



## Gallatin County Weed Board

### Regular Monthly Meeting

March 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2017 1:15 pm

#### ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Bob Hofman, Keith Mainwaring, Fred Bell, and Jeff Littlefield.
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Danielle Jones (Program Assistant), Jennifer Mohler (Gallatin Big Sky Weed Committee)

**MINUTES:** Bob moved to accept the minutes as written, Keith 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, and all approved.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- **2017 Road Contract Bids vs. Seasonal Crew:** Bids were sent out February 27<sup>th</sup> and are due March 31<sup>st</sup>. This road contract option is the alternative to hiring a seasonal crew, in case a qualified crew cannot be hired. The road contract would be for 2 years, dependent on a successful first year. The job posting for the seasonal crew will run March 1<sup>st</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>, and will be posted at the Job Service, the Chronicle, the county website, and on the MSU Hire a Bobcat website. Jane Mangold also distributed the job posting to various departments at MSU.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jennifer Mohler gave an update on the efforts of the Gallatin Big Sky Weed Committee. The Annual Report Summary is available on the GBSWC website. In 2016, every grant dollar was matched by \$1.56 of matching funds. Four weed pulls were conducted last year, with 83 volunteers participating and 2790 pounds of weeds pulled. Since 2008, 682 volunteers have participated and nearly 13,000 pounds of weeds have been pulled. Cooperative weed treatment efforts in Big Sky by Gallatin and Madison counties were valued at more than \$19,000 last year. Work on the bighorn range habitat improvement program included removing cheatgrass, treating with herbicide, seeding with natives, and putting up exclosures. Future efforts will include monitoring the establishment of native plants on the range and possibly additional herbicide treatments of cheatgrass. Landowner site visits increased by 48% over last year. Over the past 6 years, the cost share program has helped 75 landowners with 840 acres of land. Education efforts have focused on the Play-Clean-Go campaign, including putting up new billboards at the entrance of the canyon and by Storm Castle. Signs will also be put up at Forest Service trailheads and at 3 sites in Big Sky. For the mapping and monitoring program, the leafy spurge site at the pond that flows into the West Fork of the Gallatin has been drastically reduced due to control efforts in recent years. Weeds were mapped along Hwy 191 to provide information to MDOT and other agencies about areas to target. GBSWC partnered with Gallatin River Task Force to do a realtor education course in Big Sky, and Jen will talk for another realtor course tomorrow in Bozeman. Jen said thanks to Gallatin County for their support of the Committee. Don suggested Jen attend one of the Commission public meetings to give the same update.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- **Monthly Report Q&A**
  - Jeff asked about FWP's herbicides being stored in the Weed District chemical shed. FWP does not have anywhere else to store their chemicals. They come every year and do an inventory, and then

pick them up in April or May to use for the spray season. Issues with water leaking into the chemical shed were resolved last year.

- **Commissioner Report**

- Weed issues are moving through the legislature, including a battle for dollars for aquatic invasives (i.e. mussels).

- **Coordinators Reports**

- Resolution Changing Office Hours: A new resolution was written to correct wording of the original resolution, which was passed at the February 13<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. This new resolution will be presented at the next Monday morning Commission office meeting. The new office hours are 8-4, with accommodation for the public outside of those hours.
- GBSWC Meeting: Meeting was on held on February 21<sup>st</sup>. The summary that Jen gave earlier in the meeting covered a lot of what was discussed. The Big Sky spray day with Madison County and others, and the bighorn sheep range spray day are two of the big events that the Weed District participates in. Mike also helps with the Big Sky Weed Summit; this year they will talk with the bigger landowners about weed management along trails and recreation areas.
- 2017 Belgrade, Bozeman, 4 Corners area Road Bid Contract: 4 bids were received. The lowest bid was from NPK (Bozeman company) for \$15,284. Keith moved to accept this as the winning bid, Bob 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and all approved.
- Weed Legislation: House Bill 126, which revises the Montana Pesticide Act to provide additional funding to the State Weed Coordinator, has gone through the House and a hearing is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup> in the Senate Ag/Livestock committee. This bill seems to have good support. HB 410 would increase funding for the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. This bill was tabled in committee on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Because it is a finance bill, they can try to get it off the table, but are not feeling optimistic. Kelly Flynn has a bill that would provide weed management money for wildlife enhancement, the money would be in a trust fund that would be administered by FWP as grants.
- Vehicle Maintenance: The 2015 truck is back from the road department, it has the flatbed on it now. John is now working on mounting the sprayer tank. The 6x6 had its initial servicing at Gallatin Recreation (oil change, etc.). John talked to them about installing a separate battery to run the switches to prevent the battery from dying after driving slow for a long time. The Yamaha was sent over for service. The spray trucks will go to TireRama for service (oil change, etc.). John has serviced the truck sprayers, and will work on servicing the rental sprayers.

- **Roundtable**

- Marcy left the Conservation District and there is now a new Administrator.
- Fred suggested that a trickle charger or solar panel mounted on the truck might help to keep the battery on the 6x6 charged up.

Meeting dismissed 2:10 pm

Next scheduled meeting: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Danielle Jones

Program Assistant