

**/MEETING MINUTES**

<b>Meeting/Project Name:</b>		Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council Meeting	
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	January 9, 2012 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
<b>Minutes Prepared By:</b>		<b>Location:</b>	Carol Bearden Heritage Inn, Great Falls
<b>1. Meeting Objective</b>			
Business Meeting			
<b>2. Attendees</b>			
<p>Council Members: Jim Gordon, Jennifer Anderson Vermillion, Margie Edsall, Dan Jackson, Nico Cantalupo, Todd Wagner, Jack Eddie, Dick Zoanni, Jim Olivarez</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Joe Weigand, Jim Jacobs (conference call), Larry Beneker, John Gaskin, Steve Shelly, Peter Stevenson, Mike Miller, Steve Siegelin, Tracy Sterling (conference call), John Simons, Dan Dobler, Gary Adams</p> <p>Guests: Taelor Anderson, Joe Merenz, Celestine Duncan</p> <p>Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Greg Ames, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Kim Johnson, Carol Bearden, Jeremy Seidlitz, Craig McLane</p>			
<b>3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>		
<b>Welcome New Council Members</b>	Greg Ames opened the meeting and welcomed new council members, Jim Olivarez, Dick Zoanni, and Jack Eddie. Introductions were made.		
<b>Review June 22, 2011 Minutes</b>	The minutes from the June 22, 2011 council meeting were reviewed. <b>Margie Edsall moved to accept the minutes as written. Todd Wagner seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</b>		
<b>Review November 21, 2011 Minutes</b>	The minutes from the November 21, 2011 council meeting were reviewed. <b>Margie Edsall moved to accept the minutes as written. Nico Cantalupo seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.</b>		
<b>Noxious Weed Trust Fund Budget Report</b>	<p>Greg Ames provided information on the funding estimated to be available for the 2012 Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWF) grant hearings. Greg stated that the NWF grant budget for fiscal year 2012 included \$1,250,000 in Initial State Special Revenue Funding, \$101,159 in General Fund dollars, and \$665,000 from the United States Forest Service (USFS) Cooperative Forestry Assistance/Forest Health Program.</p> <p>Greg advised the council that the Missouri River Watershed Coalition Project (\$40,000) and the Weed Free Borders Project (\$40,000), both specifically designated for funding by the Forest Service, had already been awarded. Greg said that \$18,150 of the USFS funding had been committed for a summer intern cost share, and \$18,840 (three percent of grant funding) was allocated for operating expenses within the MDA Central Services Division.</p> <p>Greg reported that other budgeted expenditures for the year included \$450,000 that has been awarded for the FY12 Special County/Reservation Grants, (\$7,500 per grant), and \$100,000 of Department of Transportation funding that is passed through the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) to the counties.</p>		

	<p>An estimate of \$1,349,169 was given by Greg as the amount available to fund grant proposals at the 2012 grant hearings. The 105 grant proposals received for consideration requested a total of \$2,820,999 leaving a shortfall of \$1,471,830 in available funds.</p> <p>A review of the NWTF budget for the past few years was given by Greg. Interest earned by the trust fund was reported as \$213,449 to date in fiscal year 2012 and the current trust fund balance was reported at \$10,230,116.</p> <p>Greg reported that grant funds in the amount of \$37,613.52 had been reverted in fiscal year 2012 to date and an additional \$54,767.69 was pending being reverted. Discussion followed regarding the amount of grant funding left unspent by grantees and subsequently reverted to the trust fund each year. An extension of one year can be requested by grantees but Dave Burch said this is not always utilized. Dave said legislative action would be required to recapture the reverted funds for use in grant awards. It was requested and agreed that specific information on reverted grant funds would be provided at the 2012 grant hearings.</p> <p>The shortage of grant funding was discussed with Greg attributing it to a significant drop in revenue from the Weed Vehicle Fee and funding cutbacks being made by MDA to correct overly aggressive awarding of grant funds in past years. Greg said the deficit had been partially corrected with last year's funding reduction and would be completely corrected this year by reducing the grant award amount by approximately \$287,000.</p> <p>Discussion followed that the FY 12 estimated revenue from the Weed Vehicle Fee (\$1,336,654) and the estimated interest (\$502,000) exceeded the amount shown as available for grant funding. Operational expenses of the MDA noxious weed program were discussed. Greg and Dave Burch provided information on the weed program funds used to cover a portion of MDA staff salaries. Greg noted that the MDA Central Services Division receives a percentage for indirect costs, based on salaries that are paid from weed funding. These expenses combined with the deficit correction, and low vehicle fee revenue more clearly explained the amount of available funds for grant awards. The council was asked for feedback on the budget information and comments were made that it was more understandable with the additional information that Greg and Dave provided. Based on the council's response it was agreed that June council meetings would provide a detailed budget review and January meetings would remain as they were but would also include the clarifying information that Dave and Greg had provided.</p>
<p><b>2011 Aquatic Update</b></p>	<p>Celestine Duncan provided a draft Aquatic Plant Program 2011 Interim Summary handout with details of the on-going projects and programs in Montana, which had received funding from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). Celestine's report also included information from neighboring states and agencies and groups who had provided updates.</p> <p>Survey results from the past summer were reviewed with Celestine noting that on the positive side, 82% of the lakes surveyed in western Montana were clean for curly leaf pondweed (CLP), and a relatively low amount of additional findings of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) had been made.</p> <p>The importance of standardized sampling, prevention programs, training, and the involvement of volunteers was discussed by Celestine. Research and program needs noted by Celestine included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on addressing EWM in non-regulated flowing water systems,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing the support needed for research programs,</li> <li>• finding management options for long term control of flowering rush,</li> <li>• finding long term stable funding,</li> <li>• researching the impact of aquatic invasive species (AIS) on fishery habitats,</li> <li>• water exchange studies,</li> <li>• fish / herbicide toxicity studies,</li> <li>• expansion of local aquatic programs,</li> <li>• prioritizing CLP management,</li> <li>• additional collaboration / review of the current inspection station program and,</li> <li>• coordination with the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Columbia River Basin team.</li> </ul> <p>Celestine asked that anyone interested in receiving updates contact her or Carol Bearden with their email address.</p> <p>Greg Ames reported that Ron de Yong, MDA Director, was interested in input and ideas in an effort to develop a \$5,000,000 AIS trust fund. Greg said that Ron plans to meet with other Department heads from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and DNRC in early February for further discussion on this topic with hydropower companies..</p>
<p><b>Grant Management Overview / Training</b></p>	<p>Dave Burch discussed the new grant management system, WebGrants, that the department will soon be using. Dave said that several other state agencies have joined in using the system which has reduced the cost to the Department. Dave discussed the delays in implementing the system, but said the new system will improve the grant process. The state grant system can be found on-line at <a href="http://fundingmt.org">http://fundingmt.org</a>. The council will be notified when it is ready for their use.</p> <p>Kim Johnson advised the council that at this time they could begin reviewing the 2012 grant applications on a thumb drive that was provided for each of them. Excel evaluation forms for each application were also on the thumb drives for the council and agency representatives to use in completing their evaluations. Evaluations will later be transfer to the WebGrants system.</p> <p>Training and written instructions were provided on how the WebGrants system will be used for conflict of interest determination, application review, and application evaluations. Larry Beneker requested that guidelines be developed to help determine conflict of interest in grant review and voting.</p>
<p><b>MDA Aquatic Plant Update</b></p>	<p>Dave Burch and Craig McLane presented information on the MDA watercraft inspection plans for 2012 and a review of the MDA inspection data gathered in 2011. Dave said training of the 2012 inspectors will begin the week before Memorial Day and inspections will begin Thursday of that week. Dave reported that MDA staff inspected 10,786 boats in 2011. Information was given on where boats were from, their destinaion, and contaminants that were found. Craig provided a map of the 2011 MDA watercraft inspection locations, the number of inspection days, and the number of boats inspected at each site. A second map was provided showing the state management and light quarantine areas, EWM locations, and sampling/survey locations.</p> <p>Survey plans for 2012 were discussed. Steve Shelly noted that Region 4 of the Forest Service provides funding for Idaho check stations and said he was interested in contributing in Region 1. Donna Rise was appreciative of Steve's offer and eager to further discuss partnering with the Forest Service. Dave Burch noted that the Forest</p>

	Service had been involved with the Clearwater Junction inspection station with FWP. Partnering efforts from the Montana Department of Transportation were also noted with their contribution of signage and location site use.			
<b>Other Business / Public Comment</b>	Greg Ames asked if there was any other business, public comment, or future agenda items. None were heard. Todd Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Jim Gordon. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.			
<b>4. Action Items</b>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Larry Beneker requested that guidelines be developed to help determine conflict of interest in grant review and voting.	MDA Noxious Weed Staff	ASAP	Open
2	It was requested and agreed that more specific information on reverted grant funds would be provided at the 2012 grant hearings.	MDA Noxious Weed Staff		
3	Steve Shelly noted that Region 4 of the Forest Service provides funds to Idaho for check stations and was interested in contributing in Region 1. Donna Rise was eager to further discuss partnering with the Forest Service.			