

2008 MWCA Fall Board Meeting  
November 18 & 19, 2008  
Billings Crowne Plaza

Unofficial Minutes

Call to order 9:12 a.m. November 18

Members present: Jim Gordon, Marty Malone, John Simons, Joe Weigand, Mike Miller, Dick Zoanni, Kenny Keever, Jennifer Cramer, Amy Adler, Pam Converse, Lindsey Bona, Kellieann Morris, Jim Ghekiere, Jack Eddie, Danny McIntosh, Judie Tilman, Morgan Valliant, Dave Burch, Paul Wick, Gary Olson, Lisa Surber, Dan Dobler & Dave Brink.

Members absent (excused): Ellen Simpson, Dave Schulz, Mark Korte, John Moodry, Diane Rice, Jim Jacobs

MWCA Staff & Board appointments – Jim Ghekiere introduced the new part time staffer, Diana Ericson to the board, and she explained a little bit about herself. Then Jim introduced board members who were newly appointed including: Weed Coordinator Support Chair, Amy Adler who replaced Stacey Barta, who had replaced Jason Smith this year; Lindsey Bona and Kellieann Morris (co-chairs) who replaced Marijka Haverhals as education committee chair, Dave Brink who has replaced Bryce Christieans as Western Area Representative and Mike Miller who has replaced Justun Juelfs as MDT representative.

Old Business

Spring Retreat Minutes approved – Becky reviewed some changes in the board minutes as recommended by board members. Lisa Surber found the error in the minutes earlier this spring and won the Starbucks door prize. Gary Olsen moved to accept the minutes of the spring retreat, Jim Gordon seconded and all were in favor.

Review of financials – Judie reviewed the 07 – 08 fiscal year and then reviewed the current P & L. There were no questions. Danny moved to approve the current financials and Gary Olson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MWCA review report – Becky reported that previous CPA Peck and Peck decided after a year that it was too stressful to complete the MWCA review, so Becky asked for bids on a review once again. She had submitted requests for bid from three companies – Anderson & Zurmuehlen, Holmes and Turner Company and Newland & Company. She requested information prior to the November board meeting and Newland and Co were the only ones to return a bid for \$1,800. Dave Brink moved that we accept the bid to move forward with a review and Morgan seconded. All were in favor. Becky also reported that MWCA taxes had been sent for the 07 – 08 fiscal year. Julie Ward (our CPA for tax work) has made some recommendations to make our books flow better.

09 Convention update- Jack & Becky reviewed the agenda and answered questions. Becky and Dave Burch reported on the Colorado Weed Summit which the upcoming Montana Weed Summit is

patterned after at this conference and encouraged all board members to attend. Concerns about parking came up and it was mentioned that we'll need to let everyone know about parking for the conference. Jim relayed that he only received about 9 responses from commercial applicators in regards to holding a commercial applicator workshop and we decided not to hold that workshop at the annual conference. That time slot will be replaced by a bio-control meeting.

Fall Coordinator Training update – Amy Adler reported on the 2008 spring coordinator training held in Choteau that attendance was good and the overall training was great. Fall coordinator training was held in Forsyth October 6 -8. At that meeting, Amy and Stacey took orders for pullover coats for coordinators who wanted them and they will be given out at the annual meeting. Awards will be updated at the annual conference as well. 2009 Spring Coordinator Training will be held in Bozeman on March 17 -19 in conjunction with MSU spring break and we will work with Jane Mangold to coordinate activities. Upcoming locations for trainings have been approved: the 2009 fall coordinator training will be held in Lewistown; in 2010 the spring meeting will likely be in the Bitterroot; and the 2010 fall coordinator training will be held in Havre.

Review of spring board evaluation – There were no comments from the board regarding the board survey. Becky reminded the board of the decision to work on a strategic plan after the spring retreat and that survey is how we based our current strategic plan and annual objectives.

ED evaluation- Jim received 8 ED reviews back and reviewed that Becky's job performance was satisfactory and reviews had been good. Jim hoped that all board members felt comfortable talking with Becky about any issues or concerns they had.

Review of strategic plan and yearly objectives – Jim reviewed the strategic plan and several board members commented or made suggestions to the current strategic plan. Becky will make the changes.

Review of mission statement – Becky reviewed the original statement and suggested we update the mission and make it a more marketable mission. The board, after much discussion, came up with “Working together to strengthen and support noxious weed management efforts in Montana.” Moved by Morgan and seconded by Amy and all were in favor except Lisa Surber.

Current grants update – Becky and Dave Burch reviewed all of the current MWCA grants. There were no questions.

BSSA sponsorship update – Jim Ghekiere reviewed the synopsis of what has happened with the Big Sky Small Acres magazine/project since the spring retreat. Since the board packet was mailed out, the Big Sky Small Acres group has disbanded and the MWCA has submitted an official letter of resignation from that group. Marty Malone explained his version of how the issues have evolved.

Staff reports – Becky and Diana expanded on what they've been working on and asked for any questions from the board.

Speaker fee rates & board reimbursements – There was discussion of some options, but the general consensus of the board is that we'll find out some additional information and at the 2009 spring retreat, we will address this issue along with budgeting plans at that time.

ED Vehicle proposal – Jim reviewed the steps taken by the proposal to purchase a car for the executive director and that a car was purchased in October for \$18,579. It was deemed that since Becky was logging over 10,000 miles per year at a state rate of .585, it made more financial sense to outright purchase a vehicle for this position. Dave Burch stated that when using a personal vehicle, state rate doesn't begin to compensate the person for the wear and tear on the vehicle.

Invasive Species Council – Dave Burch presented the final draft of a bill by the MDA to create an invasive species council. They do have a senator who will take this bill to the legislature. Dave fielded questions by board members regarding the bill.

Russian Olive Listing – Dave Burch reviewed the listing process that has been in place for Russian Olive, Curly leaf pond weed, common mullein, Hydrilla, and cheatgrass, and while no decisions have been made at this time, more information is being gathered to make those determinations. The MWCA will have the proposed listed weeds on the MWCA voting ballot at the annual conference to take somewhat of a pulse of our membership regarding these listings.

MWCA Calendar proposal – Jim Ghekiere reviewed the decision to put in a proposal to create a 2010 calendar. Dave Burch explained he felt that it is a competitive grants program and there is no reason there can't be more calendar projects. Several board members commented on their opinions regarding competing against Carla's calendar project. Jack motioned we put in for this grant with the idea that we become self sustaining and it was seconded by Marty. Paul Wick questioned that the decision will be made by the Trust Fund and the counties and agencies would have to choose between two calendars. Dan Dobler mentioned we could give a calendar out to each of our members and it would help us increase benefits to our members. Vote would be taken after all grants are presented.

MWCA Trust Fund Grants – Due to the appearance of conflict of interest, Gary Olsen and Jim Gordon would abstain as Trust Fund Council members when voting on these grants. Becky reviewed a Trust Fund grant for Zero Spread, Dave Burch will be running the weed seed free forage grant through the Association, and Kenny Keever went over grants through the MWCA IWM Committee for a statewide mapping grant and a bio-control monitoring grant. Kellieann presented the educational trunks that Ravalli County has developed and presented the contents of those trunks to the board. She asked the board if there would be an interest in the MWCA hosting a grant to get these trunks out to the public. (There was a question about the curriculum grant with Missoula County and Lindsey Bona relayed the progress about the K-12 curriculum on weeds that was started in Missoula County. She wanted everyone to understand that putting together and implementing a state curriculum change was a major and time consuming process. By January of 2009 the curriculum will be written and the pilot phase will begin with teachers to test the curriculum. They are applying for another grant to sustain this program and it is looking like 2010 will be the year this curriculum will be in place.) It was decided by the board that the education trunk grant will not be run through the MWCA, but through Ravalli County. All grants

were voted to be approved by the board through roll-call vote. There were two dissenting votes for the calendar project.

Board nominations – Jack reviewed the current nominations for board positions up for election in 2009.

Sponsorship network – Becky reported that this past spring she and Diana had attended a workshop put on by MNA to learn to obtain corporate sponsors. After attending that workshop, Becky proposed to the ecommittee that we hire the sponsorship network for \$5,500 with the understanding that we would likely generate \$10,000 back in corporate revenues. Three areas of focus will be sponsorship of the annual conference, the zero spread campaign and a major membership drive. The sponsorship Network will work with the MWCA for six months and teach the staff how to write proposals, obtain and conduct face-to-face meetings and put together appropriate benefits for all sponsors.

Proposal for Membership Levels & Benefits – Diana presented a proposal about changing our membership levels and the benefits these members get. Currently regular members make up a large portion of our membership. We have 135 agency members, we have four legacy members and about 318 group members. We only have 56 private landowners. Becky and Diana reviewed the database use, the supers list, and the demographics of our current membership. The new membership level proposal is as follows: Founding member \$1,000, Legacy member \$500, Premier Business \$250, Basic Business \$100, Group \$200, Household \$50 and Regular \$30. Diana outlined the benefits for each of these levels. Becky recommended these effects change on February 1, 2009. The staff entertained questions from the board. Amy Adler moved to adopt the proposed membership proposal effective February 1, 2009 and Jennifer seconded. Dave Brink called for question and all were in favor.

Board donations for silent auction – Kellieann encouraged each board member to bring an item to the silent item so we can increase items available and therefore increase our profits. Jim Gordon asked if we could include a live auction this year and the education committee will pursue having a live auction with the silent auction this year.

Raffle- Jim Ghekiere reported that we will not be having a raffle this year. We will be looking to hold a raffle in 2010 and hopefully will have secured some larger items for raffle through corporate sponsorships.

NIWAW Representatives – Becky recommended Dave Schulz be nominated to attend the 2009 NIWAW Conference this year. Amy Adler motioned to send Dave Schulz and Becky Kington to the 2009 NIWAW event. Danny McIntosh seconded and all were in favor.

Educational Survey – Kellieann reported that the educational committee had sent out approximately 180 surveys and to date, had received 75 back. They are working on sending out follow-up postcards and gathering surveys from additional folks and they will be assimilating results in early 2009. This survey had come in under budget to date.

MACo Survey- Becky reported that Dave Burch, Dave Schulz and Becky had been working with Harold Blattie to create and disseminate a survey to all commissioners and weed coordinators concerning

budgets, salaries, seasonal help and agency cooperation and funding issues. This survey will likely be going out in December of 2008 and MACo will house the survey and gather the results.

Weeds Across Borders Conference – Lisa Surber reported on the conference in Banff last spring and stated that she felt it was a good idea that we did not send Becky to that conference as she didn't feel that conference was suited to having our representation there. There will be another conference, likely near the Mexico border next year.

Honorary Membership – Wayne Pearson and Celestine Duncan were nominated for honorary memberships, however Celestine's nomination was not turned in time, so Wayne was the only valid nomination. Lisa Surber motioned to include Wayne Pearson as an honorary MWCA member and Kellieann Morris seconded. All were in favor.

2011 Conference location – After discussing the reasons for holding the conference at the Heritage Inn, Jim Gordon moved that we host the MWCA Annual Conference at the Great Falls Heritage Inn for three years from 2011 – 2013 and Gary Olsen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Dept of Agriculture PEIS Proposal – Dave Burch reported the MDA programmatic EIS is being started and there will be scoping meetings to gather public input. He encouraged everyone to participate in that. They haven't done one since 1992 and with all the new herbicides and aquatic issues, it is time to go through the process again.

FWP EIS – Joe Weigand reported that FWP has finished their state wide weed plan completed and they are starting an Environmental Assessment. They are now seeking input and comment from agencies and public involvement.

Meeting was moved to adjourn at 12 noon on November 19, by Pam Converse and seconded by Gary Olsen. All were in favor.