



Gallatin County Weed Board

Regular Monthly Meeting

March 1st, 2018 1:15 pm

ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Keith Mainwaring, Bob Hofman, Fred Bell, Noelle Orloff, and Steve Saunders.
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator), Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator), Danielle Jones (Program Assistant), Don Seifert (Commissioner), Andy Epple and Janne Hayward (Sacajawea Audubon), Jen Mohler (Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance) and Glenn Cloclough (private applicator).
- Noelle Orloff was introduced as the new board member, replacing Jeff Littlefield.

MINUTES: Keith moved to accept the minutes as written, Bob 2nd the motion, and all approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The board discussed the petition that was submitted by Andy Epple on behalf of Sacajawea Audubon to add burdock to the Gallatin County Noxious Weed list. The pros and cons of listing burdock were considered. The Weed District offered to help with efforts to educate about burdock, including adding management tips to the website, helping with cost share when possible, and contributing signs to trailheads, among other things. Keith presented a motion to not list burdock at this time, with the stipulations that the Weed District will contribute in the future to the ongoing education, outreach, and management efforts, and that if future education and control efforts fall short, the listing of burdock will be reevaluated. Bob seconded the motion. The board voted, with four members voting for the motion to not add burdock to the county list and one voting against. The motion passed.
- John discussed the process for reviewing the county Weed Management Plan (WMP). One change for the new version will be the addition of species that have been added to the state list since the last version of the Plan. Also, there will be changes to the subdivision WMP process. John and Mike have clarified the requirements for documentation of weed control when submitting a subdivision MOU. These new requirements will be added to the Plan when approved by the Attorney. Ideally, the new version of the Plan will be finalized at either the April or May board meeting.
- Mike summarized the proposed changes to the subdivision WMP review process. He gave a short presentation about the process for reviewing a WMP, and discussed the need for the proposed changes. In summary, the state Weed Act requires that a WMP must be submitted to, and approved by, the county Weed Board for all subdivisions. The WMP is submitted with the Preliminary Plat application and is valid for 3 years. When a WMP is received by the Weed District, the site is inspected to ensure that the provisions of the WMP are adequate. The Weed District may approve the WMP as is, or add conditions to address issues that were not originally included in the plan. This WMP is a binding agreement, and the landowner is required to implement the plan once approved. An MOU with the Weed District is then required to be submitted with the application for Final Plat. The MOU is an agreement between the Weed District and the landowner that weed control will continue as long as they own the land. Evidence that the WMP has been followed (i.e. weed control has occurred) must be included with the MOU application. Recently, it has been a problem that weed control documentation is not included with the MOU application, or the documentation is inadequate. To address this problem, the Weed District has compiled a checklist that clarifies the documentation necessary for MOU approval, which includes invoices from applicators, herbicide receipts, application records, etc. This checklist will be distributed

to landowners and engineers with each approved WMP and again with each MOU application. If the necessary documentation is not submitted, the MOU will not be signed by the Weed District.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Public Comment:** Jen Mohler, from the Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance (formerly Big Sky Weed Committee), gave her annual update about the organization. One big change this year is the new name. She reviewed her 2017 annual report (which can be found on their website), including achievements in community programs and events (e.g. weed pulls, cooperative spray days, educational hikes, etc.), education program (e.g. clean/drain/dry, play/clean/go), habitat improvement program (e.g. bighorn sheep winter range), landowner assistance program (i.e. site visits), mapping and monitoring program (e.g. new invaders, such as yellowflag iris and field scabious, as well successes using mapping information), fundraising program (e.g. Give Big, etc.), and the importance of partnerships with agencies and other private organizations. She discussed the success of using the RAC grant to pay for a specialized MCC weed crew to spray for a week on Forest Service lands in Gallatin Canyon, and the possibility of continuing this in the future.
- **Commissioner Report**
 - There was nothing new to report from the Commission office.
- **Monthly Report Q&A, Discussion Included:**
 - There were no comments or questions.
- **Coordinators Report**
 - The Weed District had a booth at the Greater Yellowstone Ag Forum, sponsored by the Montana Land Reliance. Discussions at the forum targeted ag producers and focused on weed issues.
 - Mike and Danielle went to the SW Area Commercial/Private applicator training in Butte.
 - There was a conference call to discuss issues surrounding Ventenata, specifically the application process for obtaining a Section 18 exemption for the use of Esplanade for Ventenata control on rangelands in Montana. Wyoming has already received this exemption, and Utah will also be applying for one. In response to a survey sent out by the Dept. of Ag, the group estimated that there were approximately 5000 acres of land impacted by Ventenata in Gallatin County. There will be a Ventenata tour in the Springhill area on June 26th, and the details for this tour will be discussed after the weed managers meeting on April 25th. The goal of the tour is to educate about Ventenata identification and management options.
- **Roundtable**
 - A plow was installed on the Ranger, and it has been useful for clearing snow around the shop.
 - John suggested removing meadow knapweed and scentless chamomile from the county noxious weed list. Meadow knapweed has rarely been observed in the county (although Keith mentioned he saw some on Thorpe Road years ago, and he pulled it all at that time), and scentless chamomile is not very invasive where it occurs (i.e. does not form large infestations) and is limited by habitat. It is not clear why these species were originally added to the list. He asked for input from the board about whether they agreed with removing these two species. Steve suggested that if we remove these two species, we should consider adding Ventenata because it is important to target this species while it is a relatively new invader and identify it as a problem in the county.

Meeting dismissed at 3:35 pm

Next scheduled meeting: April 5th, 2018, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Danielle Jones, Program Assistant