



**Gallatin County Weed Board  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
September 06, 2012**

**Board** members present were Fred Bell (Chair), Jeff Littlefield, Keith Mainwaring, Bob Hofman, Craig Morgan and Commissioner Skinner. **Others** present were Jessica Smith (MDA Field Officer Bozeman Office), Crystal Beckman (Gallatin County Extension Agent), Sharon Harvey (County Property Owner), John Ansley (Coordinator), Michael Jones (Assistant Coordinator) and Rosemary Perry (Secretary).

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

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. **North Star Commercial.** Bell had given Jones the name of the contact person for the subdivision. Jones contacted her and did not get a good response. The property owners are not interested in putting money into weed control. Bell suggested sending a letter explaining the situation and requesting that either Jones or Ansley attend a property owners meeting in order to get the situation addressed. The property owners need to know that the county is trying to work with them in lieu of going through the enforcement process.
2. **Budget Update.** The Budget has been finalized.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Public Comment/Other.** Jessica Smith introduced herself and informed the Board that she is the new MT Department of Agriculture Field Officer in the Bozeman Office. Sharon Harvey introduced herself and expressed concern regarding the weed law and the long drawn out process of enforcement. There was discussion regarding the process and the changes that were set up in the 2011 Legislative Session. The MWCA has a committee set up to rewrite sections of the law in order to streamline the process so that the timeline becomes more effective for weed control. They will present these changes to the Legislature in 2013. Crystal Beckman introduced herself. She is the Natural Resource Director at the County Extension Office. Beckman reported that Carlstrom (Ag Agent) is retiring and they are currently in the hiring process for a new County Ag Agent. There was discussion regarding the Conservation District and small acreage concerns. The Extension office will refer small acreage and weed questions to our office until the new agent is hired or the Conservation District has their new Small Acreage person on board.

## **2. Monthly Report Q&A.**

- Bell asked if there was an upper limit for cost share with the Bridger WMA. Ansley informed the Board that we had capped claims at \$750 as we thought there would be a lot of activity; however there have not been any major claims.
- Bell noted that we have done a number of Extensions for preliminary plat. We are charging a fee for these now.
- Bell asked about the Preliminary Plat Extension for the Black Bull Run subdivision. Ansley inspected the property yesterday and noted that some weed control had been done but not very well. He approved the Extension with recommendations.
- Ansley did a weed inventory on a piece of property for a potential buyer. Bell felt that this was a good service.
- Bell asked if we have a list of certified gravel pits. TMC is the only gravel company that continues to work with the certification program and they are listed on our web page along with the Commercial Applicators and Seed Sources.
- The person who made the complaint against the North Star Commercial subdivision filled out one form for the entire subdivision and does not want to do individual complaints. Jones has inspected the area and there is a significant weed issue there.
- McOwen was contracted by Knife River to spray their gravel pit at Big Sky and was appalled to note heavy weed infestations on the Kenyon Noble pit that borders it. The Yellowstone National Park gravel inspector commented on the weed issue. Bell felt that this needs to be addressed.
- The first request for a court order to treat noxious weeds on private property has been approved and we will be able to do a fall treatment on the property.

## **3. Commissioner Report.** None.

## **4. Coordinator(s) Report.**

- Ansley gave a wrap up of the spray season. The crew's last day was August 15<sup>th</sup>. On that last day one crew was in the Clarkston area and had a problem with the same truck that had had tire problems on the way to West Yellowstone. The truck had been repaired after the first incident but there was a mechanical error. The truck was towed back to Bozeman and fixed free of charge. There were communication issues with the cell phones when the crew tried to call in from Clarkston which brought up discussion regarding the use of cell phones versus two way radios.
- Spray work completed so far: Arrowleaf Hills Park; working on the Fairgrounds; several county gravel pits; report areas on county roads when called in; Regional Park/Dinosaur Park; Beef Producer Scales; Annette Park; Rose Park; the trail along Cherry River to E. Gallatin Rec. area; Bozeman Convenience site; trail along W Dry Creek Road just east of Manhattan in response to complaints; Three Forks airport; Three Forks Ponds. For Fall spraying projects we are working on some county roads, gravel pits, Hodgeman Canyon Park, Hyalite Heights subdivision park, trails, enforcement sites. Ansley asked those present to let us know if they see weed issues on any county roads.
- Complaints. We have our first court order approved and have until October 31<sup>st</sup> to treat the property. We have three more properties that we may be seeking court orders for treatment on next week. Epic Development (Ryen Glen subdivision); property owned by MT Title Insurance on the SE corner of S 19<sup>th</sup> and Patterson; and Oak Meadows

subdivision south of Kenyon Noble that has been mowed by the City of Bozeman for the last two years in response to complaints. Bell asked about the status of the Huffine property. Ansley reported that it is looking better than it did, however to our knowledge there has been no weed treatment done this year. There was discussion regarding property owners mowing Canada thistle in response to complaint notices. This is not an acceptable control measure for the coordinators as Canada thistle propagates through the root system. Commissioner Skinner felt that the Weed Board needs to come up with a policy regarding the Board initiating complaints. State Law allows for it. Jones was able to settle a complaint against Turner Enterprises amicably this morning. Harvey had questions regarding compliance within subdivisions. Ansley responded that most subdivisions have covenants covering these issues; however very few people want to complain against neighbors.

- Site visits. Ansley reported that he and Jones checked cyphocleonus release sites on Bozeman Pass with Littlefield and they did not find any signs of the insect. He will check other sites at lower elevations to see if there has been any progress. Jones participated in a flea beetle collection earlier this year and was able to release flea beetles on leafy spurge on the Greycliff Ranch. Some other property inspections include; a weed inventory for a prospective property purchase in the Sypes Canyon area; an inspection for a resident with spotted knapweed in a range type backyard; a weed inventory for a resident whose horses had been sick and her veterinarian felt they had eaten something toxic; a weed inventory for new property owners on Gooch Hill Road showed common tansy along a creek; a property inspection for residents who had just purchased a piece of overgrazed property with serious cheatgrass issues; a property in a subdivision on Bozeman Hill for an out of state landowner whose neighbors were putting pressure on him and also the Turner complaint.
- Vehicles. The 1999 GMC Dually has had some major maintenance issues, the fuse box melted, the wiring harness needs to be replaced, and the emergency brake locks up causing problems with the tires. Ansley would like to use the core program to replace it. Commissioner Skinner told him to talk to Blackman (Finance Director). The budget has been finalized so we can move forward.
- Ansley asked Commissioner Skinner about getting estimates for the lean to that has been planned to cover the rental sprayers and thus lengthen the lives of the tanks. Commissioner Skinner told him to discuss this with Borzak (Procurement Officer).
- O'Connell (911 Director) came to the office to request that their communications towers be put on a regular schedule for weed control. She also brought two (2) weeds for ID. They were prickly lettuce and Russian thistle.
- Ansley is working with HR to get the new job description done.
- There was discussion on whether or not to continue the Bridger Weed Management Area grant through next spring or whether to turn it back to the State. So far the response has been dismal. Commissioner Skinner remarked the main focus of the grant originally was to address the orange hawkweed in a subdivision in Bridger Canyon and suggested that we focus on that and keep the grant open.
- Harvey asked about a blue flower that has taken over a piece of property on Jackrabbit Lane. She will bring a sample in for a positive ID.
- Ansley informed the Board that the Woodland Park Major subdivision had been put on the Public Meeting Agenda for the 11<sup>th</sup> but they had not presented a current Weed

Management Plan. Ansley contacted Rogers (Planning) and the developer will submit a WMP for approval before the meeting or the application will be delayed.

- Jones informed Skinner that the weed he had brought in for identification was prostrate verbain, a native.

**5. Round Table.**

- Mainwaring asked about the comment made by Brown regarding organic herbicides that was noted in the Monthly Report. Ansley and Jones have both driven by the property and stated that the Canada thistle infestation was down by about 50%. The organic herbicides had not been used, but even without the property was looking better.
- Mainwaring stated that he felt the tansy problem off I90 between Bozeman and Belgrade was greatly improved this year.
- Littlefield showed those present some land snail samples. These snails have been causing problems in the area north of Belt to the Sluice Box State Park.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 2:40PM.

The next meeting will be on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Perry, Secretary