

Proposal for an Eastern Spring Coordinator Training

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The problem of getting more weed coordinators involved in the MWCA and its efforts have been ongoing for years. It is a given that commissioners have to fund their weed districts better and look to hire their coordinators full-time. However, the motivation to get involved and contribute has to come from the weed coordinators themselves.

Counties in the eastern part of the State, and I'm sure other parts also, fight a couple of problems that hinder them from attending meetings and getting involved with activities. One is that part-time people operate from about May 1 to October 1 being absent from the office the rest of the year. Another is that a lot of coordinators operate on a very small and tight budget. They also are expected to get out and spray with their crews. As a result, money and time available to attend meetings (esp. those far away) is very limited. A third problem is that the many part-time coordinators are farmers / ranchers and they can't be gone from their operations for very long, especially during calving time and spring work.

Hence our proposal to have two spring coordinator training sessions starting in 2011. This is our first step in trying to get more weed coordinators, reps, and county officials involved in the MWCA. We feel that as more counties get involved, our membership will increase as a result also. We know this will take time but we need to get started. The reason we are proposing two spring coordinator training sessions is two-fold. We feel spring is the most important session since it precedes the spray season and is a good time to see what's new, visit with other coordinators on their plans, and bring up common problems. It is also the hardest one for the eastern counties to attend because of the part-time, travel, and money concerns previously mentioned. By having the training in the "extreme east" (Miles City, Circle, for example) much of those concerns are alleviated. This also enables the other meeting to be "extreme west" which aids the western part of the State. The central counties will have their choice on what training to attend. This proposal would also enable the agendas for the two training sessions be tailored to better meet the needs of the particular part of the State that they are being held in.

Fall training can remain as is. Most of the work is basically done by then and most spray crews are disbanded. Coordinators may even look forward to getting away for a couple of days at that time.

We feel that any logistic problems this proposal brings up can be dealt with at the BOD meeting or in committee. For example, any voting to be done can be

done at each meeting with the total results e-mailed to all – same with any discussions on any issues brought up that a decision has to be made on. This may be inconvenient, but the good far outweighs the bad.

I don't think getting chemical reps to attend two meetings will be a problem since they sell to both parts of the State and it would be in their best interest to attend.

There will be an added cost for this proposal. We feel this will be money well-spent since the MWCA's number one goal should be to aid the weed coordinators' efforts in all ways possible. If need be, the east coordinators would be willing to pay the extra over the \$100 fee for their training. I personally feel, however, that any extra amount should be added to the MWCA budget to take care of the two training sessions.

In summary, I'm sure there will be questions and comments on this proposal. Our feeling is that we should try this for two or three years and then re-evaluate to see if we are seeing benefits. We can always go back to one spring session if we are not satisfied.

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