

NDWCA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Baymont Inn & Suites, Mandan, ND

March 24th, 2015

Yet to be Board Approved

President Derrill Fick called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Members present were Jim McAllister, Leon Pederson, Ron Manson, Bill Walker, Gary Hartman, Chelsey Penuel, Dan Dew, Kevin Schmidt and Merlin Leithold.

Also present was Stan Wolf, Cass County weed officer, Ronda Moszer, FSA, and ND Ag. Commissioner Doug Goehring.

Additional agenda items were: under new business – Dollars for Scholars

Minutes were reviewed. Leon moved to approve the minutes as presented, Bill seconded the motion. M/C

Merlin gave the financial report, including the check register, the budget update, and the 2015 convention update. We had a net income on the beer and brat social of \$2,838.44, and \$7,461.72 on the annual meeting. We had 84 full registrations, and numerous spouse registrations.

Seven counties have not paid their memberships as of this meeting. Ahead of last year. People are getting used to paying their dues early again. Dan moved to approve the financial report, Kevin seconded the motion. M/C

Derrill asked for introductions from everyone, since we have guests that may not know all of us.

FSA Update – Ronda Moszer, district director, headquartered out of Bismarck. Ronda wants to answer questions that could not be answered when Linda Urlacher spoke at our annual meeting.

The state committee will be meeting in May. Question, who is responsible for weeds on pasture land, wasteland when only the cropland is in the program. Right now, it is the operator, but that may change. Leon feels that it should all fall to the landowner. Weed officers don't know who rents what, but we can find out who the landowner is. Spot checking is hardly done now. FSA relies on whistleblowers for the weed problems. Ronda is not sure if it would work for FSA. Ronda will check into it. If a violation occurred in 2014, that farm will be spot checked in 2015.

Doug asked what is done if there is a violation in CRP. Does FSA work with the area weed boards? Ronda: FSA does follow the agreement that was signed with the NDDA, FSA, and NDWCA. Ronda explained the steps that are taken. Merlin stated that by the time the weed board gets a letter of a violation, it is usually too late. Ronda agreed. When they do a spot check from a whistleblower, it is usually quicker. Leon had questions about WRP (Wetland Reduction Program) payments. Dan spoke on what they do in Renville County. Stan asked what can be done on pollinator practices that have weed issues. No definitive answer was given, other than spot spraying or clipping.

Derrill asked: if a farm is enrolled through the program, does that include the entire farm. Ronda is not quite sure. The state committee will be discussing this. Kevin stated that with his property along the river, there would be no way he would ever qualify for a payment. Biological control? Ronda is not sure. Bill stated that biocontrol is used where chemical can't be used. Ronda said that if the beetles are working, she couldn't see why it wouldn't be a control use. Ronda said there is nothing written in the rules. Merlin said that the weed association was against use of biocontrol on CRP, because CRP was cropland, having a chance to go back to cropland, and because of the heavy grass, where biocontrol would not work. Merlin asked if the weed boards will have a determination under the new farm program. Ronda stated that they have nothing either way. She will bring this to the committee. Doug said that it is state and federal laws to control noxious weeds. The weed people are responsible enforce the law. He seems it odd that the program would not utilize biological control. Doug can't see why FSA would bypass the county weed people. Ron stated that the whistleblowers are most likely angry neighbors, that do not see control, whether it be from biocontrol or not. Leon stated that organic people have to be looked at as well.

Derrill asked with the new farm program, will we be asked to inspect the weeds on the pastures, as well. Ronda is not sure, will ask the state board in May. A lot of discussion took place. Ron said that some weed boards just don't care. Dan said that it has to be a team effort, between FSA and the county weed board. Doug said that there has to be a policy in place, between FSA and the county weed board, when it comes to noxious weed issues. He agreed that some weed boards, county commissions, are just not active. It should not be mandatory to all counties, but counties should be allowed to be involved.

Ronda will contact the state office on issues that were brought up today, and see what they do. Merlin invited Ronda back to the June board meeting. Derrill thanked Ronda for coming.

Doug said that he is available to us for any issues we may have. He appreciated the invite.

Doug feels that it should be in their policy concerning biological control. Without it in writing, it could be different from county to county.

Derrill thanked Doug for coming.

Break

Discussion on convention. Went well. Questions on how long we are tied up to having it here, at the Baymont. We are here through 2019. We can move the convention, but if we leave we may not be able to come back. Merlin said we are locked in for this coming year, for sure. The board feels that the quality of service here has plummeted. The board wants Merlin to check into other hotels in Bismarck to see what is available, to possibly move the annual meeting in possibly 2017.

Committees: Derrill has been working on committees for 2015. Education committee: Dan Dew is the chairman. Trying to get someone on the committee from each area. By laws committee: Let Derrill know who wants to be on.

Education Committee report: Dan, Derrill and Stan went to Napoleon to present the winner with a plaque and t shirts. Even the local newspaper was there. Stan did a presentation.

Earth Day will be April 23rd. We again will have a booth. It will be held at the McCabe United Methodist Church in Bismarck. It starts at 3:30 until 7:30. Someone will use our costumes that day.

Sprayer schools: Set for May 18 in Dickinson, May 19 in Minot, and May 20 possibly in Carrington. Sprayer calibrations, weed ID, data logger help. There will be no ATV safety training. Dan would like to have separate days for ATV training. He would like one in the east and one in the west. Jim is already having one on May 13th, for his people, and Barnes County people. Class sizes are important. How many classes do we need? We may need several each spring for several years, until we get caught up. They are 4 hour classes. You could do possibly 2 classes each day. Dan would like to have a couple of classes to train the trainer. Then we would have more instructors to have classes. Dan will talk to Erick to see what his plans are. Good discussion took place. Bill said everyone should check with where they bought their machines from, as companies have training credits available from the manufactures. Possibly have these in June.

Poster Contest: Dan would like to run it earlier this year. He plans on doing a hands on approach.

NAISMA: Derrill still checking on memberships. Asking for support for bio-control support for CABBE. Annual conference is in Vancouver, BC, this fall.

Legislative: Merlin gave the board an update on bills so far, and their progress. HB1055 changes mills to percent's. 133 page bill, changes the entire tax code. Only effects the weed boards by changing mills to percent's. SB 2144, the Governor's consolidation of mill levies. The bill was amended as we asked to add noxious and invasive weeds back into the bill. Looks like it will pass as amended. If we have problems with the language, we can fix it next session, in friendly Ag. Committees instead of tax committees. SB 2009, the department budget, should pass through favorably, as far as weed control is concerned. HB 1456 asks that the federal government would give access land around Lake Oahe in Morton and Emmons County back to the state. This has been an issue that keeps coming back. Originally, this bill contained language with Sakakawea, and tribal land. The next hearing is this Thursday morning. SB 2217 basically states that a financial report must be filed with the auditor showing ending balances before a new budget can be approved. Counties already do this. This bill is for unelected board budgets. SB 2056 has passed, basically it changes a few words in our law, like certify to becomes request from. Makes language uniform throughout the code. SB 2268 would have required state employees to have legislative authorization to participate in groups that receive funds from the state, or that want to change state law. This bill has been killed.

Discussion was held whether Merlin has the board authority to speak on behalf of the board. Leon felt that he should have that authority. Some felt that he already has that authority, by knowing what the board wants from the meetings. Leon moved that the NDWCA board of directors support Merlin to testify on their behalf, Dan seconded the motion. M/C

Merlin brought up about the 3 mill requirement. Merlin has heard from some counties, whether it is still necessary, or should it be lowered to 2 mills. Should we bring it up at the area meetings to get a feeling what everyone wants? The feeling was to leave it alone.

Government Report: Dave could make the meeting due to a prior commitment. He has provided a written report for everyone to read.

March 24, 2015

Government Report to the NDWCA

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Hirsch, Government Representative

2015 Field Season:

Budget:

Biocontrol funding for APHIS is stable this fiscal year. Budgets have been going down the past few years but the budget will be “flat” meaning the same as last year.

PPQ will be able to participate in field day activities the summer.

Yellow toadflax biocontrol:

I am helping organize a biocontrol field trip that will assess the status of yellow toad flax biocontrol stem weevil survival. Field locations near Leola, SD (west of Aberdeen) and on the J. Clark Salyer refuge in ND will be visited by experts from Montana who originally supplied the weevils. There will be an opportunity for weed control officers to attend as well. I will make sure they are informed of the schedule when finalized. The trip is tentatively scheduled for the second week of June.

They may be transporting additional toadflax weevils with them depending on harvesting luck in Montana prior to their trip here. A permit is in place to bring material into ND.

Hound’s tongue biocontrol:

Still no news on when the permit for this biocontrol agent will be issued. The holdup is with the Fish and Wildlife Service at the National level. Biocontrol scientists are using extra care to make sure the application is complete and host specificity studies are well documented. This will help the chances of the application but this takes more time.

Prediction by Dave Hirsch:

Dave Hirsch will go out on a limb to predict leafy spurge bug populations will be much higher than last season. It’s no secret we should have an early spring with warmer conditions than the past years. This type of spring is favorable for healthier beetle development and better harvesting conditions. I also think this will translate into increased spurge control by the beetles.

NDDA: Chelsey gave the following report.

Asked if anyone received input from your areas regarding the LAP formula that the NDDA is currently using.

Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) funds has been revoked and reallocated

Revoked just over \$88,000

More than \$600,000 of additional county funds documented that were not reimbursed

Reallocating additional funds to counties that spent all or have less than 25% of the funds remaining

As of July 1, they are switching to NOGA (Notice of Grant Awards) for LAP and TAG.

State list review - held March 19

Open comment and survey close - March 26

Notice of changes - April 2

County list reviews – all counties that have a county list need to review the list every 5 years and notice must be given to the Department

Annual weed surveys still have a few stragglers

WSFF inspector training will be held at the Mandan ARS station on April 28th - Lane will get an agenda will be sent out soon

Yellow toadflax biocontrol workshop is in the works for June 10th at Ordway prairie near Eureka, SD
Lane will have more information on the workshop as plans become more concrete

Carol Randall and Sharlene Sing from the USFS will be hosting and bringing agents if possible

John Gaskin, supervisory research biologist from the Sydney, MT ARS station also plans to attend
They also plan to visit ND biocontrol sites near Minot that week as well

Jim mentioned that when the county commissioners hold their annual meeting in October that we should attend. Some thought we should have a booth. Discussion was very favorable. Merlin will check with the association of counties.

Industry Report: Bill stated that not a lot of changes since the annual meeting. Dow is still trying to get an aquatic label for milestone and capstone. But, it will not be a true aquatic label, but will improve when spraying close to water. There was a hearing for Method, Perspective and Streamline in February. Bayer had to get more information on label to EPA on waste, manure disposal, and then EPA will have 4 months to decide. Cost of Method is around \$320/gal. (8-12 oz/ac on Leafy Spurge), still with a one year haying/grazing restriction.

OLD BUSINESS:

IRS: Merlin told the board that he received another letter from IRS. We still owe them money, \$1,925.71. He contacted the Tax Team from Valley City, the ones who Becky had do our taxes. Very poor responses from them. Merlin sent information to the IRS. We owe this money because it is a penalty, \$20/day from November, 2012 back to December, 2010, for late filing. The board asked Merlin to talk to his county state's attorney, to see what we can do, when Merlin finds out the final decision from the IRS, if it is unfavorable to us.

Lunch Break

Research Fund: Stan Wolf discussed the research fund proposal. In discussion with Merlin, SBAR could be a source of funding. A lot of good discussion, for and against took place. Questioning why NDSU does not take this to the legislature themselves. Has NDSU bought into this? NDSU should be at the forefront, selling the idea. Merlin said that that would have to happen if it went to SBAR. We could be there in support, but the idea had to come from NDSU. Dan moved to table the research fund proposal to see if NDSU still wants to do this, and to see if they want to move forward to SBAR, Bill seconded the motion. M/C. Stan will talk to NDSU.

Education Grant: Merlin said that there will be a very large surplus in the EARP fund at the end of the biennium. The education committee should start working on a request from the department, whether it be inserts, posters, etc. We need to sell it to the commissioner. The department used to have a line item for advertising/education in the past. Derrill asked Chelsey if we would need a match, but that is only with federal funds. Bill said that we should start working on paper inserts, using something similar to the ones they use in Nebraska and South Dakota. Discussion was very favorable. Dan and the education committee will begin to work on it. Bill will get copies to everyone to look at.

By Laws: Derrill mentioned that we need to have a committee draw up changes for the government position. Merlin mentioned that the bylaws need to be looked at regarding the paid memberships and voting at the annual meeting. Leon moved that the executive committee and the executive secretary be the bylaws committee, Ron seconded the motion. M/C

Gravel Pits: Stan Wolf has compiled a draft of a uniform form that can be used throughout the state. The idea came from the annual meeting, during the panel discussion, to have a uniform form, posted on our website, for counties to use, if they so desire. Derrill said that there are more requests. There were some corrections that were found, that Stan will correct. He will send a corrected copy to the board for approval, before he would send to Terry, for the website. Ron moved to put the corrected forms on the website, Leon seconded the motion. M/C Bill said that each owner and operator needs to come up with a weed management plan.

Changing our annual meeting month: This came up from the January meeting. After some discussion, Ron moved to leave it as is, Kevin seconded the motion. M/C

NEW BUSINESS:

Bio-Control - NAISMA: Stan said that North Dakota does not contribute to this fund anymore. It is ironic, since North Dakota used to be a lead state in CABBIE and biocontrol research. Derrill said that NAISMA is trying to get more states involved again in CABBIE. It should come directly from the NDDA to CABBIE, not from the weed association. After some discussion, Bill moved to not act on this, Leon seconded the motion. M/C

Taking Special Funds: Should we set a policy to receive funds from other entities? After some discussion, Dan moved that the NDWCA not accept any donations if there are conditions or stipulations attached in order to receive that fund, Leon seconded the motion. M/C

State Noxious Weed List: Should we send a letter to the NDDA concerning the noxious weed list. Since the comment period is open, and we are the weed association, it would be good if we do send a letter. Derrill will send a letter, in support of the current noxious weed list, and also stating that Houndstongue is a weed to watch.

Fall Area Meeting Dates: Merlin said that he has questions when the area meetings will be held. He felt that we should set them up. The board felt that it was a good idea. Start times will be 9:00 am local time.

October 26 – Minot – Area III

October 27 – Devils Lake – Area I

October 28 – Valley City – Area II

October 29 – Mandan – Area IV

October 30 – Amidon – Area V

Merlin will check with Joan to make sure Amidon will work again.

Dollars for Scholars: Merlin received a request for a donation from Dollars for Scholars. After discussion, Derrill asked for a motion. Idea died due to a lack of a motion.

South Dakota Meeting: Ron said that in South Dakota, they are forced to attend. After some discussion, Derrill appointed a committee of himself, Ron, Leon, Bill and Chelsey to try and figure out how to increase attendance at the annual weed forum and at the annual meeting.

Ag Day at the State Capital – April 1st Derrill and Merlin will have a booth

Being no further business, Ron moved to adjourn the meeting, Bill seconded the motion. M/C

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Merlin Leithold

Executive secretary