



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly Meeting
October 04, 2012**

Board members present were Fred Bell (Chair), Keith Mainwaring, Jeff Littlefield and Commissioner Joe Skinner. Craig Morgan and Bob Hofman were excused. **Others** present were Ron McOwen (Western Conservation), Jackie Flikkema (Knife River), Dan Alexander (Story Distributing), Ray Heagney (FWP), John Ansley (Coordinator), Michael Jones (Assistant Coordinator) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

Minutes. Bell brought up some questions regarding topics that had been discussed at the last Board meeting. He asked if Harvey had brought in a sample of the blue flowered weed that was discussed at the September meeting. John replied that she had not. Bell asked about the first court order to treat property that we had received. Ansley informed him that we did not hear from the property owner until they received a copy of the court order. The property has been sprayed and we are waiting on the Attorney fees before submitting the bill. The Minutes of the September Board Meeting had been sent to the Board and were approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. North Star Commercial.** Jones received a mailing list of property owners from the HOA representative and sent out a letter to all listed property owners informing them of the weed issues in the subdivision and offering Weed District assistance. We have received two responses and Jones has inspected one property with the owner. Bell stated that the subdivision covenants address noxious weed control. Commissioner Skinner felt that the staff should continue to try and work with the HOA rather than filing complaints on the individual property owners.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Public Comment/Other.** Ron McOwen of Western Conservation Services introduced himself and gave a brief history of his weed control work in Gallatin County over the last 35 years. McOwen voiced frustration over the enforcement process. He feels that he needs to defend the people who are working towards weed eradication but are faced with bordering properties where noxious weeds are left to grow unchecked. Commissioner Skinner informed McOwen that we are doing enforcement but we have to follow State Statute which is very cumbersome. Ansley gave an overview of the process and stated that we have three (3) steps that we have to follow according to State Statute which now requires court orders for entry onto property. So far it has taken approximately 60 days to get through the entire process. The MWCA has a committee set up to try and address changes to the law in next year's Legislative Session in order to make the process work more smoothly and faster. There was a

lot of discussion regarding equipment, budget and possibilities of contracting some county roads out to Commercial Applicators. Commissioner Skinner suggested that the staff put together costs for a county road and ask for an estimate on that road from commercial applicators. McOwen then introduced Jackie Flikkema from Knife River. Weed Control is a priority for Knife River as they need to have clean gravel pits in order to get Yellowstone National Park contracts. McOwen then introduced Dan Alexander (Vice President of Story Distributing Marketing). Alexander is responsible for a number of properties in Gallatin County. He informed the Board that he would like to be an ally and offered help in the budget and Legislature areas.

Ray Heagney (FWP) reported that he was able to have a two (2) person crew this year which helped them cover a lot more ground. He has noticed new infestations of spotted knapweed at the Cameron Bridge FAS and also an increase in weed populations at Fairweather. Both Fishing Access sites are receiving a lot more use than they have in the past. Heagney also reported that during the re-organization of FWP, Parks was separated out and the Fishing Accesses have been put back under the Fisheries jurisdiction. Heagney stated that he is working on an annual report and the weed coordinators will be receiving copies when it is done.

2. Monthly Report Q&A.

- Bell noted that we have done fifteen (15) preliminary plat extensions so far this year.
- Bell asked where the Woodland Park subdivision is. It is on Huffine Lane.
- Bell asked about the Hebgen Lakes Estates inspection. Property owners had asked for a walk through of the subdivision. Ansley and Jones coordinated the event with a fall spray day of county roads in the West Yellowstone area.
- Bell remarked on the revenue from the sprayer rentals. There has been a lot of demand for the sprayers this year thus generating more revenue than usual.

3. Commissioner Report. None.

4. Coordinator(s) Report.

- **Enforcement.** Ansley has had discussions with the Deputy County Attorney who has been assigned to our enforcement program. Originally it was felt that we would need to start complaints from the beginning each year however further research allows us to take photos of the property in spring or early summer and continue from the point where we left off. The invoice for the first enforcement treatment will go out as soon as we receive the legal fees. There was discussion regarding publicity however this was scrapped. Littlefield asked if there has been any information sent out regarding changes to the weed law in the upcoming legislative session. Ansley replied that we will be attending the SW Area Meeting on Tuesday 9th and the weed law will be discussed there and also at the MWCA Annual Conference in January.
- **Spray Update.** Ansley sprayed the field behind the Rest Home. It was plowed this summer in an effort to get rid of the Richardson Ground Squirrels and has come back as a field of Canada thistle. The Tri County Speedway parking lot was sprayed as there were bad infestations of spotted knapweed there and with all the traffic in and out it is a prime source for spreading the weed. Other fall spray projects were: West Yellowstone area; Hyalite Heights Subdivision Park; Fairgrounds; Ecton Gravel Pit; Aspen Meadows

roadways; fourteen county roads; Hodgeman Canyon Subdivision Park; Snowfill Trail; and Rose Park.

- **Big Sky Weed Committee.** Jones reported that the committee had set up a weed mapping project with the 10th Graders at the new Big Sky High School. They worked in the Porcupine Creek area and he felt the day was a great success. The committee is working with the USFS, FWP and the Weed District to explore possible funding options to expand the Big Horn Sheep Project and possibly write a noxious weed trust fund grant to provide cost share to private property owners who border the area.
 - **Shop Project.** The coordinators have contacted a number of construction companies in order to get estimates for the cost of building the lean-to on the west side of the Shop. So far we have only received one estimate.
 - **Vehicle Update.** Ansley reported that Blackman (Finance Director) has given permission to start looking for a replacement vehicle for the Sonoma. We will also be starting the process to replace the 1999 one ton truck that has a number of mechanical issues. This truck will be replaced through the core equipment program.
 - **Job Posting.** Ansley is working with HR on the new position description and hopes to have it posted soon.
 - **Fall Coordinator Training.** Ansley and Jones will attend the MWCA Fall Coordinator Training in Hamilton on October 16th through 18th.
 - **SW Area Meeting.** The Agendas for the above meeting and the SW Area meeting were passed around to the Board. The business meeting for the SW Area will begin at 3:00PM on Tuesday 9th at the Vigilante Saddle Club Facility in Butte and will be followed by a member meeting at 6:30PM.
 - **Planning/Subdivisions.** The Weed District WMP is good for three (3) years; however Planning has been faced with requests for 1 year, 3 year and 5 year extensions on Preliminary Plats. Commissioner Skinner suggested that Ansley set up a meeting with Planning and the Commissioners to discuss this so we are all on the same page.
5. **Round Table.** Commissioner Skinner suggested that we look at the feasibility of contracting some work out to Commercial Applicators.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05PM.

The next meeting will be November 1st, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary