

**MWCA Spring Board Retreat  
April 1 & 2, 2009, Fairmont**

**Official Minutes**

**Legislative presentation and discussion**

The board meeting was called to order at 1:15 pm April 1, 2009. Introductions were made. Members present were: Lisa Surber, Amy Adler, Dan Dobler, Pete Pula, Danny McIntosh, Mike Miller, Pam Converse, Morgan Valliant, Diana Ericson, Becky Kington, Dave Brink, Jim Gordon, Jack Eddie, Paul Wick, Dave Burch, Gary Olsen, Kellieann Morris, Joe Weigand, Jim Ghekiere, and Judie Tilman.

Guests present: Margie Edsall, Janie Alt, John Moodry, Rodney Kott, Steve & Doris Sherrick, Ariel Overstreet and Brian McGee.

Becky introduced a panel of speakers including Brian McGee with the Montana Nonprofit Association, Ariel Overstreet with the Stockgrowers, Steve Sherrick with the Wool Growers, Rodney Kott of the Montana Sheep Institute and John Moodry at the MWCA Legislative Chair.

Brian McGee started off discussions with an explanation that the MNA is the largest nonprofit in the country based on a per capita basis and congratulated the MWCA on being a charter member. He then passed around a handout for building public policy, and went through the steps with the board.

Ariel Overstreet with the Stockgrowers explained a little bit of the history with their association and how public policy works within the Stockgrowers. She described the resolution process from beginning to end.

Steve Sherrick from Wool Growers explained the importance of relationships and working with other organizations. Find out who your allies should be and work with them in legislative processes. You also need to build relationships with the staffers of organizations. He talked about how much electronics now play a role in politics and working with your legislators.

Rodney Kott talked about how the conversation started regarding the MWCA, membership and advocacy efforts. He felt that the MWCA should be a voice for weed management and advocacy in Montana.

John Moodry talked about his past experience as the legislative chair for the MWCA and that in the past two years, he testified on behalf of the MWCA twice. The Association tends to be reactive and not proactive. It has been his experience that it can be disheartening not to be able to take a stand as an organization.

When presentations were completed, the board asked several questions of the panel, and some of the topics that came up included: Do we have the capacity as an organization (i.e. staff & funding)? Do the weed coordinators need to form their own group of professionals? The Legislative Committee needs to get active and be proactive. A suggestion that the Coordinator Support Committee should be the legislative body of the organization?

The majority of the board felt that we needed to do something with public policy, so Becky suggested a work group get put together to come up with a proposal for MWCA public policy. The new committee will be made up of: John Moodry- Chair, Amy Adler, Lisa Surber, Dave Brink, Pam Converse, Jack Eddie, Kelliann Morris, Debby Barrett, Dave Burch, Mike Miller, and Dave Schultz. ***The workgroup has been assigned the task of coming up with public policy procedures for the association by November 1<sup>st</sup> and to create a “bucket list” for a filtering process as MNA does.***

**Dave Brink moved that we continue with the agenda into the evening and not wait until the next day. It was second by Jim Gordon. All were in favor.**

### **ED and Board Evaluations**

Board and ED evaluations were explained and were handed into Jack to collect.

### **Brainstorming future objectives and goals**

Prior to the board discussion on future objectives and annual goals, Becky had the group engage in a team exercise and then reviewed the Montana Summit meeting follow-up priorities with the group. The MWCA, MSU and MDA all have tasks from that meeting.

#### ***For this year, the board objectives are:***

1. Promotion of the MWCA by every board member
2. Each board member has to be involved in selling raffle tickets, getting new members to join and donating to the silent and live auction
3. Develop & implement a public policy for the MWCA

#### ***Staff objectives are:***

1. Emergency backup system for the staff & organization
2. More surveys, electronic newsletters
3. Gathering success stories – need more detail. – intern writing the narrative.
4. Increase membership

#### ***Presidential objectives are:***

1. Find ways to strengthen area councils and create a more effective set of polices for them
2. Strengthen board development committee
3. Promote the MWCA in increasing membership

#### ***Committee objectives:***

##### **Coordinator Support Committee**

1. Assist the MWCA in finding a direction for the area councils and help define their functions
2. Work with Jane Mangold in developing weed professional certification criteria
3. Develop a consistent set of policies and criteria regarding coordinator awards
4. Implement stronger training components into coordinator trainings including reveg and restoration and professional development.

### Education Committee

1. To continue the development of Weed of the Week Articles, that can be used anywhere across the state and get them sent to you or Diana for uploading on the MWCA website. Folks can use these articles for informing their public about weed issues. These articles will contain weed and re-veg information as well as any other similar topics.
2. Come up with prices and a design for 2010 desk planners. Profits from these will go to the MWCA Ed Committee
3. Develop a few success stories for you very soon, the faster the better as we need to spark a few folks to get this done
4. Continue the promotion of the (RISK) education trunks
5. Develop more ideas for education after Jane Mangold finishes the review of surveys.
6. After knowing the theme for next year conference... come up with a few education ideas to help with the theme
7. Help promote the MWCA and encourage involvement
8. Help with designing the Zero Spread logo to help with the (GREEN) thought. I will bring a few ideas to the April 1 meeting.

### IWM Committee

Currently several workgroups within the IWM Committee are engaged and involved in projects. Our goal for 2009 would be to have committee recommendations finalized for the Board Meeting at the 2010 annual conference. From there, the committee and the association can make the decisions on what can be accomplished, develop a plan/budget, and go forth to do good things.

1. Come up with links and sites for research for the MWCA website by fall 2009

### Scholarship workgroup

1. Explore intern opportunities in conjunction with the scholarships

Other suggestions from board members included offering credit for work for us.....working with Center for Invasive Plant Species ----internship services and obtain a marketing student.

**Winter board minutes approved motioned by Gary Olsen, seconded by Jim Gordon, all were in favor.**

### Current Financials

Judie reviewed the current financials. She reminded the board of onetime expenses of car & sponsorship network which caused overruns in the budget. She mentioned we have two CD's coming due in April. Dave Burch noted that last year's budget was not balanced and it was in the carry-over, which is why we aren't actually in the red. **Danny McIntosh motioned to approve the current financials and Lisa Surber seconded. All were in favor.**

### 09 convention overview

Jack and Becky reviewed basic facts of the conference: 270 people attended the conference, 25 vendors had booths, there were numerous problems with the way the Crowne Plaza conducted their services and we are to be refunded \$500, 27 evaluations were returned and the board was given that report in their packets. Total of conference registrations and donations to date

was \$45,254.28 and total expenses were \$30,622.99. Silent auction revenues were \$4731.50 with \$220 outstanding at this time.

### **2010 Annual Meeting Update**

The annual meeting work group proposed that the 2010 annual conference rates be the same as last year with the exception of vendors, who will be charged \$200 for a booth; nonprofits and educational organizations will be charged \$75, and the landowner workshop registration will be \$35. **Dave Brink motioned we increase the vendor fees to \$200, the nonprofit fee to \$75, and the landowner workshop at a single event fee of \$35. Gary Olsen seconded and all were in favor.** The planning committee had met for three hours the morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Success would be included in the theme and moderators and strands and workshops were all thought up. Becky and Jack explained the Honda raffle and the gun raffle they were proposing. Kellieann asked that the staff come up with a poster that everyone could download off of the website to promote the raffles.

### **Policy and Bylaw update**

Becky reported that we were doing away with the board binders. She would have hard copies of the bylaws and policies at every meeting and those bylaws and policies would be posted on the website for all to access. Morgan asked about a new board member packet.... There was discussion that we needed to have some sort of an orientation process for those new members, preferably directly after the board meeting. She also requested that instead of snail mailing packets to board members, she would post a folder on the website and all board members were responsible for downloading those files. The board agreed we should try this. New board member orientation would be discussed at the November meeting.

### **DC NIWAW update**

Dave Burch reported on the trip back to DC and all of the agencies and individuals we met with. He gave a brief synopsis of all meetings and the board members all had reports from Becky and Dave Schulz in their packets. Becky talked about ways to make the MWCA more memorable with our congressmen – she felt corresponding with them regularly and sending them items to keep them in the loop. Lisa suggested we need more intense involvement such as in weekly calls with Congressional staffers, and Becky questioned the amount of time she or Diana had to accomplish this.

### **Membership packets**

Becky and Diana reviewed the sample membership packet that the board received. Diana explained the contents in the packet, the current numbers of our membership, and some ideas she had to increase donations. She talked about a “have breakfast with the MWCA” idea. She talked about a monthly donation and listing the MWCA as a beneficiary on 401 K plans. Diana asked the board to consider the idea. **Danny McIntosh motioned we order a 1,000 magnets to add to the membership packets and Jim Gordon seconded. All were in favor.**

### **Sponsorship Network update**

Becky reported on the history of the relationship with the Sponsorship Network and that they were currently looking at sponsorships for the conference with Montana Rail Link (a sponsorship proposal had been sent to Rick Shelley) and they were going to approach Honda with a local

dealer and see if we couldn't get an ATV donated for the raffle. Barbara would work with us until we at least reached our initial investment of \$5500 for their services. Diana and Becky both reported that traditional methods of obtaining sponsorships maybe weren't working in Montana and that we were learning to modify the proposals. Amy Adler, Morgan Valliant, Jack Eddie and Dave Burch all reported that they may have contact with their local dealers.

### **Website Revisions & updates**

Diana explained that we've outgrown our site and proposed her website changes. Currently the top five pages visited are weed id, commercial applicators, FAQ, counties and events and press. She reviewed the current flaws in our website and showed the board a proposed website new layout.

### **MWCA representation at 2009/2010 trade shows**

Becky once again questioned the expenditures of sending her to trade shows for two or three days and the number of them. Judie explained that trade shows are really about creating relationships and if we want to create partnerships with other organizations, we need to work with them on special projects. Becky explained that due to some inequities with swapped memberships, Diana had created a contract for both parties to sign in agreeing to a partnership swap. This would be used for all membership swaps in the future. Becky felt that keying in on five organizations last year was simply too much. She suggested if there was one organization to work on this year, it would be Montana Conservation Districts. All trade shows were put into the MWCA promotion category in the budget. **Jim Gordon moved that we leave promotional monies to the discretion of Becky and the E Committee, Gary Olsen seconded and all were in favor.**

### **Board reimbursements & speaker reimbursement rates**

The board discussed current reimbursement rates for board members which is currently at \$100. **Gary Olsen moved we pay state rate for hotel, per diem for meals , and actual gas receipts for board members as requested and based upon genuine need. Dave Brink seconded and all were in favor.** Board members will still be encouraged to car pool whenever possible.

Jack brought up the speaker reimbursement problems we had last year which hindered some possible good speakers from coming to our conference. It was decided our current policies are too "cheap!" **Danny motioned we leave the budgeted amount to the discretion of the annual conference chair and the coordinator support chair. Gary Olsen seconded and all were in favor.**

### **Area Council discussion**

Jack discussed that one of his main objectives as president was to look into the purpose and direction of the area councils. He has asked Amy to address this with the coordinator support committee. She explained that she had begun working with area reps to address this issue. There was much board discussion on history, possibilities and leadership and personality issues regarding the area councils. Becky stated that she felt we need to have some sort of policy designed regarding area councils as we have job descriptions, but we have no direction or purpose for area councils.

### **Staff activities**

Becky and Diana submitted written reports in board packets. There were no questions. Judie stated she felt the staff was doing a great job.

### **Legislative activities**

Dave Burch gave an update on legislative actions. Not detailed in the minutes as they change daily.

### **Montana Summit review and update**

Burch and Becky reported on the activities of the follow-up meeting to the Montana Summit held at the annual conference and the minutes from that meeting were posted in the board packets. Becky also gave a thumbnail version of decisions and goals of the committee the day prior. Those minutes can be found at [www.mtweed.org](http://www.mtweed.org).

### **Committee updates**

Becky again reviewed the goals for each of the main committees and all board members received a current committee list with members.

### **MWCA Financial Review**

Becky and Judie went over Newland and Company's recommendations from the financial review Dick Tamblin performed. Judie stated that considering the organization had not had a review or audit in a very long time, if ever, she was surprised that our books were in pretty good order.

**Dave Brink recommended we adopt the recommendations of the finance committee regarding the financial review: to house all bookkeeping, payroll and taxes with one company, Newland and Company, as of our new fiscal year July 1, 2009, and to move the grants account back into the regular checking ledger and have one ledger. Jim Gordon seconded the motion and all were in favor.**

### **Diana's position**

Jack and Becky discussed how they came to the figure of Diana's proposed salary of \$24,000 in 2009 – 2010. Becky had taken the results from the MT Nonprofit salary and benefit survey, found a position most closely related to Diana's current position to come up with a base average hourly rate of \$17 times a 30 hour work week. She reiterated how important Diana has been to the MWCA since she came on a year ago. There were no questions. Morgan commented that if wanted to get things done to the level we are proposing, we need to compensate motivated, good staff.

### **2009/2010 Proposed Budget**

Judie and Becky reviewed the budget with the board line by line and answered questions from the board. **Danny McIntosh motioned to approve the 2009/2010 budget and Dave Brink seconded. All were in favor.**

### **2009 Trust Fund Grants**

Becky reported that the MWCA was fully funded for the 2010 Calendar Grant and for the final phase of the Zero Spread Grant. She had not received the contract, but reminded the board of

the calendar project and how they would be designed and also that the majority of funding from Zero Spread was to go towards a spring advertising campaign and the remainder to go towards weed ID revisions on the Association website. Other updates would be added as well to make it more user-friendly. There was question of what the calendars would be costing and Becky explained a plan of selling 25,000 to weed coordinators and professionals for \$.75 each, and to take 5,000 or so and retail them for \$5.00 each and sell them on the website. **Danny McIntosh motioned that we send a calendar to each member, and Brink seconded this motion and all were in favor.** Becky stated she would send out a calendar at Christmas to each member and Paul brought up costs associated with mailing. Becky would work to tie in the calendar with the winter newsletter.

### **Association investments**

The board discussed the present economy and what to do with the two CD's that were maturing this April. There was talk of savings accounts and of merging the two CD's for more money into a long term investment. However, due to the economic climate, the latter suggestion was deemed not prudent. **Gary Olsen moved that the two CD's due this month get reinvested at one year at a CD rate separately. Jim Ghekiere seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

### **Board development**

Jack talked about the hardship the VP faces in trying to get board nominations. He encouraged the board to help in this process. Becky reminded the board of the recommendation a few years back to look at the make up of your board and look at the professionals missing from the table; she mentioned we might want to look into soliciting an attorney and a marketing expert to the board. Lisa suggested we get someone from Northern Ag to sit on the board, such as Russell Nimetz. There was also discussion on the absence policy regarding board members. Several board members have not been able to make many of the board meetings during their term. The current policy states they can miss three meetings in a year, but this was based on four meetings a year. There was discussion that the board take action if necessary, but in the end, everyone felt the current policy of leaving the decision to approach or remove a board member be left in the executive committee's hands. **Morgan moved that we change the meeting policy to state that board members must attend two of three meetings in a year. Danny seconded. 9 in favor and 3 opposed. Motion passes.**

### **Other business**

Becky asked the board about gift ideas for ill board members. There was no decision made.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009