

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting and Grant Hearings		
Date of Meeting:	February 29 – March 4, 2016	Start Time:	Feb. 29, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	Wingate Hotel, Helena

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting / Grant Hearings

2. Attendees

Council Members: Jack Eddie, Linda Eklund, Jim Gordon, Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris, Jim Olivarez, Jennifer Vermillion, Todd Wagner, Dick Zoanni

Agency Representatives: John Cook, BIA; Dan Dobler, DNRC; John Gaskin, USDA-ARS; Chris Hagan, FWP (Tuesday); Joe Merenz, APHIS; Mike Miller, MDT; Steve Siegelin, MSU Extension (Tuesday – Friday); Tony Smith, USFS; Tracy Sterling, MSU-Ag Experiment Station (Monday meeting by conference call)

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

Guests: Bill Dyer, MSU (Friday); Shantell Frame-Martin, MSU (Friday)

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
Welcome & Introductions	The meeting was opened by Greg Ames and introductions were made. Greg welcomed first time hearing attendees Linda Eklund, Livestock Production representative, and Tony Smith who attended in place of Steve Shelly as Forest Service representation.
Minutes Review	The minutes from the January 21, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Jim Gordon moved to approve the minutes as written. Kenny Keever seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Budget Report

The budget report was provided by Greg Ames who noted an increase since the January 21 budget report, estimated at \$137,433 for State Special Revenue funding. Based on this increase, Greg estimated the amount for fiscal year 2016 grants awarded from MDA Fund 02068 to be \$1,940,672.

Fiscal year 2016 grant awards, expenditures, and pending expenditures were discussed. Non-grant expenses for fiscal year 2016 will be \$219,482 based on the calculation of 12% of the prior year grant awards.

Greg advised the council that the balance of funds available for award at the 2016 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant hearings was estimated as follows:

State Special Revenue Fund	\$1,368,172
General Fund	\$101,159
Forest Service Funds	\$157,709
Unspent past Forest Service Funds	\$13,338
Reverted Funds	\$21,679
Total (estimate)	\$1,662,057

	<p>Historical information regarding the weed vehicle fee, NWTF interest amounts, reverted funds, and grant hearing funding requests was provided to the council. Greg advised the council that application T16-040, Biocontrol Agents for Flowering Rush-Year 4, submitted by Peter Rice from the University of Montana, will be funded through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) grant program. Removal of application T16-040 reduced the total hearing request amount to \$2,005,413 for 86 applications, leaving an estimated shortfall of \$343,356.</p> <p>Todd Wagner asked what would result if all available grant funds were not awarded at the grant hearings. Greg Ames advised that the remaining funds would be held for emergency grants or future grants.</p>
<p>Application Updates and Hearing Review</p>	<p>Jasmine Reimer reviewed the updated additional application information sheet and county weed district budget information documents that were provided to the council. Discussion followed regarding county mill limits and how mills are determined. Accuracy of county budget information provided to MDA by counties on the \$7,500 Special County / Reservation grant application was discussed. Dave Burch said the county budget information should include funding received by the county for contracted work, such as with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), but should not include grant funds received from MDA. Dave said efforts will be made to increase verification of the reported county budget amounts.</p> <p>A map displaying the 2016 application project locations was provided along with the funding history for six previously funded local cooperative projects. 2016 applications for these projects had been submitted as new projects, due to expanded project areas, or an extended time since prior funding.</p>
<p>BIA / Tribal Weed Coordination</p>	<p>John Cook advised the council of questions raised at the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) training in Billings during the fall of 2015. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agency staff had inquired about their eligibility to receive NWTF Special County / Reservation \$7,500 grants in addition to those applied for by tribal weed departments.</p> <p>Challenges with noxious weed efforts on reservations, including personnel turnover, jurisdictional land ownership grey areas, communication challenges, and the lack of personnel trained in weed control were reviewed by John. The uniqueness of each reservation was described and John provided information related to roles, functions, and coordination between individual tribes and the BIA.</p> <p>John outlined the BIA Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) responsibilities for six Montana tribes, excluding Flathead, and one tribe in Wyoming. John noted the importance of the BIA in effectively managing and protecting trust resources, advising that the tribes own the land and the BIA manages the land to protect trust resources.</p> <p>John said the BIA request for Special County / Reservation \$7,500 funding was for BIA representatives of three tribes; Northern Cheyenne, Blackfeet, and Fort Belknap. Discussion followed with suggestions that BIA agents apply through the standard NWTF funding opportunities. Greg Ames asked the council to consider the BIA request and provide input later in the week.</p>
<p>EDDMapS</p>	<p>Chuck Bargeron from the University of Georgia / Center for Invasive Species presented information on EDDMapS and EDDMapS Pro via GoToMeeting. Chuck demonstrated the EDDMapS reporting process for invasive species mapping and discussed recent improvements that have been made to the operating platform.</p>

	<p>New features such as density maps, state noxious weed lists, and a site revisit form, which allows updates to existing reports were discussed.</p> <p>Recent NWTf funding of \$7,500, combined with funds from Utah and Nevada, will contribute to features on EDDMapS Pro, which is expected to be available in mid-June. Chuck discussed the EDDMapS Pro improvements that allow land managers to track and monitor invasive plant infestations and treatments without cellular connectivity. Dave Burch noted that these enhancements will be helpful in the pre-screening process for fire camp staging areas, which is currently underway.</p>
Council Duties	<p>Dave Burch revisited discussion from previous council meetings with Ron de Yong, regarding assistance from the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council to fill terrestrial weed management gaps. Dave noted that some gaps had occurred following disbanding of the Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council (NWSAC) and formation of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC). The council was asked for feedback and consideration of taking on some of the roles previously filled by the Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council. A draft list of current and proposed council responsibilities was reviewed.</p> <p>Current Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to the department concerning administration of the NWTf. • Provide funding recommendations for grant applications to the MDA Director. <p>Proposed Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote coordination and cooperative partnerships among private, county, state, tribal, and federal entities. • Review and provide comments on draft state noxious weed plan updates. • Review guidelines for land managers to develop weed management plans consistent with state and national strategies. • Provide recommendations the Director related to noxious weed management in Montana. <p>Mike Miller commented that the increased activities would provide a unified voice. Jim Olivarez noted that original NWSAC members had land responsibilities similar to those held by agency representatives on the NWMAC. Jim discussed changing the council agency representative role to be on par with voting council members. Additional time commitment was discussed. Dave Burch did not believe it would be a substantial increase in time and would mainly be included with existing NWMAC meetings, remote meetings and email correspondence. Dave saw the State Weed Plan review as the largest time commitment.</p>
Other Business Public Comment	<p>Other business was asked for. Greg Ames noted that five council member terms would be coming to an end on June 30, 2016. Council members with ending terms were asked to notify Dave Burch of their plans to seek an additional two year council term by March 15.</p> <p>Public comment was asked for by Greg Ames. None was heard.</p>
Hearings / Wrap Up Discussions	<p>Grant application presentations began at 3:15 p.m. February 29th and concluded March 3rd. Applicant presentations concluded each day with a council review and discussion of presentations heard that day.</p>
March 4 Business Meeting	<p>The council reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 4th. Discussion returned to consideration of the council assuming additional responsibilities. Jim Olivarez commented on the commitment level after his review of the State Weed Plan</p>

	<p>regarding steering committee direction, but was advised by Dave Burch that only a portion of the former NWSAC duties were being considered and that he did not plan to completely start over with a re-write of the State Plan. Todd Wagner moved that the council take on the additional advisory council responsibilities. Dick Zoanni seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Greg Ames returned to discussion of the BIA request for Special County / Reservation \$7,500 funding for BIA agency weed programs on the Northern Cheyenne, Blackfeet, and Fort Belknap reservations. Funding would be in addition to the currently available \$7,500 funding. Concern was expressed that this may open the door to additional entities requesting funds through this grant opportunity. Consideration of the BIA being allowed to request the \$7,500 grant if a tribe did not apply was raised, but confirmation that the tribe wasn't applying would not be known until the deadline for application submissions had passed. BIA agents submitting standard NWTF applications was suggested, although this would require a more detailed application process and would not allow equipment funding. Todd Wagner moved that the Director be advised to continue to fund the existing 56 counties and seven reservations as they apply for the Special County Reservation Grant. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously.</p>
<p>Grant Award Deliberations</p>	<p>Grant hearing protocol and council conflict of interest was reviewed. Greg Ames explained the voting process and Robert's Rules of Order were reviewed. Application deliberation order was determined by the combined application review scores submitted by council members and agency representatives.</p> <p>Council deliberations began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded at 11:50 a.m. Greg advised the council that their funding recommendations would be given to Director de Yong for final approval.</p> <p>2016 Funding Recommendations are attached.</p>
<p>Other Business</p>	<p>Dave Burch advised the council that Doug Dupuis had resigned his position on the council and asked again that the remaining term ending members contact him by March 15 with their plans for continuing on the council.</p> <p>Retention of emergency grant funds or contingency awards was not required as explained by Dave Burch and Greg Ames due to an estimated reserve balance of \$225,000 being retained in the weed program account.</p> <p>Greg thanked the council and staff. Public comment was requested. Bill Dyer expressed his appreciation of the rigorous project review.</p> <p>Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jim Gordon and approved unanimously. The meeting concluded at 12:05 p.m.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Council members with ending terms were asked to notify Dave Burch of their plans to seek an additional two year council term by March 15.	Jennifer Vermillion, Dick Zoanni, Jack Eddie, Jim Olivarez	March 15, 2016	