

High Plains Weed Management Association
February 27, 2008

A meeting of the High Plains Weed Management Association was held February 27, 2008 at the Harms Advanced Technology Center in Scottsbluff, Neb. President Jeff Schledewitz called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Present were Schledewitz, Kay Grote, Dan Weinreis, Owen Walker, Gene Witt, Curtis Cloud, Nick Sanderson, Terry Raymer, Dennis Beyer, Mike Sarchet, Cris Burks, Brian Hiatt, and Justin Shaw.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Moved by Curtis Cloud, seconded by Owen Walker, to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2008 meeting. Unanimous.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Dennis Beyer reported the association's current balance is \$3,031.59. The latest deposits included payments from landowners Colburn, Merrigan and Blake for aerial spraying projects. They are still awaiting payments from Azarius and Parr. It was suggested that these bills should be resubmitted and Schledewitz will follow up with the landowners to see that payment is made to the association. Moved by Mike Sarchet, seconded by Terry Raymer, to accept the Treasurer's report. Unanimous.

4. Reports:

1. WYWMA—Mike Sarchet and Dennis Beyer attended the Wyoming Weed Management meeting in Casper Jan. 22-23 and presented the Nine Mile Creek video and made several contacts. They reported that representatives from BASF and Allegar will committed to providing \$1,000 for the Invasive Species Control Summit in May. They reported that Wyoming is very supportive of our efforts.

2. NE/WY Task Force—Curtis Cloud and Mike Sarchet will reported the task force will be meeting in Scottsbluff at the Harms Center on March 7 at 10:00 a.m. Mike reported that Colorado wants to get more involved and make it a three-state task force. He said Colorado officials are also looking at possibly doing something in Deuel County on the South Platte River. Slade Franklin and others are in Washington D.C. now meeting with the delegation to ask for full support funding for Salt Cedar/Russian olive Demonstration Control Act.

3. Nebraska Invasive Species Conference – Mike Sarchet and Dennis Beyer attended the conference Feb. 6-8 in Lincoln. They reported that a lot of agency heads attended but they found that more people who are willing to do the work in the field are needed. They were concerned that agencies were talking, but no action was taking place. They reported that from the conference they got the impression that Fish and Wildlife and Game and Parks are concerned that weed management practices are aimed at taking out all trees along the rivers. Sarchet and Beyer said there needs to be an education effort to dispel this misconception. Legislative issues related to invasive species were also discussed at the conference.

4. Nebraska Weed Control Association – Jeff Schledewitz and Dennis Beyer Jeff, Dennis, attended the recent meeting of the NWCA and gave a presentation about the work done on Nine Mile Creek. More Nine Mile videos were also given out. Dennis stressed that work on Nine Mile needs to be replicated for future projects rather than having to “reinvent the wheel” for new projects.

5. Summit and brochure, etc. -- Mike Sarchet reported that brochures for the May summit event are being circulated, but it will be updated next week with new speakers along with the ETF and other sponsorships.

a. Confirmations and additions of presenters, exhibitors—Mike reported that passes for local landowners will be available in April enabling them to attend the day events and tours, but not partake in the evening meals. More equipment dealers are also being added to the exhibitors list. A FECON demonstration prior to Summit is also being planned and the results will be shown during the summit tours. **ACTION ITEM:** Start advertising for the summit now.

5. Old business

Cris Burks suggested getting bids in now for planned fall helicopter work as the copter services will book up early.

1. Computer purchase – Curtis Cloud reported that after the board authorized the purchase of a laptop for no more than \$1,500 at January 17 meeting, the officers got two different bids: Bytes @ \$1,825 and Connecting Point @ \$1,464, which included accessories, printers, and scanners. With tax the purchase price at Connecting Point was \$1,525, an excess of \$25. The laptop will now be used for any HPWMA work, including presentations, and bookkeeping. Dennis Beyer was assigned guardian. Moved by Cris Burks, seconded by Terry Raymer, to accept the \$25 overrun on laptop purchase. Unanimous.

2. Form letter -- Kay Grote provided a draft of a form letter to be used to solicit contributions, members, or other support for the Association. Some revisions were made by the group. The letter will be given to county superintendents and current members to circulate.

3. ETF grants – Jeff Schledewitz reported that the HPWMA had made the short list for three Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund grants including the \$1.6 million for control projects on river and tributaries; \$8,500 for Nine Mile Creek invasive species control and habitat restoration; and \$14,100 for the Summit. ETF will be here April 14 to award the grants. No publicity and project promises should be given until the grants are confirmed and awarded. Mike suggested starting landowner meetings approximately two weeks after April 14 award date to get moving on county projects. **ACTION ITEMS:** The superintendents need to have each project protocol laid out and work on contractor contracts so they’re ready to go. The group needs to be thinking of landowner meetings and dates, times, and objectives. Two FECON dealers will have some lease options to present to the Association.

4. Other – Terry Raymer asked about reimbursement payments. Dennis reported that the accounting is now straightened out and payments should be forthcoming.

6. New business

1. Application to Panhandle RC&D -- Jeff Schledewitz updated the superintendents about moving the Association into Panhandle RC&D office in downtown Scottsbluff and sponsored under the RC&D. This would allow HPWMA to house their manager, field coordinator and secretary (Jennifer Rogers) with RC&D. The Association would then be a stand-alone entity, with its own board of directors and 501(c) (3) status. With approval, Jeff would like to take the proposal of the move to the RC&D board. Jeff provided the application for RC&D project measure proposal form for review. Ron Moore with RC&D met with the group to explain the proposal. He said after RC&D board approval, the two boards would need to set down together to go over structure and goals. Ron explained the application that would allow RC&D to work for the Association to bring in other USDA agencies. He said there may be a vehicle through NRCS that would also be available to the Association. Moore pointed out that RC&Ds can also work across state lines and cooperates with the Wheatland, Wyoming office. The RC&D Board meeting is March 13. Moved Nick Sanderson, seconded by Terry Raymer, to proceed with the application to join RC&D and meet with the RC&D board on March 13, second by Terry Raymer. Unanimous.

2. By-Laws adoption – Dennis Beyer presented a general overview of By-Laws. The draft has been reviewed by Ron Moore with RC&D. It was suggested that an attorney look over the draft. Need by-laws adopted first before the 501(c) (3) can be granted. The RC&D board would first need to accept HPWMA before 501(c) (3) status can be granted. The board agreed the Location of the Association should be at the RC&D (pending approval) at 1517 Broadway, Scottsbluff. The board also considered other questions including frequency of meetings, mailing of notices, structure of meetings, etc. Moved by Mike Sarchet, seconded by Curtis Cloud, that the By-Laws be completed by the executive committee (board officers), undergo legal review and be mailed out to members within five days for review; if no additional input is requested, the officers will submit the By Laws in with 501(c)(3) application. Unanimous.

Jeff asked for names of potential board members from superintendents. Ideally, the board of directors need diversity, be politically well connected, and include landowners. **ACTION ITEM:** Superintendents are to send in names of potential Board Members to Dennis or Jeff within a week.

Discussion was held on how the board members will be selected. It was decided they will be reviewed by the executive committee for recommendation, and then given to the acting board for final approval. The structure of board was discussed. It was suggested that once the Board has been appointed, then the officers will be elected of the board members by the board members. Look at the by-law draft to make sure it's written this way. It was suggested that once the official Board is established, to keep this group of current board members (county superintendents) as the Project Committee to select and overview the actual project work.

Discussion was held on the position of Board treasurer and if the Association's accounts should be handled by the board treasurer or by the Association's manager. It was also suggested hiring an accounting firm to handle the accounts. This service may already be provided through the RC&D.

3. River Network –Dennis Beyer explained that organizational help is available through the River Network. It was decided that membership and use of this organization will be determined after the official board is put into place.

4. Other – The LB701 funding that the Association received last fall needs to be spent by June 1. This amounts to \$4,500 per county. Priority projects have been identified as those involving Russian olive and Saltcedar removal and management in riparian areas on the North Platte and South Platte rivers. This could involve more helicopter spraying projects. **ACTION ITEMS:** County Superintendents need to have landowner approval by April. Spring projects should be removal or basal-bark treatment. Designate wetlands or riparian areas that need to be treated. Only two maps have been turned in so far for spraying projects. Landowners have three options: spraying, removal, and stump treatment. Curtis asked that the weed removal protocol be sent out to all the Superintendents to provide to landowners.

7. Next meeting time and date

The next meeting was set for Friday, March 14, 10:00 a.m. at the Harms Center. Superintendents are encouraged to bring potential board members to this meeting.

8. Adjourn

Schledewitz adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.