



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly Meeting
September 02, 2010**

Board members present were Keith Mainwaring (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Bob Hofman, Fred Bell and Craig Morgan. Commissioner Skinner was excused. **Others** present were John Ansley (Coordinator), Michael Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Rosemary Perry (Secretary), James Greenbaum (Deputy County Attorney), and Rachele Rhoades (MSU Student).

Minutes. The Minutes of the August Board meeting had been mailed to the Board and were approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Utility Agreement.** The two (2) documents that had been presented to the Board were a contractual agreement and a voluntary agreement. After much discussion Bob Hofman moved to accept the contractual agreement as revised on March 10th and authorized the Weed Coordinator to use the document for projects that are subject to the 15 day prior notice requirement. Jeff Littlefield seconded and the motion carried. The Board decided that Ansley and Jones could use either document at their discretion depending upon the scope of work involved. Greenbaum stated that Ansley could ask for legal advice on a case by case basis.
2. **Huffine Property Update.** Ansley read an email from Gray (Deputy County Attorney) suggesting that Ansley try to contact Wells and attempt to get voluntary compliance for weed control on the property. If the Weed District gets verbal permission, Ansley is unsure of whether or not to require written permission, and whether or not to get a court order to enter the property. Bell recommended that notice be sent to the listing agent regarding the noxious weeds on the property in order to make sure they are on the disclosure form.
3. **Landowner Maintenance.** At Mainwaring's request Jones inspected the right-of-way adjoining the Brown Organic Farm. Jones took photos and stated that it will need to be mowed again before winter.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Other or Public Comment.** None.
2. **Monthly Report Q & A.**
 - **Bell** asked about a complaint response from a property owner near Tower Road in the Belgrade area. The property is being farmed and most of it has been mowed. Ansley has offered the property owner a perimeter courtesy spray and she is receptive to that.
 - **Hofman** asked about the CRP land that had weed infestations on it. The complainant was referred to NRCS.
 - **Bell** remarked that he liked the fact that Ansley has done some courtesy sprays as this is good PR for the Weed District.
3. **Chair Report.** Mainwaring brought up discussion regarding the NPDES permitting requirements. FIFRA already covers this and the additional permitting required would be burdensome to applicators. Mainwaring has contacted the offices of Tester and Baucus regarding

the issue. Littlefield asked if the EPA proposal has been published yet – it has not been published yet. There are still a lot of unanswered questions. The Board felt that when the time for public comment comes they should submit a letter supporting HB 3735 against further EPA permitting involvement.

4. Coordinator(s) Report.

- **Jones** reported that Eurasian water milfoil (Priority 1B) has been found in Gallatin County on the Jefferson River near the Drouillard Fishing Access and also at the Fairweather Fishing Access. It has also been found at the Toston Dam, Cottonwood Creek near Townsend and the Fort Peck Reservoir. Broadwater County and the Department of Agriculture have drafted an environmental assessment and will apply for a permit for treatment. We may be able to attach to their documents. Bell asked about the ownership of the land surrounding the infestation sites in Gallatin County. A couple of ranches were named, however we may be able to use the stream access law for access. Littlefield had a sample of the plant and passed it around. We are currently involved with Broadwater County, Department of Agriculture, and FW&P regarding this problem.
- **Jones** reported that he had received a report of yellow star thistle from the MDOT. He investigated with Mangold and Graves from MSU and found one (1) yellow star thistle plant. This is the only Priority 1A plant on the State Noxious Weed List. The plant was pre-bloom, however it looked like it had been mown and grown back. The site will be monitored closely for re-growth.
- **Jones** received a report from Mangold (MSU) that common bugloss was growing at the East Gallatin Rec. Area. While this is not on the State Noxious Weed List it is a very invasive plant and Ravalli County is having problems with it. Jones went with Mangold to the site and sprayed the area.
- **Jones** inspected the East Gallatin Rec. pond to check the status of the areas where we did the curly leaf pondweed weed pull. It still looks good so he will reevaluate in the spring.
- **Jones** reported that we had a really good crew this year, however due to the wet weather we are behind on the treatments on county properties. He and Ansley are planning on fall spraying.
- **Complaints** about spotted knapweed and Canada thistle are continuing to come in. Since only written complaints are accepted the number has slowed down. Ansley asked Greenbaum if people can use the civil lawsuit service. Greenbaum replied that they can but it is not realistic, both from a cost and time factor. Greenbaum suggested that the Weed District open up discussion with our County Commissioner to see if there would be a possibility to coordinate with the Compliance Officer. Mainwaring felt that the Board could possibly look for an increase in budget next year in order to keep one seasonal applicator longer.
- **Ansley** reported that the Department of Ag had inspected our grant areas and the reviews are favorable.
- **The spray trucks** will all be undergoing maintenance check ups prior to being winterized. Two will remain in service so that Ansley and Jones can get fall spraying done. Once the budget is finalized we will have funds to purchase one (1) newer spray truck with a sprayer and a newer flagging/runabout truck. Blackman (County Finance Officer) is trying to get funding to allow county equipment upgrades on a regular basis. This is a safety issue as well as saving funds on repairs.
- **Hail damage.** The windshield that was broken has been replaced and the tanks for the two (2) rental spray units have been ordered.

- **Carlstrom** (County Extension Agent) has asked if the Weed District can absorb the fuel cost for the truck that is being used by the Small Acreage Resource Technician. The Board decided that as the position helped out the Weed District they would do that.
 - **Ansley** received a shipment of cyphocleonus this morning from the Western Agricultural Research Center and he and Jones released them on the south facing side of Bozeman Hill in the Rocky Creek WMA. In 2008 Ansley put out 8 releases of cyphocleonus, in 2009 he did 16 more releases and this year he and Jones did 16 more.
 - **Crop Production Services** (Jim Gordon) donated some herbicide (Escalade and Perspective) for Leafy spurge trials. Western Conservation Services will do trials on property on Bridger Canyon Drive.
5. **Round Table. Littlefield** had some questions regarding unused budget funds from FY'10. These have been rolled over into FY'11.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.30PM.

The Board went in to Executive Session to do Ansley's Performance Evaluation.

The next scheduled regular monthly meeting will be on October 7th.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary.