

MWCA Biocontrol Working Group
April 30th, 2009

Tonda Moon called the meeting to order at 9:10am at the Lewis and Clark Fairgrounds in Helena, Montana.

Introductions were made.

Minutes from the last biological control meeting were read and Jay Cole moved, seconded by Mary Mayer, to approve the minutes as read. Motion carried.

Tonda gave a brief update on the noxious weed list changes

New Weeds

New categories...

Question was asked about delisting weeds and about trust fund funding for county listed noxious weeds (Jay Cole)

- Proposed delisting of Common crupina

Jeff Littlefield updated the group on what he has set up.

He explained the papers handed out starting with the Agents released or approved for biological control. There was discussion on putting them on the MWCA website (example from Oregon was passed out). Larry B. said there should be limits set. The committee has a responsibility to raise the dissemination of information that the law sets as the boundary. The list does not include path pathogens like one for Houndstongue. Sam asked about studies on where they establish (some work on d. toadflax, field bindweed are just starting to review knapweed again). Jay said a statement must be needed to explain that the releases should not be moved unless approved to do so. Mary said that only the approved bio. control agents should be put on the web.

There was a group consensus agreement for Jeff's work creating the table on agents released or approved for biological control with the addition on wordage explaining illegal transportation of biological control agents. Shane Galford said both parties must have permits for cross state transportation. Noah said that T. Horidea and Bracplious (toadflax) are not approved for transportation at this time.

Jeff then went over the 'Biological control of weeds sub-committee guidelines recommendation' that he put together for the group. It explained that we need to determine how do we interact with the IPM committee, listed five goals, showed a need for a long term implementation plan which was broken down into four focal areas and examples of possible priority items. The four areas were coordination, research and development, implementation, and outreach and technology transfer. He passed out more example papers (Idaho's 10 year strategic plan) to show what goes along with implementing an action plan. It would be beneficial to have a central database system for release information. Examples of two different reporting criteria and monitoring examples were distributed. All was well received.

The current lawsuit with the USDA on the Salt Cedar insects was explained and the question was raised if an expediting list still exists. Joe M. should be contacted for the answer.

David Weaver explained what was being accomplished around Canyon Ferry and explained his disappointment that many of their established sites had been sprayed. Discussion continued on ways to prevent this from happening in the future. More coordination with the county weed coordinators as

well as landowners was talked about as well as uniformed signage for releases. The point was brought up that a centralized database would definitely help in this area. The group decided that there will not be a unified signage for release as it varies too much from area to area. Lewis and Clark County will be the test area for using road hairs to mark release sites.

Jay updated the group on the proposed monitoring grant through the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund. Due to the availability of BLM funds, the moneys from the trust fund were no longer needed. The program will be run through APHIS. Three people were hired one out of Billings and two out of the Helena office. They are to be working in the counties of Blaine, Lewis and Clark, Big Horn and Lincoln initially with other counties to be added later on as time permits. They will be looking for present or not present not anything too technical. They will be looking into if present and if they are, are they collectable at the same time. If it looks like the sites are collectable, they will work with the counties to distribute them. They hope to find many collectable sites. Right now they will be looking for just dalmatian toadflax insects but are going to try and look for others if there is adequate time. This will be a great opportunity to increase enthusiasm for the program.

The group then discussed the survey and Jay stressed the need to share when and where collections are. No changes were requested at this time. He also stressed that we need to provide our own sources of bio. control as the other states' supplies are drying up. More classes are needed to show people what to look for when looking at plant damage.

Kenneth with the Montana Department of Agriculture talked about the Japanese Beetles and explained what they do in Idaho. The beetles' favorites are cherries, crab apples, grapes, ash and Virginia creeper.

Sharlene provided updated information on two new insects for yellow toadflax but was sad to say that they died in transit. They will try again. The bio. control insects are also showing excellent progress on hybrid toadflax. Please contact her if an insect is feeding on yellow toadflax in particular.

Jeff has three projects that he is continuing to work on. One is the Russian knapweed biological control, work on whitetop's stem galling midge and on pre-release plots for hawkweeds. The central agents for whitetop will be released soon.

Mary M. is working on the genotypes of invasive knotweeds.

Whitetop - *Ceuthorynchus* ~~*Pseudea yinkius*~~ appears to be not host specific due to agent hybridization. They are looking for many agents for Russian olive. Listing restricts it to be a seed or flower-feeding insect, which will only stop the spread not kill.

Jim Story is still working on the knapweeds. There has been a steady decline in knapweed due to the cyphlocleonus actates. For long-term control, optutis, minutis and fly are making the seed bank collapse, which means no new seedlings. They are getting complete collapse of knapweed populations, though there are other factors that probably affect it as well like drought and the reduction of pollinators near knapweed. Cheatgrass is found to come in where there was a monoculture. Where there was not a monoculture, the grass is starting to come back in. There is a need to reseed with natives.

The funding for the Consorcium of biological control for common tansy with Jeff Littlefield was funded in 2008 and they are asking again this year to continue. It does not have a lot of close relatives, which makes it a little easier to work with.

A question was raised by the HSFS if there was stimulus money for biological control. The answer is yes and it is in Lincoln County.

Allen K asked if all had seen a reduction of the leafy spurge insects last year. All said yes, they had noticed the decline. No one knows if it is due to a cyclic cause or not.

Jay updated the group on *Mogolones cruciger* (the Houndstongue agent). The agent is migrating down from Canada. It should not be moved around nor is it permitted to be moved out of the state. They found that it is not host specific. It will affect the native borages in Montana. There is a need to track the insects so that we are not blamed for supporting the movement. We need to solidify sightings from rumor.

Tonda explained that Todd B. is putting together a biological control booklet. A group of volunteers is needed to go through the completed booklet and critic it. Some of the ideas that the group came up with were to explain where to look for to see signs of attack, season for collection including time of day and the timing of emergence, life history, population density of bugs needed for collection and a clarification on what Todd meant when he said "specifically how to use". The members present that volunteered are as follow: Jim, Jeff, David, Larry B., Mike, and Jay.

The next sub-committee meeting will be at the MWCA convention in January. The main meeting will still be at the end of April. A fall sub-committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the BLM interagency meeting.

Jim Story moved and David Weaver seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Present:

Tonda Moon- MT Department of Ag, Stephanie Blasenak- Jefferson County Weed District, Noah Poritz- ~~??????????~~ [private](#), Mike Miller- MT Department of Transportation, Larry Beneker- Bureau of Indian Affairs, David Weaver- MSU, Sharlene Sing- USFS, Mary Mayer- USDA-ARS, Bob Bushnell- Lewis & Clark County Weed District, Kenneth Puliafico- MT Department of Ag, Jeff Littlefield- MSU, Sam Little- Jefferson County Weed District, Jim Story- MSU, Alan Knudson- Missoula County Weed District, Shayne Galford- USDA-APHIS-PPQ, ~~??????????~~ Maddalon- USDA-APHIS-PPQ, Jay Cole- USDA-APHIS-PPQ, Pam Converse- Broadwater County Weed District, Larry Hoffman- Lewis & Clark Extension/Weed District, Nancy Sturdevant- USFS, Scott Bockness- Yellowstone County Weed District.