



**Gallatin County Weed Board  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
April 12, 2012**

**Board** members present were Fred Bell (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Keith Mainwaring, Bob Hofman and Commissioner Joe Skinner. **Others** present were Michelle Dammen (Conservation District), John Ansley (Coordinator) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary). Michael Jones was excused.

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Bridger Weed Management Area Grant.** Ansley reported that we have been awarded the NWTF Grant; however we had requested \$31,000 and the grant was cut to \$15,000. The budget has been revised and resubmitted; however we do not have the contract back from Helena yet. Commissioner Skinner asked what the strategy will be with the reduced budget. Ansley informed him that we will try to concentrate on the orange hawkweed and the St. Johnswort but will help with the other noxious weeds as much as we can.
2. **Fees.** Deputy County Attorney Bremer has researched the fee position and we cannot charge fees for gravel pit inspections as they are not part of the subdivision process. We are still waiting to hear about charging for subdivision preliminary plat extensions.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Public Comment/Other.** Dammen informed those present that the Conservation District is working on the Farm Exchange program where farmers are partnered with business people and exchange jobs on their own terms for a period of time. The program will culminate with a social event at the end of the season.
2. **Monthly Report Q & A.**
  - Bell asked about the MSU Weed ID Booklets purchased from MWCA. We have them in stock. The cost from MSU is \$4.00/booklet. The cost from MWCA is \$1.50/booklet.
  - Longview Estates was inspected for a Preliminary Plat extension and Bell asked about the weeds that were found. Ansley told him that Canada thistle, Houndstongue, common tansy and musk thistle were found. The weed management plan extension has been approved.
  - Bell asked for an update on the status of the funding for the Big Sky Weed Committee. The committee will go before the Big Sky Owner's Association in May to request Resort Tax funds but there will be no funding from the Conservation District this year.
  - Bell asked about the status of the sprayer for the new truck. The sprayer has been built and we are waiting to see when Ag West will be able to deliver it.
  - Mainwaring had a question on the prices of the new locks for the shop.

3. **Herbicide Quotes.** Ansley sent out a request for herbicide cost quotes to three businesses and only Crop Production Services responded.
4. **Commissioner Report.** Commissioner Skinner reported that he had attended the Board/Commissioner Training in Missoula that was put on by the Montana Weed Control Association. One of the things that he learned was that we can have a special taxing district for weed control. Property owners can set up a special tax district for themselves specifically for weed control. Bell felt that this program would run rather like the rural fire district. Another topic that was discussed at the training was the funding of the Weed District as set up by State Statute. Gallatin County has not been meeting the funding requirements. Ansley asked Commissioner Skinner about the overall 2013 Budget projection. He replied that they anticipate being able to fund the Departments at about the same level as last year.
5. **Coordinator Report.**
  - **EWM Task Force Meeting.** Ansley and Jones attended in order to stay in the loop and help out where possible. The MDA has a survey planned for the Missouri from the Headwaters to Toston and Jones may be able to assist with this. Americorps will help survey the channel near Drouillard at no cost to the Weed District. The upstream source is believed to be the Jefferson Slough. DNRC has invested a lot of money into control of the weed at the Toston Dam and in 2011 found more EWM than in 2010. They are not sure if this is due to the high water last year scouring out channels etc. There was a comment about controlling the invasive EWM downstream from the source; however Littlefield commented that the Toston Dam gets a lot of boater traffic and control measures there would have to do with preventing contaminated boats and recreationists spreading the weed to other water bodies.
  - **GVLТ Booth and Breakfast.** This event was an outreach to the GVLТ conservation easement participants. Unfortunately due to a severe storm that hit, attendance was low.
  - **Spring Coordinator Training.** Ansley reported that there was a lot of good information presented. There was a presentation by an Idaho Coordinator on the Idaho compliance program. Their system is much quicker than the Montana program. There was also a very good presentation on reducing coordinator liability. Ansley brought up the question of the platforms that are on the front of our trucks for the sprayer to stand on. He was told to refer to our HR Department, which he has done. HR has forwarded his concerns to the county insurance agent. In 2003 the Weed District was inspected by MOSHA and there was no comment on the platforms at that time.
  - **Weed Watcher Challenge.** Mangold (MSU) has set up a Weed Watcher Challenge on line. The challenge is to input weed infestations on the INVADERS database or EDDMapS. The points are allocated according to the priority of the weed. There is a monetary reward for the Area Council and also for the County with the most data entries. The idea behind the competition is to get more people interested in the Early Detection Rapid Response program. Ansley felt we had a good chance of doing well on it.
  - **Commercial Applicator Training.** The Department of Agriculture scheduled training in Bozeman on the same day to accommodate a speaker who was presenting at both trainings and this impacted our attendance significantly. The MWCA will try to connect with the MDA to prevent this from happening in the future.
  - **Crew Update.** We have two (2) returnees and one other experienced crew member hired so far. We interviewed a candidate this morning and have four (4) more interviews on Wednesday next week.

- **ATV Update.** Facilities purchased the 2003 Honda and Ansley took it to Power Play Motor Sports to have a snow plow installed on it. He picked up the new Yamaha from Alpine Yamaha in Livingston on Monday.
- Ansley and Jones attended the **Noxious Weed Management Workshop** put on by MSU. Littlefield was one of the speakers. Ansley felt the program was very beneficial.
- **Municipality MOU.** The Board had copies of the document that the staff drew up. It was sent to the County Attorney's office for review and was approved as a start. Ansley also brought up comments by Harold Blattie (MACo Executive Director) in the Weed Times regarding the weed law. We currently have a good working relationship with Kerr (City of Bozeman) but the Parks and Trails people need to get on board. There was a lot of discussion on this subject culminating in the decision that we need to make sure that the process with how to address municipalities is in the new county weed management plan.
- **Compliance.** Bremer (Deputy County Attorney) has been helping with the compliance process. We have adapted a form from the Compliance Office to suit our needs and once approved, this will be posted on our web page. All complaints including those already on file will need to be processed from the beginning due to the changes in the weed law. All complaints will need to be in writing.
- Ansley listed a number of upcoming events.
  - i) Wagner's Flower and Garden Show
  - ii) SW Area Council Meeting
  - iii) GVLТ Weed Walk – Kelly Canyon St. Johnswort
  - iv) Weed Manager's Meeting
  - v) Farm and Ranch Show Booth

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

- Ansley informed the Board that he will not be able to attend the May Board Meeting.
- Ansley informed the Board that we will have the final draft of the County Weed Management Plan available for review before the May Weed Board meeting.
- Littlefield asked how long the Weed Management Plan is good for. Ansley informed him that it has to be updated and submitted to MDA every two (2) years.
- There was discussion regarding the Weed Times enforcement article with quotes from Blattie (MACo). Commissioner Skinner suggested that Ansley email MACo for clarification.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20PM.

The next meeting will be May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary