

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	June 12, 2014	Time:	1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Conference call – Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA), Helena

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting

2. Attendees

Council Members: Ron de Yong, Jim Gordon, Jennifer Vermillion, Jack Eddie, Jim Olivarez, Dick Zoanni, Kenny Keever, Nico Cantalupo, Kellieann Morris

Agency Representatives: Mike Miller, Steve Siegelin, Tracy Sterling, Gary Adams, Floyd Thompson, Joe Weigand, Jim Jacobs

Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Carol Bearden, Kim Antonick

Meeting Guests: Shantell Frame-Martin, Jim Darling, Stephanie Hester, Alicia Stickney, Virgil Dupuis, Pam Converse, Caryn Miske

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
Welcome & Introductions	Ron de Yong called the meeting to order and introductions were made.
Review Minutes / Emergency Funding	<p>The minutes from the March 3-7, 2014 meeting and grant hearings were reviewed. Jack Eddie moved to approve the minutes as written. Kellieann Morris seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Dave Burch discussed the emergency funding request of \$7,903 that was approved for the Lake County PRISM Medusahead Inventory project. Dave noted the project cooperation between the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe, Lake, Sanders, and Missoula Counties. Dependent on inventory results, Dave said a second emergency grant may be requested for control and that project survey results will be made available to agencies, the MWCA, and on the MDA website. A medusahead task force has not been formed yet but Dave asked to be made aware of medusahead developments and would like to facilitate communications with counties, Doug Dupuis, Tom Benson and Jane Mangold.</p> <p>The funding for the emergency grant reduced the available contingent hearing funding, resulting in total awards of \$35,000 for Park County Extension's West Boulder River project and \$17,222 for the MSU Biological Control of Invasive Hawkweeds project.</p>
Aquatic Project Funding	<p>Questions regarding use of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund for aquatic noxious weed projects was addressed by Ron de Yong. Jim Darling from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department (FWP) commented that the Governor's aquatic blueprint had given authority to FWP but no granting mechanism for aquatic noxious weeds. Jim advised that funds provided to FWP through the blueprint were being utilized for inspection operations.</p> <p>Aquatic grant funding from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) was discussed and Alicia Stickney advised that the funding was one-time only. Alicia said they plan to request additional funds through the legislature. DNRC grants have a \$30,000 cap and Alicia said they look for projects that can be completed in one field season, and survey / control projects that have strong local involvement. Alicia reported that \$100,000 of grant funding remains to be utilized for their 2015 spring grant cycle, which will allow for an earlier start on projects. The 2013 aquatic noxious weed control work and 2014 plans were reviewed.</p> <p>Creation of an invasive species council was discussed. Ron has been in contact with Ivy English at the Governor's office and plans to attend a meeting with FWP and DNRC directors within the next two weeks.</p> <p>Ron encouraged communication between agencies prior to the 2015 session and asked Donna Rise to organize a meeting between MDA, FWP, and DNRC aquatic weed experts to discuss future aquatic funding needs and transitions in grant funding. Following this meeting, Ron hoped that the invasive species council (ISC) – if formed, could meet and become involved in determining agency roles for aquatic grant funding.</p>

Permanent Project Funding	<p>Dave Burch asked the Council for input on permanent grant funding for the Natural Heritage Program, and the education and biocontrol coordinator positions. Discussion followed regarding the value of these programs. A consensus was reached designating the three projects as priorities, which will be at the top of the grant hearing deliberation order. Project priority order was designated as: 1) Natural Heritage, 2) education coordinator, and 3) biocontrol coordinator. Applicants for the priority projects will continue to submit applications and make annual presentations at the grant hearings, allowing the council to hear annual work plans, and will provide project information for new council members.</p>
Council Term Update/ Council Roles	<p>Greg Ames reported that Jack Eddie, Jennifer Vermillion, Nico Cantalupo, Jim Olivarez, and Dick Zoanni are up for council term renewal or termination on June 30, 2014. The remaining five council members will reach their term date on June 30, 2015. Greg said the Governor's office is in the process of reviewing potential candidates for the council and he was hopeful that the process will be completed soon. Greg noted that council members remain on the council until re-appointed or replaced. Greg discussed the role of a council member as outlined in the council creation order and in statute. Jim Olivarez commented on council attendance at the 2014 grant hearings. Donna Rise and Dave Burch noted the department's great appreciation for the time committed to council activities and voiced their recognition of the value and commitment of the council. Ron de Yong will follow up on Jim's attendance concerns.</p>
Legislation Update	<p>Donna Rise briefed the council on how a potential \$150,000 of general fund dollars through the executive budget and legislative process would allow the department to complete tasks needed for weed control coordination within the weed program. Current funding is severely restricted by the Noxious Weed Trust Fund administrative percentage. This new funding would return Dave Burch to weed coordination activities and cover a small portion of the bureau chief position.</p> <p>Donna said the department also is considering legislation that would allow the 12 percent administrative expense calculation to be based off of previous fiscal year revenue rather than on current year grants. With this change, the department would be able to calculate the 12 percent budget at the beginning of the fiscal year. Currently, a budget amount for the year cannot be known until the end of that same year, making it difficult for the department to be in compliance.</p> <p>Donna opened the discussion to any additional weed related legislation that may be developing. None was heard. Discussion continued regarding the critical need for support from the weed community in moving the necessary weed legislation forward. Dave Burch reported that the Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) executive board meeting, held a few weeks back, had included a preliminary discussion of resolutions proposed for support by the MWCA. A policy to support a \$150,000 general fund request was proposed, moved, and passed.</p> <p>Pam Converse said the board was supportive of maintaining the 12 percent administrative allowance as stated in statute and that this will go before the MWCA executive board at their meeting on June 23. Pam provided a timeline for the MWCA resolution process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 1 - deadline for submission of policy statements and resolutions • August 15 – deadline for the MWCA public policy committee to review submittals • September 15 – deadline for the MWCA board to inform the seven MWCA areas, prior to area fall meetings, of policy statements and resolutions that had been passed by the board • November 1 – begin drafting legislation as needed on resolutions approved by the board • December 1 – ballots sent to MWCA voters • December 21 – ballots due back to MWCA <p>Ron suggested that the department, members of the MWCA and any other interested parties, meet prior to the session to strengthen agreements and communication, allowing them to come together as a united group in support of beneficial weed legislation. Donna was asked to begin making preliminary plans for a meeting near September 15.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez asked for a write up and explanation of possible MDA legislation. Jim said he would share the information with the western area group. Ron said that Donna would provide the information but was concerned about getting ahead of the Governor's office as plans are still in flux.</p>

Weed Program Update	<p>Dave Burch discussed updates for the 2015 Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant applications. Dave plans to add a check off section to indicate if the applicant has discussed their project with the education and/or biocontrol coordinator. Dave noted that Joe Merenz had suggested requesting additional biocontrol information on the applications. Currently, applications have a required Integrated Weed Management section asking applicants to list the biocontrol agents used, how many releases, the number of agents per release, and if the release sites are mapped. If the applicant has not provided adequate information in this section Dave encouraged the council to ask for clarification. Dave has asked the biocontrol coordinator, Melissa Maggio- Kassner to participate in the pre-hearing research project review to give her insight into the research that is going on. Review of local cooperative projects would not be required as biocontrol agents are not funded with grant dollars.</p> <p>Dave discussed the few applications received that don't fit perfectly within the four project types. Dave recalled that prior to WebGrants there was only one standard application form. Following his review of the current application and evaluation form for education projects, Dave felt that with minimal updates it could be used for mapping and other projects that currently don't have a good fit. Dave asked for input on changing the education application into an education and development project application. Following discussion it was agreed to make this change.</p> <p>Dave plans to have the FY 2015 applications available on the WebGrants site in July. Application instructions will address the project types that fit the various applications. Applications will be due by December 1, 2014. Grant hearings will be held March 2-6, 2015 at the Wingate in Helena.</p> <p>Dave reported that he has received section updates for the Montana Weed Management Plan and will begin compiling the updates in July. A recently completed MWCA survey provides present/absent noxious weed information that will be included in the updated Plan along with estimated infested acre information, if obtainable. Plan updates will also include aquatic noxious weed management changes with FWP and DNRC. A draft update is expected to be available following finalization of the weed list work group's listing recommendations to Ron de Yong.</p>
Education Campaign	<p>Shantell Frame-Martin advised the council of completed projects and activities and of those that she has planned for upcoming months. Highlights included noxious weed related ads that have been placed in hunting and fishing regulations, website changes, and the Adopt a Trailhead pilot program that is set to begin this summer. Shantell provided information on various events that she has participated in or attended. Mike Miller offered a positive review of the weed identification PowerPoint that Shantell developed for use in Department of Transportation trainings.</p>
Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage	<p>Kim Antonick provided a program summary of the 2013 forage season including participation by county, pellet production, producer numbers, and production acre information. Possible impacts from program fee increases will be reviewed at the end of the 2014 season.</p> <p>Kim plans to attend the Montana Petroleum Organization annual meeting in August and hopes to obtain buyer contact information for straw producers. Ron de Yong asked that Kim work with MDA public information officer, Jayson O'Neill to prepare information that Ron can share at the July Wheat and Barley Committee meeting. Mike Miller encouraged Kim to work with Phil Johnson regarding straw usage by MDT. Kim said she would like to increase enforcement of certified forage use at county fairgrounds and will work with Shantell to create an informational brochure. Jim Gordon encouraged Kim to work with the Rodeo Association and offered to provide contact information. Kim would like to get certified forage marker information out to state and federal land officials and has made contact with Kevin at the USFS in Missoula. Kim and Dave Burch discussed forage programs in surrounding states and the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) formerly NAWMA.</p>
Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service Overview	<p>Tracy Sterling, Department Head and Professor with Montana State University (MSU), reviewed the written report of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and Montana State University Extension Service activities that had recently been forwarded to the council. The report included highlights of MSU's 2011-2013 NWTF grant projects, 2013 NWTF grant awards, funding amounts from other sources, research and education impacts, activities, 2011 -2013 research, extension and outreach publications, and a diagram of research and educational partnerships.</p> <p>Tracy reported that Dr. Ryan Thum, plant geneticist and aquatic invasive plant expert, will join MSU faculty in Bozeman this fall.</p>
Other Business	<p>Ron de Yong asked for agenda items for the January 2015 council meeting. The agenda will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative update • Council appointment update • Grant application and financial report • Montana Noxious Weed Plan update <p>The council was asked to provide additional agenda items as they come to mind. An additional request for topics will be sent out closer to the meeting date. Dave Burch will poll the council for a meeting date. Ron asked for other business. None was heard.</p> <p>Ron asked for public comment. Jim Olivarez encouraged Ron to push on formation of an invasive species council. Ron said he was hopeful for action by fall.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Provide medusahead survey results to agencies, MWCA, and on the MDA website.	Dave Burch	At survey completion	
2	Begin preliminary plans for a legislation discussion with MWCA and other interested parties in mid-September.	Donna Rise		
3	Provide a write up on planned MDA legislation for Jim Olivarez.	Donna Rise		
4	Organize a meeting with MDA, FWP, and DNRC aquatic weed experts prior to the 2015 session, to discuss future aquatic funding needs and transitions in grant funding.	Donna Rise		
5	Update 2015 grant application forms.	MDA Staff		
6	Prepare forage information with Jayson O'Neill for Ron to share at the July Wheat and Barley Committee meeting.	Kim Antonick		
7	Contact Phil Johnson regarding straw usage by MDT.	Kim Antonick		
8	Contact the Rodeo Association regarding NWSFF use.	Kim Antonick		
9	Poll for January meeting date and send follow up request for agenda topics.	Dave Burch		