

**Early Fall MWCA Board of Directors Meeting  
September 13, 2007  
Lewistown Yogo Inn**

**Minutes**

Members present: Dave Brink, Marijka Wessner, Margie Edsall, John Moodry, Scott Bockness, Jim Ghekiere, Dan Dobler, Paul Wick, Dick Zoanni, Dave Burch, Mark Korte, Justun Juelfs, Jack Eddie, Carla Lawrence, Danny McIntosh, Marty Malone, Ellen Engstedt, and John Simons.

Members excused: Jim Gordon, Diane Rice, Dave Schulz, Joe Wiegand, Carla Hoopes, Morgan Valliant, and Lisa Surber

Members unexcused: Dale Butori and Bryce Christeans

Guests present: Janie Alt

**Call to order**

Website update & review – Becky reviewed the website online with the board and took suggestions for the site. Those suggestions included adding boxes to the registration page for an “invoice” and “pay at conference” option. Jim G asked that the bylaws and policies be added to the library/archives.

March board minutes & Aug E-committee minutes approved ***Both minutes were voted to be approved by Scott Bockness and Jim Ghekiere seconded. All were in favor.***

**Old Business**

**Review 2006 – 07 budget-** Margie Edsall reviewed last year’s fiscal year budget and took questions. The year went well and instead of the projected \$55,000 year-end carry over, it was actually at \$65,000. Margie explained how some of the grant funding worked within our budget. ***Marty Malone approved the 06-07 budget and Scott Bockness seconded. All were in favor.***

**Mutual fund report and CD update-** Becky reported that the mutual fund had been cashed out and put into a long term CD as requested by the board at the spring retreat. The finance committee set a goal of having \$50,000 in investments. Ellen suggested that it be capped at one year’s worth of operating expenses. John explained that \$50,000 would be for basic expenses without projects or grants. Becky reported that a grants checking account had been established this past spring as well.

**08 Annual convention update-** Jim Gekeire reported on a productive meeting for planning the day before. He reviewed the theme, strands, workshops, and

tentative agenda. The theme will be “*Cowboy up against Noxious Weeds*” and the strands will include Montana CWMA’s, Management, Vendors & Tech, Challenges and Research. The workshops will be the Border project with Kim Goodwin and Range Management with Matt Ricketts. Carla Lawrence requested the Air National Guard come in and present for the flag and to show the DVD “*Path to Eder*”. Carla suggested we also call and see if Tom Brokaw would speak at our function. She would look into that. Becky requested that every board member nominate someone for the awards and that they donate to the silent auction. Jim G. asked for a third raffle item to be donated. Carla L. suggested the SWCS donate a print – she will ask. ***Range workshop fees for the workshop alone will be \$25 as motioned by Jack Eddie and seconded by Danny McIntosh. All were in favor.***

**Audit or review update-** John Moodry reviewed the options for a financial review or audit and reported that the finance committee has recommended a review instead of a full blown audit. It was felt that an audit would be an unnecessary expense at this time. One review bid come in at \$3,200. Scott B. made it clear that the finance committee was not circumventing the board decision of allocating \$6,500 to an audit made at the spring board retreat. Ellen Engstedt suggested every 3 or 4 years that a review be done. ***Margie motioned that the MWCA pursue a review with three bids, Marijka seconded. All were in favor.***

**Insurance update-** Becky reported that she had three bids coming for insurance, but no one had come through with a bid yet. Problems with delays in underwriters were part of the lack of information. She will work with the finance committee or send out to the board electronically for vote.

#### New Business

**Review 2007 – 08 budget** -Margie Edsall reviewed the budget and asked for questions. There was no need to amend the budget or gain approval from the board.

**Governor’s Advisory Council update** – Dave Burch reported that the council hadn’t been very active, and council members had been re-appointed. Scott Bockness and Jim Olivarez had met with the acting director to see what to do about revitalizing the council and to re-appoint a new chair. The new director, Ron deYong, has come on board with a request to have a meeting in November. Scott B. reported that he had urged the director to appoint a chair who was knowledgeable about noxious weeds and to have an MDA person chair that council– such as Greg Ames or Dave Burch. Scott suggested that this council have a meeting at the annual conference as well. Dave fielded questions from the board regarding the council and past issues. Scott reported also that he and Dave and Becky had drafted letters to our Governor and Congressmen

concerning weed control after fires. These are the types of issues this council should be addressing.

**Trust Fund Council update** – Dave Burch updated everyone on the status of the new appointments to the council. No decisions had been made yet, but they were expecting them soon. Twenty five new weeds have also been proposed to the state list and Dave thought those new weeds would be effective January 1, 2008.

**Grants update** – Becky reported on the current MWCA grants. Zero Spread included a good sized media campaign this spring – newspaper and radio ads were well received. Approximately \$10,000 was spent to re-print the NRCS weed ID books. Becky was working with the partners to reach internal media personnel at local, state and federal levels. The partners also worked with the MWCA Education Committee to identify cities for possible pilot projects for direct mailings. These pilot projects will be in Philipsburg, Miles City and Lewistown and those chambers are being contacted to see if there is a way to reach local landowners, especially new ones. Becky was still sending out packets and signs, and there are about 2,500 packets left in storage.

**Reorganization grant** – in alignment with the objectives of reaching out externally to promote the organization a table top display has been designed and is being used, grant funding will be used to send board members and staff back to D.C. for NIWAW. Some funding may be used towards the use of contracted services to help with the website and online data entries. Terry Profota has been paid \$513 for her work with the implementation committee. Other funding is available for educational supplies and materials.

**Death by Lecture grant-** in year three of this grant, Becky will spearhead a workshop that will address effective management of people or something along those lines. She is looking at a Mar- April workshop- location and speaker TBA. There is about \$3,000 left to finish off that grant. With this little amount of funding – not sure if it will be held at a resort or not.

**State Plan update-** Celestine Duncan is currently updating the plan and plans are to have it reprinted and distributed at the 2008 annual conference.

**Weed Seed Free Forage** – Spring media campaign going well – the Governor did a couple TV and radio spots. The Director of the MDA will be doing spots targeted towards hunting season. Each area will be getting banners for this program for educational purposes. 17,000 pieces of mail have gone out primarily in the western part of Montana and the grant will end next year.

**Cooperative Forestry** – When Dave Burch completes a grant for this funding, he earmarks the funding. This year it was for the Missouri River Coalition and

that didn't work out. Now, he wants to funnel those funds through the MWCA and it will go towards some mapping and GIS work and will also encompass some education. Some of those funds may be used for the NIWAW expenses. Regarding the salt cedar issue within the 6 states coalition, appropriations have been requested for 4.25 million. Montana's portion of that is \$750,000. Dave just needs to get the contract to Becky to get that finalized.

**Fire Weeds Grants-** Dave Burch reported that the Trust Fund established a fire weeds grant program with \$150,000 start up funding to be used for post fire rehab efforts in the state. There will be a less than 2 week turn around time. It can be used on reseeding and herbicide control on 2007 fires. There is a group of agencies who have banded together to try to put a mechanism in place to expedite the process of getting grant funds for post fire rehab. Landowners should be able to access this funding more easily through this effort.

**Staff evaluation-** John Moodry reported on the 2007 staff evaluation for Becky. John received about 12 evaluations back. He averaged all of the evaluations – the average on the performance 3.71 and the overall rating was a 4.33. She is exceeding job requirements. Both John and Becky have signed off on the evaluation and they will go into a sealed confidential file. Written requests from board members in order to read the files will be accepted. If suggestions or changes are needed for this evaluation form, John recommended to get them to Becky for this evaluation.

**Nomination for awards & elected positions** – Margie Edsall reported on the flyer that will be asking people to send in nominations, and that the awards committee will meet on November 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. to decide on award recipients. Jim Ghekeire asked the board members whose terms were up if they would run again. He reviewed the positions that were up for election. There were no names mentioned at this meeting.

**2007 Scholarship recipients** - Two \$500 scholarships were given out this year: Jennifer Esp, a sophomore at Northwest College in Powell and majoring in range management, and Bethany Beneker, a sophomore at MSU and majoring in architecture. There were no other applications.

**2009 annual conference location** – Becky reviewed the three hotels she visited for the 2009 conference: the Missoula Garden Hilton, the Bozeman Grantree and the Billings Crown Plaza. She reviewed the pros and the cons and bids for each hotel. Her recommendation would be to go with the Billings Crown Plaza. ***Marty Malone motioned that we hold the conference in Billings in 2009 and in Missoula in 2010. Margie Edsall seconded. All were in favor.*** Carla asked about the lack of eastern representation at events and functions and Dick Zoanni explained that among other things, the difference in strength of weed boards and

budgets often makes a difference in the amount of participation from many eastern weed coordinators.

**Secretary report** – The website was a major project this spring and continued to be a learning curve for Becky. A new web-based service for our database with Etapestry now takes up a good chunk of time. The Association has signed up for lifetime training with Etapestry and there are many videos and seminars to slog through. Becky is still learning how to complete basic functions. The database for our membership has been sent off and we are nearly ready to have a web-based database completed. She was working on a membership solicitation – sending out 325 expired memberships dating back to 2004 in some cases.

Zero Spread – organized and inventoried shed. Typical duties – signs and packets all over state. TIPS booklets –the MWCA has taken on that project from DNRC & Dave Martin. There are about 10,000 booklets to distribute at \$1.50 each. The association is working with Partners Inc and Big Look to create marketing tools and accomplish grant objectives. Other duties include spring, summer and fall newsletters, the Implementation Committee proposal; Becky Attended an organic meeting in Choteau, worked with the Big Hole Weed Committee for Weed Whacker Ball, and the Twin Bridges Welcome to the Neighborhood event. The MWCA hosted the Sheridan realtor training with about 80 in attendance. It was a great show – positive comments. She attended a conference for advocacy and communities put on by MNA, produced meetings, fielded the usual business of calls, emails, setting up the conference, touring facilities, ecommittee meetings, helping with coordinator trainings, grant work, organizing for board meetings, tracking finances and working on budget, and planning for NIWAW.

**Implementation Committee Update** – Scott explained the Implementation Committee's purpose in proposing that the board change Becky's title from Executive Secretary to Executive Director. He explained that because of the volunteer nature of this organization, the duties and expectations of committees and officers has not been met. Becky is already serving in large capacity as an Executive Director and the committee proposed to the Executive Committee who approved proceeding with the proposal to the Board of directors. Becky & Margie Edsall reviewed the budget and the Executive Committee fielded questions from the board on the proposal. Ellen Engstedt asked for clarification on the role of this organization: is it an educational organization or an advocacy organization? The board agreed we are primarily an educational organization and that it will be a fine line between advocacy and education in the future with this position.

***Marijka Wessner motioned that we approve the proposal and budget for Becky on December 1. Jack Eddie seconded and all were in favor.*** The Implementation Committee will meet between now and the November board meeting to further discuss the details in this proposal and duties. The board will discuss this proposal further at the next board meeting.

**Nominations for DC & NIWAW update-** John Moodry opened the floor for nominations: Becky, Marijka, Jim G, Scott B, and Dave Schulz were nominated to attend DC. ***Margie motioned that we send Becky, Marijka, Jim G. and Scott fully funded with Dave Schulz being partially funded. If Jim G can not attend, the other four would be fully funded. Dave Brink seconded and all were in favor.*** Scott reported that the MWCA has asked three other state weed organizations (WY, ID & SD) to help us fund an executive dinner for higher level federal personnel to explain what is happening in our state and our needs.

Other business

**Invasive Species in Natural Areas** – Marijka passed around a flyer for the conference in February and invited all to attend. She asked for not only participants, but a call for speakers as well.

**NRCS** - Carla Lawrence reported that Dave White came back from D.C. to vacation over Labor Day and he is ready to return home for good. The acting state con's term has expired and Jeff Burwell from Colorado is now the acting state con until Dave White returns. The weed booklets that Jim Jacobs wrote are available now. Jim Jacobs was recently hired in a new position but he is also still the Invasive Species Coordinator for NRCS.

**BLM** – John Simons just expended \$210,000 year end money that was given to certain counties. He stated to plan on the same budget levels in 2008 as in 2007, and the EIS will be completed soon to add five new chemicals to the list of approved herbicides. Milestone was not included in that original list.

**MDT** – Justun Juelfs reported their agency dodged the bullet in funding decreases. They dole out \$1.4 million to the state and that funding was safe. Three new zone I trucks were sent out this summer and those trucks are simply to be used in a supplementation manner. It costs more to use those trucks than to work with the county programs. MDT is putting together a proposal to take over the rest of the secondary roads, which encompasses 2,500 – 3,000 center lane miles but not just the roads – fence to fence. It will require additional resources. Justun answered questions from the board.

**MDA** – Dave Burch reported that he will be requesting legislation to increase license plate fees to help cost share weed districts for full time coordinators. With the increase of the additional interest in Trust Fund, this will also increase the special county reservation grants to \$7,500. The department is also looking at adding another full time position to the MDA weed department. Margie Edsall asked about bi-annual reports and whose responsibility it was to complete those reports. Dave B stated he didn't care who did the report, it just needed to be done and most likely it would fall to the county to get it completed.

***Marijka motioned to adjourn and Dave Brink seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.***