



# Legislative Background Brief

for the  
Economic Affairs Interim Committee

August 2014

## Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council

*Prepared by Pat Murdo, Legislative Research Analyst*

**Administrative Appointments:** By Department of Agriculture Director

**Statutorily Established** - 80-7-805, MCA. Created in 1985.

**Purposes:**

- advise the department on noxious weed management funding.

**Council Members: 11 members.** The website indicates 5 vacancies as of June 30, 2014. Members include: the director of the Department of Agriculture and representatives of livestock production, agriculture crop production, a recreationist/wildlife group, herbicide dealers or applicators, a consumer group, a biological research and control entity, the Montana Weed Control Association, a western county, and an eastern county, plus one at-large member from the agricultural community.

Meetings: The next meeting is set for January 2015 by conference call.

Members/Address	Representing	Term Expires
Ron de Yong, Helena	Director, Dept. of Agriculture	NA
Bobby LaSalle, Box Elder	livestock production	June 30, 2015
Todd Wagner, Glasgow	agriculture crop production	June 30, 2015
Jennifer Vermillion, Livingston	recreationist/wildlife group	June 30, 2014
Jim Gordon, Huntley	herbicide dealers/applicators	June 30, 2015
James Olivarez, Missoula	consumer groups	June 30, 2014
Kenny Keever, Havre	biological research & control	June 30, 2015
Jack Eddie, Dillon	Montana Weed Control Association	June 30, 2014
Kellieann Morris, Stevensville	a Western county	June 30, 2015
Dick Zoanni, Sidney	an Eastern county	June 30, 2014
Nico Cantalupo, Baker	at-large member	June 30, 2014

**Budget**

The Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council had expenses of \$10,333 in FY 2014.

The Noxious Weed Trust Fund's principal balance, reported as of June 2014, was \$10,000,000. The Department of Agriculture, with advice by the council, awarded grants in

FY 2014 of \$2,043,414. Program administrative expenses are regulated by law, pursuant to SB 144 from the 2013 Session..

### **Topics of Interest**

- Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service - State and Private Forestry Division have had [joint agreements](#) since 2001 ranging from \$2.1 million to the current amount of 4202,000 for federal financial assistance on cooperative weed management grant projects administered through the Noxious Weed Trust Fund program.
- Emergency Weed Grant applications are due Nov. 1, 2014, for FY 2015.
- Noxious Weed Special \$7,500 County/Reservation applications are due Nov. 3, 2014, for FY 2015.
- Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant applications are due Dec. 1, 2014, with hearings set for March 2-6, 2015.
- The website is <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/About/Boards/WeedTrust/index.html>.
- The changes directed by Senate Bill No. 144 (see below) in the Department of Agriculture's ability to use trust funds to administer the Trust Fund grant program were a topic at the Economic Affairs Committee's [October meeting](#) in relation to a proposed fee increase for the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program. See the [letter](#) from the Department of Agriculture referencing the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Committee and the support for subsidizing the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program.

### **2013 Legislation Enacted Regarding Noxious Weeds**

- SB 144, by Sen. Jon Sesso, revised use of reverted grant funds and prohibited the Department of Agriculture from applying for or receiving grant awards from the Noxious Weed Management special revenue fund. Also revised percentage of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund that could be used for the Department of Agriculture's administration.
- SB 301, by Sen. Terry Murphy, clarified procedures that counties and district weed boards could use for noncompliance with laws regulating noxious weeds. New sections of law codified as 7-22-2131 through 7-22-2134, MCA.

### **Audits**

- December 2008 Performance Audit of Weed Management at State Parks and Fishing Access Sites. Primarily an audit of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The audit mentions a weed management committee on pp. 4, 5, and 20.