



**Gallatin County Weed Board  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
February 02, 2012**

**Board** members present were Fred Bell (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Bob Hofman, Keith Mainwaring and Commissioner Joe Skinner. Craig Morgan was excused. **Others** present were Jecyn Bremer (Deputy County Attorney), Marci Murnion (Conservation District), Michelle Dammen (Conservation District), John Ansley (Coordinator), Michael Jones (Assistant Coordinator) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

**Minutes.** Bell had questions regarding the January meeting discussion of extension fees for subdivisions and inspection fees for gravel pits. The Minutes had been sent to the Board and were approved as presented.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- 1. WMP Extension Fees/Gravel Pit Inspection Fees.** The current review fees are \$150 for a minor subdivision and \$300 for a major subdivision. Commissioner Skinner stated that the Commission did not object to establishing fees for services as long as there was justification documented. There was discussion regarding options for both regular fees as already established and extension review fees; such as per lot fees, flat fees, fees per hour, mileage etc. Commissioner Skinner also stated that we need to keep major and minor subdivisions at separate rates. Littlefield asked about the gravel pits. As they do not go through the subdivision process they have never been charged an inspection fee. Ansley would like to charge an inspection fee for new gravel pits based on the fee for a minor subdivision and then charge a fee of \$100/pit per year for inspection for certification.
- 2. Cash Carryover Funds.** The funds were in the 2840 grant fund and have been allocated to the Special County Grant Fund.
- 3. County Weed Management Plan.** Deputy County Attorney Jecyn Bremer stated that she was working on the enforcement side of the County Weed Management Plan. She will check with Greenbaum (Deputy County Attorney) to see where we are at with the rest of the Weed Management Plan document. Ansley had some questions for Bremer regarding the current enforcement actions and the fact that the Weed Law was changed in the 2011 Legislature. Bremer stated that for those who are not in compliance we should start at the beginning of the process in order to have a paper trail should the issue end up in court. For those who are complying we can continue to be helpful. Bremer will check to make sure that State Statute allows for the continuation of enforcement actions from year to year, however for the first year under the new law she recommended starting all actions from the beginning. Bell asked if we kept date and time stamped photo documentation of all complaints. Ansley informed him that we do keep those records.

Ansley then asked Bremer what her thoughts were on getting a court order to enter private property. She is trying to get this process streamlined for us as the time line for weed treatment is so short. For inspections we may not need the Court Order as most infestations can be documented from the road. We may be able to get court orders through Justice Court which will help but if the order is appealed it will have to go through District Court. She will also need to research the procedure for enforcement in areas not under County jurisdiction (municipalities).

Ansley then asked about the Department of Agriculture Template for the non-compliance notification. The Weed District has developed a document using the information on the State document that we feel is more user friendly and easier to read. Bremer checked the new statute and it states that the Weed Districts SHALL use the template provided by the Department of Agriculture. Ansley will send our document to Burch (State Weed Coordinator) and ask him to review it with the Department of Agriculture attorney as they have asked for feed-back from Counties. Bremer felt that Request to Inspect letter which is the first formal contact was fine. It needs to be mailed certified as per state statute. Bremer brought up the Road Department Encroachment Permit. State statute requires any person or state agency creating a disturbance within a district to notify the Weed District Board (MCA 7-22-2152). At this time this does not happen. The applicant for the Encroachment Permit would need to send a copy of the application to both the Road Department and the Weed District. Bremer will review the document to see what the burden is to the Weed District. Commissioner Skinner suggested that Bremer and Ansley meet with Provance (Road Department Superintendent) to develop a system that will work for all involved.

- 4. Municipality Agreement.** The Weed District has developed a form that was modified from Cascade and Beaverhead Counties and has sent it to the County Attorney's office for review. Commissioner Skinner asked Ansley if he still wanted to talk to the Round Table group. He will notify Ansley when the meeting date is set.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. Public Comment/Other.** Marci Murnion (Conservation District) reported on the Agency restructuring. Commissioner Skinner asked about the status of the small acreage program and Murnion informed those present that Dammen had been hired as a Small Acreage Specialist and Education Specialist. The position will become a permanent position.
- 2. Monthly Report Q&A.** Bell remarked that he was pleased to see the staff working with GPS units. The new units show land ownership, allow weed infestation points to be marked and also take photos. Hofman had a question about the discussion with the Park County Coordinator regarding salaries versus hourly pay scale.
- 3. Re-schedule April Board Meeting.** The April Board meeting conflicts with an MSU Extension Weed Training program that Ansley and Jones will be attending. Ansley asked the Board if the April meeting could be rescheduled for the following week. The Board agreed to reschedule the April meeting to April 12<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Commissioner Report.** Commissioner Skinner reported that they have already started the budget process for the next fiscal year.

**5. Coordinator(s) Report.**

- The staff attended the MWCA Annual Conference in Great Falls. There were a lot of really good workshops. Littlefield asked if there had been a training session for the MDA new web based grant input program. Ansley attended the training. There have been some issues with the herbicide section. Johnson (MDA Grant Coordinator) will attend our SW Area Commercial Applicator training at the end of March to outline requirements and answer questions from applicators who will be working in grant areas.
- Ansley announced that the new spray truck has been purchased. It is a 2006 Chevy ¾ ton. The box will be replaced by a flatbed that we took off an older truck and the box will be sold. Ansley asked Commissioner Skinner if we need to get quotes for the sprayer that will be installed on the truck – yes we do.
- Big Sky Weed Committee. Jones attended their last meeting. They have done a tremendous amount of work both educational and on the ground weed control. In 2011 they did \$4600 in cost share alone. He feels that this group has been an invaluable resource for the residents in the Gallatin Canyon and Big Sky area and thanked the Conservation District for their contribution.
- EWM Task Force Meeting – Whitehall. The next meeting of the Headwaters Task Force will be at the Extension Office in Whitehall on February 8<sup>th</sup>.
- We will have a booth at the Wild West WinterFest on February 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>. We received a call from the Chronicle asking if we would advertize in the WinterFest Tab. We usually advertize in the Fair Tab in July and our budget does not allow for both. The Board chose to advertize in the Fair Tab in July.
- NWTF Grant Hearings. Jones and Ansley will present the Bridger WMA grant application to the NWTF Board on February 27<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM. Jones reported that we have received over 30 letters of support from private landowners in the area and also have six (6) agencies on board. A representative from the GVLTL approached the District regarding St. Johnswort in the area and may accompany Jones and Ansley to the hearings. Commissioner Skinner suggested contacting Michael Tucker who is the new editor of the Belgrade News to see if he will run an article if we get the grant.

**6. Round Table.**

- Littlefield asked about Ansley's evaluation. He has not received a copy of the final. Perry will call HR and ask what the procedure is.
- Mainwaring announced that Michael Tucker is the new Editor of the Belgrade News.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50PM.

The next meeting will be on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary