

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	January 21, 2016	Time:	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	MDA – Room #225 Conference Call / GoToMeeting

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting

2. Attendees

Council Members: Ron de Yong*, Linda Eklund*, Jennifer Vermillion, Jim Gordon, Jim Olivarez, Kenny Keever, Jack Eddie*, Doug Dupuis, Kellieann Morris*, Dick Zoanni

Agency Representatives: Chris Hagan, Dan Dobler*, Tracy Sterling, Mike Miller*, Floyd Thompson, Steve Shelly, Jim Jacobs, Joe Merenz*

Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames*, Donna Rise*, Dave Burch*, Carol Bearden*, Jasmine Reimer

Guests: Amber Burch*, Margie Edsall*

* Attended in person

3. Agenda and Notes,

Decisions, Issues

Topic

Discussion

Welcome & Introductions

Ron de Yong opened the meeting and introductions were made. Ron welcomed Linda Eklund and Chris Hagan as new council members. Linda has been appointed as the Livestock Representative and Chris serves as the agency representative for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

<p>June 25,2015 Minutes Review</p>	<p>The minutes from the June 25, 2015 meeting were reviewed. In discussing page one of the minutes, Ron asked for information on HB167, which revised the rate of non-resident use permits for off-road vehicles. Dave Burch said he is currently looking into what funds had been collected and how they are being dispersed for weed control. Chris Hagan will look into this as well.</p> <p>In reviewing HB 525 on page one of the minutes, Ron asked if DNRC had received any donations or had fundraising activities for the invasive species trust fund. Dan Dobler suggested that Amy Gannon be contacted for information.</p> <p>Ron reviewed page two of the minutes regarding the Pesticide Act and proposed fee increases. Ron noted that discussion workshops had been held and the subject had been discussed this month at the Legislative Agricultural Caucus meeting. Ron encouraged developing specific options to bring to the Legislature. Ron will work with Donna Rise in planning a meeting with committee members, Jeff Bader and Cecil Tharp from Montana State University.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez asked about developments in creating an MOU with the Idaho Department of Agriculture for biocontrol efforts, as written on page three of the minutes. Dave Burch has talked with Mark Schwarzlander and believes there may</p>
	<p>be an opportunity with the University of Idaho, but said he did not believe the Idaho Department of Agriculture would be actively involved at this time.</p> <p>Ron advised the council that a meeting was scheduled for January 26th to discuss agency responsibilities in regard to aquatic noxious weeds. Meeting topics also include rules on the use of aquatic harvesters.</p> <p>Dave Burch noted that all action items listed in the minutes were completed, including a Noxious Weed Trust Fund / WebGrants training held in November in Billings. The training had been facilitated by John Cook and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Dave reported good attendance from several tribes and counties. Dave advised that an EDDMapS training for tribe and county staff is scheduled for April 27th in Billings.</p> <p>Steve Shelly commented that the Adopt a Trailhead pilot project was in place in the Lolo National Forest rather than the Bitterroot National Forest as shown on page 4 of the minutes.</p> <p>Jack Eddie moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Kellieann Morris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p>

Noxious Weed Trust Fund Budget Report

Greg Ames provided a budget report with estimates of the amount expected to be available for grant awards at the 2016 hearings. Greg reported that the initial amount for all fiscal year 2016 grants was estimated at \$1,803,239.

The council was provided with information on grant awards and expenditures that have already been made or are pending for fiscal year 2016. Non-grant expenses for fiscal year 2016 were estimated at \$219,482, which was calculated as 12% of the prior year grants awarded.

Greg advised the council that the estimated funds remaining for the 2016 grant hearing awards were as follows:

State Special Revenue Fund	\$1,230,739
General Fund	\$101,159
Forest Service Funds	\$157,709
Unspent past Forest Service Funds	\$13,338
Reverted Funds	\$21,678
Total (estimate)	\$1,524,623

The Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) balance was reported at \$10,000,000, where it will remain, since reverted funds are now re-awarded rather than being added back to the trust fund. Historical information on the weed vehicle fee, NWTF interest amounts, reverted funds and grant hearing funding requests were provided to the council.

Greg discussed a breakdown of the state weed coordinator budget, which utilizes funds provided legislatively from the Department of Environmental Quality for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 on a one time only basis. Greg noted the importance of funding the state weed coordinator position in the future through proposed revisions to the Pesticide Act.

Dave Burch noted that quarterly reports regarding activities of the state weed coordinator are required by the Environmental Quality Council (EQC). Reports submitted in September 2015 and January 2016 were provided to the council.

Grants closed in fiscal year 2016 that left unspent funds were reviewed as well as county weed district budget information for fiscal years 2013-2016. Discussion

followed regarding the varied budgets and possible relationship to the number of acres in a county and/or the amount of state or federal land in a county. Mill values were discussed and will be included in future county weed budget reports.

<p>Pesticide Statute and Rule Change</p>	<p>Donna Rise provided a presentation on the proposed EPA certification and training changes, and the affects that will be felt in Montana. Donna discussed pesticide statute and rule changes, newly adopted worker protection standards, and options for pesticide fee changes needed to address funding and financial responsibility.</p> <p>Donna reported that presentations to advise the public, industry, and all involved parties of proposed changes have been provided throughout the state. Additional information and comment opportunities are available on the MDA website at http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Pesticides/ChangeAhead/. Ron de Yong asked interested council members to contact Carol Bearden if they would like to be included in work sessions to develop plans for future legislation.</p>
<p>Weed Program Overview</p>	<p>Dave Burch updated the council on recent Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) activities including preparations underway for the invasive species summit planned for April 12 and 13, 2016. Agenda and logistic plans for the summit are being completed with an attendance expectation of 125-200 people. Dave encouraged attendance from the terrestrial weed community to help shape the strategic plan that will be developed from information collected for the MISAC assessment. The facilitator assisted assessment has compiled comments and input from survey respondents. Mike Miller said the assessment is currently in draft form as the council considers concerns that the assessment may appear as council recommendations rather than collected input material. The draft assessment will be used to initiate discussion points at the summit. Steve Shelly asked to review the draft assessment, which Dave will look into.</p> <p>Jim Olivarez asked for clarification on the MISAC role in activities that previously involved the disbanded Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council (NWSAC). Dave Burch said the MISAC would not be focusing on terrestrial weeds as closely as the NWSAC had. Ron de Yong and Dave Burch discussed, as has been done at previous meetings, that the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council would be a viable group to fill this role. Ron asked Dave to provide proposed additional functions and duties of the council for discussion at the next meeting.</p> <p>The NWTF Special County/Reservation \$7,500 funding was discussed and Dave Burch advised that three BIA districts would like to be included in the Special County/Reservation funding opportunity. Dave has asked John Cook to present information at the February 29th council meeting related to how the BIA and tribes work together.</p> <p>The Montana State Noxious Weed Plan and its impact on council application scoring, was brought up for discussion by Jim Olivarez. Dave Burch noted that grant application forms ask applicants to address how their project fits with the Plan and questions on reviewer evaluation forms have scoring based on the proposed project's connection to the Plan. Dave added that council discussion at the hearings can also address any questions.</p> <p>Reviews and the resulting white paper for research applications, completed by the Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) Integrated Weed Management (IWM) Committee in previous years, was discussed by Dave Burch. Dave proposed that the research application white paper for 2016 be completed by council agency representatives associated with research, such as Steve Shelly, Steve Siegelin,</p>

	<p>Tracy Sterling, Joe Merenz, John Gaskin, Jim Jacobs, and the current IWM committee chair, Karen Laitala. Dave said the council has the expertise needed for this review and asked for council input. Discussion followed on the importance and value of the white paper, possible future changes with the MWCA IWM committee, conflict of interest concerns, and the importance of setting a completion date. Dave will work with Karen Laitala to organize the review group.</p>
Application Review	<p>Jasmine Reimer advised the council that 12 education, 15 research, 20 new local cooperative, and 40 continuing local cooperative applications had been submitted, for a total of 87 applications. Jasmine noted that application T16-032 had been reduced by \$200 from the amount shown on an earlier hearing agenda provided to the council.</p> <p>Dave Burch commented that a few applications, that had received previous funding, were submitted as new local cooperatives due to increased project areas, or an extended time since prior funding. Detailed information can be found on the Additional Application Information spreadsheet that has been provided.</p>
Other Business Public Comment Agenda Items Adjourn	<p>Other business was asked for. Dave Burch discussed delays in the lengthy approval process for biocontrol agents coming into Montana and other western states. Dave said he was encouraged that a temporary position had been filled with the USDA Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to take on the backlog of environmental reviews but was concerned this may only be a 60 day position assignment. Dave reported that the State Weed Coordinator Alliance was developing a letter to USDA FWS and APHIS with specific questions on the ten agents that are currently stalled in the review process. The Alliance plans on sending the letter via a congressional representative.</p>
	<p>Dave had received information from Kenny Keever that an effort was being led by Bob Nowerski in Washington DC to coordinate a message so affected parties could approach agencies with a unified message. Kenny added that the Montana Biocontrol Working Group was working on a coordinated message, but agreed a congressional approach would be best.</p>
	<p>Joe Merenz provided details regarding the petition process and the role played by APHIS. Joe suggested in addition to the congressional letter, letters be sent to State Plant Health Directors. Joe will forward information on this issue to Dave Burch for Ron's use in upcoming Washington DC meetings.</p>
	<p>Ron de Yong asked for public comment. None was heard.</p>
	<p>Agenda items for the February 29th business meeting were discussed and include:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed increased council responsibilities • BIA / Tribal Weed Coordination Report • Fire incident command site clearance • EDDMapS presentation
	<p>Jack Eddie moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Jim Olivarez seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status

1	Follow up on funds collected from HB167 and how funding is being dispersed for weed control.	Dave Burch and Chris Hagan		
2	Plan meeting with committee members, Jeff Bader, and Cecil Tharp from Montana State University to discuss specific options for Pesticide Act changes.	Ron de Yong and Donna Rise		
3	List mill values on future county weed budget reports.	MDA staff		Completed
4	Obtain, if available, the MISAC draft assessment for review as requested by Steve Shelly.	Dave Burch		
5	Prepare information about proposed additional functions and duties of the council for discussion at the next council meeting.	Dave Burch	Feb. 29, 2016	
6	Coordinate with Karen Laitala to organize the research application review group.	Dave Burch		Completed
7	Provide information on biocontrol permitting issues to Dave Burch for Ron's use in upcoming Washington DC meetings.	Joe Merenz		Completed
8	Contact Carol Bearden if interested in inclusion in work sessions to develop plans for future pesticide legislation.	Council		
9	BIA / Tribal Weed Coordination Report at next meeting.	John Cook	Feb. 29, 2016	