



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly meeting
February 03, 2011**

Board members present were Craig Morgan (Chair), Fred Bell, Keith Mainwaring, Jeff Littlefield, Bob Hofman and Commissioner Joe Skinner. **Others** present were Michelle Passmore (Small Acreage Resource Technician), Jennifer Mohler (Big Sky Weed Committee Coordinator), John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator/Foreman) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

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

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. KBOZ Home Show.** Jones worked the booth on Saturday and Ansley worked the booth on Sunday. They had approximately 60 people stop by.
- 2. Complaint Procedure/Forms.** At the January meeting County Attorney Lambert had asked for the forms to be emailed to him for review. This has been done and we are waiting for a response from the County Attorney's office.
- 3. Utility Agreement.** Utility companies have been informed of the requirements set forth by the Weed District and have been sent the appropriate forms.
- 4. Weed Manager's Meeting.** There were nineteen attendees representing nine agencies. Those in attendance felt that it was a good meeting and decided that it would be a benefit to have spring and fall meetings. There will be another meeting on April 27th at the FWP Headquarters on S 19th to set projects and dates on the calendar. The fall meeting has been tentatively set for October 19th to report progress. Jennifer Mohler remarked on a comment made by Liz Galli-Noble (Director of the Center for Invasive Plant Management at MSU) that it was amazing to her to see so many agencies sitting at the table working together. The informal round table style meeting worked well.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Monthly Report Q&A.

- Jeff Littlefield asked about the revision of the County Weed Management Plan. The revision is almost complete but we have to add an aquatic section and this is tied to the State Aquatic WMP which is not finalized yet. Littlefield would like to see the plan before it is submitted to the State.
- Fred Bell asked about the Conservation District building purchase. Commissioner Skinner stated that the Weed District had been asked if they would be interested in moving into the building, however it would not be feasible.
- Bell felt that it was good to see that there is dialog going on between the Weed District and utility companies.
- Bell asked about the donation of herbicide from DOW Agro to the City of Bozeman for the Gallagator Trail. The Weed District needs to get a report from the city on what was sprayed.
- Michelle Passmore asked about HB166. This will be discussed later.

2. Commissioner Report. There are currently three (3) Bills in front of the Legislature, HB133, HB166 and HB135. Commissioner Skinner asked the Board for direction regarding the Bills. The Commission will help in any way they can. He also brought up that there will be issues with the Budget depending upon what the final numbers are for the Deputy settlement. Littlefield asked if this year's budget would be affected or not until FY'12. Commissioner Skinner stated that there are already restrictions on this year's budget E.g. Capital spending has been frozen.

3. Coordinator (s) Report.

- Ansley reported that the office has been re-carpeted and invited the Board to check it out.
- The County Noxious Weed List has six plants on it and Ansley asked the Board for input on removing two or three of them. The plants listed are Poison hemlock, Scotch thistle, Musk thistle, Meadow knapweed, Scentless chamomile and Field scabious. Meadow knapweed and Scentless chamomile are not issues in the county and Scotch thistle is confined to one small area on Camp Creek Road. Hofman asked if we would continue to spray Scotch thistle if it was removed from the list. Ansley replied that we would. The Board felt that Scotch thistle should remain on the list. Littlefield suggested that as we need to go through the public comment process to remove the plants from the list it may pay to wait until we want to add another plant and then rearrange. The weed list will remain the same at this time.
- At the Annual MWCA Conference there was a lot of emphasis on aquatic invasive species. Aquatics have become a big concern as if not addressed they can make a huge impact on the State economy. Commissioner Skinner asked if anything was being done in the Legislature. Jones informed him that the Governor's Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council is researching the possibility of developing a new Aquatics Trust Fund. The Department of Agriculture is in the process of developing a State Aquatic Weed Management Plan.
- EWM Update – the Department of Agriculture has asked Gallatin, Broadwater and Jefferson Counties to set up a EWM Task Force. We met with the other two counties last week to discuss which agencies will need to be involved. There was a lot of discussion between the Board and Commissioner Skinner and they expressed concern that the county is being asked to take on what should be a State project. The consensus of the Board was that the State needs to run the program and the county can help where it can. Ansley informed the Board that the State will be covering costs, other than some time involved and they are also trying to streamline the permitting process. Littlefield asked if the possibility of having a state task force has been considered. Ansley said there has been discussion of establishing a State Task Force and hiring a coordinator would be hired to head up the program.
- MPDES Permit Update. As the process develops with DEQ it seems that the Weed District will not need to get this permit.
- Legislative Updates – HB166 regarding Realtor disclosure has been opposed by a strong force of Realtors and will most probably die. HB133 regarding changes to the enforcement part of the weed law is being discussed today. HB 375 regarding the Noxious Weed Trust Fund was heard in committee this morning and there was no one in support. Commissioner Skinner advised keeping a close watch on these bills and if the Board wants assistance to let the Commission know.
- The Wild West WinterFest is February 18, 19 and 20th. We will have a booth there but it will not be manned.
- The Spring Home and Garden Show will be February 26th and 27th. Ansley and Jones will each work a day.
- There is an aquatic plant training being held in Lewistown on February 23rd.
- On February 24th we will be doing a fixed asset audit with the County Auditor.

- On March 1st Ansley and Jones will present their grant applications to the Noxious Weed trust Fund Committee in Helena. Ansley will present the Expanded Rocky Creek WMA and Jones will present the Hebgen Basin WMA.
- 4. Public Comment.** Michelle Passmore informed the Board that she is working with a group of landowners who have formed the Bridger to Bangtail Coalition. This group wants to get some weed control done among other things. The Weed District may write a NWTF Grant for the area this coming fall. There is a subdivision in the area that we are already working with to combat orange hawkweed problems.
- 5. Round Table/Other.**
- Mainwaring presented Jennifer Mohler with a plaque in appreciation of all the weed work she has done in the County and as the Big Sky Weed Coordinator.
 - Bell felt that yesterday's Weed Manager's meeting was refreshing. It was good to listen to other agencies and hear what they are doing.
 - Morgan asked if other Departments have audits. Commissioner Skinner told him they do.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.15PM

The next meeting will be on March 3rd. Littlefield will be out of town.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary.