



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly Meeting
March 05, 2009**

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

Minutes. The Minutes of the February Meeting had been mailed to the Board and were approved as submitted.

Budget/Claims. There was discussion regarding the Board's stipend and mileage payments. These have been put on hold following a county audit by the IRS. The County Auditor is waiting for a ruling from the IRS regarding stipends and mileage for Boards. No ruling has been made as of this date. Bell had a question about the Yellowstone Ranch Preserve cost share. Hengel stated that the cost share expenditure came from the Upper Madison WMA grant as provided by the NWTF.

OLD BUSINESS

Fred Bell brought up an earlier conversation regarding working agreements with utility companies. Hengel informed him that this topic would be addressed in the Coordinator Report later in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Public Comment/Other.** None.
- 2. Commissioner Report.** None.
- 3. Chairperson Report.** None.
- 4. Enforcement/Education Coordinator Report.** Ansley asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the Monthly Report. Bell asked about the NWTF Grant, he also asked about the gravel pit program. Hengel replied that the GYCC was able to fund the gravel pit certification program for another year. The Weed District will hire an individual for the program again this summer. Another topic for discussion was a petition filed with the EPA to ban 2, 4-D. Hengel stated that the EPA is currently holding investigative hearings. 2, 4-D was recertified in 2005 and is a major component of turf herbicides, so a ban would have a major impact on the weed control program. Bell asked about a web site that the City of Bozeman uses to list all their surplus property. Hengel stated that last weekend the City of Bozeman had a surplus property sale. An item that is still available was a large 42" map plotter. The plotter is 10 years old and there could be an issue getting parts. However, the plotter was recently serviced and the ink cartridges are new. Current cost for the ink cartridges would be around \$500. They have offered the plotter to the Weed District for \$500. Since the Weed District does not create a lot of maps (23-30 per year) the plotter should last another decade. Bob Hofman felt that with the current economy and budget situation we should not be asking for more equipment. Fred Bell suggested that an approach to the City would be to barter, as the Weed District currently treats a number of "hot spots" for the City at no charge. Keith Mainwaring suggested looking at procuring the plotter on the contingency of how much it would cost to run and maintain. There was a lot of discussion on this topic also addressing software. Hengel will research extra costs. Ansley gave a brief report on the Weed Summit Education Group plans for 2009:

- Distribution of educational brochures to Real Estate offices was one idea and Ansley has already done this. A suggestion from the group was to approach title companies as there are not as many of them and every property sale has to go through a title company.
- Ansley is preparing a series of "weed of the week" articles that he hopes to run in the Belgrade News.
- It was also suggested that HOA's be approached. Commissioner Skinner had given some suggestions on how to contact HOA representatives. Fred Bell recommended calling Tom Cahill of American Land Title. Perry had called Morrison Maierle and received the RID contact list as a start.
- It was also suggested that we submit a grant to the NWTF for educational signs to be posted at trailheads as an educational tool for back country users. A cooperative effort would be initiated for this with USFS and GVLTL.
- Fred Bell brought up that he had met with people at the Honda Dealership and had picked up from our office "Why Should I Care" booklets for registration packets that would be distributed at an upcoming rally at Pipestone. When ATV's are purchased the dealerships give the purchaser a packet of information and this would be a good way to get the word out.
- At the Home Show Booth a suggestion was made from the public that the Weed District provides bags for flyers. Board discussion was to check and see what was involved in getting cloth bags printed rather than using plastic and thereby adding to the plastic bag problem at the landfill. Fred Bell suggested contacting someone like Steve Saunders (DOW Agro) for support and print DOW Agro on one side and Gallatin County Weed on the other. Littlefield suggested providing a bag that people could take on a trail with them and fill with pulled weeds.
- Ansley remarked that the new display caught a lot of attention and really helps to pull people into the booth.

5. Coordinator Report.

- Hengel brought up the topic of Board training that recently occurred in Butte and was also provided by Josh Kellar (Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D) several years ago. The topic of different types of Boards was discussed. The training emphasized that the most effective Boards are those that actively develop, administer and implement the District's noxious weed program.
- He is currently revising the Gallatin County Weed Management Plan with the inclusion of embargo and utility agreement programs.
- The District received several positive comments regarding the Weed Summit from the participants. Overall, the Weed Summit has been very successful in the role as a forum for Agency coordination of noxious weed management within Gallatin County. A special project of interest for the upcoming field season involves a cooperative group project being planned for Highway 287 on the north side of Hebgen Lake. Agencies working together on the project will be Weed District, MDT, FW&P, BLM, and the Town of West Yellowstone.
- Hengel assisted with the presentation for the Big Sky Weed Committee on Tuesday 3rd March at the NWTF hearings in Helena. On Wednesday 4th Ansley and Hengel presented the Lower Madison WMA application to the NWTF committee.
- Hengel has talked with Dave Burch (MDA) regarding the undercarriage wash station trailer. The Department of Agriculture is hoping to set up a program with a couple of seasonal interns to run a wash station at the Noxon Reservoir. The Reservoir is the only site in Montana at present with an infestation of Eurasian water milfoil so this would be an excellent use for the wash trailer.
- The Weed District will need to put a security fence around the shop for public safety reasons. There was discussion regarding the additional expense. Hengel is pursuing two options: (1) livestock panels or (2) a chain link security fence. The panels would be cheaper

at around \$3000. However, the chain link fence (\$5000) would provide better security but at a higher cost. Bell asked if there was any security lighting in the area. At this time there is not.

6. **Pine Bark Beetle Issue.** Hengel had mailed some information regarding pine bark beetles to the Board in their monthly packet. The Weed District has received a number of calls requesting assistance with this issue. Bell and Hofman stated that this is out of the District's legal mandate and jurisdiction and that there are commercial applicators available to treat trees for pine bark beetle infestations. The Board felt that in addition, the District did not have the expertise, budget, staff or time to develop a pine bark beetle program. Fred Bell made a motion to this end, Jeff Littlefield seconded and the motion carried.
7. **Advertising.** Hengel informed the Board that we have approximately \$1200 in the advertising line item. The Weed District has traditionally put an ad in the Ag Week Flyer and the Summer Fair insert. George Hoffman of the Belgrade News came to the office to discuss additional advertising. As per discussions with Hoffman, the Weed District will also contract to place a ¼ page ad in a new advertising wrap that will be coming out monthly in the Belgrade News. Hengel is also exploring the possibility of putting an ad in the Real Estate Market weekly. Bell thought he would be able to assist with getting a better rate in the Real Estate Weekly. The Board thought that increase advertising would be a good educational tool.
8. **Herbicide Selection and Cost Quotes.** The Weed District has typically only ordered herbicides locally. However, the Commissioners have noted that there will probably be budget cuts in the upcoming budget planning. In this regard, Hengel asked the Board to consider expanding requests for herbicides to include Helena Chemical (a herbicide supply company that is based out of Laurel) and from Alligare (a company that supplies generic herbicides) to determine if there would be a savings in purchasing herbicides from these suppliers. The Board approved requesting "Cost Quotes" from Helena Chemical and Alligare. In addition, there was discussion of setting up a purchasing group in partnership with other weed districts for 2010 herbicide purchases. More research needs to be done on the topic of forming a purchasing group.
9. **Annual Report.** Hengel asked for feedback on the Annual Report distributed at the previous Board meeting. As of this date none of the Board members had reviewed the report.
10. **Strategic Planning.** For this portion of the monthly meeting Hengel had provided to the Board a list of proposed 2009 of work issues in their work packets. The work issues were divided into Ongoing, and Priority I (Core work requirements), Priority II (Supplemental work requirements after Priority I issues were completed) and Priority III (Long term issues with greater than 5 years of completion) categories. Hengel discussed with the Board the various work issues described in the different categories. Overall, the Board decided to continue with dividing the work issues as; Ongoing issues, Priority I issues, Priority II issues, and Priority III issues as per last year. The Board then provided additional comment and discussion on portions of the following specific work issues:
 - ~ Ongoing Issues: Weed Shop repairs will continue. Bell would like to see the car port type structure built to protect the rental sprayers that sit outside on docks in the summer. The truck replacement is on schedule. We are currently looking for one more truck. Hofman mentioned that there is a flatbed truck for sale in Manhattan that may be suitable and suggested that Hengel check it out.
 - ~ Priority I Issues: The Forest Service has received continuing funding for the GYCC Gravel Pit program so that will continue for the 2009 field season. The Weed District is waiting to hear from the Big Sky Weed Committee regarding their NWTF Grant application in order to determine the extent of that program for the 2009 field season.
 - ~ Priority II Issues: The boom spray program will be initiated this field season. The Board would like to see the biological program expanded. Ansley has plans for further insect releases on Bozeman Hill. There was also discussion about working with the Forest Service to put sheep up on the "M". Hengel brought up an option of using the Special County Grant funds in the upcoming year for seasonal wages or incorporating the funds into another grant

for cost share. After discussion the Board felt that the operating budget may be impacted in the upcoming year and the Special County Grant spending should not be used for wages or incorporated into another grant for cost share. As noted previously in the meeting, the Weed District is working to transfer the undercarriage wash station to the Department of Agriculture.

- ~ Priority III Issues: There was a lot of discussion regarding moving the Weed Office over to the shop area. There is a need to consolidate the office and shop operations in order to improve productivity. Hengel suggested that setting up an office modular beside the shop may be an alternative to requesting a new shop/office complex. Bell felt that this was an option that the Board should pursue. The Conservation District has hired a Resource Technician. The Weed District is trying to work out a solution to some insurance issues relating to the Conservation District use of a Weed District vehicle for field work. Hengel informed the Board that there is nothing specific on the Legislative agenda at this time.

After the review of all of the work issues, Littlefield and Hofman stated that they would like to move the Priority II grant issue into the Priority I category. In addition, Hengel noted that the prioritization of issues may need to be readdressed after the District's budget is finalized. Hengel brought up revising Perry's position from Administrative Assistant to Weed Technician. Although the budget will no doubt not allow this for the FY'10 budget year the educational programs and training to qualify Perry for the Weed Technician position have been initiated.

11. Round Table.

- ~ Mainwaring brought up the GYCC and Big Sky Weed Committee programs. He felt that Mike Jones did an excellent job last year and expressed a hope that he would be able to be a part of the program again this year.
- ~ Bell reiterated that he would like to pursue the idea for getting a modular building to consolidate the weed office and shop buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.35PM.

The next meeting will be on April 2nd, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary