

Environmental Quality Council (EQC) Meeting
January 13 - 14, 2016
Noxious Weed Coordination Report

State Noxious Weed Coordinator

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Report submitted by Dave Burch.

Primary duties and responsibilities of the position are to provide statewide noxious weed coordination, management of the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund and Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Programs and supervision of three (3) FTE.

Status Report for FY16 – 2nd Quarter

State Noxious Weed Coordinator Activities October – December 2015:

Program Management:

- Received and reviewed 87 Noxious Weed Trust Fund applications requesting over \$2 million.
- Continued to oversee the operations of the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program.
- Trained the new Noxious Weed Grant Coordinator.

County and tribal weed district support:

- Technical and regulatory compliance assistance to County and Tribal Weed coordinators, weed boards and county commissioners: October – assisted: Power River County with budget and weed program responsibilities; Judith Basin County with overall county program including grants and contracts.
- Montana Weed Control Act Interpretation and Implementation assistance; form and process assistance: November – assisted Teton County with municipality weed management issue.
- The program goal is to meet with one-third (1/3) of county and tribal county weed districts annually:
 - October – December met with 25 of the 56 counties including: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Carter, Cascade, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Flathead, Gallatin, Golden Valley, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Liberty, Mineral, Musselshell, Petroleum, Powell, Ravalli, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole and Valley County Weed District Coordinators.

Conduct Training and Outreach:

- Conducted “New County and Tribal Weed District Coordinator Training” November 4-6, 2015:
 - 29 attendees from Counties; Forest Service; Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe.
- Participated on the planning committee for the Montana Weed Control Association Annual Conference held January 13 & 14, 2016.

- Serve as Chairman of the Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign; we are implementing a new program called “Adopt A Trailhead.” Conducted one new project in Missoula County in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service, County Weed District and the Montana Department of Agriculture.
- Assisting with the planning of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) - Invasive Species Summit to be held April 12-13, 2016.
- Assisting in the final review of the Invasive Species Survey.

Respond to Noxious Weed Infestations:

- Coordinated one new noxious weed invader response, including emergency response, containment and management efforts for Yellow starthistle. Activities included conducting delimitation surveys, seed trace back information and inspections.
- Participated in Noxious Weed Task Force issues for Rush skeletonweed with Sanders and Lincoln Counties, private landowners and the USDA Forest Service on protocol for implementing a new program for noxious weeds and fire management. This will include pre-certification of fields so fire command units can set up fire camps in fields that are free of noxious weeds.

State, regional and national coordination:

- Serve as Department representative on the Aquatic Invasive Species team, along with departments of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Natural Resources and Conservation, and Transportation. We meet on a regular scheduled monthly meeting (every third Tuesday).
- Serve as a member of the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC). Attended meetings and met on sub-committees for the summit meeting and strategic plan.
- Attended the Western Invasive Weed Summit in Boise ID, the meeting focused on Sage Grouse and weed control of Cheatgrass and other invasive species, over 250 participants attended the meeting from 11 western states. The goal of the summit was to build on the recent Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) publication, *Invasive Plant Management and Greater Sage-grouse Conservation: A Review and Status Report with Strategic Recommendations for Improvement*. We will refine the report's challenges and barriers and develop recommendations for securing adequate and consistent program funding at county, state, and federal levels. The final product of the Summit will be the development of an Action Plan to help guide state and federal agencies, local governments and private entities in a coordinated and effective approach to addressing this important conservation issue.
- Continue to prepare the legislative biennial weed report for FY 14 and FY 15.
- Attended the Western Weed Coordinating Committee, Missouri River Watershed Coalition and the State Weed Coordinator Alliance meetings in Nevada, these are annual meetings to discuss a variety of subjects and coordination efforts between the western states.