threatened, endangered and species of concern.

### **Herbicide Applicator Licenses**

All commercial and governmental pesticide applicators must be properly licensed to apply herbicides. All landowners must have a farm applicator license if they will be using a restricted use herbicide, such as Tordon, in the project area. Verification of proper licensing will be required in project status reports.

### **308 Authorization**

Montana water quality standards require state waters to be free from toxic or harmful substances to aquatic life. The 308 Authorization allows a short-term exemption from these water quality standards to apply pesticides to a state water body. If an aquatic herbicide is going to be applied in or over the water, contact the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Water Protection Bureau at 406-444-3080 or visit their website at <http://www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/othercert/308Authorization.mcp> for more information on this permitting process.

### **Grazing Projects**

All sheep/goat grazing projects are required to consult with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department (FWP) prior to project implementation due to possible conflict in areas associated with bighorn sheep or predators (i.e., grizzly bears and wolves); special preventative action and caution must be taken with grazing projects. If bighorn sheep, grizzly bears, or wolves are observed in or near your grazing project area, FWP must be notified immediately.

### **Mapping and Monitoring**

All local cooperative grant recipients are required to use, or share data with, EDDMapS West to map all weed infestations within the project boundaries. If you are currently using an alternative mapping or GIS program, please use the link below to access an upload service so the data can be incorporated into EDDMapS West.

For more information about EDDMapS visit: <https://www.eddmaps.org>

Data Upload Link: <https://www.eddmaps.org/west/tools/>. Access information and procedures under Bulk Data Resources.

### **INELIGIBLE COSTS**

Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant funds may not be used for:

- Application expenditures - developing grant proposals, grant hearing travel expense
  - Purchase of biocontrol agents
  - Equipment purchases
  - Indirect costs
  - Capital improvements
  - Annual herbicide for cropland/CRP practices
  - Re-seeding efforts for alfalfa fields, grain for wildlife habitat, or other cropland situations
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## OTHER

### SPECIAL FUNDING

Applicants meeting the requirements may request special funding.

**Special General Funding** dollars are available to help mitigate the impact of noxious weeds on private lands as a result of the activities of the MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Examples of areas impacted by FWP activities include: wildlife grazing and wintering areas, recreation areas, and waterways.

**Cooperative Forestry Assistance Funding** dollars are available to help manage private, tribal, and non-federal public land noxious weed infestations. Requested funding must focus on state-listed noxious weeds and the project must be within an established Weed Management Area on private, tribal, and/or state lands in areas associated with federal lands with an active weed management program. The project area must have 10% forest cover or be lands with infestations adjacent to or associated with weed threatened forested lands.

**Sage Grouse Habitat:** For projects located in or near greater sage grouse core and general habitat. Grants are for improving greater sage grouse habitat areas via weed control, revegetation, and/or restoration. See map for locations across the state <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/ProgramMap>. New projects must complete an environmental assessment (see Local Cooperative-New). These grants cannot include federal match dollars.

### WEBGRANTS TIPS

- Always use the navigation buttons within the Web Grants screen for Back, Add, Delete, Edit, Save, etc. Do not use the web-browser buttons at the top of the window.



- All fields marked with a red asterisk are required.
  - Forms can be edited after being marked as complete.
  - Hold down the CTRL key and use your mouse to select multiple items.
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