**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: | November 12, 2024 | Time: | 9:30 am |
| Minutes Prepared By: | Anna Connerton/Russ Hartzell | Location: | Delta Hotel, Helena | Zoom |
| Attendees: | | | |
| *MISC:* Dylan Brown, Steve Wanderaas, Tom Woolf, Andy Welch, Sara Ricklefs, Jasmine Chaffee, Jake Chadwell, Pam Schwend, Gary Adams, Jessica Zarate, Michelle Cox, Robert Thompson    *MISC Staff:* Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton, Russ Hartzell  *Other:* Amy Gannon, Asta Bowen, Eliza McLaughlin, Dr. Heidi Hildahl, Jessica Bushnell, Mark Bostrom, Megan Evans, Ronald Koontz, Rose Picklo, Shayna Jones, Becky Kington, Chris Craft, Erin Bjorklund, Jennifer Riddle, Josh Wagoner, Megan Hoyer, Phil Matson, Sara Owen, Lori Witham, Ian Foley | | | |
| \*MISC voting members are underlined. | | | |
| Agenda & Notes, Decisions, Issues | | | |
| Topic | Discussion | | |
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| Welcome & Introductions | Steve Wanderaas (Chair) opened the meeting at 9:30 am. Wanderaas conducted a roll call and confirmed the quorum. Attendees introduced themselves.  **\*Action**: Approval of July 2024 Meeting Minutes  **Motion**: Pam Schwend  **Second**: Sara Ricklefs  **Motion Passed Unanimously.** | | |
| MISC Staff Update | Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council  **Update from the 2022 Summit**   * *Liz provided an update of projects MISC has worked on since 2022 Summit, and an overview of 2023-2026 work plan.*   **Rotunda & Legislative Session**   * *2023 Rotunda – February 22, 2023-Invasive Species Day at Legislator.*   + Senate Bill 293 – Requires a poster relevant to invasive species be displayed at MDT rest areas.      * *2025 Rotunda – February 12, 2025*   + MISC members are invited to attend to interact with legislators.   **Woody Invasive Species**   * + Workgroup formed, two SAP’s held and impact report forthcoming.   **Feral Swine – Squeal on Pigs**   * Updated factsheets and logo’s. Feral swine tour of northeast Montana, highly successful.   **eDNA and AIS**   * MISC Environmental DNA Panel Discussion – September 14, 2023, in Missoula * *Panel Speakers:*    + John Amberg: USGS, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center   + Gordon Luikart: University of Montana, Flathead Biological Station   + Taylor Wilcox: USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Station * *Panel Objectives*   + Provide information on what eDNA and metabarcoding are and how they used.   + Identify strengths and challenges of using molecular tools for AIS early detection.   + Identify gaps and needs where MISC AIS funding could potentially support the development of the science.   **Firewood Science Advisory Panel**   * *Held in 2022 determined challenges and recommendations.*   **Don’t Move Firewood Outreach**   * *MISC AmeriCorps Member*   + Visited 97 campgrounds, educated hosts and managers. Plan to host an intern in 2025.   **Eastern Heath Snails**   * Eastern Heath Snails were discovered in Lewistown. Worked closely with CEMIST, Fergus Conservation District, and partners to increase awareness and execute plan. After action report will be created and shared.   **Incident Command Training**   * Coordinating a joint training and exercise for next spring * Montana Disaster and Emergency Services to assist with development and delivery   **North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA)**   * NAISMA Conference – October 1-3, 2024, Missoula, MT * Planning Team: MISC a large part of planning team. * 459 registered, 39 states, 4 Canadian Provinces, 4 Countries (U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Australia. 25% of attendees from MT, funded by NWTF grant.   **Much More in 2024**   * 54 MISC News e-Bulletins, 119 meetings and outreach events attended * Hired MISC program coordinator to build capacity and support   **What’s Next?**   * Continue 23-26 work plan work * Host Changing Climate Workshop * Host Invasive Species Communications Workshop * Hold webinars on Montana/regional topics quarterly * Review and prioritize species in need of additional efforts * Redesign invasivespecies.mt.gov website * Get Facebook and Instagram accounts * Promote community science reporting of invasive species   **Budget Review** | | |
| Committee Reports | Sara Ricklefs, Invasive Species Action Network  **Woody Invasives Science Advisory Panel:**  The most recent science advisory panel was last month, and it was here in Helena. This was a hybrid meeting. There were about 40 attendees and there were representatives from every time zone in the continuous U.S. There was a lot of good discussions, there were experts on each species. We hope to have a report to the core planning group by December 1st and then one to MISC by the end of the year as per our contract deadline. We had a lot of buy in from partners, $10,000 from MISC and $13,000 from ISAN or other partners. For the impact report we have contracted with Nanette Nelson and other researchers out of Flathead Lake Biostation, we put out a bid and got two bids.  Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council for Bryce Christiaens, Missoula County Department of Ecology & Extension  **Process to Access Invasiveness of a Species Science Advisory Panel:**  Have a contract with Leah Elwell to be the facilitator and moderator for the science advisory panel. They have a list of presenters that they are vetting. As of now they are trying to identify processes by which you can identify invasiveness of a species across the board.  Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council  **Communications Workshop:**  We are working on getting this off the ground, we are thinking about potentially doing two workshops, one in the east and one in the west, it would be for natural resource professionals who maybe don’t have a background in communication like conservation districts personnel who don’t understand communicating with the public. | | |
| 2025 Legislative Session | Mark Bostrom, Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation  The 2025 Legislative Session is coming up and we just had an election. There will be a little more play on the topics that we see this year. There will be a lot of pressure on funding, there are eight invasive species related bill drafts, so there is potential that there will be a bill come up this next session that is related to invasive species. If there is a bill or something like that that MISC wants to make a testimony on, make sure to come through the director’s office. The administration has the same view as MISC, but if they are to say no then you must follow that. The nature of administrative attachment in government stems from the 1972 Constitutional Convention there used to be 160 agencies, which was like herding cats. And so, the executive was this huge 160 agency thing. In fact, I think one of the campaign slogans that they had in authorizing that constitutional convention was 20 is plenty, and so here became 20 primary agencies, and all the boards and commissions that were operating as independent agencies were then attached to those 20. So, all the communication thus flows from those administrative attachments through to the executive branch Governor's office. based on that, you know, they'll talk to the Cabinet or natural resource advisor, or whatever take a position on a particular bill that may come through and then someone, usually the chair, or often the executive director would have opportunity to go up and do testimony, I just want to make sure that we are clear on this as I have had issues in the past with other commissions. Whoever goes up, you represent yourself as a member of an organization not as the organization itself. We watch the list of bills that drop every day, we have a meeting at 10 am every day during legislation.  Liz Lodman: During the last legislative session, I always put the bills pertaining to invasive species in our newsletters with links to the language to keep everyone informed. Last year was the first time I testified in front of the legislature, and I had to write down my script and have it approved.  **Questions:**  *Steve Wanderaas: Say I am going in front of a committee; how do I make sure that I am on the same page as the director.*  *Mark Bostrom: By talking directly to the director, or Liz could talk with the director.* | | |
| Eastern Heath Snail History & Status | Ian Foley, Montana Department of Agriculture  Presentation that reviewed the following topics:  History of detection, Notification regarding Montana exports. MDA Quarantine Authority. Current MDA Quarantines. Efforts in and around Belt, Montana. Feasibility and effectiveness of molluscicide treatments.  To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Ian Foley, please view 1:37:00 – 2:10:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/3fZm5F3W-3dbsXGbBETn5Pshi8qmLdUYieVCDKB_YFKMlbjLbFruDo_4z7_Q7cS5soVhQgwDSzziJwfU.kOuqOD9Qd63HscWN?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&startTime=1731429567000&pwd=F3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmt-gov.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2Fq6kYm-2PNs3M9G6xaBb--_80WrizEtGWcWW4mG418ZspTqmy6zvz04urgHRTTjk7.Y_yoxuG6J31yhgbH%3FstartTime%3D1731429567000%26pwd%3DF3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B). | | |
| MISC Membership | Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council  Term expirations and reappointment process for council members.  Pam Schwend is retiring from her position as weed coordinator and we discussed her stepping into the roll of private landowner position and have someone else fill the county weed districts position. This will need further discussion and cooperation from the governor’s office.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | ***Council Member*** | ***Representing*** | ***Term Start*** | ***Term End*** | | Dennis Longknife | Fort Belknap Indian Community | 5/1/2021 | 4/30/2025 | | Tracy Tyner | Rocky Boy Representative | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2025 | | Mike Bias | Fishing Organization Representative | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Martin Charlo | CSKT Representative | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Charles Headdress | Fort Peck Representative | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Paul Rossignol | Wildlife Organization Representative | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Andy Welch | Hydropower Representative | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Tom Woolf | Montana FWP Designee | 6/15/2021 | 5/31/2025 | | Jenny Pelej | Dept of Commerce Designee | 7/14/2023 | 6/1/2025 | | Jason Allen | Dept of Transportation Designee | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Jared Beaver | MSU Extension | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Jasmine Chaffee | Dept of Agriculture Designee | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Sean Fritzler | Crow Nation Representative | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Sara Ricklefs | Conservation Organization Representative | 7/25/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Pam Schwend | County Weed Districts Representative | 12/15/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Steve Wanderaas | Conservation Districts Representative | 7/25/2023 | 5/1/2027 | | Dylan Brown | Agriculture Representative | Unknown | Unknown | | Jacob Chadwell | DNRC Designee | Unknown | Unknown | | Vacant | Blackfeet Nation Representative | Vacant | Vacant | | Vacant | Little Shell Tribal Government | Vacant | Vacant | | Vacant | Northern Cheyenne Government | Vacant | Vacant | | Vacant | Private Landowner Representative | Vacant | Vacant | | | |
| Feral Swine Update | Dr. Heidi Hildahl, Montana Department of Livestock  The MDOL is fully staffed as of now, MDOL is made up of four veterinarians:   * Tahnee Szymanski (DVM) – State Veterinarian * Heidi Hildahl (DVM, PhD) – Veterinarian Supervisor * Brad DeGroot (DVM, PhD) – Brucellosis * Brenee Peterson (DVM) – Emergency Preparedness * 6 Compliant Technicians * 2 District Investigator Supervisors * 17 District Brand Investigators   Dr. Hildahl presented an extensive overview on feral pigs including why they are a threat, the current status in Montana and nationwide and the DOL response plan.  To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Dr. Hildahl, please view 3:12:00 – 3:50:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/3fZm5F3W-3dbsXGbBETn5Pshi8qmLdUYieVCDKB_YFKMlbjLbFruDo_4z7_Q7cS5soVhQgwDSzziJwfU.kOuqOD9Qd63HscWN?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&startTime=1731429567000&pwd=F3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmt-gov.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2Fq6kYm-2PNs3M9G6xaBb--_80WrizEtGWcWW4mG418ZspTqmy6zvz04urgHRTTjk7.Y_yoxuG6J31yhgbH%3FstartTime%3D1731429567000%26pwd%3DF3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B). | | |
| Alberta Invasive Species Council | Megan Evans, Alberta Invasive Species Council  Megan provided an overview of the structure and projects that the Alberta Invasive Species Council are piloting. She included reports on the councils 2023 activities including biocontrol releases, social media, noxious weed work, 8 different campaigns, and annual conference event. She also gave a deeper dive on feral pig work in Alberta, and the provinces rat eradication campaign.  To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Megan Evans, please view 3:56:00 – 4:31:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/3fZm5F3W-3dbsXGbBETn5Pshi8qmLdUYieVCDKB_YFKMlbjLbFruDo_4z7_Q7cS5soVhQgwDSzziJwfU.kOuqOD9Qd63HscWN?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&startTime=1731429567000&pwd=F3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmt-gov.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2Fq6kYm-2PNs3M9G6xaBb--_80WrizEtGWcWW4mG418ZspTqmy6zvz04urgHRTTjk7.Y_yoxuG6J31yhgbH%3FstartTime%3D1731429567000%26pwd%3DF3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B). | | |
| Forest Pest Update | Amy Gannon, Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation  *Amy provided an update regarding forest pests in Montana that included an overview of forest pests of greatest concern. Additionally, Amy provided background on the Don’t Move Firewood campaign and ongoing outreach and education efforts.*  To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Amy Gannon, please view 4:41:00 – 5:23:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/3fZm5F3W-3dbsXGbBETn5Pshi8qmLdUYieVCDKB_YFKMlbjLbFruDo_4z7_Q7cS5soVhQgwDSzziJwfU.kOuqOD9Qd63HscWN?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&startTime=1731429567000&pwd=F3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmt-gov.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2Fq6kYm-2PNs3M9G6xaBb--_80WrizEtGWcWW4mG418ZspTqmy6zvz04urgHRTTjk7.Y_yoxuG6J31yhgbH%3FstartTime%3D1731429567000%26pwd%3DF3nsAUsr5zynwfc7mu5HbdF0JXvJn12B). | | |
| MISC Member Update | ***Tom Woolf – Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:***  120,000 inspections this year, it’s about the same as what we saw at this time last year. 47 mussel fouled vessels which is a bit behind last year but still about the same range. They come from the same places. There have been no mussel detections in the state again this year, no evidence of mussels with DNA or through our microscopy labs. There are new populations of mud snails and other little things that popped up this year but nothing too alarming. More concerning is what is going on regionally, Idaho just completed their second eradication treatment of aquatic mussels in the Snake River a few weeks ago. They did sample with eDNA which they haven’t done a lot of.  Also, of interest in the western United States, there is a new detection of Golden Mussels, they come from Southeast Asia, they have a lower calcium so they can survive in areas with lower calcium levels. They reproduce like crazy; they are in the Sacramento area right now. Currently, Montana doesn’t list them as prohibited so that would be a good thing for us to do soon just to kind of raise awareness.  ***Sara Ricklefs – Invasive Species Action Network:***  Just had our first rehoming event in Billings, we were able to rehome 8 pets. We are going to have our second pet rehoming event in Missoula, and we will do it during dead week (April 29th) so that the fish that are currently being housed in dorms hopefully don’t become housed through sewage systems or in local ponds. If anyone is interested in volunteering, reach out to us and let us know. Aside from that, I will be talking about a few of our outreach initiatives at the Summit, but I wanted to put it out there that we have funding from the GYCC to do a “Know Before You Go” campaign for visitors to the Great Yellowstone Ecosystem, so if any of you have reach with visitors, please reach out to us. This will basically be an electronic toolkit for spreading the message, we have reached out to a log of land management agencies, the state departments of commerce, and the parks.  ***Jake Chadwell – Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation***  You touched on a lot of the things that we have been working on. We did check station trainings, spongy moth trap pick ups (no detections). Right now, we are ramping up efforts to do surveys in Missoula/French Town area. We added Rose Picklo to the team also.  ***Jasmine Chaffee – Montana Department of Agriculture***  This is kind of our slow season, not too much going on. We are attending conferences, meetings, and doing a lot of tabling’s this winter. Megan with the invasive species education program is going a steering committee and Josh Wagoner with EDRR does fall and spring webinars and talking about EDRR species in Montana and the other half will be Megan talking about education. Our AgCorps members are done this week, and we will have three more come on next year to help. Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants are due January 6th, grant hearings are mid-March.  ***Lori Witham – APHIS PPQ***  We heard from APHIS FWS that we had an illegal importation of the moss balls come into Florida from the Ukraine and moved on to 19 states, 49 locations in those states, Montana was not one of these locations. We were in contact with US Customs and Border Protection, and they were asking what they can do and why it is regulated this way. If Montana had been a state, we would’ve known that we had a location and gotten the company, gotten the names of purchasers and went to see them and see if they still had them. If they go to a pet store, they can be hard to track as someone can use cash.  ***Jessica Zarate – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services***  We put together some large-scale invasive species pesticide applicator trainings with funds this past year. Next year they will be eligible to most people in all 8 states to get education credits and those trainings are generally located centrally within our regions, we did one in North Dakota last year and one in Colorado. I don’t know if were going to add another one so there is less travel for some of the people, but it is a weeklong training. It is very well received.  ***Gary Adams – APHIS PPQ***  We covered almost everything but for future meetings, we should talk about the national honeybee survey where they look for mites and diseases that are affecting our honeybee population.  ***Andy Welch – Northwestern Energy***  We inventory our entire mystic project, which is up in the Beartooth Mountains, this is done every ten years. We did not find any new infestations of weeds up there so no new ones to tackle. I'm on the board of the Northwest Hydroelectric Association, and I have a panel put together on the Idaho infestation of mussels there next year for annual meeting in February. It's kind of cool to talk to those folks and get an update at that point in time probably going to be a lot of changes over this winter until the water runs up. They still do a bunch more monitoring. But it'll be kind of here good to hear their perspectives from Idaho Department of Ag, Idaho Power, and we're also having someone come up from further down south that already has infestations of mussels, on their hydro projects to kind of talked about how they manage them and those sorts of things. So, a hot topic in the Western US for hydropower companies to see what happens with this infestation.  ***Pam Schwend – County Weed Districts***  At the meeting in Billings, I talked about how we were hoping to get invasive species included in the indigenous learning curriculum. Since then we have actually gone post that, I have had conversations with principals and teachers, I’ve gone to the adult learning education in Billings and Megan Hoyer spoke with some of the teachers that are actually involved in putting together the Indian learning at MEA and we got nothing but positive response from this so we actually took it one step further and on Monday we have a Zoom meeting with the director of the Ace Consortium and their group is involved with setting the standards, so we have gone through all of the science standards from K-12 and have done a document where invasive species could be inserted into what is already a standard, just the conversation that I already had with her she is very excited about this so we are really chose to getting invasive species education as part of our science standards for the State of Montana, I will update you all after Monday and see what happens.  ***Becky Kington – Montana Weed Control Association***  We have awards through MWCA for many things, I would encourage anyone who is sitting around the table who has done something cool with weeds to please nominate them, the nominations end this Friday. MWCA has our conference January 28-30, 2024, Gary Adams is a keynote and bringing back Ken Kington who is a popular comedian. Registration is live at MT.Weed.Org. We are hoping to begin to strengthen partnerships, and I am looking forward to working closely with you. | | |
| Wrap Up & Adjourn | Location of next meeting: A meeting location was not decided.  Final Discussion: None  Public Comment: None  **\*Action**: Motion to adjourn the meeting.  **Motion**: Andy Welch  **Second**: Jasmine Chaffee  **Motion Passed Unanimously.**  Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm. | | |