



**Gallatin County Weed District
Regular Monthly Meeting
April 09, 2009**

Board members present were Fred Bell (Acting Chair), Keith Mainwaring and Joe Skinner (Commissioner). Bob Hofman and Jeff Littlefield were excused. Others present were Dennis Hengel (Coordinator), John Ansley (Education/Enforcement Coordinator), and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

Minutes. Fred Bell asked if there had been any activity regarding the City of Bozeman surplus plotter. Hengel informed him that there was not. As there was not a quorum present approval of the Minutes was tabled until the May meeting.

Claims/Budget. Hengel brought up discussion regarding a software program that was purchased that will enable the District to enter and maintain spraying records. Several other counties use the program and the program is very reasonably priced at \$250. Commissioner Skinner discussed the issue regarding stipends with the Board members present. Currently, only three Boards receive stipend payment. A recent IRS audit had determined that the policy is inequitable and that for fairness either all Boards need to receive a stipend or either no Boards receive a stipend. The County Commissioners decided that they would no longer pay stipends to Boards, however, the Boards would be eligible for travel reimbursement. Bell asked if there were any changes on the county insurance coverage for Boards. Commissioner Skinner stated that the policy would remain the same.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Comment/Other. None

2. Monthly Report Q&A.

- ❖ Fred Bell asked Ansley if his lead regarding HOA lists from American Land Title had been successful. Ansley replied that it had. Ansley has shared the HOA list with the Conservation District and they will initiate educational contacts with Homeowners Associations.
- ❖ Bell also had a question for Ansley regarding the distribution of educational material to the local ATV dealerships. Ansley stated that the booklets were well received.
- ❖ Bell noted that there had been a call from the public asking about disposing of herbicides. There is a program that is run by the Department of Agriculture and those wishing to participate do so for a small fee. Collection sites are moved around the State.
- ❖ Beaverhead County is taking over the undercarriage wash station trailer. All the paperwork has been done and Ansley and Hengel will take it to Butte when they go to the SW Area Council meeting. Jack Eddie (Beaverhead Coordinator) will pick it up the trailer at the meeting.

- ❖ The Weed District has received a number of calls regarding renting sprayers for cheatgrass control. While it is not on the noxious weeds list at this time it is up for consideration to be added to the list. Ansley plans to have two sprayers ready about mid April.
- ❖ Keith Mainwaring asked about the cloth carry bags for literature that was a topic at the last Board meeting. Ansley and Perry had researched sources and prices. The prices ranged from \$1.29/bag to \$1.82/bag depending upon the number ordered. They also checked with DOW AgroSciences to assist with cost but due to the financial climate there was no assistance available for the project. The Board felt that it would be best to wait until the District budget was determined before deciding on the project.

3. Commissioner Report.

- a. Commissioner Skinner reported that the County would be receiving stimulus funds for energy cost reduction projects. If there is an energy saving project that the Weed District would like to have done at the shop they need to get in a request. Firm prices will be needed as well as payback potential.
- b. Commissioner Skinner also passed around a memo from the Finance Office regarding FY 2010 budget. The budget process has been changed from previous years. In the past, department budgets were based and determined on the previous year's budget. With the current process a Start-Up budget is set and determined by the County Commissioners. The memo provided the information that the Weed District's FY2010 budget is to be reduced by \$53,532 (20%) in personnel (one FTE and several seasonal spray technicians) and by \$5,527 (4.4%) in operations.

4. Enforcement/Education Coordinator Report.

- ❖ Ansley reported that the NWTF Grant Application for the Lower Madison WMA had been approved; however the \$400 allocated for advertising had been cut. The Grant is for \$21,348. The funds will mainly cover cost share for residents in the grant area.
- ❖ At the Weed Summit, the Small Acreage/Education group discussed writing a grant to get signs made and posted at trailheads. Dan Durham (Conservation District) has been working on this and other agencies have committed funding for the signs. Ansley showed the Board an example of some signs that had been made for the Gallatin/Big Sky project in 2007.
- ❖ The Conservation District and the Weed District are planning a weed pull that will take place in July when plants are flowered out and the public will be able to recognize them.
- ❖ Ansley and Hengel will have a booth at the Rocky Mountain Supply Customer Appreciation Day, Belgrade, on April 18th.
- ❖ Ansley will be working with Durham to present weed workshops on April 26th at the Fairgrounds and May 5th in Belgrade.
- ❖ Ansley and Hengel will attend the SW Area Council meeting on April 27th in Butte.

5. Coordinator Report.

- ❖ Hengel brought up discussion about the security fence for the shop. The estimates range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Commissioner Skinner suggested writing a letter to the Fair Board noting potential security issues and asking them to pay for the fence. There were a number of options put forth, including: providing labor ourselves and locating used supplies (ie., contacting Larry Watson (County Grants) to see if the fence being torn down at the Law and Justice Center would work). Bell said he would approach Precision Fence to see if they have used fencing supplies. A suggestion was also made to ask the Fairgrounds if they are planning to remove the fence on the west boundary of the Fairgrounds, as that could be a source of materials.
- ❖ Hengel has talked to the County Commissioner staff about putting the Weed Booth in the foyer at the Courthouse. This may be a possibility for May and June.

- ❖ Hengel attended a Parks & Trails Committee meeting. The committee is currently surveying county residents to determine the public's needs in regards to parks and trails.
 - ❖ The District has hired three (3) seasonal employees (two spray technicians and one crew foreman).
 - ❖ Hengel has been attending the MSU Leadership Training provided by the County. The final sessions will be this April. On Friday, April 3rd he also attended a Fred Pryor seminar at his own expense (\$159). Some of the topics discussed were: Seven Guidelines for the Right Start, The Supervisor as a Leader, Developing Your Staff, Communicating Effectively, Administering Discipline and Maintaining a Positive Attitude. Hengel stated that this was an excellent seminar.
 - ❖ HR has asked for a staff update. The District received funding for the gravel pit inspection program. The funding is a 66/34 program. The GYCC funds 66% of the program and the District funds 34% of the program. However, due to severe reductions in personnel the District will probably have to discontinue the gravel pit certification program due to lack of funds. The Big Sky Weed Education Coordinator program will continue. Perry will continue attending training programs and application will be made to HR to upgrade that position.
 - ❖ Hengel informed the Board that he is on schedule with recovery from his ankle surgery.
- 6. Advertising/Educational Campaign.** Hengel has contracted with the Belgrade News to place an ad in the AG Week Insert, the Fair Flyer and the Ag Report Wrap. Ansley has 14 "Weed of the Week" articles written and hopes to get them published in the Belgrade News as part of the education and awareness campaign. However, due to the recent developments of the FY2010 Start-Up budget the advertising/educational campaign might have to be cancelled.
- 7. Herbicide Selection and Cost Quotes.** The Weed District sent out requests for Cost Quotes for herbicide. Four quotes were received. 1) UAP submitted a quote for \$12,274 but the submittal was incomplete as UAP did not provide the required herbicide labels and msds sheets; 2) Rocky Mountain Supply submitted a quote for \$14,696 complete with required herbicide labels and msds sheets; 3) Helena Chemical submitted a quote for \$15,360 but the submittal was incomplete as Helena Chemical did not provide the required herbicide labels and msds sheets; and 4) Ag Depot submitted a quote for \$17,009 complete with required herbicide labels and msds sheets. After discussion the Board decided to award the cost quote for the herbicides listed to Rocky Mountain Supply based on the company: (1) providing the required labels and msds sheets, (2) providing reasonable pricing, (3) ability to provide technical assistance and (4) ability to provide additional herbicide at a local outlet.
- 8. Strategic Planning for Upcoming Year.** This year's upcoming strategic plan was completed at the March Board meeting but was based on last years (FY'09) budget. Due to the significant budget reductions just received at today's meeting the Board will have to reevaluate and redesign the strategic plan for next year at the upcoming May Board meeting.
- 9. Round Table.**
- ❖ Fred Bell stated that as a follow up to last month's discussion about moving the Weed Office over to the Shop area he has been offered a 14' X 80' modular free. Setup costs would include moving the modular and then hooking up to electricity, water/sewer, and telephone. Commissioner Skinner felt that the District needs to check on actual costs and then the District would need to provide justification for the move.
 - ❖ Commissioner Skinner suggested that one way to cut costs with the new FY2010 budget would be to share personnel with the Fairgrounds.
 - ❖ Ansley brought up the idea of recording the Board meetings. There was discussion regarding equipment and costs. Costs could be shared with the Fairgrounds. Commissioner Skinner

suggested checking with Glenda Howse (County Commissioner Administrative Assistant) regarding the type of recording equipment they use for their public meetings.

- ❖ There was discussion regarding cheatgrass. There is a possibility that cheatgrass will be added to the state noxious weed list. As cheatgrass is widespread throughout the county adding cheatgrass to the list will significantly increase the technical assistance and enforcement requirements of the District.
- ❖ Fred Bell requested that the District staff prepare a "Talking Points" paper for the Board to present to the County Commissioners during budget talks. There was discussion between Bell and Mainwaring regarding the budget problems and what to include on the "Talking Points" paper.

The meeting adjourned at 2.45 pm.

The next meeting will be May 7th, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary.