



## Gallatin County Weed Board

### Regular Monthly Meeting

November 2, 2023 1:15 pm

#### ATTENDEES:

- **Board members:** Steve Saunders, Ed Brainard, Larry Holzworth, and Bernie Jones.
- **Others:** John Ansley (Coordinator) and Danielle Jones (Assistant Coordinator). Remotely: Mike Jones (Assistant Coordinator) and Zach Brown (Commissioner).

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no members of the public present.

**MINUTES:** Ed moved to approve the October 5, 2023 meeting minutes as written, Larry seconded and the motion passed.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- **Witchgrass Management.** Steve gave a brief update about the witchgrass discussion that occurred at the last board meeting. The amount of witchgrass in the county has exploded this year and there is concern that the weed will move into adjacent grain fields. Roadsides are a vector of spread, and management of roadsides may be influencing the spread of the plant. However, since witchgrass is a native plant, it will never be listed as a noxious weed and at the last meeting it was decided that the Weed District would not actively manage the plant along roadsides. Elizabeth from Extension agreed to help with education about witchgrass by reaching out to grain growers in the community. Larry took some pictures of witchgrass that he offered to share with the board.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- **Monthly Report Q&A, Discussion Included:**
  - There seems to be a slowdown in the number of subdivision weed management plans that have been recently received.
- **Commissioner Report:**
  - Zach commented on the Common Reed that was found in the county, which was discussed at the previous board meeting. He mentioned that the county is currently conducting another market analysis pertaining to the employee pay scale. In an effort to recruit and retain employees, the county would like to make sure that salaries are keeping up with other comparable entities in the state, such as other municipalities, county governments, or state government agencies. The last market analysis was done a couple of years ago.
- **Coordinators Report:**
  - **Recognition Award.** Mel Chrichton was previously chosen as the 2023 winner of the annual Landowner Recognition Award, but he is out of town until December so the award has not yet been presented. It was suggested that the award be presented at the June 4, 2024 Commission meeting instead of in December. At that time, the event could be used as an opportunity for weed awareness and to help kick off Noxious Weed Awareness Week. The Board agreed that this was a good idea, and decided to present the award during Noxious Weed Awareness Week every year going forward because it seems like better timing for education than in the fall.
  - **Trainings.** Weed District staff attended the MWCA Weed Managers Meeting in Livingston.
  - **Grants Update.** Annual status reports are currently being written for the three active NWTF grants. The Weed District is currently working with landowners in the new Willow Creek grant area to

gather the documentation and information needed to write the grant application. That grant area includes 70,000 acres in Gallatin, Madison, Jefferson, and Broadwater counties. The landowners are asking for approximately \$35,000 in grant funds to do \$70,000 worth of weed management work. Gallatin County will sponsor the grant, and the other three counties will offer support. The main noxious weeds targeted will be leafy spurge, dalmatian toadflax, spotted knapweed, and other common species.

- **Common Reed.** John gave an update on the status of management for the two patches of common reed that were recently discovered in Gallatin County and that were discussed at the last board meeting. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, Weed District and MDA staff met at the Woodland Park subdivision HOA property to cut and bag the seed heads and spray the remaining vegetation. This infestation will continue to be monitored and sprayed (as needed) in the future. They also sprayed the other infestation, which was located along a ditch on private property in the subdivision. The developer of this property later scraped the common reed out of the ditch and piled it in a hole; it will be buried and the ditch filled in and paved over. All of the equipment will be washed thoroughly before leaving the site. Ed mentioned a similar looking grass growing along Kagy at 19<sup>th</sup> that seems like it has recently been cut down. The Weed District will continue to keep an eye on that area as well.
- **Upcoming Meetings/Trainings.** Upcoming meetings include the SW Area MWCA meeting in Whitehall on the 14<sup>th</sup>, a virtual Woody Invasives meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and the NRCS annual local working group meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> in Manhattan.
- **Roundtable, Discussion Included:**
  - The MWCA Annual Conference will be held January 30<sup>th</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup> at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. Some of the board members indicated that they may like to attend.
  - Bernie said he will renew for another 3-year term on the Weed Board. Noelle's term also expires this year, and John will check in with her about whether she will renew or not.
  - There was a discussion about the fall growth happening with knapweed. Many of the plants are blooming again even though it is so late in the year.
  - It was agreed to cancel the scheduled December 7<sup>th</sup> Weed Board meeting.
- **Proposed Agenda Items for Next Meeting.**
  - Invite MDT to an upcoming meeting to discuss roadside weed management.
  - Vote for a new board chairman.

Meeting dismissed at 2:10 pm.

Next scheduled meeting: January 4, 2024, 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Danielle Jones