

MWCA Spring Retreat/Board Meeting
March 18, 2008
Fairmont Hot Springs

Minutes

Tuesday, March 18

Members present- Bryce Christiaens, Pam Converse, Jack Eddie, Jim Ghekiere, Jim Gordon, Marty Malone, Danny McIntosh, John Moodry, Gary Olsen, Diane Rice, Jason Smith, Lisa Surber, Jude Tilman, Paul Wick, Dick Zoanni, Dave Burch, Dan Dobler, Jim Jacobs, Justun Juelfs, John Simons, and Joe Weigand.

Members excused- Jennifer Cramer, Ellen Engstedt, Kenny Keeve, Morgan Valliant, Marijka Haverhals, Carla Hoopes, Dave Schulz and Jay Winfield.

Jim called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. Members introduced themselves, and Becky passed out updated materials for binders.

Winter board minutes approved- **Danny McIntosh motioned to accept the winter minutes; seconded by Jim Gordon. All were in favor.**

Review of current financials- Becky reviewed the financials and discussed the policies of late payments and charging interest. Talk ensued about potential blacklisting, or requiring those with poor credit historically will pay ½ up front. No decisions were made. **Motion to approve the finances was made by Marty Malone and seconded by Gary Olsen. All were in favor.**

08 Convention overview- Becky reported that 299 people attended the conference; numbers were down, but maybe due to weather? Workshops and overall agenda were well received and the awards ceremony was great. Overall it was another successful conference. Income was approximately \$48,000. There were complaints about meal prices for additional tickets; Becky explained those costs were simply what the hotel was charging the Association. Jim G encouraged any additional input be given to Jack Eddie and Becky for the 2009 conference.

Appoint SW area representative- As Jack Eddie was voted in VP, the SW area voted to have Pam Converse replace Jack Eddie as SW Area Representative for the remainder of his term. **John Moodry motioned Pam Converse be the SW area representative to the Board of Directors, seconded by Bryce Christiaens and all were in favor.**

09 Convention update – Jack reported on the recent annual conference planning meeting. The 2009 annual conference will be at the Billings Crowne Plaza on January 13-15, 2009. Jack reviewed the tentative agenda and potential planning of the conference. The tentative agenda will be posted as soon as possible. Jim Gordon recommended having the vendors on the top floor and to have a sign or reader board in the lounge for the vendor happy hour. The theme is “Getting it Done on Less” concentrating on economics and stretching dollars to get weed management done. **Jack proposed registration fees remain the same in the amount of \$150 as an MWCA member and a new rate of \$175 as a nonmember. Late fees will be an additional \$25 per category. Jim Gordon motioned to accept Jack’s proposal, John Simons seconded and all were in favor.**

2010 Conference- Joe Weigand asked the board if they would be interested in co-hosting a conference in Missoula centered around habitat, vegetation and weed management. The partnering group would be the Montana Chapter of Wildlife Society. Approximately 500 – 600 members would be attending the conference. Further consideration and logistics will be worked out with a workgroup of Joe Weigand, Jack Eddie, Judie Tilman, Becky, and Jim Ghekiere.

DC NIWAW review – Dave Burch reported that we had a good event in NIWAW, at least from a Montana perspective. He reported on the agency meetings that were scheduled and attended. The redesign of the Forest Service was discussed and the MT delegation met with all congressional representatives or staffers. Other discussion included the Missouri River Coalition, the added 5 million earmarks for the Trust Fund, and the \$100,000 in appropriations to MT for Weed Seed Free Forage, the Weed Eradication Act and the Salt Cedar Russian Olive Act. The Montana delegates felt that there wouldn't likely be funding for either act. Federal appropriations for Montana over the next two years are not looking good due largely to politics; a lame duck president and a huge administrative change in the works. John Simons recommended that we follow up with "white paper" to summarize our reception. Becky will do that. In order to cut costs in the future, Becky recommended that we only send two people from MWCA in 2009 to NIWAW unless we secure donations to send more folks. She also recommended spending four nights instead of five.

Spring Coordinator Training update – Jason discussed the agenda and plans for the spring coordinator training to be held April 2 & 3 in Choteau. Paul asked that the spring coordinator training to be more inclusive. Becky stated that it is currently the MWCA *Coordinator Training*; therefore it is in the hands of the weed coordinators to make the decision to open up and advertise the training. It will be discussed at the coordinator training.

Honorary membership criteria for MWCA- Jack Eddie presented the honorary membership criteria to the board. Becky reported that there are currently less than 10 honorary members, and honorary memberships are lifetime memberships. The criteria for honorary members are as follows:

- One honorary membership accepted each year by the MWCA Board
- Nominees asked for by Nov. 1st of each year
- Statement or paragraph submitted by person nominating of why person should receive membership (special consideration will go to those who have served as an MWCA board member)
- Nominations and statements sent to the board prior to fall board meeting for review
- Ballots with nominees given to MWCA board at fall meeting and vote taken at that time
- Honorary lifetime membership recipient will be recognized at the annual awards banquet

Jason asked if we went to other organizations to determine criteria. ***Lisa motioned to accept the criteria for honorary, lifetime membership. Jim Gordon seconded. Motion passed with one dissenting vote by John Moody.***

Levels of membership for MWCA (Business membership) - Becky presented the proposed membership form to the board. Many questions were asked. Becky proposed a business swap membership; the board decided that wasn't necessary, so it was removed from the form. The sustaining membership name change would be changed to "Business". Joe asked about a student level. Gary asked about a lifetime level option.

Individual membership will remain at \$25. Group membership will remain at \$200 per year. The sustaining membership will be called a "business" membership and remain at \$250 per year. The legacy membership will remain at \$500. Organizational memberships will be considered on an individual basis for swapping memberships. A line item will be added to include donations for the MWCA Memorial Fund, the Barb Mullin Memorial Fund, and MWCA scholarships. ***Danny McIntosh motioned to approve the changes, Gary Olsen seconded, all were in favor.***

Grants review

Becky reviewed current and proposed MWCA grants-

Death by Lecture has a remaining balance of \$3,083.95– Dave Burch will use \$1,685 for MSU Sulfur Cinquefoil educational brochures and 1,398.95 will be used for the MWCA board guest speaker fees. Could not find any potential speakers for "Managing People" workshop, especially within the remaining balance of the grant.

Zero Spread has a remaining balance of \$21,448.90 – allocating \$50,000 towards another spring advertising campaign with an addition of a milfoil ad. We have purchased 350 zero spread coffee mugs for the 2009 annual conference and the remainder of the grant (approximately \$4,000) will be used towards two pilot projects, one in P-burg and one in the Big Hole Watershed with a goal of reaching small acreage and out-of-state landowners. Meeting needed with Dave White to discuss future of this campaign this spring.

Re-org grant has a remaining balance of \$4,550 – we completed a budget revision with \$8,900 allocated towards travel and NIWAW expenses, including the reception. Spring retreat costs will be covered by the grant funds. Remaining funds will be used for MWCA external promotion.

2008 – 09 MDA Grants

Weed board training – fully funded at \$17,500

MSU Weed ID books- fully funded at \$39,250

Educational survey grant – not funded (will complete a survey through the education committee)

2008 Area weed board/agency meeting suggestion- Becky presented the idea that we hold an agency round robin session in conjunction with the weed board commissioner trainings. Joe Weigand suggested that weed management plans would have to be a part of this training in order to make it work. MWCA area representatives would have to be heavily involved in this process as well.

The five new weeds were added to the weed ID book as well as very generic management practices.

2008 TF hearings- Dave reported that it was a marathon as usual. The MDA staff is going to redo the guidelines and council member evaluation sheets. 100 grants were funded, 16 were not and 5 were pulled before the hearing. Most grants were cut and longevity of grants was factored in. Lisa asked about a process for recruiting or nominating board members. Dave relayed the criteria for her. He also mentioned the fact that the calendar produced by SNWAEC was not funded for 2010 and that maybe the MWCA would like to consider producing a calendar once again.

MWCA representation at 08/09 trade shows & promotion- Becky questioned the value of tradeshow and the time and expense associated with those events. Suggestions were presented about how to better advertise the MWCA. The Association needs to have various PowerPoint presentations so other members of the board could take and advertise for the Association. The board decided that Becky would inquire about presenting at the MACD, Stockgrowers, Wool growers, MABA, and NAWMA conferences. Jim Ghekiere would put up a booth and ask about presenting at Graingrowers. Regardless of getting on the agenda, it was decided that we would also have a booth at the NAWMA conference. The board decided not to send Becky to the "Weeds Across Borders" Conference in Banff this May.

New Business

Board evaluation process- Jim and Becky presented an evaluation to take the pulse of the board. It is not an ideal evaluation based on the lessons learned from the speaker the day before, but for this year, it would suffice. A better evaluation for both board and staff would be given next year. The board filled out the forms and Becky will tabulate the results at a later date this spring.

Regional EPPC formation –Marilyn Marler presented an idea to form an Exotic Pest Plant Council for the Rocky Mountain Region. The reason for forming this council is to address invasive species in natural areas. Three points of this EPPC include that it is not ag focused, dealing with invasives that are not on the state list, and to bring researchers together from other states. Survey from the conference showed a need to form this council because other organizations weren't meeting all of the needs for weed managers in natural areas. This EPPC would hold a conference that rotated around the states involved in the defined region, but when in Montana, it might coincide with our conference. At this year's conference, there was a biocontrol consortium the evening before. Marilyn asked for questions and concerns from the board. Ghekiere asked that this group/effort be actively engaged with the MWCA IWM Committee. Becky reported that she asked Marijka to submit an article for the *Weed Times* on this conference.

Update on part time job applicants-Judy Tillman reported that we had ten applications and chose four to interview on March 27 and we will be hiring in April. A decision will be made the day of the interviews. Jim Ghekiere explained the primary goal for this person was to manage the website. Becky apologized to the board for her lack of efforts on managing the website, and that she found it was just too big of a load to handle in addition to her other duties.

Director report – Becky reported on the following activities since the last board meeting:
Finishing up annual conference – still have \$3,200 in outstanding invoices

Planning for NIWAW reception and trip

Worked with states

Redid brochure

Worked with Baucus staffers

Grants updated and request for payment sent in

Grant hearings

Planning Gallatin realtor trainings (2)

Attended Invasive Species conference in Missoula w/booth

Setting up and gathering materials for spring retreat, notice out to board

Worked with guest speaker and staff

Part time job position drafted and sent out

Part time job position applications reviewed with ecommittee

Sent interview applicants directions and notice

Daily business with emails, phone calls, bills, invoices, balancing checkbook and working with bookkeeper and Judy to update QB
Worked with CPA on taxes and sent in
Worked on partnering memberships with MABA and MACo
Directory updated
Spring coordinator registration and materials for training documented
Worked on 2008-09 budget – revised some figures
Copies and updates for board binders
Artwork for milfoil advertising campaign

Big Sky Small Acres Magazine – Pam Converse reported that the Big Sky Small Acres Group had produced the first and second magazine and were still working through funding. They were also still working on gathering partners for funding sources. A business plan is currently in the works and MSU is still housing, printing and handling subscriptions. In the future, look for well rounded subject materials, printed approximately 2500 words. There were questions about funding from other agencies and how the MWCA would be able to get involved at this point? Subscriptions are \$8 per year. Dave Martin has stepped in for Tanya Daniels as chair of the BSSA group. In order to get the MWCA involved – the Association should submit a letter of support, and to be a full-fledged partner, the MWCA would have to provide \$3,500 per year. **John Moody motioned we provide a magazine subscription to each of our current members for one year. Paul Wick seconded. Six were in favor, two abstained, seven against. Motion failed. Jack Eddie motioned we give the BSSA group a flat fee of \$2,000 this year and revisit the cause in a year and Jim Gordon seconded. 4 were in favor, 2 abstained, 9 against. Motion failed. The decision was tabled for discussion at later date.**

MSU position update- Lisa Surber reported on the long term hole left by Roger Sheley with MSU. This is an 80% weeds 20% research position. The job closed recently and they are currently reviewing applications. Lisa feels the MWCA should be very active in this position, and that the MWCA should have a presence in those interviews. Anyone present at those interviews can fill out an evaluation form. Jim Ghekiere asked Lisa to keep us posted. Becky asked for Lisa's help in addressing who we send a letter to ask for permission to have a block of time. John Wraith, Doug Steele are the ones to submit letters to.

MWCA strategic plan for 2008 – 09- Dennis McMillian, the guest speaker for the board retreat who is visiting us from the Foraker Group in Alaska, typed up a template for the MWCA at his presentation. He will email it to Becky and she will communicate with the board via email. Dave asked that we send the strategic plan out to the board for input and suggestions. It will go out with the board evaluation summary.

Committee updates: members, goals and funding – Becky will work with Jim on getting committee lists and goals out to the board as soon as information is gathered.

2008 – 09 Budget – Becky went through and line-itemed the budget detail. Judy had concerns over dipping into carry-over. Several board members explained that we are typically very conservative in budgeting and normally don't come close to reaching expenditures. We generally overshoot our income figures. **Danny McIntosh motioned to approve the budget and Mark Korte seconded . All were in favor.**

FWP – Joe Weigand reported that the agency had updated their weed management plan and will disseminate that information through Becky in the near future. He asked the board to be aware and involved in that process.

MDA – Looking at introducing an invasive species council under the direction of Ron de Yong. Legislatively, the MDA is looking to double the vehicle fee and the summit advisory council will be working on other legislation. The state weed plan will be re-printed in the next few months. The new state weed list will be updated and sent out shortly.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15.