

## **Weed Board Minutes for Thursday, April 19th, 2007**

*Board Members Present:* Sue Stanley, Melanie Smith, Kate Supplee, Dennis VanderMeer, Dan Ryan

*Weed District Staff Present:* Jerry Marks, Bill Otten, Morgan Valliant, Jed Little, Marijka Wessner

### **Minutes, Claims and Budget**

Kate Supplee moved to approve the minutes, Dan Ryan seconded. Unanimous approval.

Dennis VanderMeer moved to approve the claims and budget, Melanie Smith seconded. Unanimous approval.

Jerry Marks reported that the Weed District is operating within its projected budget.

### **Department Head Report**

Jerry Marks reported that Sarah Millar is leaving the Weed Office for a new position at Campfire USA and Morgan Valliant is leaving the Weed Office to be the Conservation Lands Manager for the City Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Old Business: Update on County Road Right-of-Way Vegetation Management**

There has been one follow up meeting on County Roadside Vegetation Management since the March meeting. It was agreed that the Public Works Department will back seed any ditch they pull, wash their vehicles for weed seeds and change their mowing program to enhance good vegetation. The Weed District will continue to treat roadsides in Weed Management Areas, treat infestations of new invaders and conduct special projects like the Petty Creek Road project. Jerry will meet with Tim Elsea and Public Works staff on a regular basis. In a nutshell, Jerry thinks that communication with Public Works is better, there probably won't be any new dollars for county roadside vegetation management in the near future and Public Works will continue reviewing the draft Roadside Vegetation Management Plan.

### **Weed Booth at County Fair**

Marijka passed around the sign up sheet for the weed booth at the County Fair. It will be in the country fair area like last year, although Marijka is hoping for a better spot with less wind.

### **Montana Challenge presentation rescheduled**

Marijka reported that the Montana Challenge presentation scheduled for April 12<sup>th</sup> had to be postponed because the presenter had a family emergency. It was agreed that the fall would be the best time to have the presentation because people are generally too busy in

the spring and gone in the summer. Marijka will reschedule it for a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday in September at 4:00.

### **Montana Legislation update**

Jerry reported that HB 37, which enables the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to control weeds on State lands under lease and bill the lessees for the costs, has passed both the house and senate, and has been signed by the governor.

HB 269 will revise the weed law in ways that Jerry reported is mostly cosmetic. It will also transfer \$5 million to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. It has passed both the house and the senate and is expected to be signed by the governor.

There was some discussion of the weed law and its enforceability in Missoula County. It was concluded that there isn't enough funding to hire enough people to make enforcement feasible. Instead, the Weed District's approach is address widespread weeds through landowner groups while taking a more aggressive approach to new invaders.

### **Staff and Board Reports**

Marijka passed around an ad on whitetop that ran in the Sunday Missoulian as part of the New Invaders grant. As part of the grant, 2 ads will run every 30 days focusing on whitetop, common toadflax, the hawkweeds and Russian knapweed.

Morgan is wrapping things up as he prepares to start his new job at the Parks Department. He has been setting up the reporting and reimbursement process for the Swan WMA grant. The Urban Yellowflag Iris grant was a partnership with the City Parks Department, so he will be able to continue working on it in his new position. He attended a meeting with people in Greenough interested in reviving their weed group. He thinks there will be many more opportunities like this and hopes that the position he is vacating will be quickly filled and the work he has started will be continued.

Bill has been working on bids for the Clearwater River Iris project and this year's roadside weed control work. He received two bids for the Clearwater Iris. Nick Holden, who did the work last year, came in \$2,000 lower than last year and was the low bidder. The deadline to bid on the roadside control work is tomorrow and Bill is optimistic that he will receive some competitive bids. There was some discussion about the challenges of treating roadsides during the school year due to the number of school bus stops and routes. There are over 3,000 school bus stops in the county and 5 bus companies that run throughout the day. Due to the variability of the schedules, there is no safe time to treat roads with school bus stops.

Jed reported that he has been busy on the New Invaders Grant, making maps for applicators and generating contact lists of the private owners included in the grant. He has also been working with the City Parks Department on the management of the open space. He and Jerry have been attending meetings of a technical working group made up of experts and land managers who are being used by Parks to help shape their open space

management strategies. As part of the effort, Jed has been working with Morgan to create a map of Vegetation Management Areas in the open space.

Sue gave the board a brief update on the meetings the Rural Initiatives department has been holding on their proposed stream bank setback regulations.

There was no public comment and the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Missoula County Weed Board meeting will be held Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 4:00.