

**MEETING MINUTES**

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Business Meeting		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	July 18, 2019	<b>Time:</b>	8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
<b>Minutes Prepared By:</b>	Carol Bearden	<b>Location:</b>	Cascade County Public Works Building Great Falls, MT
<b>1. Meeting Objective</b>			
Business Meeting - followed by NWTF project tours			
<b>2. Attendees</b>			
<p><b>Council Members:</b> Todd Wagner, Margie Edsall, Linda Eklund, Joel Farkell, Trent Brusseau, Kenny Keever, Kelliann Morris, Brian Ostwald</p> <p><b>Agency Representatives:</b> Adam Sieges-MT Fish, Wildlife &amp; Parks (FWP); Wendy Velman-Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Dan Lucas, Tracy Sterling-MT State University (MSU); Joey e’Silva-USDA APHIS; Bob Cloninger-MT Dept. of Transportation (MDT); Monica Pokorny-USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Michelle Cox*-US Forest Service (by phone)</p> <p><b>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff:</b> Christy Clark, Beth Eiring, Jasmine Reimer, Carol Bearden</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> Josh Blystone, Cascade County Weed District; Landowners: Julie Pribyl, Kendra Lane, Jeanne McKamey; Stephanie Hester-MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC); Kim Antonick-MT Fish, Wildlife &amp; Parks (FWP); Jason Laird-MT Ag Network, KRTV News</p>			
<b>3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welcome</b></li> <li>• <b>Review of Minutes</b></li> <li>• <b>Council Appointments</b></li> <li>• <b>Division Updates</b></li> </ul>	<p>Montana Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Sciences Division Administrator, Christy Clark called the meeting to order. Christy provided information on her background as a rancher, legislator, and her prior position at MDA as bureau chief in the Ag Development and Marketing Bureau. Introductions were made.</p> <p>Minutes from the March 2019 business meeting and grant hearings were reviewed. <b>Margie Edsall moved to approve the minutes as submitted and was seconded by Kenny Keever. The motion was approved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Christy reported that council members Kelliann Morris, Todd Wagner, Linda Eklund, and Kenny Keever have been re-appointed for an additional two-year council term. Trent Brusseau has been appointed for his first term as Herbicide Dealer/Applicator Representative on the council. The term ending date for these appointments is June 30, 2021.</p> <p>Division updates were provided by Christy Clark, who discussed developments in the MDA hemp program. MDA currently has 277 licensed hemp growers, with approximately 60% of the hemp grown being used to produce CBD oil. Limited FDA guidelines related to CBD oil were discussed. Sampling protocol has been developed for MDA lab and field staff to ensure less than .03% THC is contained in products. Christy reported that at the request of growers, MDA has formed an eleven member advisory committee. Jasmine Reimer noted that cannibas has the potential to become an invasive plant.</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Updates</b></li> </ul>	<p>Program updates from State Weed Coordinator Jasmine Reimer included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant Coordinator position has been filled, Greta Dige joins MDA August 5, 2019.</li> <li>• 2020 grant funding opportunities have been posted in WebGrants.</li> <li>• Ventenata was added as Priority 2A weed on the state noxious weed list in July.</li> <li>• One-year extension request for Section 18 license is underway for Esplanade. Jasmine will advise of outcome.</li> <li>• State weed list petition process has been changed by the working group to allow petition submittal at any time. A call for petitions will be made in January and May of each year. The working group will meet in October to review submitted petitions.</li> <li>• State Agency/County Weed District Noxious Weed Biennial Report for FY18 and 19 has been sent out for completion by agency and county staff. Reporting is due by November 1, 2019.</li> <li>• The Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (NWSFF) program is developing/testing a mobile app for field inspections. MDA will transition from using paper forms to the mobile app in 2020.</li> <li>• Medusahead was found by Jane Mangold on July 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds in a recently reseeded area. Jane and Gallatin County Weed District have removed plants and are monitoring. A sample plant will be sent to John Gaskin for comparison with medusahead found in other Montana locations. MDA will assist in efforts to locate the seed source.</li> <li>• Dyer’s woad –       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 plants found near Columbus in Stillwater County</li> <li>○ 1 plant found in Whitehall area</li> <li>○ 1 plant found in Deer Lodge area</li> <li>○ 1,300 plants found in Sweet Grass County</li> </ul> <p>Dyer’s woad plants are being monitored by Amber Burch and county weed coordinators. The Sweet Grass County infestation was reported by a participant in the NWTF Boulder Project grant as having been on the site for years. Treatments have been made and it is expected to be a long-term monitoring/treatment site. The emergency NWTF grant funding process was discussed. Wendy Velman reported that cutleaf vipergrass has been found on BLM land in southern Carbon County.</p> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NWTF White Paper &amp; Council SOP</b></li> </ul>	<p>A white paper, providing an overview of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund history was distributed to the Council and reviewed by Jasmine Reimer. The document outlines legislative history, background of funding sources, and laws/regulations related to the Trust Fund.</p> <p>Jasmine reviewed the recently developed Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council SOP. The SOP was written to provide guidance to council members related to rules/laws, council member and agency representative roles and responsibilities, and the appointment and re-appointment process.</p> <p>The SOP contains information on grant application and hearing procedures, along with Noxious Weed Trust Fund policies. Policy that grant awards for herbicide not exceed state bid price by more than 15% was reviewed from discussion at the 2019 grant hearings. <b>Todd Wagner moved that a cap of 15% over state herbicide bid price be adopted as policy, with encouragement to grantees that herbicide be purchased at</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluation Criteria Review</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>state bid price when possible. Margie Edsall seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.</b></p> <p>Evaluation criteria used by the council to score research, education, and local cooperative grant applications was reviewed. In response to the research scoring rubric, additional application questions were suggested so that applicants fully explain how knowledge from the project would be utilized, applied in the future, and the anticipated project impacts. An explanation of enhanced benefits and what sets the project apart from others was noted as helpful, especially if similar research had been done in the past. Tracy Sterling suggested expanding on “success” in research criteria question #8. Jasmine will address these suggestions and provide feedback to the research committee.</p> <p>Education scoring criteria was reviewed. Adding application questions regarding the number of people impacted/benefiting from the outreach was suggested by Wendy Velman. Biocontrol education projects were discussed and as a blend of research and education, the education scoring criteria may not be a perfect fit.</p> <p>Local Cooperative scoring based on application information was discussed and the following suggestions made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify percent of participation question – based on number of landowners, include landowners in CWMA cooperating but not requesting funds.</li> <li>• Add section for explanation of why weed(s) in project are a high priority in this project area.</li> <li>• Expand the IWM section to provide more detail on biocontrol, revegetation, and mechanical efforts included in the project.</li> <li>• Add questions related to the commitment of project participants, future plans and a description of future monitoring.</li> <li>• Include language for landowner management plans to limit on-going reliance on grant funds.</li> <li>• Signed landowner management plans/contracts.</li> <li>• Increase scoring weight on monitoring plan.</li> <li>• Encourage assistance to landowners from MSU resources, including Jeff Mosley’s new “Monitoring for Success” booklet. Montana Rangelands Partnership was also suggested as a resource.</li> <li>• Provide monitoring training – possibly through MWCA. Key in on “Are we making a difference?” Include monitoring expenses in budget.</li> <li>• Include opportunity in applications for grantees to describe the project relationship within the community and landowner interaction - <b>Wendy will send wording she is working on to Jasmine.</b></li> <li>• Define aspects of success in creating future healthy plant communities in applications and review criteria.</li> </ul> <p><b>Jasmine plans to incorporate as many suggestions as possible into the 2020 application and scoring documents. Updates will be reviewed at the January council meeting prior to application evaluations.</b></p> <p>Grant award history was reviewed with 199 grants awarded in FY 19 for a total award amount of \$2,356,842. Education/Development projects made up 9.95% of awards, Research 13.13%, Local Cooperatives 52.95%, MDT pass through to counties 4.24%, and Special County/Reservation \$7,500 grants 19.73%.</p>
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<p><b>Agricultural Experiment Station / Extension Overview</b></p>	<p>Dan Lucas, Western Region Department Head for MSU Extension, and Tracy Sterling, Department Head and Professor at MSU, provided a written report of Montana State University Extension Service and the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station activities to the council. Dan reviewed the number of training hours, attendees, and programs; Extension weed management consultations; and MSU researcher and Extension specialists contributing to education and outreach in 2018. Dan discussed expanding county weed district efforts and education to landowners through Extensions non-regulatory landowner interactions. Evaluation of educational projects can be assisted with tools and answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was new knowledge gained?</li> <li>• Is the new knowledge being applied?</li> <li>• If applying new knowledge, are the desired results being achieved?</li> </ul> <p>Tracy Sterling reviewed the MSU Agricultural Experiment Station portion of the report, which highlighted MSU’s 2016–2018 NWTF grant projects, 2019 NWTF grant awards, additional funding sources, and a review of MSU departments/staff involved in weed research and education. Publications, research, and resource stewardship were noted as well as a historical perspective on research and education across the state.</p> <p>Tracy discussed researcher reliance on input from on the ground weed managers for research ideas and asked for input. The long-term process of research projects was discussed, Tracy will encourage MSU faculty to expand on the need for this aspect in grant applications.</p> <p>Tracy reported that Dr. Anton Beckermann, who recently took on the role of Associate Director of Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, had hoped to attend this meeting and would like an opportunity to participate/present at a future meeting. A council research project tour was discussed for the July 2020 council meeting. Jasmine will let the council know of research site visits made during the year for anyone who would like to attend.</p>
<p><b>Research Subcommittee</b></p>	<p>Jasmine discussed developing a research subcommittee to bridge gaps between researchers and the research needs of organizations and the public. <b>A subcommittee meeting will be planned for this fall and 1-2 times per year in the future. Jasmine is looking for committee volunteers to include weed task force coordinators, researchers, weed coordinators, and representatives from various universities.</b> The subcommittee will be the hub to coordinate research project ideas and on the ground needs.</p> <p>Monica Pokorny noted that in the past, the State Noxious Weed Plan asked for a call for research needs. Monica encouraged including this in future updates of the State Plan. Wendy Velman suggested utilizing the State Library as a site to house completed research as well as research needs.</p>
<p><b>Rush Skeletonweed Update</b></p>	<p>Following rush skeletonweed discussions at the 2019 grant hearings, MDA staff (Dave Burch, Mark Nechodom, Jasmine Reimer) met with AJ Bigby-Confederated Salish &amp; Kootenai Tribes, and weed coordinators from Lake, Sanders, Missoula, Lincoln and Ravalli counties. Jasmine’s overview of the April meeting included concern on continued task force coordination of rush skeletonweed control after Dan Williams retirement in September 2019.</p> <p>Jasmine asked for input on funding a dedicated task force coordinator rather than adding the time commitment to an already busy county weed coordinator in the area. Jasmine considered utilizing Big Sky Watershed staff for one-two years, at a cost of</p>

	<p>\$12,000/year. Discussion followed that a passion for weed control, such as from a dedicated county weed coordinator is needed, other comments noted the time commitment and suggested consideration of a statewide new invader coordinator position.</p> <p>Jasmine advised that prior to retirement, Dave Burch had encouraged development and availability of biocontrol for rush skeletonweed, especially in areas where herbicide control may not be practical. Idaho Department of Agriculture researcher Mark Schwarzlaender has worked with CABI on biocontrol agents for rush skeletonweed, however funding from Idaho has stopped. Mark was contacted by MDA and has applied for research funding through the NWTF. The council was asked to review the application and an email vote can be done for the funding recommendation. Comments were made that the application be held until the normal submittal/award time period. Kenny Kever suggested contacting John Gaskin regarding differences in plant populations and biocontrol effectiveness; and having measurable results for the project. <b>Following discussion it was decided that Jasmine will send the application to the research committee for review and input, then to the council for a vote.</b></p>																					
<p><b>MISC Report</b></p>	<p>Stephanie Hester, coordinator for the Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC), reviewed the MISC history and provided information on MISC activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018 MISC Annual Report review</li> <li>• August 21 council meeting</li> <li>• Law review outcomes</li> <li>• Science Advisory Panel - available for terrestrial assistance, houndstongue biocontrol update</li> <li>• Sept. 24 meeting - scoping needs for Eastern Heath Snail management plan</li> <li>• “Squeal on Pigs” feral hog threat; Emerald Ash Borer, White Nose Syndrome, invasive mussel updates</li> <li>• AIS check stations/Conservation District coordination</li> <li>• DNRC AIS grant program changes and funding award for update/reprint of Invasive Species packets</li> <li>• Co-hosting 2020 Summit with North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA)</li> </ul>																					
<p><b>WHIP Grant Program</b></p>	<p>Kim Antonick, grant coordinator for the FWP Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) provided an overview of the grant application, funding and monitoring process. Kim discussed the approval/funding process, which had met with some delays but has now funded the following 2018 grant awards.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="467 1514 1430 1608"> <tr> <td>\$564,000</td> <td>Upper Ruby Project</td> <td>Ruby Valley Conservation District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$30,037</td> <td>Blackfoot Community Conservation Area</td> <td>Powell County Weed District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$37,500</td> <td>North Hills-Rattlesnake</td> <td>Missoula County Weed District</td> </tr> </table> <p>Four 2019 grants are currently in the funding process.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="467 1677 1471 1803"> <tr> <td>\$63,180</td> <td>Centennial Valley</td> <td>Centennial Valley Association</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$40,000</td> <td>Tenderfoot-Bald Hills</td> <td>Helena-Lewis &amp; Clark National Forest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$275,435</td> <td>Upper Stillwater Watershed</td> <td>Stillwater Valley Watershed Council</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$783,373</td> <td>Fish &amp; Nemote Creeks</td> <td>Mineral County Weed District</td> </tr> </table> <p>WHIP projects can be funded for up to five years and require a minimum 25% non-federal cash match. Details of vegetation and biocontrol monitoring protocols for pre and post treatment were reviewed. Kim noted that biocontrol projects may have up to</p>	\$564,000	Upper Ruby Project	Ruby Valley Conservation District	\$30,037	Blackfoot Community Conservation Area	Powell County Weed District	\$37,500	North Hills-Rattlesnake	Missoula County Weed District	\$63,180	Centennial Valley	Centennial Valley Association	\$40,000	Tenderfoot-Bald Hills	Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest	\$275,435	Upper Stillwater Watershed	Stillwater Valley Watershed Council	\$783,373	Fish & Nemote Creeks	Mineral County Weed District
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	<p>ten years of monitoring. WHIP grant monitoring is used to evaluate change in plant communities and to help determine if management objectives are being met. WHIP applications are expected to be available in WebGrants this August, with a November submittal deadline.</p>
<p><b>Council Member Updates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monika Pokorny advised that long range Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPS) for EQUIP contracts are being developed to focus on selected resource concerns. Monika said noxious weeds and ventenata have been identified by some counties as top concerns and she encouraged voicing input at Conservation District and NRCS meetings.</li> <li>• Joel Farkell reported that the Smith River NWTF project visit, which he and several council members and MDA staff were able to participate in was “awesome!”. Joel was impressed with the progress being made in the area and the opportunity to meet with the commercial applicator.</li> <li>• Margie Edsall thanked Jasmine for her participation in the Jack Creek project area coop day. The discovery of orange hawkweed in the area of Hell’s Canyon Road and Third Creek was discussed. Land ownership confusion delayed action being taken, and Margie reported that the hawkweed has spread down the lower part of Third Creek, heading for the Jefferson River. The Forest Service was confirmed to be the landowner and Margie will provide contact information to Michelle Cox as requested.</li> <li>• Trent Brusseau participated in the NWTF Smith River grant site visit and noted the strong public support for the project. Trent asked about grant fund utilization due to the weather impacts this year. Jasmine advised that new application requests are sometimes reduced by applicants when prior year project activities have been delayed. Grantees who have not requested any project funding reimbursements will be contacted.</li> <li>• Kenny Keever discussed concerns brought up at the 2019 grant hearings regarding oversight of the State Biocontrol Coordination Project and coordinator position. Kenny said the Biocontrol Working Group met in May to develop a steering committee and draft charter, which is out for review. Completion is expected between October – December.</li> <li>• Kellieann Morris reported on a group effort to address blueweed in Sanders County. Missoula, Ravalli, and Lincoln counties came together with a crew of about 20 people working for three days. Kellieann said this only made a dent in the Sanders County blueweed problem but did result in good contacts and thankful landowners. An insect found on blueweed in Sanders and Ravalli counties appears to be impacting plants and has been sent to the Schutter Lab for identification. Insects will also be sent to Mark Schwarzlaender. Kellieann stressed the need for ideas and direction to address blueweed in Sanders County. A Ravalli County newspaper insert directed at noxious weed education and control was distributed. Kellieann thanked Margie Edsall for the inspiration and said that about 9,000 copies had been printed and distributed at no cost to the county.</li> <li>• Bob Cloninger reported that Mike Miller’s MDT Noxious Weed Coordinator position will be filled before long and a reseeding/vegetation position in MDT’s construction division has been filled. Bob thanked Jasmine for her invasive grass presentation at the MDT maintenance staff training.</li> </ul>

<b>Project Tour Information</b>	Prior to the council tours of Cascade County NWTF grants, landowners and weed coordinator Josh Blystone provided information on locations and activities of the grant projects. Kendra Lane discussed benefits from ten years of funding for the Hound Creek Weed Management Area project, including increase neighbor involvement and mapping with EDDMapS. Regrouping efforts in the Lower Hound Creek project participants were discussed by Jeanne McKamey. Julie Pribyl provided project history and thanked the council for assistance in the Eden grant area. Funding of long-term grant projects was discussed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Upcoming Meetings</b></li>       <li>• <b>Other Business</b></li> <li>• <b>Public Comment</b></li> </ul>	<p>Jasmine Reimer will look into holding the January 2020 Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council meeting in conjunction with the Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) annual meeting (January 14-16<sup>th</sup>) at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. The council was asked to provide agenda suggestions.</p> <p><b>2020 grant hearings – <u>dates/location have been changed to:</u> March 2<sup>nd</sup> through March 6<sup>th</sup> at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena.</b></p> <p>Christy Clark asked for other business and public comment.</p> <p>Kendra Lane suggested a mapping color change for toadflax in EDDMapS when future updates are made.</p> <p><b>The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.</b></p>

**4. Action Items**

<b>Action</b>		<b>Assigned</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Advise council of outcome on one-year extension request for Section 18 license for Esplanade use.	Jasmine Reimer		
2	Update on Gallatin County Fairgrounds medusahead.	Jasmine Reimer	January meeting	
3	Review application/evaluation criteria updates.	Jasmine Reimer	January meeting	
4	Research subcommittee development and meeting.	Jasmine Reimer	Fall 2019	
5	Distribution of Mark Schwarzlaender’s grant application to research committee, followed by council vote.	Jasmine Reimer / Council	Complete by 8/23/19	
6	Request for January 2020 meeting agenda topics.	Council	ASAP	
7	Include opportunity in applications for grantees to describe the project relationship within the community and landowner interaction - Wendy will send wording she is working on to Jasmine.	Wendy Velman	ASAP	