

MEETING MINUTES

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Meeting/Project Name: | Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting and Grant Hearings | | |
| Date of Meeting: | March 4-8, 2013 | Time: | 10:00 a.m. |
| Minutes Prepared By: | Carol Bearden | Location: | Red Lion Colonial Hotel - Helena, Montana |

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting and 2013 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Hearings

2. Attendees

Council Members: Ron de Yong, Jim Story, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Margie Edsall, Bobby LaSalle (Monday – Wednesday), Nico Cantalupo, Todd Wagner, Jack Eddie, Jim Olivarez, Dick Zoanni

Agency Representatives: John Gaskin (Thursday – Friday), Mike Miller, Steve Siegelin (Tuesday – Friday), Tracy Sterling (Thursday – Friday), Joe Weigand, Joe Merenz, Dan Dobler, Taryn Preston

Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Kim Johnson, Carol Bearden, Craig McLane, Shantell Frame-Martin (Monday, Thursday, Friday), Lorri Brenneman (Monday), Libbi Lovshin (Monday)

March 4 Meeting Guests: John Moody

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

| Topic | Discussion |
|---|---|
| Review January 14, 2013 Minutes | <p>Ron de Yong welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Ron briefed the Council on the Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council meeting that had been held on February 15th. Ron said that the Summit Advisory Council will be meeting again on May 10th. Governor Bullock will be invited to attend the meeting.</p> <p>The minutes from the January 14, 2013 council meeting were reviewed. Margie Edsall moved to approve the minutes as written. Nico Cantalupo seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> |
| Budget Review | <p>Greg Ames reviewed the grant program budget and reported an increase in the available funding since the January report. Greg stated that \$1,145,270 was available for grant funding from State Special Revenue and General Fund dollars for FY 13 grant awards following awards of the \$100,000 Department of Transportation pass through and \$472,500 awarded for Special County / Reservation grants.</p> <p>Grant funding from the US Forest Service State and Private Forestry was reported as a grant of \$282,000 to the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA). Of this amount, \$8,213 was allocated for MDA Central Services Division indirect costs, \$43,567 for awarded emergency grants, and \$10,000 for the Missouri River Watershed Coalition grant as specified in the MDA application to the US Forest Service. Greg reported that unspent funds totaling \$13,597 from previous US Forest Service awards would be reawarded. Total Forest Service funding available for award at the 2013 hearings was reported at \$233,817.</p> <p>The combined total funds available for award at the hearings was reported as \$1,379,087. Applications totaling \$2,431,841 were received for consideration at the hearings, leaving a shortfall of \$1,052,754.</p> |
| Legislative Update | <p>Donna Rise provided an update on aquatic and terrestrial noxious weed legislation. House Bill (HB) 7, HB 160, HB 266, House Joint Resolution 7, and Senate Bill 18 were reviewed. Donna discussed the amendments to SB 144 and noted that the Bill would be heard in the House Agriculture Committee on March 12. The Bill's original intent had been to sweep the amount over \$10 million in the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF), which is approximately \$323,000 for use in funding grants.</p> <p>Senate Bill 301 to refine the County Noxious Weed Act was reviewed along with several LC's that Donna will be monitoring. Donna gave an update on LC 2027 which requests \$367,000 in general fund dollars per biennium to fund the MDA education and forage programs.</p> |
| Aquatic Invasive Species Blueprint / | <p>Ron de Yong reviewed the history of funding and agency involvement in aquatic invasive species control. Ron reported that the Governor's office recently released a draft aquatic invasive species</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Program Funding</p> | <p>blueprint, which would turn aquatic invasive species inspection stations and survey efforts over to Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). Ron discussed the funding needs that are currently being debated.</p> <p>Ron discussed the amendment to SB 144, which if passed, would require cuts to the noxious weed program at MDA to meet the change in the 12 percent administration requirement. Ron was optimistic that this amendment would be removed once input could be provided during the House hearings.</p> <p>In discussion of the SB144 amendment prohibiting MDA from applying for NWTF grants, Ron noted that statute allows for funding of program expenses such as the education programs, which had been submitted as grant applications. Nico Cantalupo moved to take the three MDA education applications off the hearing table today and to fund them as on-going program expenses. Discussion followed about the three MDA education programs submitted as applications T13-001 , T13-098, and T13-099. The motion was seconded by Jack Eddie.</p> <p>Shantell Frame-Martin and Lorri Brennehan were asked to provide information and answer questions related to the education program. The Council considered and discussed making a decision at this time or at the end of the hearings. Todd Wagner requested an amendment to the motion to vote on the education programs individually. Nico Cantalupo agreed to allow the amendment. Jim Gordon seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Nico Cantalupo moved to fund T13-001, “Memorize, Recognize, Prioritize: Noxious Weed Education Action Plan” for \$16,650 and was seconded by Jim Gordon. Jim Story, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Margie Edsall, Bobby LaSalle, Nico Cantalupo, Todd Wagner, Jack Eddie, and Dick Zoanni voted in favor of the motion. Jim Olivarez abstained. The motion passed by a majority.</p> <p>Todd Wagner moved to fund T13-098, “Guide to Montana’s Aquatic Plants” for \$6,750 and was seconded by Jim Gordon. Jim Story, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Bobby LaSalle, Todd Wagner, and Dick Zoanni voted in favor of the motion. Nico Cantalupo, Jack Eddie, and Margie Edsall voted against the motion. Jim Olivarez abstained. The motion passed by a majority.</p> <p>Jim Gordon moved to fund T13-099, “Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign” for \$53,447 and was seconded by Margie Edsall. Jim Story, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Margie Edsall, Bobby LaSalle, Nico Cantalupo, Todd Wagner, Jack Eddie, and Dick Zoanni voted in favor of the motion. Jim Olivarez abstained. The motion passed by a majority.</p> <p>Ron de Yong continued discussion of the draft Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Blueprint noting that Craig McLane would be moving to FWP if the blueprint is finalized, which would lessen the percentage of funding utilized by the MDA weed program. Ron said it would be an uphill climb to acquire general funding for noxious weed programs this year but was hopeful that it could be included in the next sessions Governor’s budget.</p> <p>Ron reported that nine aquatic invasive species related applications, totaling approximately \$297,000 had been submitted for consideration at the NWTF grant hearings. Copies of the applications had been provided to FWP and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). Ron said that the AIS blueprint was developed after agency budgets so funds may not be available from FWP or DNRC to fund the projects. Ron was hopeful that an AIS trust fund would be discussed in the next session. Council discussion continued with comment that each AIS related application would need to be considered individually for funding from the NWTF.</p> |
| <p>Application Updates / WebGrants Hearing Review</p> | <p>Minor changes to a few applications were noted by Kim Antonick and use of the WebGrants system was reviewed. Jim Olivarez mentioned that a few of the applications did not seem to fit in the categories that they had been submitted in.</p> |
| <p>Other Business / Council Term Limits</p> | <p>Dave Burch asked for input on the current term limits that are set for the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council. The limits which are set in rule, not statute, limit council members to three two-year terms in succession. Difficulties in finding people to serve without a conflict of interest in positions such as herbicide dealer / applicator and agricultural crop production representative were discussed. The value of long-term council member knowledge and commitment were discussed. Ron said that councils, such as the Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council, have creation order language specifying terms to automatically renew every two years unless otherwise requested. Todd Wagner moved to revise the term language for the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council to a two-year renewal. Margie Edsall seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. Ron de Yong noted that changes to term language would be reviewed by the Governor’s Office and that nominations to fill positions would be considered along with the option of retaining incumbents.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Hearing Protocol / Public Comment</p> | <p>Protocol for the hearing and deliberation portions of the meeting were reviewed by Greg Ames. The conflict of interest statement provided previously by the MDA attorney was reviewed.</p> <p>Council application evaluation forms were discussed and it was agreed that a report of evaluation comments would not be provided in the future. A daily wrap up discussion of application presentations will be held at the end of each day.</p> <p>Ron de Yong asked for public comment. None was heard.</p> <p>The grant hearings began at 1:45 p.m. Hearings and wrap up discussion for the day ended at 5:25 p.m. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn for the day and was seconded by Jim Gordon. The motion was approved unanimously.</p> <p>March 5: Grant hearings began at 8:00 a.m. Hearings and wrap up discussion for the day ended at 6:30 p.m. Greg Ames asked for public comment. None was heard. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn for the day and was seconded by Margie Edsall. The motion was approved unanimously.</p> <p>March 6: Grant hearings began at 8:00 a.m. Hearings and wrap up discussion for the day ended at 6:00 p.m. Greg Ames asked for public comment. None was heard. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn for the day and was seconded by Jim Gordon. The motion was approved unanimously.</p> <p>March 7: Grant hearings began at 8:00 a.m. Hearings and wrap up discussion followed. The effect of SB 144 on available grant funding was discussed. If the Bill passes Greg Ames said approximately \$323,000 could be used to fund grants that receive reduced funding or to award additional project applications. Todd Wagner moved to deliberate on funding recommendations based on high to low averaged council ranking scores. Jim Gordon seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Margie Edsall moved to begin deliberations on March 8, 2013. Jennifer Anderson Vermillion seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Greg Ames asked for public comment. None was heard. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn for the day at 4:30 p.m. and was seconded by Jim Gordon. The motion was approved unanimously.</p> |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Re-open Meeting for Grant Award Deliberations</p> | <p>The Council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 8. The Council and MDA staff were thanked for their participation in the hearings.</p> <p>Greg Ames asked for public comment. None was heard.</p> <p>John Gaskin said he would like all applicants to be aware that they can ask for pre-application submittal assistance. Tracy Sterling suggested that the evaluation scores of agency representatives be combined with the voting member scores to determine the ranking order for hearings. Jim Story agreed with combining the evaluation scores and suggested that it be used to determine the deliberation ranking order for future hearings. Greg Ames asked if there was any opposition to this change, none was heard.</p> <p>Greg Ames reviewed grant deliberation protocol and voting procedures. Greg advised the Council that he would serve as Director de Yong's proxy vote in the event of a tie vote when the Director was not in attendance. The Council was advised that their funding recommendations would be provided to Director de Yong for his approval. Deliberations began.</p> <p>Funding recommendations were completed for all currently available funding. Greg Ames discussed the funding that may become available for grant awards contingent on SB 144. Greg estimated the amount to be \$363,000 including pending reverted funds.</p> <p>Nico Cantalupo moved to continue deliberation on funding recommendations utilizing the additional \$363,000 that is contingent on passage of SB 144. The motion was seconded by Jim Olivarez and passed unanimously.</p> <p>Dick Zoanni moved to continue the deliberations in order of evaluation rankings. Jim Gordon seconded the motion. Todd Wagner, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Jim Gordon, Jim Story, Jack Eddie, Nico Cantalupo, Margie Edsall, and Dick Zoanni voted in favor of the motion. Jim Olivarez voted no. The motion passed by a majority.</p> <p>Margie Edsall moved to set aside \$30,000 of the contingent funds for use in the event of a noxious weed emergency in fiscal year 2013, and awarding the funds to the next highest priority project, identified by the Council, if the funds are not utilized for an emergency. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously. Contingent funding recommendations were completed with \$26,496 left unawarded. Nico Cantalupo moved that the remaining \$26,496 be held for emergency funding until June 30, 2013 and if not used, it would be set aside as part of the reserve for fiscal year 2014 emergencies. Margie Edsall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>2013 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p> |
| <p>Other Business</p> | <p>Public comment was asked for by Greg Ames. None was heard.</p> <p>Agenda items for the June meeting were requested and included the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss adding additional application categories – mapping / other • Review evaluation forms • Legislative outcome report • Education and Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage program update <p>A tour of Tracy Mosley's Pine Creek Fire project in Livingston was suggested for the June meeting. Dave Burch said he will try to arrange a tour of the Lake County projects and advise the Council of the date. Jim Olivarez and Dan Dobler would also like to tour the Jefferson County Antelope Fire Recovery project.</p> <p>Greg Ames advised that the three MDA education program costs, approved for funding by the Council on March 4, would not be funded if SB 144 passes with the 12 percent amendment. If so, funds would be awarded to other applications. Dave Burch added that if LC 2027 passes, the \$53,447 approved for the MDA education campaign position would be available to fund other projects.</p> <p>At 2:05 p.m. Jim Story moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously.</p> |

| 4. Action Items | | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------|----------|--------|
| Action | | Assigned | Due Date | Status |
| 1 | Meet with Glacier Park officials. | MDA Staff | | open |

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|--|------|
| 2 | Arrange tour of Lake County projects and notify Council of date. | MDA Staff | | open |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |