



**Gallatin County Weed Board  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
April 08, 2010**

**Board** members present were Keith Mainwaring (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Craig Morgan and Fred Bell. Bob Hofman and Commissioner Skinner were excused.

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

**OLD BUSINESS.**

1. **Utility Agreement.** The Board members present had not reviewed the document in depth. They did have questions regarding some of the statutes listed regarding Workers Comp and pay rates. There was discussion regarding the impact of weed issues regardless of whether or not the disturbance was on a right of way or through private property. There was also discussion regarding putting an inspection fee in place. Littlefield suggested that there must be a permitting process in place and maybe the Weed District could become a part of that. The Board asked Ansley to check with the Planning Department regarding permitting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Public Comment/Other.** None.
2. **Monthly Report Q&A.**
  - **Bell** had a question regarding the funding for the Big Sky Weed Committee NWTF Grant. This was not funded; however the Committee will be meeting to restructure the program.
  - **Bell** had a question regarding the Figgins Gravel Pit. They are updating their weed management plan but have not submitted it to the weed office yet. Bell asked if any other gravel pits have contacted the office for assistance towards certification. Ansley informed the Board that we have not heard from any others yet. There was discussion regarding putting an embargo on gravel from pits with bad noxious weed infestations. The Weed District can do this in the same manner that hay and grain can be embargoed.
  - **Bell** asked about the WMP for the Bradford subdivision on River Road. There are two residences on the property and a clay target shooting range.
  - **Mainwaring** noted the number of calls from taxpayers asking about the cost share program. The Board would like to see this program reinstated. The Board suggested asking for the cost share program with a lower budget figure and then lower the cap per application.
  - **Bell** had a question regarding the call from Carlstrom in reference to the small acreage person. Carlstrom is planning to hire an intern from MSU and asked if the weed district could furnish a vehicle. As the intern would be a county employee this should not present a problem.
3. **Chair Report.** Mainwaring brought up an article that he had read in the Belgrade News in which the State claims ownership of river beds from high water mark to high water mark. Due to this PPL is being charged access fees. A thought would be that if the State owns the river bed they would also be responsible for weed control on the river beds.

#### **4. Coordinator Report.**

- Hiring – the assistant coordinator/foreman position was posted about a week ago and closes Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April. The position will be hired at ¾ time. Ansley asked the Board if they would like to be on the interview committee. Ansley, Shane (HR), Mainwaring and Littlefield will be on the committee. Ansley will ask Commissioner Skinner if he would like to participate.
- There was discussion regarding the herbicide budget and the boom spray program. Booming will save money in the long run. Ansley would like to get as much booming as possible done this spring. He asked the Board for recommendations as to whether he should spend the entire herbicide budget this year or roll some over into FY'11. The consensus of the Board was to spend it. Ansley will send out Chemical Cost Quotes tomorrow.
- Crew Hiring. We will hire six spray techs this year. We have five returnees so only have one position open with three applications for the job. We will be able to send the crews out to spray without losing time and then they will attend the SW Area Training in Alder the first week of June.
- Ansley has submitted the Grant Narrative Report to the Department of Agriculture for the Lower Madison WMA Grant.
- MWCA Weed Manager Spring Training. This was in Helena and was run in a similar format to the Annual Meeting. There were excellent break out strands and Ansley was particularly interested in the Department of Agriculture Attorney dealing with enforcement. There was a recommendation that the Weed Districts only take action on written complaints, if planning on entering property for an enforcement action put the plan before the Board and before entering property to get a court order. For neighbor against neighbor complaints there is civil action available. The Board felt that it would be good to adopt a consistent policy.
- SW Area Council meeting. Mainwaring attended this meeting in Butte with Ansley and Perry. He felt that there was good information shared about the Legislative process.
- Ansley set up a booth at the Back Country Horse State Convention at the Holiday Inn. He spent some time there but did not man it constantly and did not get much interest.
- Ansley and Perry attended the SW Area Commercial Applicator Training in Sheridan. This year the participating Weed Districts provided lunch. There was a good attendance. The program was very well accepted.
- Ansley has purchased surge busters for the larger sprayer tanks. This was a safety issue for our drivers as well as helping to lessen wear and tear on the truck suspension. The cost for these will be taken out of the Special County Grant. Ansley has also ordered a sprayer for the new truck. We have a 300 gallon tank and so he just needed the sprayer components.
- There is a Back Country Horse workshop coming up on the 17<sup>th</sup> and Ansley will have a booth at the Circle L arena during the workshop.
- Ansley and Bell will be participating in a Realtor Training on the 14<sup>th</sup> that is being sponsored by the Conservation District.
- We are having post cards printed to send to property owners in the grant areas. This will be a more economical way to contact people.
- With the revision of the State Noxious Weed List counties have been given the option of how they want to prioritize Category 2A and 2B weeds. Ansley asked the Board how they wanted to prioritize. After discussion the Board decided to address all noxious weeds found in Gallatin County.

#### **5. Budget.**

- Rental Sprayers. Ansley would like to drop the rental fees for the sprayers to half the current cost. Bell thought that this would be a good move to help taxpayers as cost share is not

available. There followed discussion regarding maintenance costs and the possibility of reinstating the cost share program at a lower level. Bell made a motion to drop the prices of the rental sprayers by half and to request cost share in the Budget with a cap of \$125 per person. Morgan seconded and the motion carried.

- Energy Stimulus. As the Weed District was under the amounts funded for all three projects Ansley had hoped to get lighting retrofits done throughout the Shop as an energy saving project. He has had an estimate done by Haubrich Electric that was accompanied by an energy savings estimate from NW Energy stating that payback on the project would take about 2 ½ years. The Board felt that with those payback estimates Ansley should go back to the Energy Stimulus committee and request they reevaluate the funding. Ansley asked the Board if there is no money available should we do the project out of our regular budget. The Board felt that this is a worthy project and to go ahead. Ansley will need to get another estimate. There was also discussion regarding the disposal of the current light fixtures. Some landfills won't take them.

#### **6. Round Table.**

- Bell stated that he is working on a 5 lot minor subdivision on Blackwood Road and one of the conditions of approval is that no herbicides or pesticides may be used except for the disposal of noxious weeds. Bell would like to know where that language came from. He will get a copy of the requirements for Ansley.
- Mainwaring passed around a copy of Country Living magazine showing a picture of a young girl surrounded by oxeye daisy. He has written a letter to the magazine requesting that they do more research before publishing pictures of noxious weeds. Discussion brought up that oxeye daisy is not a noxious weed in all states.
- Littlefield asked if there is any Russian knapweed around the valley in volume enough to support biological releases. Those present listed a number of sites for Littlefield to explore.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.45PM.

The next meeting will be May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary.