

MWCA Board of Directors Meeting
Unofficial Late Fall Minutes (**Pending board approval**)
Great Falls Heritage Inn
November 8, 2007

Call to order-John Moodry called the meeting to order at 9:02 p.m.

Members present-John Moodry, Dave Brink, Joe Wiegand, Dan Dobler, Mark Korte, Paul Wick, Bryce Christeans, Marty Malone, Jason Smith, Tonda Moon, Ellen Simpson, John Simons, Carla Lawrence, Lisa Surber, Jim Ghekier, Margie Edsall, and Danny McIntosh

Members excused- Scott Bockness, Jack Edie, Jim Gordon, Diane Rice, Morgan Valliant, Marijka Wessner, Dick Zoanni, Dave Burch, Justun Juelfs, and Dave Shulz,

Members unexcused: Dale Butori

The board discussed absences and *Marty Malone made a motion that if a board member misses three meetings over the course of a year it constitutes grounds for removal and re-appointment of the position under the discretion of the Executive Committee. Paul Wick seconded. All were in favor.*

September minutes & October ecommittee minutes- *Margie motioned to accept the minutes with the corrections amended and Ellen seconded. All were in favor.*

Old Business

08 Annual Conference update- Becky and Jim went through the tentative agenda of the conference and reviewed progress. Jim updated everyone on the raffle and the Range Workshop and Becky reviewed the strands.

Web-based services update- Becky informed the board about the executive committee decision to go from using Access to using a web-based eTapestry system. The old program was not working with so many different authors at various times. The eTapestry program can be accessed anywhere and can't be messed with in formatting changes and all.

Insurance & review update – Becky reviewed the insurance and review bids and who won them: the insurance bid for D & O was won by Payne Financial in cooperation with the Montana Nonprofit Association, and the general liability and employee misconduct was won by Novich Insurance. Peck and Peck CPA's of Dillon won the review bid. The review should be completed by the annual conference board meeting.

New Business

07/8 budget & investments – Margie reviewed the amended budget with the board. There was a question on money market or interest bearing checking account and Becky reported that First Interstate didn't offer that option. ***Marty motioned for approval and Brink seconded, all were in favor of the amended budget.***

Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council update – Jim reported that the Governor's Council was back up and running under new director Ron deYong. They had met in October and discussed several topics including Eurasian Water milfoil, an update of the weed plan by Celestine Duncan, BAER Teams and fire and weed updates, and with new money coming into the Trust Fund, county grant funds will be increased as promised by the new director. The next meeting of the council will be November 19th in Helena at the Dept of Ag. John reminded the board that this link to the governor is hugely valuable for all parties who sit at the table for the MWCA.

Grants update- Becky explained to the board the three grants the MWCA will be putting in for the 2008 Trust Fund grants: the Zero Spread Campaign – pending NRCS match funding, reprints of the MSU weed ID books, and Weed Board Commissioner workshops. Becky would be putting in for all three grants. Jim explained how the old weed board trainings worked. Jason asked if we could reach commissioners at the MACo mid-winter meeting and Brink felt that having the weed board and commissioners in the same room would be valuable. Becky reported on current grants- there has not been a lot of activity in the grants at this point. The Zero Spread grant still had a significant amount, with a majority of funds planned for pilot projects and advertising in 2008. There will be a meeting of the partners to discuss the Zero Spread future and the pilot projects. The re-org grant has been used largely for the website and web-based services. Some will be used for the potential part time staff position and NIWAW expenses. Becky is planning for a professional training to finish out the Death by Lecture grant. The training will likely be about managing people. Tonda reported on the WSFF grant – there is a new logo and a large part of the money has gone to a major marketing campaign. Now the target audience is the small acreage landowner with 2 or 6 horses on three acres. The weed plan is currently being updated by Celestine and should be ready to distribute at the annual conference.

NIWAW – Paul asked about the progress for NIWAW and Becky reported that they were securing a location, details for the event, and securing the four states' involvement. Paul asked about agenda and topics and Becky reported that planning hasn't proceeded to that point yet. Becky asked the federal agency folks at the table who we should be inviting. Carla suggested we contact Dave White to find out who best to invite from NRCS. Marty and John both felt that quick points in writing would be valuable to have to talk to DC folks about.

Nominations for elected positions- Jim reported on an updated list of nominations for the MWCA board. Nominations are open until December 15th.

IWM chair position – John reiterated what the ecommittee had decided regarding the IWM position with Dave Brink’s resignation. This position’s job description is to act as a liaison between the MWCA and the various interests represented in integrated weed management including biocontrol and research.

Secretary report – Becky reported on her activities since the early board meeting and it included a large portion of time spent on the web site and the web based services, the fall newsletter, updating memberships, several meetings, taxes, review and insurance bids, NIWAW events, rooting for the Green Bay Packers to go to the Super bowl, the annual conference planning, the MNA conference, and basic day to day activities.

ED position update – John relayed the executive committee meeting’s suggestion to review the MWCA strategic plan and that would be a guideline for Becky’s future job duties. Becky explained some of the executive committee meeting topics – if requests are made of Becky, the decision rests with the ecommittee, and no one member of the board directs the ED, the board acts as one voice. The Implementation Committee will review the strategic plan and come up with priorities and a contract for the ED position by December.

Zero Spread and TIPS booklets – there was discussion about what to do to get signs, packets and booklets distributed better. The MWCA will ask the MDA if signs can be a required part of Trust Fund grant contracts.

Review MWCA strategic plan – the board was asked to review the plan, but a new strategic plan will be drafted at the spring board meeting.

Board self-evaluation- Becky explained about the need for a board self-evaluation and reported that we will be starting the process at the January board meeting. The board will undergo a self evaluation at the 2008 spring retreat.

Other business

MACo update – Becky reported that Dave Schulz addressed the coordinators at fall training about seasonal employee rates & hiring, funding full time weed coordinators in every county or having counties merged and hiring a full time person. Dave would be discussing these issues at the winter MACo meeting. Carla asked about a document for professional purposes for the coordinators and that there is a need to update the coordinator weed handbooks and get them distributed during the weed board/ commissioner workshops. Tonda would be checking into that and Becky would put it into the grant.

FWP – Becky asked Joe Weigand about the car wash idea that he generated earlier. Joe reported that he had approached Town Pumps of Montana to provide car washes, but the biggest obstacle will be funding for this state-wide project. It would be more financially feasible if it were limited to opening day. Hunters would be granted coupons. Town Pump was receptive to the idea, but Joe just didn’t

have time to pursue it fully this year. Joe's idea was to pass out coupons as hunters obtained their licenses. Becky suggested tying it into the Zero Spread campaign for the following year and promoting weed management in the fall & hunting season. Jason reported that in Powell County the HS kids do the car wash and the CD and the weed district each pay the kids \$10 per car. Great educational opportunity and they pass out ZS packets as the folks wait in the car.

MWCA Scholarship- John brought up that we need to look at the qualifications of the scholarship. There have been decreased applications over the past few years and some of those applicants really haven't been qualified. Students in natural resource fields are important criteria. Discussion also included talk of granting in-state or out-of-state colleges, establishing criteria. A scholarship work group was established: Lisa, Bryce, Becky, Tonda and Joe volunteered to be on that work group. They have been charged with developing the criteria for not only the youth scholarships, but also in regards to a professional development scholarship, Marty will look into the costs of what that might entail. Everyone is to have a proposal ready for the January meeting.

Appointment of a central area rep – Jim asked if this board either appoints a central area rep or table the discussion until the election. ***Dave Brink moved we table the discussion and Danny McIntosh seconded. All were favor.***

FWP – Joe reported that FWP and AVISTA are working on a Eurasian Water Milfoil management plan for the Noxon and Cabinet reservoirs. When that plan is presented, Joe felt that it should be reviewed by the MWCA board. Joe discussed the many options for control and the complicated issues surrounding this new invasion. This plant has already spread and according to Joe, Montana's waters differ greatly from Idaho's and so this is a new situation for Montana.

DNRC – Agencies are updating portions of the state weed plan. Kevin Chappell has been in charge of getting information from state agencies.

MDA – Eurasian Water Milfoil is a huge issue for the department and they do have a new director, Ron de Yong. Five species to be added and shifting of categories is closer to being done. No news on TF Council appointments or WSFF appointments.

BLM – Finished EIS after 5 years. You can use Plateau, but not Milestone. Milestone may be fast tracked as the FS has already approved use on their lands. BLM does their EIS process by a region – including states and the FS does it by forest or region in some cases. The agency is still under continuing resolution regarding the budget.

NRCS – Carla also stated that the NRCS was operating under a continuing resolution – Dave White was still in DC, Jeff Burwell is the acting state con until Dave returns. Big turn over in RC & D's because of retirement. Carla will also likely be moving to Joliet and will no longer serve on this board. Jeff Jacobs will probably sit in her place. In other news, there is a new state engineer on board; the Farm Bill approval doesn't look promising; and NRCS realigned from five areas to four areas statewide.

Sheep Institute – Lisa reported they had no budget and they are still in limbo with the federal budget. If Ag appropriations get vetoed, the SI will be facing a tough future. Expansion of new projects will be limited. SI is facing some opposition from certain mid-western senators and so they are working on verbiage for appropriations. There is an online tutorial for the targeted grazing handbook at www.sheepusa.org.

CIPM – Janet Clark has resigned as director of the Center for Invasive Pest Management and BLM had previously earmarked significant funding for this program, but the time frame for that funding has expired.

Dave Brink motioned to adjourn and Bryce seconded. All were in favor.