



## Gallatin County Weed Board

### Regular Monthly Meeting

September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 1:15 pm

#### ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Bob Hofman, Keith Mainwaring, Fred Bell, Steve Saunders, and Jeff Littlefield.
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Danielle Jones (Program Assistant), Don Seifert (Commissioner), Emily Lockard (Extension), and four Montana Conservation Corps workers.

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

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- No old business.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

- No public comment.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- **Monthly Report Q&A**
  - Steve asked about spraying this time of year. If the plants are still green, John and Mike tell people to go ahead and spray, otherwise hold off until fall when we get some moisture.
  - Bob asked if the crew is done spraying for the season. John said that they are, and that he and Mike will do some touching up of hotspots this fall. Contractors are done, and seemed to do a good job.
  - Fred asked about SK along Highway 287 near Hebgen Lake. It was along the right-of-way.
  - Fred asked about the complaint along Monforton Road. There was a complaint on that property last year also. The area is being leased by someone who is going to cut it down, burn the bales, and reseed it with grass. He's going to use it for organic farming, so didn't want to spray it.
  - Fred asked about the call from Antonucci about the enforcement bill added on to the taxes for a property she was selling. The buyers are responsible for the taxes.
  - Jeff asked about the Chevy that broke down. The truck needed an axle seal fixed.
  - Fred thought it was interesting that there was such a demand for certified gravel that people would be inquiring from Park County Wyoming. Mike said that Kenyon Noble is now beginning the process of getting their pits certified. Knife River is not certified but has an active weed management plan for their pits. TMC gets their pits certified with the Weed District. Steve said that Knife River has issued standards equal to those required by Yellowstone Park, which are pretty strict. Fred asked about the process for certification. Mike explained that for the TMC pits there are different levels of certification, and the pits have active weed management plans which include spraying and reseeding with grasses.
- **Commissioner Report**
  - The FY17 budget process is finished. Through the raising of levies, tax increases equaled about \$1.12 for every \$100,000 in taxable value.

- Don is cautiously optimistic about the proposed levy for the new Law and Justice Center. They are trying to coordinate public tours of the old building so that people can see the deficiencies in functionality and security.

- **Coordinators Reports**

- **Spray Update:**

- The last day for the crew was August 19<sup>th</sup>.
- August 2<sup>nd</sup> was a Big Sky spray day with Madison County. Our crew focused on the Reflector Trail.
- On August 9<sup>th</sup> Mike and John and the crew met with a crew from MDT and sprayed the roadcuts along Hwy 191 from the mouth of Bridger Canyon to just past Bridger Bowl. There was a lot of SK, thistle, and HT. It had been sprayed last year, but still needed a lot of work, and they are hoping to spray again next year.
- Aug 31<sup>st</sup> John sprayed Logan Park and Logan Quarry, where the county has a gravel pit. The area was full of knapweed. John will go back with an ATV in order to get it all.
- Mike sprayed SK along the ROW of Brackett Creek, and will probably go back to spray more.
- John and Mike have a couple more months of spraying this fall. They will touch up at the Regional Park, and will go back down to West Yellowstone in two weeks. They will probably do an application for cheatgrass at the Fowler Pit. They will also touch base with Logan Landfill and help out with any weed issues there if necessary. Fort Ellis near the Flying Club hasn't been sprayed in a couple years, so they will check that out as well. They will also touch up any County roads that need work. Don suggested communicating with the road graders to see if they can keep an eye out for any weed issues along county roads and let the Weed District know.

- **Complaints/Enforcement:**

- About 15 formal complaints have been filed so far this year. Most people have complied. A few second notices have been sent out, and the landowners said they will follow-up. One of these landowners owns the park at Fort Ellis Leisure Community. There was a complaint at this property last year and they mowed and sprayed then, but there is still tansy, St. Johnswort, and knapweed. The landowners said they are transferring the park to the HOA. John will call them again Sept. 12 to follow up.
- The No Spray area along Axtell Gateway road was cleaned up pretty well when Mike and John went out there to inspect it on August 16.
- John asked the board for advice about how to deal with active HOA's that have covenants stating that HOA's can enforce weed control. The HOA sends a notice to the landowner, and if they don't comply after 10 days, can treat the weeds and bill the landowner. Many of the HOA's don't want to enforce the covenants; they instead file a formal complaint and want the Weed District to do the enforcement instead, which takes much longer (around 50 days). The Weed District usually follows through with the enforcement process, but John is wondering if they can instead tell the HOA that they need to enforce their covenants themselves? Don said that although the HOAs are required to put the covenants in place, the County is not party to those covenants and cannot enforce them. Enforcement under the weed law is possible through the Weed District, but that's all. He suggested visiting with the County Attorney's office to clarify that separation between County enforcement and HOA enforcement.

- **Building update:** Workers started on Monday. Emily said that remodeling is supposed to be done on September 25<sup>th</sup>, and Extension hopes to move in on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. There are still a few

remaining questions about the budget, but it appears that the remodel is well below \$300,000. There will be outreach to try to get the word out that Extension is moving, including press releases, open house, etc.

- Workplan Review: John highlighted the work that has been done so far, and the board agreed that they would take some time to review it on their own.

- **Round table**

- The mechanic has not yet looked at the 1998 truck, so they do not have an official estimate of how much it would cost to fix it. This truck is a core vehicle, which means that money from that program could be used to replace it. Bob asked if we really need to replace the truck. John said that we have a 2006, a 2002 and an old 1990 diesel that is not very reliable. Since the crew, John, and Mike all need trucks, there wouldn't be a spare truck if the 1998 wasn't replaced. John said that he will send out emails to the board when he gets the estimate of what it will cost to fix it, and they can decide at that point if they should move forward with looking for a new truck.
- John and Mike will start winterizing and putting away some of the rental sprayers.
- Keith asked Emily for a description of what ventanata looks like and asked if it was growing at the Belgrade I-90 interchange. Emily wasn't sure, but she has seen a lot in the Springhill area. Mike mentioned that there is also a lot along the Frontage Road, near Tower Road. Emily said that there is a MSU Weed Post about it that she can send out to the board. Steve mentioned some research being done showing that it can be controlled with Esplanade, and that info should be out in 2017.
- Don encouraged the board members to participate in an upcoming training offered by the County.
- Don was at a MACO meeting in Whitehall where information was presented about what is being done with European Milfoil in the Jefferson Slough. They are slowly drying up sections of the slough by altering the course of the water, and will bury the Milfoil before diverting the water back.
- John handed out some noxious weed themed playing cards that the Weed District had recently ordered for distributing at educational events.

Meeting dismissed 2:45 pm

Next scheduled meeting: October 6, 2016, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Danielle Jones

Program Assistant