

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council - Business Meeting and Grant Hearings		
Date of Meeting:	March 18-20, 2024	Time:	1:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Greta Dige	Location:	Delta Hotel, Helena
1. Meeting Objective			
Council Business Meeting / Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Hearings			
2. Attendees			
<p>Voting Members: Amber Burch, Joel Farkell, Jeff Littlefield, Kellieann Sweeney, Brian Ostwald, Dana Weatherford , Jeff Brennan, Bill Curran Virtual: Jeanette Nordahl</p> <p>Advisory Members: Jacob Bradford - BOR; Robert Thompson – BOR; Jason Allen - MDT; David Hopkins - BIA; Dan Lucas - MSU Extension; Michael Hamel – DNRC; Parker Osterloh - DNRC; Adam Sieges – FWP; Brenda Witkowski - BLM</p> <p>Virtual: Monika Pokorny – NRCS; Natalie West- USDA-ARS; Lovreet Shergill- Montana State University-AES; Hannah Lewis- APHIS, Michelle Cox- USFS</p> <p>Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Kima Tranyham, Jasmine Chaffee, Greta Dige, Josh Wagoner, Lori Leaf, Phil Naviaux, Ian Foley, Chloe Perel, Sam Yonan</p>			
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome Minutes Review Department Updates	<p>Kima Tranyham, Department of Agriculture (MDA), Agricultural Services Bureau Chief, called the meeting to order. Introductions were made both in the room and on Zoom.</p> <p>Kima reviewed the minutes from the November 8th council business meeting. Amber Burch moved to accept the minutes as written, Joel Farkel seconded; minutes were approved.</p> <p>Kima gave a department update: Most exciting is the addition of the AgCorps Program. 7 out of 11 members current with one starting in May for the groundwater program. Harvest of the Month St. Peter’s health and Butte. Discussed new potential for expansion. Broken ground on the new diagnostic lab in Bozeman and have \$50 million in funding and authority. Pesticide Program finalized EPA certification and training last fall. Minor changes to licenses and training; Restricted used chemicals must be 18 years old to use unless working on family farm, changes to categories, look to mitigate TES, Revision to applicator training manuals Wood treat, seed treatment, and Ag plant and pest being finalized. Fall/winter will work on ROW manual. Awaiting BLM on pesticides including indaziflam. Department has been receiving Rights to Know for paraquat regarding a class action lawsuit from Illinois.</p>		
EDRR Program Updates	<p>Josh Wagoner, discussed presentations and trainings that occurred since November 8th meeting to present. American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, really good to speak to people who aren’t as familiar with weeds. MACD annual conference, Plant Morphology Basics for MT Noxious Weed Id – AmeriCorps Training. Discussed AgCorps program and how it will be helpful. MWCA Annual conference. Education is going well with the assistance of MWCA. Lori Leaf great to do social media and had been a great addition. Lots of speaking and more to come; Amber and Josh will be speaking in Canada about EDRR in about a month. Taskforce meetings TBD.</p>		

<p>Application/Hearing Updates</p>	<p>Greta Dige discussed state rates as there were missing some common herbicides so will be contacted directly next year. If pricing errors if didn't change the request 15% made no changes were made to application. She reminded the council to ask questions when applicant is present and the process if they come up later.</p> <p>Mentioned applications that discussed previously applications and why some were submitted as new applications, Trout Creek \$, Painted Robe, Fallon County Badlands \$33,908. They would have to new environmental assessments. 141,098.</p> <p>Requesting summer field trip sites. Possible workdays in Sander County, looking at river project, visiting Stillwater County watershed area. Asked where council would like to go.</p> <p>Asked for new outreach and opportunities, look at getting generic contacts for colleges and universities; any other suggestions and ideas to try to increase applications. Jasmine mentioned reaching out to tribes is a goal. Will work with Bob and Dave Hopkins to get introduced to tribes and reservation noxious weed contacts. Joel asked about conservation districts – mentioned conservation menu of funding opportunities to help people find opportunities easier. Encourage part-time weed coordinators to work with CDs and Extension agents to be sponsors for grants to assist them.</p>
<p>Noxious Weed Program Update</p>	<p>Jasmine discussed first Noxious Weed Free Materials (NWFM). She is running this year and getting certifications ready as they need to be renewed annually. Will be working with Phil to test drones to inspect fields. Will be making twine deliveries early May and doing plant inspections between April and May. Will have a forage person on the council so looking to fill the position. Education Campaign looking to hire for the state and hope to have by mid to late May.</p> <p>Lori Leaf for education, tackle EDDMapS guides starting with Pro. Have had requests for tailgate wraps and making items for kids as we don't have much. Chloe will be helping counties to do school education opportunities, updating the websites.</p> <p>ATT program: new trail installations coming up and Sam has grown program a lot. We got Steward and take him for tabling. Sam and Chloe will be helping Dan Wilkins with the PYS program.</p> <p>Mapping and Monitoring: Phil has created shapefiles for all grants. He is helping with mapping backlogs and getting into EDDMapS. Working on the survey123 app to make statewide for the monitoring protocols created by Dr. Jane Mangold and Dr. Lisa Rew. Also creating storymaps starting with Rush Skeletonweed.</p> <p>State weed biannual report will be coming out for people to start working on. Working on dashboard for federal and now working on state. Got funds from BLM to help funding invasive annual grass mapping in hopes to get access to more funding. Planning for NAISMA coming to Missoula this fall. AIS grants are doing their hearings in April.</p> <p>Council member positions coming up for renewal. Wildlife and Recreation, NWFFM rep, MWCA Rep, Eastern County, Member at Large, and Herbicide Dealer/Applicator Rep. Applications due May 31st so spread and share to fill positions.</p>

Budget Report

Meeting documents were reviewed by Jasmine Chaffee, including an overview of the noxious weed program budget and estimate of funds available for FY 2024 Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant awards. Allowable non-grant expenditures, calculated at 12% of the prior year grants awarded from fund 02068, were reviewed. Fiscal year 2023 NWTF grant awards from fund 02068 totaled \$1,919,645.

Previously allocated and pending 2024 grant awards and expenditures were reviewed:

State Special Revenue	\$2,348,097
MDT Pass Through Funds	\$100,000
Council Expenses (estimate)	(\$14,000)
Non-Grant Expenses	(\$225,396)
Special County/Reservation Awards (estimate)	(\$450,000)
MDT Pass Through Distribution to Counties	(\$100,000)
General Fund	\$90,397
Forest Service- FWEEED23, INFRA23	\$220,674
<u>Reverted Funds</u>	<u>\$40,701</u>
Balance Available for 2024 Hearing Awards	\$1,780,275

Historic information related to program revenue, grant hearing requests/funding history, and unspent awards were provided to the council.

2024 Application Breakdown

Funding Type	Number of Applications	Funding Request Total
Research	0	\$0
Education	9	\$229,526
Development	5	\$212,207
Local Cooperative (New & Cont.)	28 (10/18)	\$1,047,313
EDRR & Statewide Education 3yr	5	212,467

Funds requested for the 47 submitted NWTF grant applications totaled \$1,701,513 resulting in a remaining balance of \$78,762. Have more funds that what was requested. Discussed options, mini-grant, or do more for invasive grass or woody invasives. Think about what to do on Wednesday. Mentions there is a bigger network out there that need to tap into it.

Reviewed county weed districts budget. Greta mentioned that all 56 counties applied and 5 out of 7 reservations applied.

Jasmine reviewed the conflict-of-interest statements and hearing protocol with the Council. She provided the council with a document that shows the percentage of grant reviewed the deliberation caps for the 2024 grant hearings. The council will deliberate on each funding opportunity type separately and award funds in each category up to the cap, once all grants have been recommended for funding the council will have an opportunity to award uncommitted funds to any funding opportunity type.

Discussed excess that there are options with opportunities. Assign to dollars to high visibility areas for advertisement. Could the funds go towards increasing the \$7500; possibly use as match for America the Beautiful grants. Jasmine will look into funding options.

	Amber Burch moved to accept the minutes as written, Joel Farkel seconded; adjourned till Wednesday.
Protocol Review Wednesday, March 20th	<p>The meeting was opened at 2:33 p.m.</p> <p>Discussed the remaining balance and possible options such as mini grants, use as match for America the Beautiful Act, or save till next year. Kelliann mentioned about advertising in high traffic areas to get more awareness out the trust fund. Jasmine mentioned waiting till summer to decide. Parker asked whether it could be used for American the Beautiful act; Jasmine tabled till summer.</p> <p>Jasmine reviewed the deliberation protocol once again noting how each funding opportunity will be deliberated on separately with a funding cap.</p>
Grant Award Deliberations	<p>Application deliberation order was determined by the combined application review scores submitted by voting members and advisory members, separated by funding opportunity type. Deliberation order and cap: EDRR & Statewide Education at 17.36% or \$317,468, Research at 6.94% or \$126,981, Local Cooperatives at 56.97% or \$1,042,111, Development at 11.11% or \$203,164, and Education at 5.66% or \$103,445.</p> <p>The deliberation process began. Voting proxy for Director Clark was given to Kima Traynham in the event of a tie vote.</p>
Director Review of Funding Recommendations	NWTF grant funding recommendations from the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council totaled \$1,714,061 for 47 grant proposals. Recommendations will be provided to Director Clark for review and approval. 2024 Funding Recommendations are attached.
Other Business/ Public Comment	Kima asked for any other business or public comment, none was heard. Meeting ended.

4. Action Items				
	Action	Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Send summer tour ideas to Greta	Council	April/May 24	
2	Send education/outreach ideas to increase NWTF grants to Greta	Council	Ongoing	
3	Submit a letter of interest to MDA if interested in serving an additional council term.	Term ending council members	May 30	