

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	January 19, 2017	Time:	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared By:	Jerin Borrego	Location:	MT Dept. of Agriculture – Rm. 225 GoToMeeting / Conference Call
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting			
2. Attendees			
<p>Council Members: Brian Ostwald, Jack Eddie, Jeanette Nordahl*, Jim Gordon, Joel Farkell, Kellieann Morris, Kenny Keever, Linda Eklund*, Margie Edsall*, Todd Wagner</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Tracy Sterling, Dan Dobler*, Floyd Thompson, Gary Adams, Joe Merenz, Mike Miller*, Steve Shelly, Monica Pokorny</p> <p>Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) Staff*: Kim Mangold, Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Carol Bearden, Jasmine Reimer, Jerin Borrego</p> <p>* Attended in person</p>			
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome & Introductions	Kim Mangold called the meeting to order and introductions were made. New members Jeanette Nordahl, Joel Farkell, Margie Edsall, and Brian Ostwald were recognized.		
Review Minutes	<p>Minutes from the June 28, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Dave Burch noted that in the minutes under action items number 8, the date needed to be changed from January 2016 to January 2017. Everyone agreed with the correction.</p> <p>Margie Edsall moved to approve the minutes with Dave Burch's correction. Jeanette Nordahl seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</p>		
Budget/ Noxious Weed Program Overview	<p>Greg Ames reviewed the Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) budget report. Fiscal year 2017 (FY17) grant program budget estimates were explained. Information was given for historic funds from FY09 to FY17 for state special revenue history, other revenue history, grant hearing history, and unspent grant award history. Information was given for grant awards that were unspent and reverted in FY17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kenny Keever requested information about why there was a drop in the number of grant applications over time. Dave Burch answered this during the Weed Program Overview.• Dan Dobler wanted to know about the decision on which grants are funded from General Fund money that can't be reverted for reuse if it isn't used. Dave Burch noted that when grants are awarded the fund source is debated and assigned based on the grantee's credentials and funding criteria. Preliminary decisions on funding sources are made during the grant hearing. Suggestions can be made at the grant hearing about where funds should be coming from.		

	<p>Estimated funds available for 2017 grant hearings:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="415 170 1024 390"> <tr> <td>State Special Revenue Fund</td><td>\$1,330,728</td></tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td><td>\$101,159</td></tr> <tr> <td>Forest Service Funds</td><td>\$113,798</td></tr> <tr> <td>Unspent past Forest Service Funds</td><td>\$559</td></tr> <tr> <td>Reverted Funds</td><td>\$21,687</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total (estimate)</td><td>\$1,567,931</td></tr> </table> <p>Funds available for the 2017 grant hearings will continue to be updated. Jeanette Nordahl moved to accept the budget report and was seconded by Margie Edsall.</p>	State Special Revenue Fund	\$1,330,728	General Fund	\$101,159	Forest Service Funds	\$113,798	Unspent past Forest Service Funds	\$559	Reverted Funds	\$21,687	Total (estimate)	\$1,567,931
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<p>Legislative Update</p>	<p>Donna Rise provided details about MDA legislation related to noxious weeds and pesticides that are currently being considered in the 2017 legislative session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>HB 126 Generally revise the Montana pesticide act:</u> House Agriculture Committee hearing was 1/5/17; amendments coming. Increase in registration fees for pesticides and applicator licensing. Funds would be used for private pesticide applicator program, support pesticide programs, and support the statewide weed coordinator position. Next action on House Bill anticipated on 1/24/17. • <u>HB 170 Reducing vehicle fees for seniors:</u> Tabled in House Transportation Committee and unlikely to be un-tabled. It would have reduced Noxious Weed Trust Fund revenue from vehicle fees by about \$23,633. • <u>HB 204 Generally revise laws related to maintenance of fishing access sites:</u> referred to House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee. This Bill establishes a vessel fee of \$25, of which \$10 must be used for weed control at Fishing Access Sites. Hearing scheduled for 1/26/17. Mike Miller clarified that the \$10 MUST be used for weed control. • <u>HB 283 Require agencies to report grant information:</u> House introduced. This would require a report to legislative financial committee 60 days after 2017 session adjournment and then annually by January 31 each year. Donna Rise noted that this would require the WebGrants program to provide grant information in an Excel format. This report would not be difficult to furnish since this data is already collected by the grants program. • <u>LC2219 Create FWP noxious weed management trust fund and grant program:</u> Draft is currently on hold. It proposes use of Pittman Robertson funds as noxious weed grants for state and federal agency use to control weeds on properties managed in Montana. Kelly Flynn HD 68 is sponsoring bill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dave Burch has talked with Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and they currently receive the funds in full. Of these funds, \$2 million per year for the next six years, is being requested for use on noxious weeds. These funds must be used on federal and state public lands. Currently, federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service have approximately \$3 million combined to spend on weed control in Montana. The added funds from Pittman Robertson on these federal lands would be welcome. FWP would need a grant council to administer this money. Since this council already has a system in place, MDA could assist FWP. ○ Kenny Keever noted that it would be difficult for federal agencies to do any type of funds matching to receive these funds. Dave Burch will look into this with Kelly Flynn and the MDA attorney. 												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jack Eddie noted that since 81% of his county is public lands, this money would greatly benefit his county as an alternate means of funding. ○ Margie Edsall noted that this would fill in weed management on state and federal lands that are currently not supported by grant programs. ○ Mike Miller requested information on what the matching funds rule would be. Dave Burch answered that it appeared it would be a 25:75 matching. It is not known yet whether the matching funds would need to be in-kind or hard money. ○ Kellieann Morris noted that she will head up support of any bills introduced that deal with noxious weeds that the council wishes to support. This support includes testifying or letter writing. Almost everyone she has contacted had responded in support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) has a bill that would increase the vehicle registration fee by 0.92%. This would raise approximately \$1 million annually that would go towards the Trust Fund. Ten percent of these funds would go to support the statewide weed coordinator position (if this were to pass the funds from HB 126 that were allocated for this position would be used for the pesticide program). Twelve percent of funds would go towards administration by MDA. Two percent of funds would go to the Montana Department of Agriculture, Central Services Division. None of these funds would go towards Carol Bearden's or Jasmine Reimer's positions. The remaining money from the \$1 million would be split equally among the counties in Montana. This money going towards the counties could be used to fund full-time county weed coordinator positions in counties that don't have them. In order to get these funds the new county weed coordinator positions may need to complete educational training. <p>Jasmine Reimer will email Donna's legislation spreadsheet to online meeting participants. Additional information can be found on the MDA website or by contacting department staff.</p>
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Weed Program Overview

- Dave Burch noted that the Montana State Weed Plan update is open for review and comments until January 31, 2017. A meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2017 to review all comments. He requested that all interested persons submit comments. About 10 people have submitted comments. Dave Burch stated that comments submitted were mostly positive so far.
- Kenny Keever noted that his group is reviewing the biocontrol section and other areas of the plan and will be providing comments soon.
- Tracy Sterling wanted to know if her comments were received. Dave Burch noted that they were received. Tracy disagreed that the Montana State Weed Plan followed the MISAC format. Dave Burch stated that this would be reviewed. Dave Burch noted that the 2008 plan contributors would be cited.
- Grant Program Discussion – Dave Burch
 - 74 grants were submitted this year which is down from previous years. Ideas for why this is include:
 - The weather caused groups to be spraying late into November. This conflicted with the deadline of when grant applications were due and they were unable to get an application turned in. An idea to move the grant deadline to January 6 or 15 was brought forwarded by Dave Burch. This would give more time for grant applications to be turned in after the spraying season. Jeanette Nordahl suggested January 15 as the date so that it wouldn't interfere with holiday season. Kenny Keever suggested the January 6 deadline so as not to conflict with the annual Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA) meeting. **Dave noted that this new deadline would be considered and probably changed to January 6.** It was noted that the change in deadline will not affect when grantees receive their funding. Changing the application deadline would change when the grant hearings are held, moving that date forward to the end of March for 2018.
 - Dave Burch noted that new software should be available to MDA soon that will allow documents to be signed electronically, cutting down transit time of documents.
 - Jasmine Reimer noted that the environmental assessment (EA) is a difficulty for some applying. Dave Burch said MDA legal counsel is currently reviewing the EA to see what could be cut out to create less difficulty for those applying. Margie Edsall noted that the file for the soils portion of the EA becomes so large when completed that it is difficult to send in with the grant application.
 - Jasmine Reimer and Carol Bearden provide grant workshops to help anyone interested in applying. These workshops have been helpful for those who have attended to make the application process more understandable.
 - Dave Burch brought forward an option to allow conservation districts, extension offices, and non-profit organizations to include an administrative cost for local cooperative grants. Dave suggested allowing 3% of the grant amount, with a cap set at \$1,000 per grant. This would exclude county weed districts and tribes as they can use the \$7,500 Special County/Reservation grant funds that they are already allocated to cover administrative costs.
 - Previously when the council removed the ability to apply for a grant including administrative costs, there was no cap for administrative costs. The complete removal of the option to apply for administrative costs is too restrictive for those applying for grants and including a cap will give them

	<p>some administrative funds while not seeing too much of funding going to this expenditure. It may allow more local conservation districts in particular to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kim Mangold noted that payment for administrative work for the grant would support better reports and communication as to how the grant money was spent and project results. ▪ Margie Edsall moved to allow conservation districts, extension, and non-profit organizations to request an administration fee of up to 3% of the funds requested for local cooperative projects, with a cap of \$1,000 for administration fees. Jack Eddie seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave Burch received contact from Stephanie Hester, grant coordinator at the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), noting that funding for aquatic invasives had been redirected to the recent invasive mussel situation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peter Rice has applied to DNRC for a 2017 flowering rush grant and will not be receiving funding. Dave reported Stephanie had inquired if Peter could be allowed a late submittal of his application to the NWTF. Dave advised that Peter was requesting approximately \$30,000. ▪ Kenny Keever wondered if by allowing Peter Rice to submit a late application to the NWTF it might cause other aquatic weed people to apply with the same reasoning. Would this be a onetime thing or would this become regular where aquatic noxious weed groups would apply to the NWTF instead of DNRC? ▪ Dave Burch noted that the problem is that Mr. Rice didn't apply within the timeline set for NWTF applications and that authority for aquatic weeds lies with DNRC. Dave advised that if Mr. Rice were allowed to apply for an emergency grant it could start July 1st with the new fiscal year. He also indicated that emergency grants are typically for fire/flood. ▪ Kim Mangold noted that this would set a precedent showing that even though DNRC is the authority on aquatic weeds, DNRC doesn't need to fund aquatic weed grants. <p>Discussion concluded with consensus that Peter Rice would not be allowed to apply late nor would there be consideration of other aquatic weed grants.</p>
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Grant Project Reviews/Application Updates	<p>Jasmine Reimer went over a power point presentation highlighting the 60 site visits she completed this summer of 2016. She highlighted successes and challenges from each grantee. A form was filled out at each visit to evaluate grant usage. These forms could be uploaded and used to evaluate returning grant applicators in successive years. Jasmine gave grant project examples in education, research, new local cooperative and continuing local cooperative grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Miller suggested that some of Jasmine's examples be used as "success stories" to promote the grant program. <p>Mike Miller noted that not many of the grants received are coming from the eastern part of the state. Dave Burch responded that this section of the state has few full-time weed coordinator positions and doesn't receive as much support as the western part of the state.</p>
Other Business	<p>Greg Ames asked for public comment and none was heard. Other business discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dave Burch stated that if a school or nonprofit has an insectary and was funded from grant money; they are legally allowed to sell those insects for profit. ○ Kenny Keever noted that on grant applications, many who are applying for biocontrol research grants will be sourcing their research from the Swiss group CABI. This group is one of the few ways that biocontrol insects can be researched for the United States and is one of the less expensive sources available. ○ Dave Burch requested any ideas for the June 2017 meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kenny Keever suggested a river float between Fort Benton to Loma on the Missouri river to look at the biocontrol efforts along the river. • Greg Ames stated that the grant hearings would begin on Monday, February 27th at the Wingate Hotel in Helena. Dave Burch stated that they would start at 1 pm with a business meeting. Starting at 3:15 pm there would be seven applications heard. On Tuesday, February 28th, 30 applications would be heard. On Wednesday, March 1st there would be 30 applications heard. On Thursday, March 2nd seven applications would present their grants between 8 am and 9:45 am. After a short break, deliberations on grant decisions by the council would begin at 11 am until finished. • It was requested that Donna Rise provide a legislative update for next meeting. • It was noted that when Jasmine and Carol finish reviewing applications, they will be released for council members to review and make comments. Previously, review comments were private and other members wouldn't see what was written. It was suggested that these comments be made open so that anyone could see who made any comments on the document. All agreed that making the comments visible to the council was fine. <p>The motion to adjourn was made by Todd Wagner, 2nd by Kellieann Morris. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.</p>

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Comments on Montana State Weed Plan until January 31, 2017.	Council Members	1/31/17	
2	Legislative update for bills impacting noxious weeds.	Donne Rise		
3	Collect site visit information to be used in “success stories” of past grants.	Jasmine Reimer		
4	Submit agenda suggestions for the June 2017 meeting.	Council members		
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