



## Gallatin County Weed Board

### Regular Monthly Meeting

December 3, 2015

#### ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Keith Mainwaring, Fred Bell, Steve Saunders, Bob Hofman, Jeff Littlefield
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Don Seifert (Commissioner), Emily Lockard (Extension), Troy Carter (Chronicle), Ron McOwen (Applicator), Glenn Colclough (Applicator)

**MINUTES:** Keith moved to accept the minutes, Fred 2<sup>nd</sup> – approved without dissent

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Ron McOwen (Western Conservation Services).**
  - Came in to say there have been grand improvements such as using applicators for spraying roadsides. Weed Board has found a solution to enforcement and continue with enforcement. What the hell are we going to do about cheatgrass? Gravel Pits are greatest problem regarding cheatgrass. Ron feels cheatgrass is most difficult weed to deal with. Ron provided some examples of what he has done with cheatgrass using herbicides such as Parazone & Tordon. He also mistakenly sprayed Rifle-D on germinating seedlings in an experimental plot and noticed that it killed all the cheatgrass. Ron sees cheatgrass as the greatest problem. Ron will try to duplicate the results by experimenting at the Knife River Pit.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- **Monthly Report Q&A**
  - Keith asked if there was any report on the lady that came in to the last board meeting that was complaining about the area that got sprayed? She came into the office and got some signs to post along the road.
  - Steve asked if there was anything else from the monthly report that was worthy of talking about? A gentleman had talked with Commissioner Skinner office about his neighbor that has Kochia and other weeds blowing into his fence and ditch. A friendly letter was sent to the landowner asking to be a good land steward and neighbor and plant something beneficial to both parties. The weeds were cleaned up, so the friendly letter was useful.
  - Jeff asked what the project was for the Level 3 Training? Mike and John did an experiment to see how effective the Weed Crew was on 3 county road rights of way. The data was not significantly different due to several factors including sample size and weeds were killed but some had grown back. We will receive a certificate and some books for doing the project.
  - Steve asked if we are staying ahead of subdivision weed plans since he has seen a lot go through our office? We are keeping up. Steve asked if there was follow-up on weed plans and we have to inspect for Preliminary Plat and re-inspect for Final Plat.

- Commissioner Seifert asked what services we supply to the Big Sky Area. The Gallatin Big Sky Weed Committee handles the Big Sky Area and the Weed District assists them and also has a spray day with Madison County Weed District.
- **Commissioner Report**
  - Talking with Stillwater County Commissioner and they contract with railroad for spraying. Is this something that is of interest? MRL has Rumble Spraying Inc. does the treatment around here. Rumble contacts us each year to see what areas are of concern. No budget issues to speak of. Remodel of building 4. Emily (Extension) gave an update about the remodel of building 4.
- **Coordinators Reports**
  - **Complaints/Enforcement Update:** Court ordered treatment took place on October 5 & 6. The order was only for Tract 2 but we thought all tracts were covered. Treatment occurred on all tracts. We had to revise the invoice to reflect only the treatment of Tract 2 per recommendations by County Attorney's Office. The new invoice will be sent to Bank of America since they will take over ownership on December 17. This was one of the worst infestations of St. Johnswort that we have seen. Landowner requested public records for the complaint.
  - **Program Assistant Update:** Waiting to hear from Commission to see if they will approve 1/4 time for Extension and then the position will be shared 1/4 with Extension and 3/4 with Weed. If we can make this a full-time position, we will have a better applicant pool as well as better employee retention. Emily has made request to HR, Finance and the Commission to have the 1/4 time position. Emily has had a discussion with Ed (Finance) regarding funding for the position. Commissioner Seifert stated that he will visit with Ed about the issue. Having a full-time shared position will increase coverage for both Weeds & Extension when we are housed in the same building. Hope to have someone on around March 1, 2016.
  - **I Beam/Hoist Update:** Received 3 quotes on the I Beam installation: Seivert Construction for \$2,414; Duff's Mobile Welding & Repair \$1,880; TNT Building Systems \$1,615. Contract was awarded to TNT. Have not received service agreement back from TNT. Once we get service agreement, we can route that up to courthouse for proper signatures and approval.
  - **2016 Plan of Work:** John asked where do we want to go with this? Maps are posted on the walls. The dry erase board has categories of areas that we work on. Scheduling is difficult, we do not have control over certain things such as rentals, cost share and subdivision reviews. Steve would like for the Board to have a clear vision on objectives and goals for 2016. Identify ways to approach objectives. Would like to have a vision of where we are going and how to measure objectives. Commissioner Seifert stated that the county as a whole is working on measurable goals for every department. Steve would like to have a vision and then implement it. A work plan was common when he worked in the private industry. Examples might be no accidents for the year or something about education or spraying weeds. Another thing Steve picked up from a meeting was a mapping program from AgTerra that identifies where you sprayed. It can be used by our contractors and costs about \$3500. Jeff stated that we used to prioritize things years ago and it was called strategic planning. Bob thinks that things are going well and is not sure if this will change things. Steve suggested having a meeting and pencil things out. We will schedule a meeting to do this and bring it to the next Board meeting.

- **Round table**

- Mike and John will be working on bids for spraying a portion of the county road system in the next month. We are not sure if we will have returners next year. It is getting harder to find good workers. We are concerned with getting non qualified applicants for our summer spray crew. If we do not get good applicants, we might want to increase the number of roads for the contractors and Mike and John can pick up some roads around the Three Forks area. We will have to wait and see who applies.
- Bob Hofman's board term is expiring. He is planning on re-applying.
- Emily (Extension) stated that there is an applicator training in Three Forks that will be hosted by Broadwater County and Madison/Jefferson County Extension. If you know of someone who needs the credits please let them know. Montana Department of Agriculture is changing the rules for Private Applicator Certification/Training.
- Commissioner Seifert commented on Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program and making certified pellets. Emily (Extension) stated that she does the field inspections.
- John stated that the Deputy County Attorney had told us that after you receive a court order for treatment, we need to wait 10 days before entering the property to spray. Cannot find in State Statute that it tells us to wait the 10 days after getting the court order. Dave Burch (MT. Dept. of Ag) said that you do not need to wait. Interpretations by attorneys are different. Gallatin County Weed District will follow the Deputy County Attorney's recommendations as this is who we work with.
- Steve mentioned the Horseshoe Hills fire and if there is anything that is being done to assist landowners in the area with weed control? We will contact Kerry O'Connell and get a list of the landowners that were affected. We will then send the landowners a letter stating how we can help.
- Jeff asked if we have any new Trust Fund Grants? We do not have any. We were waiting to hear from a landowner that was interested but we did not hear back from him. These grants are all about landowner interest and having those landowners fully on board. If they are not, the grants fail. We will still have the Dry Creek and Story Hills Grants for 2016.

Meeting dismissed 2:46 pm

Next scheduled meeting: January 7, 2016, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

John Ansley

Weed Coordinator