

MEETING MINUTES

These abbreviated summary minutes will become the official adopted minutes at the next Montana Invasive Species Council meeting when they will be approved. Until then, they are considered a draft.

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| Meeting Name: | Montana Invasive Species Council | | |
| Date of Meeting: | April 12, 2023 | Time: | 9:00 AM |
| Minutes Prepared By: | Anna Connerton | Location: | Hauser Dam, Zoom |

Attendees

MISC (voting members underlined): Bryce Christiaens, Tom Woolf, Steve Wanderaas, Mike Bias, Jasmine Chaffee, Martin Charlo, Amy Gannon, Leigh Greenwood, Dennis Longknife, Jane Mangold, Sue Mills, Monica Pokorny, Paul Rossignol, Jan Stoddard, Steve Tyrrel, Andy Welch.

MISC staff: Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton

Other Attendees: Mark Bostrom, Kima Traynham, Casey Lewis, Arthur Potts, Brent Smith, Phil Matson, Sara Ricklefs, Molly Masters, Amber Burch, Jennifer Riddle.

Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

| Topic | Discussion |
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Welcome & Roll Call

Chair Bryce Christiaens opened the meeting at 9:15 am, conducted roll call and confirmed quorum. Attendees introduced themselves.

Administrative Business
Bryce Christiaens

Action Item: Approval of December 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes
Motion: to approve the December 13, meeting minutes (Wanderaas). Seconded (Tyrrel).
Motion passed unanimously.

MISC Budget
Liz Lodman

The fiscal year ends June 30; the balance of accounts are as follows:
MISC Council Budget: about \$18,000 remaining. Reserving \$5,000 for travel expenses for April and June meetings.

| Category | Standard Budget | Actuals | Pending | Balance | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Other Services | \$ 20,000 | \$ 220 | \$ 10,000 | \$ 9,780 | Windfall 629 |
| Supplies & Materials | \$ 1,000 | \$ 5,060 | \$ 3,000 | \$ (7,060) | swag and banners |
| Communications | \$ 1,000 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 1,000 | |
| Travel | \$ 5,000 | \$ 7,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ (7,000) | April 12 & June 20 |
| Rent | \$ 1,000 | \$ 700 | \$ - | \$ 300 | |
| Utilities | \$ 1,000 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 1,000 | |
| Repair & Maintenance | \$ 1,000 | \$ 13 | \$ - | \$ 987 | |
| Other Expenses | \$ 20,000 | \$ 230 | \$ - | \$ 19,770 | |
| TOTALS | \$ 50,000 | \$ 13,223 | \$ 18,000 | \$ 18,777 | |

Invasive Species Budget: anticipate print, advertisement and travel expenses.

| Category | Standard Budget | Actuals | Pending | Balance |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Other Services | \$ 111,050 | \$ 8,850 | \$ 20,000 | \$ 82,200 |
| Supplies & Materials | \$ 500 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 6,000 | \$ (15,900) |
| Communications | \$ 500 | \$ 9,300 | \$ 10,000 | \$ (18,800) |
| Travel | \$ 3,000 | \$ 4,600 | \$ 1,000 | \$ (2,600) |
| Rent | \$ 500 | \$ 150 | | \$ 350 |
| Utilities | \$ 500 | \$ - | | \$ 500 |
| Repair & Maintenance | \$ 500 | \$ 350 | | \$ 150 |
| Other Expenses | \$ 218 | \$ 21,400 | | \$ (21,182) |
| TOTALS | \$ 116,768 | \$ 55,050 | | \$ 24,718 |

Windfall 629
ID guides, printing
advertisements

Both budgets show Windfall contract that will carry over to next fiscal year.

Discussion: None.

AIS Grant Applications

Bryce
Christiaens
Liz Lodman

Grant hearings were held February 24 with the applicants and Grant Review Committee of Tom Woof, Andy Welch, Jasmine Chaffee, and Jason Allen.

- Received 12 applicants, two did not get funded.
- All grant agreements have been sent to applicants. We are waiting on two applicants to review and sign their agreements.
 - Flathead Lake Biological Station has issues with funds needed for their proposal.
 - Clearwater Resource Council just needs to sign their agreement.
- New this year, the applicants had to choose the *type* of grant proposal: On the Ground, Education/Outreach, or Research. Some applicants do a combination of Education/Outreach and On the Ground, then choose where the majority their proposal falls.

Discussion:


- Is there any money left over? Will we need to do a second round of these?
 - No funds are remaining.
- At the hearing, only the grant committee members attended. It would be helpful to have more council members attend and add their input.
- We have good process but could improve how applicants explain their expenses for each task.

eDNA and Meta Barcoding Information

Bryce
Christiaens
Tom Woolf

MISC is interested in assisting in the advancement of eDNA and metabarcoding research.

- MISC needs a better understanding of the different types of research, the groups conducting this research, and how they relate to each other. Also need to know how things have advanced since the eDNA science advisory panel met.
- The grant review committee discussed holding a workshop and inviting researchers to share what they are working on.
- The technology of environmental DNA for aquatic invasive species early detection is being accepted more broadly, nationally. The challenge is how to respond to a detection and communicate things appropriately.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USGS has received infrastructure funding to expand an early detection network nationwide, Early Detection Rapid Response Information System. • One grant application asked for 20% of the AIS grant funds for this topic. The applicant proposed relevant questions about repeatability, sensitivity of sample collections, and comparing results with methods like qPCR. The challenge is defining what DNA results mean, how results are communicated, and how to respond. More information is needed on metabarcoding (using one sample to detect multiple species.) If there's not an understanding of what the results mean, then how can it be used as a detection tool. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MISC could create a workgroup, invite the appropriate people, and moderate a discussion about this complex subject. • Look into a fall meeting, after field season, and invite entities like Flathead Lake Biological Station, Rocky Mountain Research Station, and USGS to provide information and help MISC understand this science and where there are gaps. • If this topic is of interest to others outside of Montana, information could be shared at the AIS Short Course (spring 2024) or NAISMA conference (fall 2024). • A hybrid webinar could allow national experts to participate. Panelists from the first eDNA Science Advisory Panel should be invited to discuss. • A work group should determine timing, format and questions for a meeting/workshop on this topic. Work group is Tom Woolf and Steve Wanderaas. |
| <p>Legislative Updates</p> <p>Liz Lodman</p> <p>Casey Lewis</p> <p>Jasmine Chaffee</p> | <p>SB 293: Requires posters related to invasive species at MDT rest areas. MISC would create and print posters and provide MDT for display at 49 rest areas. Would like a couple MISC members to help with the message and design concept. Passed both houses.</p> <p>SB 83: Creates the Western Montana Conservation Commission that combines the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3) and the Flathead Basin Commission. Passed Senate, passed House with amendments, back to Senate.</p> <p>HB 821: Appropriate \$500,00 to Department of Agriculture for control of woody invasives in three counties. Passed House, now in Senate.</p> |
| <p>MISC Workplan Documents Review</p> <p>Bryce Christiaens</p> | <p>Review of MISC Workplan Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MISC Work Plan: This one-page document provides a snapshot of the MISC projects for the next 4 years.  |

- MISC [Work Plan for 2023-2026](#): Multi-page document provides details about the development and process of the work plan projects.

Work Plan for 2023-2026

Montana Invasive Species Council - MISC

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| 1. <i>Top 10 Invasive Species to Watch</i> | 2 |
| 2. <i>Quantify the Impacts of Invasive Species</i> | 5 |
| 3. <i>Science Advisory Panels</i> | 7 |
| 4. <i>Focused Efforts to Improve Programs and Increase Capacity</i> | 10 |

Discussion: Full Work Plan for 2023–2026

- MISC staff will modify the document to make it look nicer.
- Question about Woody Invasive Task Force noted on page 10, who is leading this effort and what is the plan moving forward?
 - MWCA applied for a Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant to support this effort, Kelsey Miller is currently the contact. They expect to contract with ISAN.
 - Need clarification on the group’s structure, participants, and goals, so there is a common understanding of the group and the purposed work.
 - Should it be a “Working Group” rather than a “Task Force”?
 - MT Dept of Agriculture will work closely with this group.
 - Will this group ultimately seek additional funding from Montana Legislature?
 - The Yellowstone Conservation District Council thru Custer County CD received the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant. They are meeting in Billings on May 11th.
- [Invasive Species to Watch](#): This is a list of plant and animal species from different habitats that MISC can use to raise awareness and for educational purposes.



**MISC
Workplan
Documents
Review**

Bryce
Christiaens

Discussion: Invasive Species to Watch

- Note that to avoid misunderstanding this document is no longer called “Top 10 Invasive Species” because the species aren’t ranked or in any priority.
- MISC chose 10 species to highlight but only 9 are on the document. MISC is still in discussion with FWP about the invasive fish to highlight.
- There needs to be a discussion about bucket biology and the movement of game fish (both warm water and cold water); and include the fish advocacy groups.
- Not listing a fish species is conspicuous in its absence.
- Bryce will communicate with FWP Director’s office after the legislative session is over for a plan to continue this discussion.
- Was there a discussion about a fish species that is not here but is known to be a problem elsewhere, like Asian Carp?
 - Species on the list were suggested by stakeholders at the listening sessions or Summit; Asian carp wasn’t mentioned but Northern pike and walleye were. The reality is -- people move fish they value and want to fish.
- Should regulated game fish be considered an invasive species when there are rules and regulations about game fish?
- Should we add a statement at the top of this sheet to indicate how the list was developed such as “this list is a result of input from a stakeholders during 2022 listening session and summit”?
- Could the invasion curve be moved from bottom of second page to top of first page?
 - The invasion curve graphic is in the place where the invasive fish was supposed to be located.
- [Fact sheets](#): These will provide more details on each species including distribution, economic/environmental impacts, authorities, pathways (use symbols developed by Oregon), action the public should take, where to report, etc. For “associated species” list related species only when appropriate, i.e. for Saltcedar, list common buckthorn and Russian olive. Feral swine is the example fact sheet.

Discussion: Fact Sheets

- Can the species experts fill in the fact sheet information.
 - Suggested that MISC do the first draft then provide fact sheets to species experts to review and edit. Could make them more consistent. Aim to provide in June.
 - Check the section that has a quote.

**MISC
Workplan
Documents
Review**

Bryce
Christiaens

- Add information about diseases if the species is a vector for disease (feral swine).
- The species experts who will review the fact sheets are as follows:
 - Bullfrogs:** Torrey Ritter and Bryce Maxell
 - Eastern Heath Snail:** Gary Adams and Jeff Littlefield
 - Emerald Ash Borer:** Leigh Greenwood and Amy Gannon
 - Feral Swine:** Jared Beaver and Marty Zaluski
 - Flowering Rush:** Virgil Dupuis and Jane Mangold/grad student
 - Rush Skeletonweed:** Jasmine Chaffee and Jane Mangold
 - Saltcedar:** David Weaver
 - Zebra Mussels:** Tom Woolf
 - Ventenata:** Jane Mangold and Jasmine Chaffee
 - Fish Species:** Tom Woolf suggests Eileen Ryce

- [Storymap](#): This provides more information about the species in a visual format. Staff at the Natural Heritage Program drafted this version to be reviewed by the species experts. The story map will go beyond what is provided in the fact sheets. Probably will be finished next winter.

Discussion: Diseases

- What is MISCs role in diseases threats?
 - When MISC was created it was determined that human health diseases are not in MISC’s purview, MISC members don’t have that type of expertise.
 - Need further discussion about diseases/pathogens where MISC might play a role like diseases that arrive on plants (karnal bunt, Dutch elm disease, root rot). Need more information about diseases that cross taxonomic groups into humans (equine encephalitis, west Nile virus, avian malaria, HP avian influenza). How do we define this jurisdiction before it becomes a problem?
 - Suggest a future tabletop exercise or webinar series on zoonotic diseases. Need information from experts in this field (MT Dept of Health or CDC) and define what MISC’s role should be.
- **Science Advisory Panel** (pages 7-9 of Work Plan for 2023-2026): Develop a process to assess the potential invasiveness of a species by effectively quantifying its impact to Montana’s economy and environment?
 - There are experts outside of Montana that could provide models to adopt rather than create something new. (Horizon scanning done by USFWS and USGS, [Deah Lieurance webinar](#), mid-west states aquatic risk assessment, APHIS-PPQ modeling).

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantifying impacts (economic/environment) is different from risk assessment (horizon scanning). ○ Looking at pathways (mechanisms for arrival) and prevention; could invasive species be prevented if efforts were doubled. ○ Is this a 2-tired process -- model/access potential invasiveness to Montana, if it reaches a certain threshold then quantify impacts. ○ Co-chairs: Bryce Christiaens, Tom Woolf, Gary Adams. Bryce will organize meeting and identify panelists. |
| <p>Workplan Activities Liz Lodman</p> | <p>Focused Efforts (page 10 of Work Plan for 2023-2026): These topics were identified to improve programs and increase capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and communication training for natural resource professionals to (1) help managers improve their communication with the public on topics that are technical or confusing, (2) learn how to work with the media (advertisements, social media, interviews), (3) use community-based social marketing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do either MSU or UM have experts we could tap for help? ○ Can we survey managers about what they want to learn. ○ Check if other states have done this type of training. ○ Can participants leave with a communication plan. Check with Tom Dickson’s POM-T method. ○ Co-chairs: Liz Lodman, Jane Mangold, possibly Jan Stoddard. ● Support woody invasive species management and research coordination. Develop ‘best practices’ for woody invasives mitigation. Support the Woody Invasive Task Force plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When, where, how to control; use of biocontrol; how to remove/dispose; prevent secondary invasions; population dynamics. ○ Russian olive is not listed as a noxious weed and complicates this issue. ○ Southwest US has been dealing with this issue for 40+ years, look at their resources to assist. ○ Look at the Center for Invasive Species Management at MSU, Scott Bockness has information. ○ Russian olive work at Ft. Keogh near Miles City. (Natalie West – ARS) ○ The planning stage and ecological assessment at the landscape level is important to have everyone on the same page. ○ What states that have done this work: South Dakota, New Mexico and Utah. ○ Co-chairs: Liz Lodman, Jasmine Chaffee, Sara Ricklefs |
| <p>Feral Swine Updates Liz Lodman</p> | <p>Transboundary Feral Swine Working Group This is a group of western states and provinces working with USDA-Wildlife Services Feral Swine Program to collaborate on projects and information sharing.</p> |

- They hosted sessions at the [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Summit](#) last year in Calgary; Liz and Steve W attended.
- Feral swine sessions will be offered at [2023 PNWER Summit](#) this year in Boise on July 18-19. In addition, a full day of feral swine surveillance, detection, and trapping equipment and methods is being added.
- DNRC has applied for a USDA-APHIS grant to support the PNWER conference and pay for Liz's travel to attend.
 - The USDA-APHIS grant will also support the creation of an international *Squeal on Pigs!* website. This provides a single location for people to learn about feral swine, how to report, provide links to state/provincial agency websites, find updated logo files, etc. University of Georgia will be the contactor.
- Does MISC want to send someone to PNWER?

USDA-Wildlife Services

- Update on Feral Swine -- Kraig Glazier, Western District Supervisor
 - October: report near Havre that looked like a trail in a field. Investigation found someone had dragged an antelope from the field to the road.
 - More recently: report near Dodson. Investigated for 2 days on ground and aerial surveillance but didn't detect anything.
 - In the winter during normal operations to reduce predation of coyotes on calves and lambs, they also do aerial surveillance (fixed wing and helicopter) along border, mostly near Saskatchewan. No detection of swine or sign.
 - Plan to do surveillance in Sweetgrass Hills area in May or June this year.
- Update on Starlings -- Doug Ekberg, Eastern District Supervisor
 - Was contacted by Billings business (agriculture and urban) about starling impacts and damage (crop damage, consuming feed, feces clean up, human health risks).
 - Their survey estimated 40,000 to 50,000 birds in Yellowstone County area.
 - Used a pesticide that only starlings eat where they ingest, metabolize and excrete within 2 hours. Can take 24 to 48 hours to expire.
 - One treatment removed 10,000-12,000 starlings.
 - Mostly positive comments – very few negative comments once they explain the project.

Discussion:

- Are there corrective actions that can be taken to prevent this from being cyclical?
 - Yellowstone county has several feed lots and people creating habitat so it could be difficult to control. That would be a big picture issue for the local authorities.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do we know about the fidelity of starlings for their range? Did this action clear the way for new starlings or did it affect birds more resident to the area? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The control work is done in the winter with over-wintering populations and not migrant populations. Startling have detrimental effect on cavity nesters like blue birds, woodpeckers, and martins. So this should create more habitat for those species. ▪ Sharing the beneficial effects would be helpful with messaging. |
| <p>MISC Appointment Terms</p> <p>Liz Lodman</p> | <p>Nine MISC representative have terms ending as of 5/1/2023. To reapply or apply for a MISC position go to: https://governor.mt.gov/boards_appointments/ and search 'Invasive Species Council.'</p> <p>Jasmine Chaffee – Department of Ag DESIGNEE (will reapply) Bryce Christiaens – County Weed Districts Bob Clonger – Department of Transportation DESIGNEE Gerald Cobbell – Blackfeet Nation Amy Gannon – DNRC DESIGNEE Leigh Greenwood – Conservation Organization Jane Mangold – MSU Extension Steve Tyrrel – Agriculture Representative (will reapply) Steve Wanderaas – Conservation Districts (will reapply)</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please share these opportunities with groups that make sense. • Is there correspondence or a letter from MISC or the Governor’s office that could be shared about these vacancies? Will we be able to fill positions by the June 20th meeting? Can you send a news release about this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liz will follow-up on these questions. • The Chair is appointed by the Governor. Will the council have input on who the chair will be? • The MISC co-vice chairs will run the meetings until the chair is appointed. |
| <p>Wrap-up Adjourn</p> | <p>Final Discussion:</p> <p>Location for the next meeting will be in Sidney on June 20th at the Agriculture Research Service. The MISC meeting precedes the River Rendezvous, MRCDC meeting, and CMR Working Group meeting in Jordan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woolf/FWP: Three mussels fouled vessels have been intercepted, 2 boats and 1 barge. Stations are opening and hiring is going better than last year. • Wanderaas/CEMIST: April 25 hosting an Eastern Heath Snail meeting in Stanford. April 27 Steve will attend the invasive grasses forum in Bell Fouché. • Mangold/MSU: April 19 Jane is the speaker for a Ventenata webinar. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gary Adams, Jeff Littlefield and Liz will speak at the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Council-- Terrestrial Invasive group meeting about feral swine and EHS on April 18.• Welch/Hydropower: Andy will share the North Western Quarterly Magazine with Liz for possible collaboration.• Longknife/Ft Belknap: Tribe will have an Earth Day celebration, needs donations.• Stoddard/Commerce: April 23-25 is Governor's Conference on Tourism in Helena, MISC has a booth. Rolling out new marketing program and will be working with Leave No Trace program. |
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Public Comment: None

Motion: to adjourn (Mangold). Seconded (Woolf)

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 2:10 pm

FINAL