

MWCA Spring Retreat/Board meeting
March 29 & 30, 2007
Fairmont Hot Springs

Minutes

Board members present: Scott Bockness, Bryce Christiaens, Jack Eddie, Margie Edsall, Ellen Engstedt, Jim Ghekiere, Mark Korte, Marty Malone, Danny McIntosh, John Moodry, Jason Smith, Lisa Surber, Morgan Valliant, Marijka Wessner, Dick Zoanni, Dave Burch, Dan Dobler, Justun Juelfs, Carla Lawrence, John Simons, and Joe Wiegand.

Board members excused: Dave Brink, Dale Butori, Clint Clark, Jim Gordon, Diane Rice, Carla Hoopes, Paul Wick & Dave Schulz

Guests present: Jim Jacobs, NRCS

Minutes approved

The January 16, 2007, minutes were motioned to be approved by Margie Edsall with the deletion of the catch sentence for the board game, and Marty Malone seconded. All were in favor. The February 7, 2007 board orientation minutes were motioned to be approved by Lisa Surber and seconded by Marty Malone. All were in favor.

Strategic planning session

John reviewed a history of the restructure process that the MWCA organization has been engaged in for the past three years. He explained the role that several members of the board had in creating a new organization, and the process of implementing a strategic plan, a better board structure, job and committee descriptions, the development of policies for the board and staff, a revamp of bylaws and a new committee structure. Scott relayed the sentiment about the dedication of those involved and that he hoped the board would continue with the dedication and involvement needed to sustain continued dedication to excellence. John reviewed the current committee and work group list.

Terry – overview of non-profit

Five Questions to look at:

Who are we? What do we believe? Who do we serve? What good shall we accomplish? What is the cost? Terry reviewed the three priorities as set by the MWCA: Networking, Education and Research Assistance. She then asked us to begin to review our current strategic plan. Becky reminded the board to review committee duties and the job descriptions for elected positions in their binders.

Goal 1 – Continuation of reorganization effort – Scott and Terry felt that we were still engaged in the implementation process and there wasn't a need to spend time on further objectives

Goal 2 – To pursue funding sources to fund internal and external needs in weed management

Internal funding

- a. pursue grant funding sources – Becky would be the clearing house for all grants and the board's responsibility was to look into grant sources and pass on to Becky. The ecommittee would determine whether or not to pursue the grant.
- b. increase membership and diversity of membership – Becky is about maintaining current membership and soliciting old members back. The board and marketing committee are also engaged in increasing the membership. Ellen suggested that the board carry around brochures for MWCA membership and pass them out. Get their names to Becky for follow-up.

- c. Special projects – Becky handles license plates, Zero Spread, and Realtor trainings. The Barb Mullin Memorial fund is an inactive work group. Zero Spread is also under education committee and e-committee. Realtor trainings are also under coordinator support and area member positions.
- d. Creating a foundation. Decided this would be put on a back burner until a millionaire approached the Association.

External Funding

- a. Support efforts to cap the Trust – currently in process
- b. Support increased funding for local, state, & federal agencies – involved in public policy committee, largely federal programs and support some legislative action for state programs as well.
- c. Develop a position statement to support increased financial resources – the public policy work group would handle this.

Goal 3 – Increase and enhance communications

- a. Enhance and revamp the mtweed .org website – falls largely under Becky
- b. Enhance & revamp newsletter – Beck
- c. Develop communications & media plan and network with partners with special projects – marketing work group, ecommittee and Becky
- d. Continued efforts to pull together all MT education affiliated groups for an annual meeting of the minds.

Goal 4 – to elevate MWCA involvement in the research community

- a. To facilitate efforts to provide collaboration with the research community – IWM, annual conference work group, and coordinator support committee

Goal 5 – Support and use the MT State Weed Management Plan

- a. Coordinate with MDA, MACo & legislative council to review current weed law and make recommendations – done
- b. Coordinate with agencies/organizations on the development of strategies the coincide with all agency plans for new invader specie priorities and needs – ecommittee and public policy

Goal 6 – Develop and support educational efforts for the Association

- a. To encourage educational events, training, publications, and other activities to further the knowledge and expertise of MWCA members, weed professionals and the public- IWM, Annual Conference, Area Reps, coordinator support, education, ecommittee

Goal 7. To improve the effectiveness of the area councils and their memberships

- a. To encourage leadership development through the implementation of policy- ecommittee, area members, coordinator support

After reviewing the strategic plan, Terry asked the committee chairs to review the plan and discuss objectives and goals:

E-committee objectives: Marketing group together and plan developed
 Public policy group together
 Advocacy efforts clearly defined
 Continued efforts in planning for annual conference
 Continued implementation of Zero Spread

Annual Conference work group: Conference targets everyone statewide and area members and coordinator support committee

Newsletter solicitation for ideas for conference

Public policy work group: post report of legislative session and posted on the website
Develop a position statement for MWCA and advocacy
Review current weed laws and maintain relationships with legislators and
staffers

Last three months of 08 –first 4 months of 09 any legislation drafted
Committee does not do anything without direction of the board

Marketing work group: create a strong work group by April 5, 2007

Create a short term and long term marketing plan for the MWCA completed by August 1, 2007
Incorporate members publications as part of this group and complete web site construction
with etapestry and partners by June 15, 2007

Education committee: Assist in Zero Spread Campaign

Assist with weed trainings and work with Coord Support Chair

Assist in updating website and advising on an annual basis

Conduct MWCA Silent Auction

Support know weeds curriculum

Submit articles to the newsletter based on activities

Assist in planning for annual conference

Involvement in Back yards and Barn yards

Lisa Surber explained a little history about the Backyards and Barnyards publication: articles are all geared towards small acreage landowners. One article per issue may be related to noxious weeds.

Coordinator Support Committee

Follow committee guidelines

Strengthen the group through enhanced communications

Provide better professional development at coordinator trainings and look at other ways to offer the trainings

Area Member Committee

Area leadership program

Promote membership

Events calendar

One article per newsletter from each area member

One item from each area for silent auction

IWP Committee Research & Demonstration

Collaborate and network with all parties who have a vested interest in research

Committee finds out the needs of the research community (round robin session at annual conference)

Committee members need to infiltrate the research community and develop relationships and dialog

Supporting those on the ground who are already doing the work within the organization (members)/ sharing of information among members (technology transfer is critical)

Submitting an article for each newsletter

Meeting recessed at 5:10 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 8:10, March 30, 2007 – Fairmont Hot Springs

Financials Reviewed

Margie reviewed the current P & L for the Association and answered a few questions

Becky reviewed the proposals by the finance committee:

Proposed AM registration fees: \$150 for early regular registration, \$100 booth fee (for all vendor and organizations), late registration fee (at the door) \$175, and no single day registration fees.

Finance committee would propose a goal of having a cost matrix for each of the major facilities in Montana. MDA would help with that cost matrix

Policy for Annual conference speakers (and all speakers) will be as follows:

Out-of-state waive registrations, flat fee for travel up to \$250

Agency and MWCA members – volunteer their time for the association

Non members in state pay for registration (if they stay) and up to \$75 in travel (off of actual receipts)

The Refund policy for all Association events will be:

Refunds will be given for unforeseen circumstances for an MWCA event with 25% retained for admin costs to the Association.

Membership dues will remain the same with new benefits as outlined:

\$25 individual dues

\$200 group membership dues- up to 10 members

\$250 Sustaining membership – includes 2 memberships, advertising in 4 newsletters & directory advertising

\$500 Legacy membership – includes 2 memberships, advertising in 4 newsletters, directory advertising, advertising on MWCA website with a link to their web site (if they have one) and a recognition plaque at the Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony

Marty suggested that we clean up the annual conference line items in the P & L so it only reflecting the actual costs of the meeting and the actual expenses.

Jason Smith asked that the fee structures be applied for all functions of the MWCA. Motion to approved the fee structure proposed by the finance committee by Scott Bockness, seconded by Margie Edsall. All were in favor.

Grants Update

Becky reviewed the grants (old and new)

Zero Spread- the grant still has about 32,000 outstanding to be used this spring. Partners has been allocated partial funding for the \$67,000 spring campaign

Re-org grant

Dave Burch reviewed the two grants run through the MWCA:

Weed Seed Free forage- asked for \$100,000 and received \$50,000 from the Trust Fund. This money will be used for a media campaign targeted to small acreage landowners and horse owners. The goal of the campaign is to get more volunteers to use weed seed free forage. They have contracted with Bannack communications out of Great Falls. The entire campaign will cost about \$300,000. Dave reported that the Forestry Coop money would likely change in scope and the FS was looking at allocating funding towards projects more multi-state in nature. Ie – bigger projects and more collaborative. Ellen asked about the source of that funding – It is state and private forestry, title 4 funding. Montana is receiving the lion's share of this funding. The forage ads will start soon with a new focus with a slogan "The best defense inside your fence." Advertising will take place on radio and TV.

Update of the weed plan- the plan will be updated this year and Celestine Duncan will be contracted to do those updates. The plan has been updated every two years and after this revision, the plan will be updated every five years. The grant was funded at \$25,000. The goal is to have the new plan ready to hand out by the 2008 Annual Conference. The action items with dates will likely be added to the plan as an addendum.

Committee needs:

Margie reviewed the committee expenses - \$600 education, \$500 IWM, \$200 Marketing work group, \$200 public policy submitted proposals so far. Right now \$2,500 is budgeted and Margie felt we were well within range. John encouraged areas to use MWCA funding if needed.

Audit and Review

Margie asked about the need of an audit. Ellen motioned the Association complete an audit in 2007 and then review financials biannually and that three bids go out for a projected budget of \$6,500 for that expense. Jack seconded and all were in favor.

Secretary expenses

Margie asked for a 2% cost-of-living increase for Becky's salary. Dave Burch recommended that the cost-of living increase follow state guidelines and be at 3.6% this year. Again it was reiterated that a new checking account would be established for the grants.

DC trip

John Moody felt that the influence that Montana has back at weed awareness week. In the past we've solicited donations for this trip and he would say to fund it at \$7,500 for four people and look for additional donations to go back. Becky reported that the major cost was with hotel expenses and maybe we could find a place to stay that was more reasonable.

Insurance

The finance committee recommended that we look at the various types and costs of insurance for the Association. Becky would look into D & O insurance through the MNA and Becky asked the board to look into their homeowners or farmers to check for volunteer nonprofit coverage. Other bids will go out for agent employee theft, annual meeting cancellation, & general liability.

Morgan moved to adopt the 2007 – 08 proposed budget and Mark Korte seconded. All were in favor.

Old Business

08 Convention update- Great Falls January 15 – 18, 2008, some topics include professional development for weed professionals regarding realty issues, workshop topics include range management and gardening and landscaping. Late summer meeting with education committee and ecommittee along with Cascades' weed district.

Policies update – Scott reported that insurance coverage will be changed, amending some word changes, adding financial policies and fees from this meeting. Policies are in place and will help all board members understand their positions. Becky will send out the new policies with wording changes via email and board input. After that, the ecommittee can radify and adopt those policies.

DC NIWAW review- Becky handed out brochures and encouraged the board to use those. John reported that we met with key people in high positions, our congressmen, and other important agency contacts. Met with Dave White and talked about the farm bill, special funding through NRCS, and the possibility of using that funding in the Trust Fund. Becky reported that there was discussion with Dave about the requirements in the special iniative funding and the Montana contingent tried to see if NRCS would relax some of their requirements. Since that special initiative funding was not used this year, maybe the funding could go towards the Trust Fund and Dave Burch and Scott would be approaching Dave White with that suggestion. There was also talk with Dave White about fire and weeds and creating a

contingency fund for fire rehab. Currently there is a real problem with agency collaboration on fire rehab. Scott would like to see the governor's advisory council take on this issue. Marijka reported that the conference itself needs to be revamped – more networking and the states need to be able to talk to the federal agencies, good, bad & ugly, not have the federal agencies talk to the states about what they are doing which hasn't changed in four years. Dave reported on the history of NIWAW and where it is at now. Because of DC meetings, the saltcedar coalition has applied for federal funding and it has been channeled through our congressmen. Baucus asked several years ago to have a congressional tour in Montana and it is still in the works. Becky stated that it would be a good idea to run this through the governor's advisory council. NAWMA is also requesting that congressional delegates and agency higher ups be at their conference in Las Vegas.

Conflict Workshop review- Marijka reported that 27 – 30 people were registered and Marijka asked board members present their views on the workshop. Becky reported that she felt the trainings that were presented had been very valuable and she encouraged Marijka to look for grant funding in the future for other possible trainings.

Spring coordinator training update – Jason reported that spring coordinator training will be held in Deer Lodge on April 17 & 18. He passed out the agenda and registration forms and explained some of the topics being presented. Jason wanted there to be a focus for on-the-ground treatments.

Web site update

Becky passed out the site map and asked the board for input on the site map. Several comments were noted. Marijka, Morgan and Dave would help with the gathering of materials for the site.

Area trainings

Dave Burch asked Jason if he would consider putting together a workshop agenda concerning weed boards and commissioners for all the areas to operate off of the same template. Jason agreed and thought the speaker for the board orientation would be the type of appropriate training for them. Dave felt that the relationship with MACo has improved and that MACo would likely help promote these workshops. Dave encouraged application of a trust fund grant for next year for this purpose.

New Business

MWCA committee's role in NWTF Grants

The Research committee reviewed grants and the council and committee felt that their process was good. Dave Brink sent out a summary of each grant, the members of the committee ranked them, Dave tallied them and re-sent them back to the committee for final comment.

Marijka reported that currently there are no guidelines for the education committee to review the grants and it makes the process very difficult. Jack Eddie, as a councilman for the Trust Fund, reported that he would agree that there is not a need for the education committee to review the education grants. Dave Burch reported that there are guidelines and it has been working, Marijka and Becky disagreed that the guidelines work for the education grants. Specific education goals are needed for the trust fund council and Dave would address this issue at the June council meeting. John felt that if the MWCA is asked to review the grants. We should do.

Secretary Evaluation

John reported to the board the process for evaluating the executive secretary. The board will be asked for comments sometime in June. The Executive Committee will be evaluating this position at the end of

the fiscal year. Scott wanted the board to be aware of the duties that have been assigned to Becky in light of evaluations.

Secretary Report

Becky reported on her duties since the last annual conference and discussion insued about possible contracted services to assist in Becky's duties. The areas that Becky could use help in would be the annual conference, the membership or grant writing. Dave again reiterated that MDA or any state employees can not accept more than \$50 in gifts as it is a direct conflict of interest.

Mutual Fund

The finance committee recommended that the mutual fund be transferred to a CD as it would get a better return. There was discussion on the cost of the fees the investement company is taking and basically the fund is a high risk fund with a low rate of return. It would be more profitable to place in a CD. John Moodry made a motion to cash out the mutual fund and put into a long-term CD and Jack seconded the motion. All were in favor. Jim Ghekiere asked that we check into a mutual fund checking account or interest bearing account with First Interstate. John stated we would also negotiate the interest amounts on all of our accounts.

Table top display

Scott approached Becky about getting a display for the MWCA and she presented a proposal by Big Look for an 8' display for the Association. Scott explained the need for a display. Scott motioned that we order the display and Marty seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Forest Service representation

Becky stated a concern about the lack of representation on the MWCA Board by the Forest Service. Becky suggested contacting regional weed guys as we had meetings, but Dave felt we needed continuity with one person. Jay Winfield has taken on a role to assist Jim Olivarez. John would contact Jay Winfield and see if you would either produce a name or attend the meetings as possible.

Board Development and Nomination Committee and Retreat

John asked the board about the idea of a retreat and if we should consider doing this retreat again. Jim Ghekiere asked about combining the retreat and the orientation and Becky voiced concerns about timing issues. Morgan asked for historical clarification of the MWCA Board meetings. Marty suggested we go around the room and do bios and ask new board members why they are on the board and felt that should be a part of next year's retreat. Scott stated that the work we did regarding committees will help provide us an assessment tool for the board. Dave Burch felt that the board orientation was important because of so many new faces. Need to have committee chairs more on line with budgets and planning at that orientation – more operations and explanation of the MWCA. Morgan motioned that we hold the board orientation and the retreat all in one facility at one time (winter retreat) and hold a regular spring meeting, and Bryce seconded the motion. All were in favor.

We need to start looking at new positions and recruitment for next year. A new VP and Treasurer will need to be in place for next year.

MDA – Dave Burch reported that the Trust Fund Advisory Council has three members who have termed out: Jack (western area council rep) is termed out, Jerry Marks (bio control) and Josie Dahlberg (representing crops) and 4 people need to be reappointed. Letters need to be submitted to nominate people for those positions to Nancy Peterson. He also reported that no more administrative costs

allowed on NWTF grants. Some discussion ensued over this, but the council has already made the recommendation to the Director.

Binder requirement

Becky reminded the board that their binders were mandatory materials at every board meeting and that at future board meetings, those not having their binders would not only have to use the pink tarred and feathered binders, they would have to pay for Becky's two week all expense paid vacation to the Bahamas. She reminded the board to bring their binders with them to every board meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.