**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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting Name: | Montana Invasive Species Council  |
| Date of Meeting: | February 20, 2025 | Time: | 8:30 am |
| Minutes Prepared By: | Anna Connerton/Russ Hartzell | Location: | Montana Wild, Helena | Zoom |
| Attendees: |
| *MISC: Dennis Longknife, Dylan Brown, Jake Chadwell, Jared Beaver, Jason Allen, Mike Bias, Pam Schwend, Sara Ricklefs, Steve Wanderaas, Tom Woolf, Tracy Tyner, Brenda Witkowski, Lori Witham, Michelle Cox, Monica Pokorny.* *MISC Staff: Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton, Russ Hartzell**Other: Amber Burch, Ashlee Atchison, Barbra Martin, Becky Kington, Brent Smith, Bryce Maxell, Cara Thompson, Emilie Henry, Evan Youngblade, Gunnar Bridges, Hailey Smalley, Heidi Hildahl, Jill Allen, Joe Kremer-Herman, Josh Wagoner, Kelly Hendrix, Mark Bostrom, Michael Jones, Michael Skamarkas, Mike Jones, Molly Masters, Phil Matson, Torrey Ritter.* |
| \*MISC voting members are underlined. |
| Agenda & Notes, Decisions, Issues  |
| Topic  | Discussion |
|  |
| Welcome & Introductions | Steve Wanderaas (Chair) opened the meeting at 8:37 am. Wanderaas conducted a roll call and confirmed the quorum. Attendees introduced themselves.  |
| MISC Staff Update | **MISC Staff Update (Liz Lodman):** ***Activities From Last Quarter:*** Liz provided an update on activities MISC staff and members have been engaged in since last quarter.***2023-2024 MISC Annual Report:*** The annual report can be found here on the MISC website, request to have the executive committee review prior to publishing in the future: <https://invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/reports-and-publications>***AIS Grant Update:*** * MISC received 11 grant applications for the FY25 cycle.
	+ The requested amount was $336,625, and MISC has $278,580 available yearly.
* The AIS Grant Review Committee met yesterday (2/19/2025) and reviewed the applications.
* The AIS Grant Hearing will be held on 3/6/2025 from 8:45 am to 12:00 pm – following lunch is when the deliberations will happen. See a list of applicants below.

|  |
| --- |
| **FY25 AIS GRANT APPLICATIONS** |
| ***Applicant*** | ***Grant Title*** | ***Type*** | ***Amount*** |
| Montana State Library - Montana Natural Heritage Program | AIS Data Centralization and Exchange to Support Outreach, EDRR, and Planning | Education and Outreach | $ 40,050.00 |
| Flathead Lakers | Targeted AIS Prevention: Reducing Risks through Data-Driven Outreach | Education and Outreach | $ 42,575.00 |
| Grow Wild | Clean Drain Dry in Upper Gallatin Watershed | Education and Outreach | $ 20,708.00 |
| Invasive Species Action Network | Aquatic Pet Rehoming | Education and Outreach | $ 16,090.00 |
| Beaverhead Conservation District | Statewide WIS Training Lead | Education and Outreach | $ 45,688.00 |
| Salish Kootenai College | Flathead Lake Flowering Rush Controls | On the Ground | $ 43,005.00 |
| Sanders County | Invasive Milfoil Management | On the Ground | $ 40,000.00 |
| Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes | EWM Treatment for Pablo Reservoir | On the Ground | $ 22,173.00 |
| Clearwater Resource Council | AIS Monitoring in Clearwater Valley | On the Ground | $ 19,943.00 |
| Yaak Valley Forest Council | YVFC Early Detection and Clean.Drain.Dry. E&O | On the Ground | $ 26,593.00 |
| Missoula County | 2025 Missoula County Flowering Rush Biocontrol | Research | $ 19,800.00 |

***2025 MISC Summit - Summit Work Session Takeaways:*** *Work Session #1 was focused on top invasives of concern and actions to improve management or prevention** Our current invasives to watch list was heavily represented in the work session report-outs
* Standardizing mapping and reporting were consistently highlighted
* Increased funding for existing prevention efforts was a common recommendation
* Education and outreach prioritized across all taxa

*Work Session #2 was focused on invasive species communication, including how to encourage public engagement and reporting and ways to improve campaign messaging and effectiveness** Emphasis on short, simple, and engaging messaging with calls to action, make it easy to report and offer training on what to look for
* Reaching new and diverse audiences with messaging
* Utilizing technology, social media, targeted ads, geofencing, etc.
* CBSM principles heavily featured

***Stories for Action Video Update, Invasives to Watch Story Map:**** Funding committed from a previous contract with Stories for Action.
* Will update current video
* A new video topic could be focused on bucket biology
* Agreement with MTNHP to create a StoryMap based on the invasives to watch list

***ICS Exercise/Training:*** * April 23-24th in Helena, Montana DES and USDA APHIS have been key partners in the planning

***Don’t Move Firewood Intern****:* * Application submitted to host MCC intern May-August, continue and expand work of 2025 intern.

***Science Advisory Panel***Topic: Process to Access the Potential Invasiveness of a SpeciesDate: May 5-7, 2025Location: Butterfly House in Missoula*Expected Panel Outcomes:* 1. Determine if the definition of “invasive” currently used by the MISC captures target species or potentially misses economically, culturally, and/or ecologically important species.
2. Review existing models and current work being done in North America to assess the risk of a species being invasive based on that definition.
3. From outcomes 1 and 2, develop a series of steps for Montana to follow to assess the risk of introduction and establishment of an invasive species to Montana.
4. Identify steps to assess the potential economic, ecological, and cultural impact of the highest-risk species if introduced to Montana.

***Financial Update:***  Liz Lodman provided an overview of MISC’s financial standing and budget for the remainder of FY25. |
| MISC Partnerships | **MISC Partnerships (Steve Wanderaas):** Steve highlighted the work done by the council and staff to develop and maintain partnerships and encouraged that work to continue. Acknowledged the time and energy dedicated to this effort.  |
| MISC Workplan Activities | **Proposed Projects, Programs, and Priorities – 4P (Liz Lodman & Russ Hartzell):*** Quarterly Webinar Series/Ask an Expert video series
* Participatory Science Project
* Outreach and Education
* Species to Watch List Updates
* Workshops and Science Advisory Panel
* Social Media Presence
* MISC Website Revamp
 |
| MISC Open Seat Discussion & Vote | **MISC Open Seat Discussion & Vote:** Liz Lodman reviewed the MISC Bylaws – Article II: Membership and discussed the council member term dates (see below) and current openings on MISC. MISC will announce the opening of council seats through a news release. Would like applications by June 30, 2025.

|  |
| --- |
| **COUNCIL MEMBER TERM DATES (ENDING)** |
| ***Member*** | ***Representing*** | ***Term Start*** | ***Term End*** | ***Response*** |
| Dennis Longknife | Fort Belknap | 5/1/2021 | 4/30/2025 | Yes – Pending |
| Tracy Tyner | Rocky Boy | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2025 | Yes |
| Mike Bias | Fishing Organization | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Martin Charlo | CSKT | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Charles Headdress | Fort Peck | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Paul Rossignol | Wildlife Organization | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Andy Welch | Hydropower | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Tom Woolf | FWP | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | Yes |
| Jenny Pelej | Dept of Commerce | 7/14/2023 | 6/1/2025 | Yes - Replace |

|  |
| --- |
| ***CURRENT MISC OPENINGS*** |
| Representative of the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Government |
| Representative of the Little Shell Tribal Government |
| Representative of County Weed Districts |
| Representative of the Blackfeet Nation |

Liz Lodman reviewed the MISC Bylaws – Article III: Membership and discussed the current open positions on MISC. To apply, visit <https://governor.mt.gov/boards_appointments/> under “Invasive Species Council (ISC)”.

|  |
| --- |
| ***MISC OPEN POSITIONS*** |
| ***Position*** | ***Nominated for Position*** |
| Chair | Steve Wanderaas |
| Vice-Chair | Tom Woolf |
| Vice-Chair | Jason Allen |

**\*ACTION**:Floor was opened for nominations for Co-Vice-Chair of MISC.Tom was nominated by Mike Bias. No further nominations. Vote on Tom Woolf of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for the MISC Co-Vice-Chair Position. **Motion: Steve Wanderaas motioned for a vote.** **Vote Passes Unanimously.** **\*ACTION**:Floor was opened for nominations for the Private Landowner seat on the council.Pam Schwend was nominated by Tom Woolf. No further nominations.Vote on Pam Schwend as the Landowner Representative for MISC. **Motion: Steve Wanderaas motioned for a vote.** **Vote Passes Unanimously.**  |
| Legislative Update | **Legislative Update (Liz Lodman):** Liz Lodman gave an update on the current legislative bills that MISC is tracking.  |
| Invasive Grasses & Phragmites Update | **Invasive Grasses & Phragmites Update**Josh Wagoner gave a presentation on invasive grasses and phragmites. Presentation recording available. |
| Bullfrog Update | **Invasive American Bullfrogs in the Mission Valley**Cara Thompson (CSKT) and Torrey Ritter (FWP) gave a presentation on Bullfrogs in the Mission Valley. Presentation recording available.  |
| MISC Member Updates | Mike Bias (FOAM): Annual meeting coming up, updates on state of Fishery at annual meeting. Guide training program is also underway with field practicum coming up. Trainees learn about invasive species, amongst other topics.Jake Chadwell (DNRC): Attending events and tabling. Some federal funding expiring which will limit where they are advertising. Have an intern who will lead update to EAB Readiness & Response plan. Attending ICS training. Trapping will begin in spring.Bryce Maxell (MNHP): Shared links to non-native species watchlists that have been reported via iNaturalist. Would like to hear from anyone doing outreach for citizen reporting, they are putting together materials. Putting together some dashboards on landscape changes. Hearing from the Schutter lab would be a good idea.Lori Witham (USDA-APHIS): Uncertainty, down two employees. Pest committee has been rejuvenated. Take another run at looking at aquatics at ports of entry. Monica Pokorny (USDA-NRCS): Still waiting on budget. Looking at a program to focus on small infestations. Tom Woolf (FWP): Stations open in March. Very similar to last year across the board. Positions posted. Pivot from monitoring training to more general awareness on keeping an eye out for things. Aquatic Nuisance Plan will be coming soon, keep an eye out for that. Concerns about golden mussels, unlikely to be contained. South Dakota still a challenge when it comes to containment. Idaho has treated again and trying to tighten up cooperation with them. Working on getting golden mussels listed that will come after session. Dennis Longknife (FBIC): Following developments from Federal Government changes including loss of staff from some partners. Brenda Witkowski (BLM): Received approval to put out contract to partners, those will have additional review. Some funding still frozen.Pam Schwend (Private Landowner Representative): Her and Megan get to do workshop with K-12 science teachers. Help teachers learn how to teach invasive species to students. Standards are written for all school curriculum and that should be official soon. Dylan Brown (Ag): A lot of funding variability depending on agency. Time is of the essence as any delays will set back the field season work.Jared Beaver (MSU-Extension): No update. Jennifer Riddle on behalf of Sara Ricklefs (ISAN): Some spring events coming up. Aquatic pet rehoming at University of Montana. Ready to launch the GYCC Know Before You Go campaign.Michelle Cox (USFS): If agreements remain in place, project on eDNA with University of Montana and a 22 species biochip. Take new and archived samples and run those for eDNA. Good communication plan in place. Second thing is work on Invasive Annual Grasses. A lot of work has been done on those agreements, a plan will be created off of that work and fire effects protocol. Grases identification training is happening in Helena in June. Tracy Tyner (Rocky Boy): Next week will have natural resources meeting and will work on noxious weeds plan. Also working with ranchers on range management plan. Let her know about funding streams that will help with mapping, etc. Have an earth day activity lined up. Hoping to take these ideas to the tribal council so a plan can be created.  |
| Wrap Up & Adjourn | Location of next meeting: Looking at Ft. Peck area in July the Executive Committee will discuss the next meeting date. **Final Discussion**: None**Public Comment**: Ashley Atchison, Montana Salinity Control. Envirothon is coming up soon. Clean, drain, dry outreach and Pull Your Share projects. Studies ongoing looking at impacts and mitigation of rangeland saline seeps. Amber Burch, MWCA, have put in for a couple grants. Several upcoming events.**\*Action**: Motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion**: Lori Witham**Second**: Monica Pokorny**Did not have a quorum to hold vote on motion.** Meeting adjourned at 3:38 pm.  |