



Gallatin County Weed Board

Regular Monthly Meeting

May 7, 2020 1:15 pm

ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** In person: Steve Saunders, Bob Hofman, and Noelle Orloff. By phone: Larry Holzworth.
- **Others:** In person: John Ansley (Coordinator), Danielle Jones (Program Assistant), and Don Siefert (Commissioner). By phone: Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator).

MINUTES: Bob moved to approve the minutes for the March board meeting, Steve seconded, and all approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- No old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Public Comment:** No members of the public were present.
- **Monthly Report Q&A, discussion included:**
 - There have been fewer new subdivision weed management plans submitted recently. Most recent communication with the public has been by email, so there were quite a few emails listed in the monthly report.
- **Commissioner Report:**
 - There was a discussion about the potential COVID-19 impacts to the county budget, including how the reclassification requests for the Weed District may be impacted by future budget constraints. Reclassifications will still be considered for the FY21 budget.
- **Coordinators Report:**
 - **North Bridgers WMA NWTF Grant Hearing.** The Weed District had requested \$20,000 from the Trust Fund Council for the 2020 North Bridgers WMA grant, and \$14,001 was awarded. The Trust Fund committee had to cut over \$800,000 from all of the projects that were submitted for grant funding, and many projects were not funded at all. The North Bridgers WMA is a continuing grant project that started last year. Last year, approximately \$1300 was left over that will carry over to this year, so there will be over \$15,000 in grant money to spend this season, which is similar to last years' budget. Three landowners are involved in the WMA, and they will contact the commercial applicator to schedule a helicopter spray in mid-June. Photo points will be taken about a week before the spray to record 'before' conditions and to serve as a reference for the effectiveness of the treatment. Areas were sprayed with a helicopter last year in mid-June, resulting in good control of sulfur cinquefoil and knapweed and good grass regrowth. Some ground spraying will also be done

again this year. The grant money is for cost share, and the landowners will equally match the trust fund money with their own money.

- **Budget Meetings.** Next week is the FY21 budget review and input with the Finance Department, and then on the 19th John will meet with the Commissioners to discuss budget requests. The plan right now is still to have the budget discussions at the library in June. The Weed District will be asking for an increase in the personnel budget for job reclassifications. All other budget line item requests will stay the same as they were in FY20.
- **Gallatin County Weed Management Plan approval.** The updated Weed Management Plan was presented to the board for approval and signature. The contents of the plan had been reviewed and discussed by board members at previous meetings. Steve moved for the board to accept the Weed Management Plan as written and sign it. Bob seconded the motion, and there was no discussion. All voted to approve the motion, and Noelle signed the Plan. Next, the Plan will be considered for approval by the Commissioners at a future public meeting.
- **COVID-19 Impacts.** The impacts of COVID-19 on the operations of the Weed District were discussed. Due to an increased workload and limited Department resources, as well as the financial impacts of COVID-19 on the community, it was agreed that the Weed District would focus on educational enforcement instead of official enforcement this season. Other Weed Districts in the area are enacting similar practices. The District will still follow up with the court orders that are currently in place from previous years.
- **Roundtable, Discussion Included:**
 - The herbicides for the upcoming spray season have been delivered, and the contractors have picked up their herbicide supplies.
 - John has been calibrating rentals and spray trucks. The same contractors (Montana Spraying Company and Dan Marx) will be spraying county roads this year.
 - There was a discussion about the ventenata in the north part of the county. Plans are in development for treating one property with a large ventenata infestation, including potentially spraying the ventenata with a helicopter to minimize the spread of seeds. There was discussion about the possibility of a future Trust Fund grant for the area to fund the treatment of ventenata at a larger scale. Steve mentioned a potential ventenata/invasive grass tour in the area scheduled July 14th.
 - Larry Holzworth introduced himself as a new member of the Weed Board.

Meeting dismissed at 2:30 pm

Next scheduled meeting: June 4, 2020, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Danielle Jones, Program Assistant