

High Plains Weed Management Association

Board Meeting Minutes: April 11, 2008

The April 11, 2008 meeting of the High Plains Weed Management Association was called to order by President Jeff Schledewitz at 10:10 a.m. Those in attendance included: Jeff Schledewitz, Nick Sanderson, Owen Walker, Terry Raymer, Mike Sarchet, Ron Moore, Ron Cacek, Roy Lyles, Georgette Jordening, Curtis Cloud, Jennifer Rogers, Kay Grote, and Mike Marker.

2. Minutes: The previous meeting's minutes (March 13, 2008) were reviewed. Addition: Curtis Cloud attended the meeting and was left off of the list. Motion made by Owen Walker to accept the March 13, 2008 minutes as amended; Nick Sanderson seconded. Motion carried - unanimous

3. Treasurer's Report: Everyone went over the Treasurer's Report. Previous balance was \$4,221.59, with one deposit of \$900.00, and two expenses, \$10.00 to the Nebraska Secretary of State and \$1,311.46 to Staples. Ending balance: \$3,800.13.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report by Nick Sanderson; seconded by Terry Raymer. Motion carried - unanimous.

4. Reports:

a. RC&D Meeting, MOU – There was a meeting between the subcommittees of HPWMA and Panhandle RC&D, and everyone has received a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations that was put together at that meeting. RC&D approved the MOU on April 10, 2008. There were no comments or questions. Motion made by Terry Raymer to accept the MOU with Panhandle RC&D; seconded by Nick Sanderson. Motion carried – unanimous.

b. NPNRD Meeting, MOU – President Schledewitz attending the April 10, 2008 meeting of the North Platte NRD to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between the NPNRD and HPWMA. Everyone took a moment to read through the proposed MOU. President Schledewitz mentioned that under “Responsibilities of HPWMA,” it is basically spelled out what the organization will provide. All equipment will be provided by HPWMA except a vehicle for the Field Coordinator, which will be provided by the NPNRD. The NPNRD will take care of payroll, taxes, recordkeeping, paychecks, workman compensation for the Project Manager and Field Coordinator. HPWMA will reimburse the NPNRD quarterly. President Schledewitz thinks this will be a great help to the organization. No questions were presented from the group. The NPNRD board approved and signed the MOU at their board meeting on April 10, 2008. Motion was made by Nick Sanderson to accept the MOU with NPNRD; seconded by Terry Raymer. Motion carried – unanimous. Pres. Schledewitz will sign the MOU.

c. Appointment of Project Manager, Field Coordinator – Officers have met, and Pres. Schledewitz has talked to the members of HPWMA about who should be the Project Manager. The acting board has proposed to hire Dennis Beyer on a 90% commitment to HPWMA, and will provide 10% of his to continue his project and commitments with NPNRD on the Nine Mile Creek project. Motion was made by Nick Sanderson to appoint Dennis Beyer as Project Manager of HPWMA; seconded by Owen Walker. Motion carried – unanimous.

Through the MOU with NPNRD, the seating board has talked with Roy Lyles, and Roy has volunteered to put in 10-15 hours per week as Field Coordinator, working with contractors, landowners, and weed superintendents on the different projects in the coverage area of the group. His duties through the North Platte NRD will be continued in the remaining hours per week. NPNRD has agreed to the arrangement. Curtis Cloud questioned whether 10-15 hours would be enough to complete the work. Pres. Schledewitz said we will just need to see if it ends up being enough, especially if the Weed Superintendents can put in a lot of time to assist with the project. Dennis, as Project Manager, will also be able to assist with those duties. Motion made by Owen Walker to accept Roy Lyles as Field Coordinator for HPWMA; seconded by Nick Sanderson. Motion carried – unanimous.

d. Summit update – Mike Sarchet gave an update on the summit in May. All of the booths for the Summit have been filled. Based on the commitments, the total sponsoring dollars is \$28,150, including the grant award from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Wyoming's Department of Agriculture has really stepped up and agreed to cover the cost of the C.D.'s that will be distributed to participants (\$9.95 per C.D.). All speakers except one have confirmed, and the final one is expected to give a definite answer next week. Registrations total 73 right now, and 31 registrations have come in that haven't had payment received yet. The Missouri River Invasive Species Coalition meeting has been confirmed for the third day. The Weed Management Association's directors requested to hold an association meeting the evening of the sixth, as part of the conference. There has also been enough confirmed to solidify a quorum for the Governor's task force meeting. 17 have confirmed so far (with more expected) for the round table discussions on Thursday. Sandra Hansen did a great article in the paper last Sunday, and she will also be putting together some ads for the newspaper, and a format that can be sent to any of the papers, in order to advertise more for the day passes. No questions were presented on the Summit. Pres. Schledewitz said that if any help is needed, the HPWMA, would be more than happy to help.

5. Old business

a. List of potential board members – A list was included in the packets of people who have called in to confirm they would like to be a part of board. Members will be putting together a description for the responsibilities of the board members, and then set up meetings with the potentials in order to have a board in place in the near future. There hasn't been much response

from the southern counties like Deuel County. Verlin Bruns the RC&D representative from Deuel County talked with the commissioners, and it looks like they will be joining soon; Pres. Schledewitz offered to do a presentation with the commissioners whenever they would like. There is quite a problem in that area, so they would be an important part of the program. Mike Sarchet said that may be an ideal place to put a research plot for the university test plots. They will need a mile site dedicated as a research plot by April 23rd. Pres. Schledewitz believes the board is going to be great based on the response so far.

b. LB 701 Funding – Invoices have to be in June 15th for last year's LB 701 funds, so that work needs to be continued in order to finish spending those funds in time. It is important to have those projects lined up by the first of May, and to follow-up with mapping. There's approximately \$33,000 left. The reason for that was the early freeze which halted a lot of those projects. If the helicopter comes up for the summit, BASF would like it to spray some of the acreage while it's here. That may be an opportunity to get some of the large plots along the river sprayed this spring.

The 2008-2009 application was just finished and sent in. A total of \$1.6 million was requested, and they only have a total of \$2 million available. Dennis Beyer and Pres. Schledewitz met with Mitch Coffin and the department in Grand Island, and they requested that we submit the amount that we think we need, as opposed to a restricted request based on the budget. Only 100 feet on the actual river banks will be allowed for next year, including islands. It will be awarded around the first part of May. Mike Sarchet said that the request was based on the Association's top three priorities, in order to provide the opportunity for them to fund a portion, if their budget doesn't allow them to fund the entire request. The work Mike's been doing with the task force, and the meeting in Grand Island was a great help in this year's funding proposal.

6. New business

a. News articles for "Weed Watch" spring edition – Kristi needs them in by late this afternoon (April 11). Curtis thought it needed to be in by April 10th. She has gotten quite a few good articles, the size of it will basically be doubled.

b. Vehicle Lease, Insurance – Pres. Schledewitz has been visiting with local car dealers for transportation for the Project Manager. They looked at one vehicle to get an idea on costs and that option would be to lease a 2007 Ford Explorer, for \$400 per month; the Association would only be responsible for the monthly payment and insurance. Ron Moore said NRCS doesn't have a vehicle available at this time, but he will continue checking into it. Pres. Schledewitz said we would need to be able to have an off-road vehicle in order to go to the project sites. NRCS wouldn't have a vehicle like that. Terry Raymer said maybe government surplus vehicles would be an option. Pres. Schledewitz will look into those options. Ron Moore also suggested maybe approaching a car dealership on donating a vehicle. Mike Sarchet

suggested checking into the dealers on their certified used vehicles. Motion made by Terry Raymer to start looking at all the options and present it back at the next meeting to make a final decision then; seconded by Kay Grote. Motion carried – unanimous.

c. Liability Insurance for Employees – JG Elliot is putting together a quote for errors and omissions and liabilities, as well as a bid on vehicle insurance for the employees and board of directors. Pres. Schledewitz said he would like the board to vote to accept the packet put together by JG Elliot once that comes through in order to get that safeguard in place. County Commissioners have errors and omissions insurance as well, and Mike Marker believes it is incredibly important to have that in place. Mike Sarchet suggested getting at least three comparable bids for the insurance simply because of the funding that the group will be receiving. Motion made by Owen Walker to obtain two additional bids on the insurance (with a total of three bids) and to authorize Pres. Schledewitz to purchase policies based on those bids; seconded by Nick Sanderson. Motion carried – unanimous.

d. Debit card – Pres. Schledewitz has spoken with the bank regarding obtaining a debit card for the Project Manager and Field Coordinator to cover expenses incurred during work on the projects (going out of town, meals, etc.). There would be a limit of approximately \$1000 per month on travel and expenses. That number will need to be re-evaluated once the work begins to see if it needs to be higher or lower. Ron Cacek asked why a debit card would be gotten as opposed to a credit card. With a debit, Nick Sanderson said you would only be spending the money that you had, but it was believed that there is better tracking through a credit card. Local banks are able to issue credit cards as well. Everyone agreed that a credit card would be more appropriate. Ron Moore suggested bonding the treasurer as well. The county should have him bonded already if he is a commissioner. Motion made by Terry Raymer to acquire credit cards for the Project Manager and Field Coordinator; seconded by Kay Grote. Motion carried – unanimous.

e. Articles of Incorporation (addition) – The current Articles of Incorporation still has Twin Cities Development and Rawnda Pierce as the mailing address and contact person. The changes need to be made and filed. The correspondence would be Jeff Schledewitz, High Plains Weed Management Association at 1517 Broadway Suite 101, Scottsbluff, NE 69361. Mike Sarchet said TCD had their required audit to approve the switch of the checking account at their board meeting. Motion made by Nick Sanderson to amend the articles of incorporation's correspondence and contact information to Jeff Schledewitz, High Plains Weed Management Association, 1517 Broadway Suite 101, Scottsbluff NE 69361 and to pay the filing fee; seconded by Owen Walker. Motion carried – unanimous.

f. ETF Budget Changes (addition) – Pres. Schledewitz said the budget was revised on the North Platte River Invasive Species Project through the Environmental Trust Fund, due to the lesser amount awarded (\$1.6 million for the first year). Also, the Nebraska Game & Parks

Commission sent a letter to the group requesting that the goat element be excluded from the grant and projects. So those funds were removed, and the funds were rearranged. The University through the Governor's task force requested that we include \$60,000 for test plots on control measures which was included in the final budget as well, after an agreement by the Executive Committee to support the test plots. Curtis Cloud, who was in charge of revising the budget proposal said the office and legal assistance (\$40,000) was taken directly from the RC&D MOU, and Lisa through the Environmental Trust said individual items can be changed with prior approval if necessary during implementation. The test plot Mike Sarchet mentioned earlier would come from the \$60,000 support included in the ETF final budget submission. The test plots are designed to provide hard data regarding the options for invasive species removal.

The agreement at the task force was that if we could put in \$60,000 to cover the first year of testing, then the project would continue for two more years, and those costs would be covered by other WMAs during those years. Due to the \$60,000 support, they will be able to start their project this spring. Since the original budget already had some money in it for test plots and research, the amount just needed to be increased. UNL will provide the work and staff and will coordinate with the superintendents and HPWMA regarding the sites chosen. They will begin as early as April 23, looking at designated test plots, and coordinating for HPWMA. Pres. Schledewitz said the Deuel County spot would be ideal, and Galen Wittrock with the South Platte NRD would be able to assist with that as well. If anyone else has a full mile of project area work that would like to be a part of the testing, just let Pres. Schledewitz know. Mike Sarchet said the most important result of this collaboration is what it does for HPWMA statewide, in terms of notoriety and by agreeing this, we are supporting the governor's task force, and we are the first WMA to do a cooperative effort so it puts HPWMA in a very strong leadership membership. The two board members on the ETF who were aware of this were strongly in support of it. This gives us a very strong position for future funding because it shows our willingness to step up and coordinate with the university.

We received final approval last Thursday from the ETF on the three preliminary grant awards. We received the contracts in the mail and need to sign them and send them back in to finalize the agreement. Motion made by Kay Grote to approve the three contracts through the Environmental Trust Fund and send them back in; seconded by Owen Walker. Motion carried – unanimous.

Roy Lyles said he would like to meet with the board or interested parties in order to discuss priorities and projects so we can begin implementation. Pres. Schledewitz said we need to set up a landowner's meeting as soon as possible to work on procedures, protocol, etc. to start implementation. The NRD has a list of practices, cost shares, etc., and Roy would like to see the same here. We need something in writing to present to the landowners. Roy said his opinion on the board members list is that this list is too long, and Pres. Schledewitz said based on the bylaws, the total number will be 7-11. The job description for the board members needs to be

developed in order to set up the meetings to lay out what the responsibilities and duties will be. Time commitment is going to be a big factor for the potential board members.

Website - Kay Grote brought up the website situation. The North Platte NRD website is just a placeholder for now, and Kay believes we should probably wait until after the summit, and then make a transition to the group's own website. It might be beneficial to announce the new website at the Summit. Jennifer Rogers said it would be quite a bit cheaper for the organization to design the site itself, and could have everything in place to have the website go live whenever the board wanted it to. Kay Grote thinks June first might be a good date to shoot for. Jennifer Rogers will look into costs associated with the website, as well as a template website to be brought to the next meeting. Jennifer and Pres. Schledewitz will start looking at different options (design, domain, etc.) and bring back to the next meeting for board approval.

7. Next meeting time and date – The next meeting of the HPWMA Board of Directors will be held the final day of the Summit, following the tours on May 8, 2008 at 1:30 p.m at the Gering Civic Center. Mike Sarchet he will put us down for a room, as the Summit has the entire Civic Center booked.

8. Adjournment – Motion made by Kay Grote to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Owen Walker. Motion carried – unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 11:20.