

High Plains Weed Management Association

Board Meeting Minutes: May 8, 2008

The May 8, 2008 meeting of the High Plains Weed Management Association was called to order by President Jeff Schledewitz at 1:50 p.m. Those in attendance included: Kay Grote, Georgette Jordening, Dennis Beyer, Jeff Schledewitz, Brian Townsend, Terry Raymer, Curtis Could, Nick Sanderson, Justin Shaw, Owen Walker, Roy Lyles, Dallas Johannsen, and Jennifer Rogers. Jeff welcomed Justin Shaw, Weed Superintendent from Deuel County, as they have recently chosen to join the group. Jeff also mentioned the LB 701 grant award of \$250,000 for High Plains for the 2008-2009 grant cycle.

2. Minutes: The previous meeting's minutes (April 11, 2008) were reviewed.

Motion made by Kay Grote to accept the April 11, 2008 minutes as amended; seconded by Nick Sanderson. Motion carried – unanimous.

3. Treasurer's Report: Everyone went over the Treasurer's Report. The beginning balance was \$3,800.13, and there were deposits that were all registrations for the Summit (totaling \$1,135.00), and one expense to Platte Valley Bank for a check order of \$57.78, bringing the ending balance to \$4,877.35.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report by Owen Walker; seconded by Kay Grote. Motion carried - unanimous.

4. Bills-to-be-Paid: Went through the Bills-to-be-Paid including: two reimbursements to Dennis Beyer for covering two bills for the Summit including the display boards and the materials for the handouts on his personal credit card. If any of the individual counties receives Weed Watch inserts, whenever they receive the bills, just send them our way. The Bridgeport News Blade also sent a bill for \$129.50 for the Weed Watch. The law firm of Smith, Snyder, Pettitt & Wallien Law Office also sent a bill for the services rendered to High Plains for \$1,037.76.

Motion to approve and pay the Bills-to-be-Paid as presented by Owen Walker, seconded by Nick Sanderson. Motion carried – unanimous.

5. Reports:

a. Summit Update – The bills with the Summit will be sent to us. Slade Franklin with the Department of Ag was going to be in charge of the c.d. so we should just check with him in regard to how those are going to be sent out. During the Summit, Mark and Lisa from the ETF gained some new ideas regarding what they've learned, so they are thinking it might be beneficial to spread out the \$1.8 million over three years as opposed to the two because of information they learned from the Game & Parks and other wildlife organizations. So they

would like to go ahead and talk to the group. Jeff thinks that will be a great idea because of the total funds that we need to get spent in such a short amount of time. They recognize that and so they're willing to work with us on the time period. Dallas suggested that possible other methods like basal spraying might be good to do during that time. Curtis knows that there are inspections and studies that have to be done before you can actually remove the trees in order to see the impact on the wildlife. There are possible exceptions and other options to get around those time tables and requirements. Emily Munter would probably be the best person to discuss that with. An exhibitor mentioned that he would be interested in putting more money toward another Summit, which might be something to consider in the future. No action needed at this time.

5. Old business

a. LB 701 funding needs to be spent – A little more than \$30,000 is left for the LB 701 funds for the previous year's grant. Owen Walker described a project he completed down in Morrill County. The State lakes were getting overgrown so bad that people couldn't even fish. So they hired Mike Dalby and they cleared the lakes; it took approximately 80 hours and they finished yesterday getting it cleared up. It is a huge difference for fishers and campers. Jeff mentioned that we will need paperwork from Game and Parks in regard to their in-kind contribution. We also need a copy of Dalby's insurance in order to start a file. They are going to be having some pictures in the Bridgeport paper, and Owen will get us some copies of that. Money will be going to Justin down in Deuel County to get some projects done down there as well. Roy and Jeff went out and talked to a landowner down in Banner County and unfortunately, he is going to keep the money and do it themselves through EQIP. They might not be doing it the proper way. Roy thinks we need to get guidelines out, but the landowner doesn't actually have to follow those guidelines in order to get reimbursed. Dallas thinks we might have to just see what happens as far as the re-growth happens. Kay said that as a result of the workgroup that the guidelines that were decided upon will be able to be a part of the contract as far as ripping and pulling goes. Kay suggests that the guidelines will need to be a part of the contract portion of HPWMA to do it. Owen wants to know exactly how far up the drain he can go. Last year's LB701 is pretty open in regard to how far out they can go out. Terry has some people interested on Russian Olive along Blue Creek (about a mile) with Russian Olive. They want to go into organic farming so that might be a problem for them. \$50 per acre was what was initially looked at for landowner cost-share. Everyone should probably just get a hold of Roy to have him take a look at the area and come up with the plan. Jeff in Scotts Bluff county has a couple of landowners that would be good to get going with. Roy is meeting with the Shaws on another possible project that would probably need helicopter. Jeff needs a Platte map from the lake system from Owen as well marked in where projects were done.

It has come to the attention of the group that State and Federal agencies are bound to comply with not threatening endangered species, cultural resources, and more on that list, another one is following requirements from the migratory bird act. The bird nesting period is April 15-July 15,

so state and federal programs are required to not conduct harmful activities during those times or survey those areas to make sure that they're segregating those areas, another option is to get a waiver. ETF funds are considered to be state funds, which means that we would need to follow those criteria with our projects that fall under those restrictions. Everything is migratory except starlings, sparrow, and pigeons. Sometimes they use July 1 and some use July 15. The Republican River has had some problems with some of those issues down there, so we'll definitely want to be aware of it next year. Mark with the Environmental Trust would be okay with us getting an extension, but we'd need to ask for that extension before implementation on those funds if we have issues getting those projects done with those restrictions. We could get even three to four year extensions. In some cases, it might hurt us with applications in the future if they see that we're not really getting our money spent in a good amount of time. Spraying would not constitute a disturbance under these guidelines, so that work would still be able to be done. Surveying might be an option in some areas in order to get the go-ahead for removal during those time periods. It might also be a good idea to talk with Mitch on the LB701 funds with extending last year's leftover funding because of the migratory act.

b. Potential Board Members Meeting – Letters were sent out to potential board members for an introductory meeting at the Gering Civic Center on May 15 from 11:00 to 2:00; lunch will be provided.

Board Member Commitment Form – a draft was presented as an option for the potential board members to sign and in order for them to understand their duties and commitments for High Plains; the executive committee will look through it and have something to present at the potential's meeting.

Motion made by Kay Grote for Jeff Schledewitz, Dennis Beyer and Jennifer Rogers to iron out the details of the Board Member Commitment Form; seconded by Terry Raymer. Motion carried – unanimous.

c. Website – Jennifer presented what she had put together for High Plains' website. She also told the group that the costs would be \$166.80 for two year's domain and hosting charges, and any additional domain names would be \$10.00 more per year.

Nick Sanderson made a motion for Jennifer to complete website including paying the domain and hosting fees for www.hpwma.org and three additional domain names; seconded by Justin Shaw. Motion carried – unanimous.

d. Vehicle lease, insurance – NRCS has given a truck for the use of HPWMA; the group has talked about leasing a vehicle – preferably an SUV for Dennis to be able to transport people to the sites. Roy and Dennis did some checking and have three (another at the office) bids:

2008 Honda Pilot, 3 row seat, 3 year warranty bumper-to-bumper. \$415.12 per month for three years to lease. Should have the best mileage. 15,000 a year (Roy's preference); warranty repair is the best; the Honda's lease is lower because the resale is better than other models.

2008 Dodge Durango, same features \$753.00 a month to lease. 15,000 a year

2008 Mazda SUV, two rows of seats. \$372.53 a month. 15,000 miles a year

2007 Ford Explorer from Wolf \$469 or \$472. 12,000 miles a year

Kay Grote moves to go forward with the 2008 Honda Pilot lease for \$415.12 per month for a three year lease; seconded by Terry Raymer. Motion carried – unanimous.

e. Liability insurance for employees – have talked to several different insurance carriers and some packages have been put together, but Jeff and Dennis haven't had the chance to pick the best one and purchase it yet. Jeff will present the decision at the next meeting.

f. Debit card – hasn't been finalized yet; at the last meeting, it was decided that a credit card would be the better option for the group for any expenses that Roy and Dennis might have to incur.

g. Articles of Incorporation – Dale Wallien with the law firm of Smith, Snyder, Pettitt & Wallien looked through the amended Articles of Incorporation and told the group that they just need to re-file them with the Secretary of State's office and then advertise them in the paper three times.

6. New business

a. Landowner Guideline/Forms – Members of High Plains met on Monday the 5th in Bridgeport with other local agencies and partners to set up cost-share procedures for project implementation. Everyone went through the proposals handed out by Kay and Roy that were put together from the information gathered at that meeting. The group feels it would be a good idea to have these items in place as soon as possible.

It might be beneficial to set a flat rate for phragmites as opposed to the points system, since eradication of phragmites and salt cedar are the number one priority for the group, and they don't plan to turn any projects away, which means their applications don't have to be ranked. It was suggested that it would be important to make sure the landowner is responsible for 15% even if other cost-share programs are utilized.

A question was brought up regarding situations that may arise if a landowner sells his or her property that High Plains is assisting with a project on. It's the seller's responsibility to let the

new landowner know because of the contract that is in place, and if they don't then the landowner has to pay back any cost share funds.

The next priority will be cost per acre with cost-share (all of the government programs are a year behind) so we'll have to set aside funds for that, as there are probably a few that are going to coincide with the agreements. Dallas said that the next sign-up will begin in July or August with a cutoff in October but the funding won't go until spring of 2009. Last year with the farm bill there was some interest in getting some funds for invasive species but none of that is in place yet and they don't know when the farm bill will get funded. It would also be beneficial to prioritize also based on what the land use will be after the removal. It was decided the group needed to form a committee in order to iron out the details of the Landowner Guidelines and the Program Descriptions/Goals for the group.

Landowner Guidelines/Program Descriptions and Goals Committee: Cris Burke, Curtis Cloud, Dallas Johannsen, Emily Munter, Kay Grote, Owen Walker, Roy Lyles, Dennis Beyer, and Jeff Schledewitz; the group will meet at 10:00 on May 14th at RC&D office.

Mitch Coffin stopped into the meeting and said that if we do the \$60,000 for the test plots through funding from the Dept of Agriculture as opposed from the Environmental Trust funds, they would be willing to do that (it would end up saving money in the long run). He doesn't think we can extend because of the way the system is set up at this time, but he will check into for the group.

7. Next meeting time and date – Thursday, May 15th at 11:00 a.m. with the potential board members at the Gering Civic Center. Lunch will be provided.

8. Adjournment – Motion made by to adjourn the meeting Owen Walker; seconded by Curtis Cloud. Motion carried – unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.