

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Advisory Council		
Date of Meeting:	January 19, 2012	Time:	10:00 AM
Minutes Prepared By:	Breanna Caldwell	Location:	Conference Room 225 – Agriculture
1. Meeting Objective			
Business Meeting			
2. Attendees			
Council Members: Jim Melin, Ken Smith, Jim Bouma, Michelle Miller Agency Representatives: Ron Larson, Gil Gale (via conference phone), John Simons (via conference phone) Montana Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) Staff: Ron de Yong, Donna Rise, Dave Burch, Jeremy Seidlitz, Breanna Caldwell, Cort Jensen, Greg Ames			
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Review of Minutes	<p>Jim moved to approve the minutes, Ken seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Discussed the need for public education as mentioned in the previous minutes. Discussed the current billboard that is \$4200 in rental fees and \$400 to change. Dave explained the “Fight Five” campaign which would be a low cost opportunity to educate the public on weeds and their detrimental effects. Ron added that the Noxious Weed program would be funding an Education and Awareness position that could incorporate the education needs of the forage program.</p>		
Budget Report	<p>\$70,000 is used from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund to assist with program costs and the Noxious Weed Council has made positive comments about the Noxious Weed Free Forage program.</p> <p>The program revenues were down but the seed program’s revenues were down as well. Dave suggested this may be due to the damp season. Dave explained that the program will be using some of the Cash and STIP balance this year to bring the balance down. A large twine order of around \$14,000 is planned for this year.</p> <p>Dave commented that he would like to contact other public land agencies and request funding since it’s their lands that are protected by the program.</p>		
2011 Program Summary	<p>Gil commented that twine is much easier to identify than tags. Gil also commented that transportation certificates are good tools for NWSFF identification.</p> <p>A program summary was distributed.</p> <p>23,124 acres were used for production. This number may be down due to the wet spring. Participation is down as well.</p> <p>Superior twine has been working well for producers with no complaints.</p> <p>46,200 labels have been shipped out to inspected cube plants. Jeremy inspected all of the Montana cube plants.</p> <p>There was one enforcement issue stemming back to a tag given in 2003.</p>		
Program Survey Results	<p>A summary of the program survey results was distributed.</p> <p>The program received many suggestions. Dave mentioned the use of personnel to check hunting camps and vehicles that are going into the back country for NWSFF. Jim suggested the use of game wardens to check for NWSFF. Greg suggested using back country horseman for volunteers to perform this task.</p> <p>Dave wants to conduct a survey of what weeds are present at trailheads. Gil suggested contacting the regional offices since most will have an inventory of weeds at trailheads. Gil explained that most units are posting notices about NWSFF.</p> <p>Another suggestion was the use of an incentive plan so producers can offset costs and keep their prices competitive.</p> <p>Another suggestion was the certification of more NorthEast inspectors and better inspector education.</p> <p>Greg suggested giving brochures to producers informing them that the analytical lab in Bozeman can analyze hay.</p> <p>There was a request for the development of a hay association that recognizes the need for certified forage.</p>		

Legislation	<p>Donna asked if the council knew of issues that may be brought forward or issues the council wanted to bring forward next legislative session. Previous council minutes noted civil penalty amounts and strengthening the language regarding use of NWSFF on public lands.</p> <p>Raising civil penalties was discussed. Dave pointed out that only one violation had occurred. The council decided to continue with the civil penalties as they are.</p> <p>Currently the use of NWSFF isn't required on public lands. Cort says statutory change is need with the support of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks along with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. These agencies could also assist with enforcement of the statutory change. Cort suggested changing the language to read: "In the state of Montana all parties entering public lands in the state shall use only certified Noxious Weed Seed Free for all animals except cattle and sheep at all times while on public lands. Use of certified Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage for three days prior to entering land is encouraged to prevent the distribution of weed seeds and/or plants." Jim moved, Ken seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>The embargo section should be removed Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Act since it is covered in the Weed Management Act. Cort said that legislators would just have to be notified that this is a clean-up and why it's being changed.</p> <p>Cort suggested clarifying the funding or partial funding of the NWSFF program with NWTF money. He said it would be good to clarify that the NWTF can fund and why. Ken moved to use NWTF money for NWSFF and that the money would be included in the 12% allowed by the NWTF law. Jim seconded and the motion passed unanimously.</p>
PR Campaign	Several advertisements from the previous campaign are available including: <i>Back Country Horsemen</i> advertisements, TV spots with the governor and radio spots with the director. Dave said that they could talk to billboard companies to look into more billboards. Ron de Yong suggested creating smaller aluminum signs to advertise NWSFF.
Public Comment	No public comment was made.

4. Action Items

Action	Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Talk to FWP and DNRC regarding eforcement on federal lands.	Dave Burch	Open
2	Talk to USFS about enforcement and posting notices at trailheads.	Gil Gale	Open
3	Letter to Federal Agencies requesting funding for the NWSFF program.	Dave Burch	Open
4	Creation of Montana Hay Association	Ken Smith	Open
5	Emails to the council several times a year to keep them informed.	Jeremy Seidlitz	Open
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