



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly Meeting
April 07, 2011**

Board members present were Jeff Littlefield (Acting Chair), Bob Hofman, Keith Mainwaring and Commissioner Joe Skinner. Fred Bell was excused.

Minutes. The Minutes had been sent to the Board and were approved as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Shop Heating – Gas Costs.** A print out of monthly utility costs from FY'07 to February FY'11 was passed to the Board for review. The energy stimulus update on the shop has produced good results.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Public Comment.** None
2. **Monthly Report Q&A.** The only question addressed the Accounting call regarding Fund Balances. This was in response to the County External Audit. The Accounting Department also requested a copy of the Weed District Bylaws.
3. **Legislative Updates.**
 - **HB166 – Changes to Weed Law.** Jones reported that this bill has been approved by majority votes so far. It is scheduled for a second reading on April 12th and looks like it will pass.
 - **HB133 – Changes to non-compliance process.** This bill gives more due process to landowners. The changes as presented lengthen the process and the Board felt that this was going to be cumbersome. A question that came up is that the weed law does not address continuation from one year to the next. Ansley will check with the County Attorney on that. One good aspect of this bill is that it offers the opportunity to settle complaints amicably.
 - **HB621** –gives FWP the lead over aquatic invasive species but may compromise the Noxious Weed Trust Fund.
 - **HB375** – to reduce noxious weed trust fund revenues from license fees was restored to the 1.5% currently being received.
 - **SB343** – to revise Montana's aquatic species act would channel funds to MDA for aquatic species.
 - **MPDES Update** – there is a bill in Congress to eliminate this permitting program as it is a double up on FIFRA.
4. **Commissioner Report.** Commissioner Skinner reported that the Finance office has sent out letters to Department Heads with Preliminary budget figures. The Weed District has been affected by the Deputy settlement and will need to reduce budget by \$60,000 over the next two (2) years. Ansley met with the Finance Director this morning. There was a discussion regarding options and Ansley asked Board members if they would be able to accompany him to a strategy meeting with the Commission. He gave them dates and times and the 19th of April was selected. The Board decided to have a short executive session following the regular meeting to go over options. Commissioner Skinner stated that the Commission does not want to remove jobs. He also asked about the savings in Capital Outlay for a truck as our spray trucks are in the Core Equipment program. Ansley will set up the meeting with

the Commissioners and then let the Board members know. The Board decided to go into executive session after the regular meeting to discuss options.

5. Coordinator(s) Report.

- **Headwaters Task Force Meeting.** Mainwaring, Littlefield, Jones and Perry attended the meeting. Mainwaring brought up the draft of the Aquatic Plant Weed Management Plan which carries a high financial commitment to put into place. He felt that this is a state problem and the Weed Management Plan puts the onus on the Weed Districts. Jones stated that the first part of the meeting was educational. There were a number of private landowners present in the morning. In the afternoon Jones felt that there was not enough input from Agencies. The MDA and FWP will be doing surveys this summer and will coordinate to avoid overlapping. Commissioner Skinner stated that he felt it was important to find the upstream source before going to Three Forks. Hofman asked about using chemical control. There are herbicides that can be used but the permitting process is burdensome and expensive. An EA would also be required. Littlefield stated that the first meeting was more to introduce the players that would be involved. He also felt that it would be important to attend the next Task Force meetings in order to express concerns. Commissioner Skinner asked Perry to send him the meeting notes and announcement of the next meeting.
- **Spring Coordinator Training.** Ansley and Jones attended the training in Helena. There were a lot of good workshops addressing new herbicides, cheatgrass issues and MACo gave a presentation on the Legislative Bill process.
- **Grants – Administration Fees.** Ansley brought up that the Weed District is not budgeted for administration fees on grants and our grants are Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants. The NWTF will not pay administrative fees. Our grants do not run through the Grants Department. There is a new Grant Policy that was sent out this morning to address some issues that came up during the external audit. The staff will meet with Watson (Grants) to clarify the process.
- The Weed District has been awarded the Hebgen Basin and the Rocky Creek Grants and the Extension Office will be running the Mule Creek and the Clarkston Grant through the Weed District Budget.
- **Crew Hiring.** We have two returnees from last year, one returnee from 2 years ago, two who have worked for Beaverhead County and are already licensed and so only have one slot to fill.
- **Herbicide Price Quotes.** Ansley showed the herbicide price quotes to the Board. We will be spending approximately \$26-28,000 on herbicide this year. Crop Production Services came in with the lowest quote and the Board elected to go with them.
- **Resolution for Creation of Weed District.** In order for the Weed District to continue to get state funding in the form of the Special County Grant and NWTF grants we need to have a copy of the Resolution creating the Weed District on file with the State. Perry has done research on this with Semerud (Clerk and Records office) and the Resolution has not been found. Ansley has a copy of the newly presented Madison County Resolution and Commissioner Skinner recommended contacting the County Attorney's office requesting they write a new resolution for the Weed District.
- **Cost Share – Revegetation.** Deputy County Attorney Greenbaum met with the staff to go over forms in the County Weed Management Plan. While looking at the Cost Share program he asked why revegetation is not included as it is a form of weed control. Ansley asked the Board for their opinion. Littlefield stated that this had been discussed before and was decided against as it is too easy for someone to abuse the program. The Board decided to leave revegetation out as an option.
- **Transfer 1990 Ford with sprayer to Road Department.** Ansley told the Board that this truck is one of the old spray trucks and is no longer suitable for the crews. He would like to transfer the truck to the Road Department so they can spray the guard rails and their property off Jackrabbit

Lane. The Board asked what the truck is being used for now. Ansley informed them that it is in storage. Commissioner Skinner suggested drawing up an MOU with the Road Department stating that in return for the truck, sprayer and herbicide they do the guard rails.

- **Shorelander Trailer and Water Tanks.** The trailer is an ATV trailer that we no longer use. Ansley would like to sell it if possible. We also have two 400 gallon water tanks that were originally purchased to put on trailers to use as nurse tanks for water. Ansley does not want the crews driving trucks with 500 gallon tanks mounted on them and pulling trailers with 400 gallons of water. He would like to sell the tanks also. Commissioner Skinner suggested that Ansley check with Search and Rescue to see if they would be interested in the trailer. We will check with the Auditor regarding selling the tanks. Bob Hofman made a motion to get rid of the equipment, Keith Mainwaring seconded and the motion carried.
 - **Board and Commissioner Training.** Ansley announced that there is a Board and Commissioner training planned for November. Commissioner Skinner asked to be kept informed as if the Agenda is good he would like to participate.
 - **Aspen Spring Major Subdivision.** Ansley presented the subdivision to the Board. The developer had a WMP approved in 2006. They have requested extensions of preliminary plat and are now wanting to move forward to final plat. Ansley and Jones inspected the property and found lots of old houndstongue stalks sticking up above the snow. Weed control has been done on 9 acres by a commercial applicator but it was late last fall. Ansley felt that if they had followed the WMP there should be few if any weeds present. There was discussion regarding what is covered when a developer requests an extension. Commissioner Skinner will check with Planning and asked Ansley to check with the County Attorney regarding requesting a new WMP or a paid contract for weed control. If a new WMP is developed the developer needs to set a more realistic goal for weed control.
6. **Weed Management Plan.** The Weed Management Plan has been finalized except for the enforcement section which has to wait until the Legislature is finalized. Littlefield asked that the review be put on the May Agenda.

7. **Round Table/Other.** None.

The next meeting will be May 5th.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry

The Board then went into Executive Session to discuss Budget strategy.