



**Gallatin County Weed Board  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
October 01, 2009**

**Board** members present were Bob Hofman (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Craig Morgan, Keith Mainwaring, Fred Bell and Commissioner Joe Skinner. **Others** present were Sam Rogers (Property Owner), Erik Suffridge (NRCS), Mike Jones (Big Sky Weed Coordinator), John Ansley (Interim Coordinator), Cynde Hertzog (Gallatin County HR Director) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

**Minutes.** The Minutes of the September Meeting had been mailed to the Board and were approved as presented.

**Budget/Claims.** No discussion.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Bob Hofman asked Ansley if he had found out anything regarding the liability issue of doing courtesy sprays. Ansley has discussed this with the county insurance agent we are O.K.

Ansley reported that as a follow up on the Big Sky complaint the Weed District has sprayed weeds along Ousel Falls Road. He also contacted the Spanish Peaks Development Company as they were in violation of their Weed Management Plan. The property borders the complaint area. They have hired a commercial applicator to take care of the problem.

Ansley reported that after the September Weed Board meeting he had met with Fowler and Urdahl of the County Road Department. They gave Ansley a list of eight (8) gravel pits that the county maintains. The Foreman has treated two (2) larger ones and Ansley has treated three (3) more. If the weather cooperates he will treat the remaining three.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Public Comment/Other.** None.

**2. Monthly Report Q & A.**

- ❖ Mainwaring had a question about the call from the Mayor of Three Forks regarding the Lower Madison WMA Grant. The Weed District did a courtesy spray along the trail system. This area is within the Lower Madison WMA; however municipalities are not eligible for the grant funds. There was discussion regarding trails and maintenance and the responsibility of maintenance. Many trails in the valley are poorly maintained.
- ❖ Bell asked for information on the MRL field trip. Ansley reported that most of the railroad property at the west end of the valley is in good shape, however from about halfway between Manhattan and Belgrade infestations of Canada thistle, spotted knapweed, musk thistle and houndstongue showed up. There was a small amount of leafy spurge, and yellow toadflax discovered and some Dalmatian toadflax near Three Forks. MRL sprays with booms from a truck that runs along the lines and also ATV's. The width of the right-of-way varies considerably.
- ❖ Bell also asked about the sprayer tanks that are being disposed of. The staff has been trying to find a way to recycle them rather than put them in the landfill, however no one seems to want them. Bell asked about the feasibility of using them for water storage for fire fighting.

There is a 400 gallon tank, however it was on the truck that was rear ended last summer and may be compromised. The others have a 50 gallon capacity. Bell will meet with Ansley to look at the tanks.

3. **Weed Summit Date – Awards.** We have two choices for the date of the 2010 Weed Summit. February 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 9<sup>th</sup>. The Board elected to hold the Summit on February 9<sup>th</sup> in Building #4 at the Fairgrounds. The program will run from 8.30am to noon. Ansley asked for comments on whether or not to continue to give out awards. Commissioner Skinner felt we should continue with the awards and the Board agreed. MDT was nominated as the recipient for the Agency Award.
5. **Commissioner Report.** Commissioner Skinner informed the Board that the Commission had awarded the Weed District \$10,000 for extra herbicide. The requests that the Board had submitted were agreed to. Mainwaring brought up the cost of the department cell phone bill. We work under a blanket contract for the whole county, however Commissioner Skinner will check on this with the County Auditor. Perry has put a seasonal suspend on the phones used by the weed crews in the trucks. The phones will be reactivated in May 2010. Ansley asked Commissioner Skinner about the stimulus energy funding. Forms are being developed so that the Departments that receive this funding will all report activities, expenses etc in the same format. Before and after photos would also be good documentation.
6. **Interim Coordinator Report.**
  - ❖ Ansley reported that September was a very busy month. Complaints are still coming in and Canada thistle is a big problem this year.
  - ❖ Ansley attended a Land Planning and Use Committee meeting in regards to the interconnect trail system. Ansley brought up the question of trail maintenance.
  - ❖ This year we have made headway on the Fairgrounds spraying nuisance and noxious weeds.
  - ❖ Ansley attended the Porcupine HOA meeting with Mike Jones. The meeting has generated a number of requests for property inspections.
  - ❖ Cyphocleonus aphates releases have been made in the Frog Rock area. The spotted knapweed infestations on the south facing slopes are severe and hopefully the insects will make a difference. The property is too steep for hand spraying. Jones released insects on the Big Horn properties site at Big Sky which is also a steep site. Small releases have also been made in the Upper and Lower Madison WMA's.
  - ❖ Two trailer loads of junk have been taken to the Logan Landfill and one (1) load of metal has been taken to Pacific Steel for recycling. This "clean up" effort is to create easier access for the insulation crews to insulate the shop.
  - ❖ The insect tents and frames will go to MSU. Ansley will coordinate with Littlefield to get them over there.
  - ❖ Enforcement. The Blue Sky Development Company project at Story Mill was mowed by Dynamecc Property Services in July and sprayed 1 ½ weeks ago. Commissioner Skinner asked if this was going to become a tax lien. When we receive the bill from Dynamecc the property owner will be billed according to State Law. If the bill is not paid it will be forwarded to the County Treasurer for attachment to the taxes.
  - ❖ The owner of another property that had an enforcement action done on it last year gave the go ahead to two companies to work on the weed issues on her property. A burn program was set up, to be followed by a fall spray – weather permitting. A large area of weeds was burnt.

- ❖ Ansley attended the Fall Coordinator Training in Lewistown and handed out copies of a Weed Program Survey that was conducted by MACo and the MWCA for the Board to review.
- ❖ On Monday October 5<sup>th</sup> Ansley and Jones will be involved in a meeting with the Big Sky Owners Assn and two (2) utility companies. This will give them an introduction to the key players for getting a weed management program in place with utility companies. The Board feels that this is an important step.
- ❖ The fall GYCC meeting will take place in West Yellowstone on October 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>. Ansley and Jones will attend. The mapping project that was done by the Big Sky Weed Committee should be of interest to land managers in the GYCC area. Also copies of the GYCC Gravel pit inspections will be handed out to the participating counties.
- ❖ MDA NWF Grant reports are due this month. The Lower Madison will not be rewritten; however the reports on activity are due to the state by October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Upper Madison WMA Grant and the Frog Rock grant have been closed out and final reports are due to the Department of Agriculture on October 30<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ The MWCA SW Area Council meeting is in Butte on October 20<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Ansley brought up his work schedule. When Hengel was his supervisor Ansley worked four (4) ten hour days. He asked the Board if this schedule was still O.K. The Board felt that as long as the office was covered that would work. Perry also works four (4) ten hour days. Littlefield asked about after hours appointments. Ansley responded that this doesn't happen very often possibly as a result of the Conservation District hiring the Small Acreage Specialist.
- ❖ Ansley reported that a report of yellow starthistle in the House Rock area was called in about two weeks ago. Jones and Ansley went to check on the plant and found perennial sowthistle. Last week two more reports came in with sightings in the Sourdough Trail area. This also turned out to be perennial sowthistle. The education program seems to be having an impact as we get more calls on weeds than ever. There is a sign at the Sourdough Trail with weed pictures. Ansley showed a sign to the Board.

Bell asked if Blue flax was on the noxious weed list. It is not. The State Highway Department plants it in disturbed areas as part of their reclamation.

#### **7. Round Table.**

- ❖ Littlefield brought up the topic of State Awards. He feels we should be more proactive about nominating people to the MWCA.
- ❖ Bell remarked that the upcoming meeting with the Big Sky Owner's Association and the utility companies was a step in the right direction. Ansley has copies of the Madison County and Beaverhead County WMP's for utility companies and will be able to build one for Gallatin County.

#### **4. Coordinator Job Description Discussion.**

Cynde Hertzog, Director of the Gallatin County HR Department, went over the new Coordinator Job Description with the Board. Job Descriptions for both Coordinator positions are being rewritten, to reflect a Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator. There were suggestions from the Board that language regarding enforcement, subdivision review, GPS capabilities, and grant monitoring be added or modified. Lifting capabilities were also discussed. Discussion then went to address salary bands. The Board reviewed the salary bands and probationary periods for department heads as explained by Hertzog. Craig Morgan moved to post the position at \$50,759 with a one (1) year probationary period. Keith Mainwaring seconded and the motion passed. The HR Department will make the changes to the Coordinator Position Description with the goal of posting the position in mid November. The position will be posted at the Job Service, the

MWCA web site, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle and depending upon cost some professional journals. Starting date will be February 1st, 2010. The Enforcement Coordinator position description will be rewritten as Assistant coordinator.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.10PM.  
The next meeting will be on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary