



**Gallatin County Weed Board
Regular Monthly Meeting
July 2, 2015, 1:15pm**

ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Bob Hofman, Steve Saunders, Keith Mainwaring
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Mary Vanderby (Program Assistant)

MINUTES: Bob moved to accept the minutes as written, Keith 2nd – minutes stand approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Bob Hofman posed a question about organic farm buffer zone** – questioned if there is a requirement for a 30' buffer zone for an organic farm and if the 15' county right of way can be considered part of the 30'. Discussion concluded that a buffer is required but not sure exactly what the specific requirements are. Suggested going onto the state website and look for Organic Farming Certification.
- **Monthly Report Q&A**
 - Keith questioned a property purchase where the new owner was not notified of a noxious weed issue and the transaction took place in the winter months. Is there some type of action that can/should take place? Fred Bell may be aware and can answer at a later date.
 - Steve Saunders questioned Spain Bridge Meadows Phase II subdivision – Mike inspected the property, most of the property is in small grain production and very clean
 - Bob questioned a complaint call from Three Forks. If we receive a formal complaint from a resident in the city limit, we will follow the official enforcement process. Within municipal areas we encourage the towns to care for their own public property. Our department works on some of the trail systems. Steve questioned if there would be benefit in approaching MACO to develop a plan to educate the municipal areas on noxious weed control.
 - Steve asked if we had followed up on a potential Japanese Knotweed sighting. Mike has not looked at it yet.
- **Coordinators Reports**
 - **Budget Update:** our budget appears to be approved as we submitted. We will know when the final budget is approved and posted. We plan to add the I-beam to the shop when the budget is published. Extension has been approved for a building to be built on the fairgrounds. We will explore the benefit/feasibility of being in the same building as them.
 - **ATV update:** John has been exploring the best option for the side by side ATV. Blitz motor recommended the 6x6 for stability and maximum load capacity. If we trade in our oldest ATV, we would have money available to put the sprayer on away. Steve questioned trade-in vs. private party sale of the ATV since the private party sale could have potential for a higher price. The asset disposal policy of the county discourages this practice.

- **Grant Activity:** We sent out the packets and have fielded a few phone calls. Most of the activity should be running through the Extension since they are housing the grant with MSU
- **Bighorn Spray Days:** June 8 & 10 – about 12 people participated. The decline in noxious weed presence is very noticeable. This is all backpack spraying in very steep terrain.
- **Big Sky Weed Committee Meeting:** Meeting summarizing the BSRAD grant award. \$10,000 needs to be used for cost share/habitat improvement. The rest can be used for labor. Clarification is being sought on other customary expenses.
- **Gallatin Weed Pull:** June 13 – approximately 30 people attended. Great prizes were given away, we are hoping that community involvement will continue to increase participation. The event did have some TV coverage, and thank you's will be posted.
- **Big Sky Community Weed Pull:** 25+ people were involved. There was a nice representation from the Yellowstone Club, Big Sky Community Corp provided a BBQ. Great event educating community members on what weeds look like.
- **Spray update:** NPK should be finished in early July, Dan Marks is still working. Steve questioned a spurge patch that is located on Cherry River. John feels it is FWP that has been treating. Steve also noted a small patch of spurge on the corner of Airport Rd/Springhill Rd that has been treated. The road out to Clarkston saw a significant increase in weed infestation due to the seed bank being disturbed by new road construction – it has been treated. Some trail work still needs to be completed and some of the rec areas will be looked at.
- **Enforcement Update:** A lot of complaints are coming in. We have received 21 so far this year. More come flying in when the spotted knapweed and Canada thistle bloom. We have had contact with the land owners that have received the formal complaint letters. We are hoping for resolution with all complaints to date.
- **Honey Bees/Sweet Clover:** We received a call from a concerned citizen on Theisen Rd about the county spraying sweet clover because there are 100 beehives in the area and sweet clover is a preferred bee habitat. While we do not target sweet clover, it is beneficial to treat because it makes mowing more efficient. If left sweet clover can cause snow drifting in the winter – causing public safety issues. County right of way is a very abused piece of property with many disturbances and needs to be treated in a more aggressive manner than range land.
- **Rentals:** The number of requests are slowing down
- **Big Sky Spray Day:** July 23 – Cooperative product with MDT, Madison County, Gallatin/Big Sky Noxious Weed Committee, and Gallatin County.

- **Round table**

- **Bob Hofman** – Questioned if we spray Churchill Rd – that is MDT maintained. There are some thistle issues along there. Bob will look and call if further action needs to be taken.
- **Fair Booth** – We are putting in an unmanned, informational booth.

Meeting dismissed 2:30 pm

Next scheduled meeting: August 6, 2015, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Vanderby

Program Assistant