



Resolution 24-03

Resolution type: Legislative Directive

Resolution for MTDOT/ Railroad right-of-ways Invasive Species Cooperation

Submitted by: Sheridan Conservation District

Passed as amended at 2024 MACD Convention Business Meeting 11/21/24

1. BACKGROUND DESCRIBING ISSUE *

As conservation districts, it is our responsibility to safeguard the resources within our district. We have observed that the current management practices of right-of-way properties maintained and controlled by MTDOT and railroad right-of-ways are inadvertently creating an environment conducive to the proliferation of weeds and invasive species. The practice of chemical treatment at the immediate edge of the roadway is weakening the grass stands and allowing noxious weeds and undesirables to take over. This situation poses a significant risk to our range and crop land, potentially leading to infestation by both noxious weeds and species not currently listed as noxious in the state of MT. The improper use of chemicals, including incorrect timing, application rates, and types of chemicals, exacerbates the existing problem. Revising the management approach in these areas is crucial to address the conservation and reestablishment of desirable grasses and broadleaf species, thereby reducing the impact of invasive weeds. Additionally, the potential for these weeds, such as cheatgrass, narrowleaf hawksbeard, etc., to modify native plant communities and contribute to erosion and water resource damage is of pressing concern.

2. LANGUAGE TO BE INCLUDED IN LEGISLATION DRAFTED BY MACD *

That MACD will work with all stakeholders, including but not limited to county weed departments, railroad right-of-ways, MTDOT, and county road departments to develop a management plan that prevents the growth of weeds and invasive species and their resistance to chemical treatment, thus protecting our native rangeland and our productive farmland from potential destruction and contamination.

3. SPONSOR(S) ACTIONS TO DATE *

What has been done to address the issue, which agencies and organizations have also addressed this?

Discussions have been held at board meetings and with local MTDOT road superintendent.

4. HOW WILL YOUR DISTRICT CONTINUE TO SUPPORT, BE INVOLVED WITH, AND TRACK THIS RESOLUTION BEFORE AND DURING THE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION? *

We will research, educate, support, and testify.

5. ARE THERE ANY EXISTING MACD POLICIES THAT THIS WOULD IMPACT OR INTERACT WITH? *

Resolution 10-03: BNSF Cooperation

6. HOW WOULD THIS LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVE IMPACT MACD? *

It will necessitate the allocation of staff time to collaborate with different agencies, as well as potential consideration of legislative and policy adjustments.

7. WOULD THIS POLICY STATEMENT IMPACT THE STATE BUDGET? IF SO, HOW? *

Yes, the change in management will require essential adjustments, including different mowing times, precise chemical use, timing of application, ensuring seed mixes used in the seeding of right-of-way areas are from a certified weed free source, and potential agronomy consultant fees. These changes are crucial for improving the overall maintenance of these areas.

8. MEETING AND DATE ADOPTED BY SPONSORING ENTITY *

Sheridan County Conservation District - Sept. 4, 2024

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE(S) AND TITLE(S) *

Nathan Shackelford, Board Chairman

(See original PDF submission for official signature)