

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	June 14, 2017	Time:	1:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Carol Bearden	Location:	4-H Building, Dillon, MT

1. Meeting Objective

Business Meeting and Tours

2. Attendees

Council Members: Ben Thomas, Margie Edsall, Linda Eklund, Jack Eddie, Joel Farkell, Jim Gordon, Kenny Keever, Kellieann Morris, Jeanette Nordahl, Brian Ostwald
Agency Representatives: Gary Adams, Dan Lucas, Mike Miller, Steve Shelly, Tracy Sterling, Floyd Thompson
Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Carol Bearden, Jasmine Reimer, Kim Antonick
Guests: Carolyn Sime, MT Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program; Amber Burch, Beaverhead County Weed District

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Discussion
<p>Welcome, Review of Minutes, Council Appointments</p>	<p>Director Ben Thomas called the meeting to order and expressed appreciation for former MDA Administrator Greg Ames. Minutes from the February/March 2017 business meeting and grant hearings were reviewed. Margie Edsall moved to approve the minutes as written and was seconded by Kenny Keever. The motion was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Ben advised that he is working with the Governor’s office staff to finalize council representative appointments for five positions. Council members with term renewal dates of June 30th will be contacted by MDA once decisions have been made. Council members were thanked for their dedication.</p>

<p>Weed Program Budget Estimate</p>	<p>Donna Rise provided an overview of the noxious weed program budget estimate for fiscal year 2018. Donna reported that non-grant program expenses for fiscal year 2018 are budgeted at \$232,820. This amount is based on 12% of the prior year grant awards from fund 02068 which totaled \$1,940,166 in fiscal year 2017. Non-grant funds are utilized for the noxious weed program operating and personal services costs, council expenses, and a percentage for MDA’s Central Services Division.</p> <p>Following distribution of the pending FY 2018 Special County/Reservation grant awards, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) pass through awards, and allowable non-grant expenditures, funds available for the 2018 grant hearing awards are estimated as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="477 499 1016 604"> <tr> <td>State Special Revenue Fund</td> <td>\$1,323,680</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td> <td>\$101,159</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reverted Funds</td> <td>\$11,235</td> </tr> </table> <p>Dave Burch reported that the noxious weed program has received an award of \$500,000 for a Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Cooperative Forestry Assistance project, and is completing the process to receive \$169,000 in funds from the USFS Cooperative Weed Management Cost Share program. The Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Cooperative Forestry Assistance funding is expected to be distributed over several years for weed control, rehabilitation and revegetation grants in or near core sage grouse habitat.</p>	State Special Revenue Fund	\$1,323,680	General Fund	\$101,159	Reverted Funds	\$11,235
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	<p>Historical information regarding weed vehicle fee revenue, Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) interest amounts, reverted funds and grant hearing funding requests were provided to the council. Funds available for the 2018 grant hearings will continue to be updated following the close of fiscal year 2017.</p>						

<p>Legislation Update</p>	<p>Donna Rise provided an update on MDA legislation that passed during the 2017 session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 126 – Generally revise the Montana pesticides act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased government applicator fees by \$10/year, commercial applicator and dealer fees by \$30/year and established a fee range for pesticide registrations. Fees will support MDA pesticide programs, including the state weed coordinator position and the Montana State University (MSU) Private Applicator program • HB 283 – Require agencies to report grant information • HB 434 – Create Montana wildlife habitat improvement act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creates advisory council to rank and fund up to \$2 million/year for projects to enhance wildlife habitat by controlling/preventing noxious weeds. Modeled after the Noxious Weed Trust Fund ○ Ben Thomas volunteered to request contact information from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Director Martha Williams regarding this grant program. Dave Burch will provide an update on the grant program at the January 2018 council meeting. • HB 444 – Redirect Jefferson Slough fund distribution for milfoil mitigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Authorizes the use of state special revenue funds for Eurasian watermilfoil mitigation of the Jefferson Slough and Bypass Channel • SB 363 – Generally revise aquatic invasive species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implements Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Pass ○ Invasive species fee for hydroelectric facilities ○ FWP to report related activities/expenses to Environmental Quality Council (EQC) and Legislative Finance Committee ○ Vessel owners/operators required to provide proof of compliance upon FWP request ○ Provides funds for the invasive species trust fund <p>Donna completed the legislative update with a review of bills that did not progress through the session.</p>
<p>Grant Reviews and Schedule</p>	<p>Jasmine Reimer reported plans to have the 2018 NWTF grant applications available on the WebGrants site by July 1, 2017. January 6th is the application deadline for 2018.</p> <p>Updates being made to the application forms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide selection update - include Forefront active ingredients • Increase megabyte size for attachments if possible • Add 3% administrative allowance option on non-county local cooperative projects • Streamline environmental assessment process if possible <p>A logo for the NWTF program was unveiled to the council with a request for comments and feedback. Brochures with details about the various types of NWTF funding opportunities are planned as well as grant writing trainings, which are tentatively planned for October.</p> <p>Jasmine plans to visit the 13 new local cooperative projects that were funded in 2017, along with return visits to many of the 2016 awards. Jasmine encouraged the council to contact her if there are specific projects they would like her to visit, or if they would like to participate in, or receive a copy of a site visit report.</p>

<p>Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program</p>	<p>Carolyn Sime, Program Manager for the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program, provided information on program efforts to sustain viable sage grouse populations and conserve habitat. Carolyn said that greater sage grouse have been considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act and discussed sage grouse habitat needs and sensitivity to disturbances.</p> <p>The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program includes consultations for permitted activities, competitive Sage Grouse Stewardship Fund Grants, technical assistance, and habitat preservation and restoration. Carolyn noted that the program has no regulatory reach onto private lands; provides incentives for voluntary actions; and partners with counties and councils. Carolyn is interested in meeting with county weed coordinators and collaborating on weed plans for developments such as windfarms.</p> <p>Dave Burch encouraged utilizing the Montana Natural Heritage Program to house sage grouse information. Dave and Carolyn will work to develop language for NWTF grant applications specific to sage grouse habitat. Additional Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program information can be found at https://sagegrouse.mt.gov.</p>
<p>Noxious Weed Trust Fund Program Update</p>	<p>Dave Burch updated the council on Noxious Weed Program activities and area events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Montana Weed Management Plan update comment period has closed and the document is being routed for final review by MDA before being released. • A medusahead tour is planned for July 24th followed by a rush skeletonweed survey July 25th and 26th in Lake County. Participation information is available from Dan Williams, Lincoln County Weed Coordinator. • The 2018 NWTF grant hearings will be held March 5-9th at the Wingate in Helena. • EDDMapS Pro is currently being tested as they work to improve the phone versions. EDDMapS West has been approved by the State Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) for use by state agencies.

<p>Agricultural Experiment Station Overview</p>	<p>Dan Lucas, Western Region Department Head for MSU Extension, and Tracy Sterling, Department Head and Professor with MSU, provided a written report of Montana State University Extension Service and the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station activities. Pesticide education training opportunities, publications, research and resource stewardship were noted as well as a historical perspective on research and education across the state. The report highlighted MSU’s 2014–2016 NWTF grant projects, 2017 NWTF grant awards, additional funding sources, and MSU departments/staff involved in weed research and education. A copy of the annual report is available online at http://weedeco.msu.montana.edu/resources.html.</p>
<p>Other Business</p>	<p>Ben Thomas asked for public comment. None was heard.</p> <p>The January council meeting was discussed with input that a face to face meeting is preferred over a conference call. Dave Burch will contact the Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) to see if time for the council meeting is available prior to the start of the MWCA annual meeting.</p> <p>Agenda topics suggested for the January 2018 council meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on weed free sites for fire operations • Bacterial control of cheatgrass • Update on FWP HB 434 grant program <p>The council was encouraged to provide additional agenda suggestions.</p> <p>Kenny Kever moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Jeanette Nordahl. The motion was approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.</p>

Tours	<p>Following the business meeting, the council participated in a weed pull and Adopt A Trailhead sign dedication at the Dillon Town Overlook Trailhead. The council was joined by Mike Mooney, Bureau of Land Management; Shantell Frame-Martin, Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign; Kim Antonick, MDA-Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage; and members of the Beaverhead Trails Coalition.</p> <p>Tours continued June 15th with the council visiting the Snowline site of the Beaverhead County NWTF Dyer’s Woad Cooperative Project. Amber Burch and Jack Eddie provided project information and a demonstration of the Dyer’s woad detector dogs was led by Ngaio Richards with Working Dogs for Conservation.</p> <p>The council then traveled to Todd Breitenfeldt’s NWTF Whitehall Biological Weed Control Project “Bugs-R-Us”. Melissa Maggio-Kassner, Montana Biological Weed Control Coordinator, and Whitehall Biological Weed Control Project staff, Colton Coffing, Alycia Loomis, and Ally Reany, provided biocontrol information and a tour of the Whitehall insectary. The tour concluded with a biocontrol collection site visit and hands on insect collection.</p> <p>Many thanks to all who provided the great tours!</p>
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4. Action Items				
Action	Item	Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Acquire contact information for HB 434 grant program from FWP Director Martha Williams.	Ben Thomas		Complete
2	Provide update on FWP wildlife habitat grant program at the January council meeting.	Dave Burch	Jan. 2018	Complete
3	Contact Jasmine if council members have suggestions or requests for specific project reviews/site visits.	Council members		Complete
4	Submit agenda suggestions for the January 2018 meeting.	Council members		Complete
5				