

Missoula Board of County Commissioners

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES COVER SHEET



THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024 – 2 PM

Hybrid meeting – Missoula County Courthouse Annex Sophie Moiese
Room/Microsoft Teams

[Click here to view the meeting recording.](#)

Time stamps (in green) correspond to meeting recording above. Please click to
the time stamps listed to view a particular item in the meeting.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Chair David Strohmaier
Commissioner Josh Slotnick

Staff Present:

Cheryl Hartman, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Flanna McLarty, Development Specialist, Land and Economics
Andrew Hagemeyer, Director, Community and Economic Development
Bryce Christiaens, Director, Ecology and Extension
John Hart, Civil Deputy Lead Attorney, County Attorneys' Office
Chris Lounsbury, Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioners' Office
Melissa Fisher, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Commissioners' Office
Carey Powers, Communications Coordinator, Commissioners' Office
Allison Franz, Communications Manager, Commissioners' Office
Elisha Buchholz, Equity Coordinator, Commissioners' Office
Jennie Dixon, Planner, Planning, Development, and Sus
Mattie Scott, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Christina Dewar, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Bethany Holland, Project Specialist, Parks, and Trails

1. **CALL TO ORDER** *[Time stamp – 0:02]*
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** *[Time stamp – 0:05]*
3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** *[Time stamp – 0:29]*
Missoula County acknowledges that this event takes place in the aboriginal territories of the
Salish and Kalispel people.
4. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS** *[Time stamp – 0:36]*
 - a. Closed Captioning
 - b. Proclamation: Wildfire Smoke Ready Week
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA** *[Time stamp – 4:42]*

6. CURRENT CLAIMS LIST *[Time stamp – 04:54]*

Claims received as of June 12, 2024 to June 17, 2024 by the Commissioners' Office total of \$989,529.45.

7. HEARINGS

a. Consider the Sale of Development Park 6 *[Time stamp – 05:08]*

Flanna McLarty, Development Specialist, Lands and Economic Development

Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve the sale of Development Park 6 (6105 Expressway Missoula, MT to WyMont Realty Company for the purchase of \$520,000.

Commissioner Strohmaier seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Contract signed and returned to Flanna McLarty on July 10, 2024 Book:1101 Page:1017]

b. Resolution to Designate the Russian Olive as a Noxious Weed *[Time stamp – 13:45]*

Bryce Christiaens, Director, Ecology and Extension

Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that [the Missoula Board of County Commissioners] add and list the Russian olive as a Missoula County noxious weed.

Commissioner Strohmaier seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Resolution 2024-073 Book:1101 Page:600]

8. OTHER BUSINESS

[None]

9. ADJOURN

Chair Strohmaier – Called the meeting to adjourn at 2:44 p.m.

BCC Public Meeting June 27, 2024 – Transcription

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Dialogue in the transcription attributed to "Sophie Moiese Room" is for all speakers that attended the meeting in person. Attendees that participated virtually are labeled individually.

0:02

Thursday, June 27th meeting of the Missoula Board of County Commissioners.

0:05

I'd like to call to order today's meeting and please stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

0:09

Pledge allegiance to the flag.

0:29

Missoula County acknowledges that this event today takes place in the Aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispell people.

0:36

Cheryl, would you like to provide us a few announcements?

0:43

Thanks, Dave.

0:44

Hello, everyone.

0:44

If you're joining us for this meeting, this meeting virtually today, instructions for turning on closed captioning or on your screen.

0:51

If you're joining us in person, we'll have closed captioning on all the screens here in the Sophie Moise Room.

0:57

There will be an opportunity to speak during the meeting for a public comment virtually and in person.

1:03

If you are Microsoft Teams, we if you would like to speak when discussion has been open for a public comment, we ask that you use the Raise Hand feature.

1:10

This is the small hand button.

1:12

If you're calling in on the phone, you'll need to hit *5 to raise your hand.

1:16

Once called upon, you'll need to hit *6 to unmute.

1:20

We also have assisted listening devices if you need one.

1:23

Please find me during the meeting.

1:24

Thank you.

1:25

Thank you, Cheryl.

1:26

And for everyone who is new to these meetings, I'm Commissioner Dave Stromer.

1:30

I'm joined on my right.

1:32

You're left by Commissioner Josh Slotnick.

1:34

Commissioner Juanita Vero is tied up in a Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committee meeting this afternoon.

1:43

So we do have a proclamation today recognizing Wildfire Smoke Ready Week.

1:49

Commissioner Slotnick.

1:55

Whereas wildfire smoke is a serious and growing public health threat, and the more scientists learn about the dangers of smoke exposure, the more we need to act, Wildfire smoke can readily come indoors, creating unhealthy conditions both outside and inside.

2:11

And whereas wildfire smoke causes worsened asthma attacks, decreased lung function, worsened COPD symptoms, increased susceptibility to infectious disease, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, negative impacts on cognition, and increased hospitalizations and deaths.

2:29

And whereas, the National Interagency Fire Center Outlook identifies significant wildfire potential in portions of the Western United States in 2024, including regions that send smoke to our area.

2:42

And WHEREAS, Our adopted Climate Ready Missoula plan finds that our summers and early fall are becoming hotter and drier.

2:51

Wildfire season is getting longer.

2:53

Wildfire smoke is an increasing risk, and we need to enact strategies to reduce harm.

3:00

And WHEREAS Missoula Public Health and Climate Spark Missoula have resources to help residents understand and to decrease exposure to the health risks associated with wildfire smoke.

3:11

And WHEREAS public messaging and outreach focused on the dangers of wildfire smoke and how individuals can protect themselves play an important role in individual preparedness during wildfire season.

3:24

Therefore be it resolved, we Missoula County and the City of Missoula Deer hereby proclaim July 8th through 14th, 2024 has Wildfire Smoke Ready Week to inform and educate Missoula County and City residents of the hazards the wildfire smoke presents and how to mitigate against these hazards.

3:44

Signed by Andrea Davis, Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners Dave Stromer, Juanita Vero and Josh Slotnick Dated this 27th day of June 2024.

3:55

Thank you, Josh.

3:57

And we have a couple public hearings that will be taken up here momentarily.

4:03

So if you have public comment, folks either in the room or online have public comment on either of those items, please hold your comments to that time.

4:11

But if there is any public comment on items not on the agenda today, preferably within the jurisdiction of Missoula County and the Board of County Commissioners, this is your time.

4:22

So if anyone in the room has non agenda public comment, please come come on up to the microphone now, state your name and provide your comments.

4:33

If there's anyone online who would like to provide comments on non agenda items, please use the raise hand function and we'll call on you in the order in which you raise your hand.

4:42

Any public comment on items not on the agenda.

4:48

OK, Going once, going twice.

4:53

Thank you.

4:54

So our current claims list, this would be claims received as of June 12th, 2024 through June 17th, 2024 by the Commissioner's Office total \$989,529.45.

5:09

You can go to our electronic version of the agenda and drill down into what all of those claims amount to that add up to that amount.

5:18

We have two public hearings today, the 1st well and I should say for both of them, we will begin with a staff report.

5:26

We will then have an opportunity.

5:29

This is maybe less applicable today, but we typically have an opportunity for an applicant or applicant's representative to speak and then we'll open it up for public comment.

5:38

Our first public hearing is brought to us by Flanna and this is on the consideration of the sale of Development Park 6.

5:47

So, Flanna, thank you, Commissioner, I had before you today an offer to purchase Development Park 6.

6:19

Just a little background on this property, it is owned by Missoula County and development or the development park is an industrial park and industrial areas are not required to have a park dedication.

6:38

And Flanna, could you put this in full screen mode please?

6:42

Did not work the first time.

6:56

There we go, Thank you.

6:57

No problem.

7:04

Development The Park 6 as well as other parks in the area are minimally used because they are in an industrial area and they have not been maintained due to lack of participation by the property owners association, which is who is supposed to maintain the parks.

7:23

And so maintenance has fallen back on Missoula County or in this case of this park, the adjacent neighbor Midland implement has been maintaining it.

7:37

And I, oh, I should have looked up the state, but I think as you know, the area was annexed into the city I believe in 2018.

7:45

And when they annexed they did not take the parks with them.

7:49

So in June 2023, Missoula County and the City of Missoula entered into an interlocal agreement allowing Missoula County to sell 3 parks in the development park to help fund a stormwater assessment and upgrades that are needed in the area, which was also approved by vote of the Property Owners Association.

8:12

So that then we can transfer other stormwater parcels to the city for them to take over ownership and maintenance.

8:21

So we published a notice of Intent to sell 3 parks in the development park in March, listing the property information and the appraised value of the parks with an offer deadline of May 2024.

8:42

Park 6 is located on Expressway.

8:46

Its current property type is a park, but it has the potential to be rezoned as industrial.

8:51

It is about 1 1/2 acres and the appraised value is \$495,000, which is about \$325,000 per acre.

9:02

And it's really hard to see on this tiny little map, but it is number six in orange, kind of smack dab in the middle.

9:17

We did receive two other offers for this property.

9:21

One was for \$152,000, which is about \$100,000 per acre, and the second was for \$245,000, which is about \$161,000 per acre.

9:34

And both of those offers are unacceptable due to the offers being below the appraised value.

9:40

And I just want to point out that according to state law, the board of county commissioners may not sell land for below the appraised value.

9:52

Looking at other listings in the area, there's undeveloped land on West Harrier that is about half an acre that's listed for \$210,000, which is about 381,000 per acre.

10:06

And then undeveloped land on Expressway, that's a little over 13 acres, that's listed for a little over 5 million, which is \$383,000 per acre.

10:17

So our appraisals are within line of other properties in the area that have the similar industrial use.

10:34

We did receive an offer from Whymont Realty Company for \$520,000 which is about \$25,000 over the appraised value or which is also around 342,000 per acre.

10:50

The offer is contingent on the county being able to rezone to industrial.

10:58

And Whymont Realty Company is a sister company to Midland Implement, which is the adjacent landowner.

11:04

And I just wanted to note that Midland Implement has donated materials and labor to help in the creation of Park 6 as well as maintenance of the park.

11:21

And if you have any questions, I'm happy to answer them, but otherwise I have a motion for you whenever you're ready.

11:28

OK thank you.

11:29

Is there anyone from Whymont who would like to speak to this or the buyer?

11:34

Come on up to the microphone and tell us who you are and you got to hit the little button at the base there to turn the light green.

11:44

You're very paints and I'm from Billings, but our store is up here in Missoula and so I am Whymont.

11:55

So I, I think she pretty well said it all.

11:59

We're anxious to to purchase the product if or the the parcel if you allow us to really.

12:07

So.

12:09

OK, thank you.

12:11

Any questions Josh?

12:14

Oh yeah, go ahead.

12:17

Are you going to expand Midland implement and you'll need to come up to the mic, Sir, at this point in time, No, I mean, we plan on just having it how it is.

12:32

I mean, I think it's important to us to protect the investment we have.

12:38

So I mean, we weren't really planning on buying it, but we sort of, you know, like I said, we want to protect what we have.

12:48

So we don't have any immediate plans to do that.

12:53

But obviously, if we're going to lay out that kind of money, I mean, at some point, it'll probably be something besides a park.

13:03

Thank.

13:03

Thank you.

13:04

Your mic was off there, Joshua.

13:06

Now it's on.

13:07

It's OK.

13:09

Any public comment on the proposed sale?

13:15

OK.

13:16

How about a motion?

13:18

I would move to approve & the buy, sell agreement for development Park 6 with Wymont Realty Company for a purchase price of \$520,000.

13:26

All right, we'll second that.

13:28

Any further discussion seeing none.

13:30

All in favor.

13:31

Aye, aye.

13:33

OK.

13:33

Best of luck.

13:34

Congratulations, Flanna.

13:36

Thanks for your work.

13:37

Yes, thank you, Flanna.

13:41

OK, we will move on to our second public hearing today.

13:45

This is brought to us by Bryce Christians.

13:47

This is something that in my time serving on the Board of County Commissioners, I have not seen.

13:54

This is a designation of a new noxious or an old species that is apparently going to be proposed as a new noxious weed.

14:03

Josh.

14:05

Oh, hang on just a second.

14:18

OK, again, we are taking up the issue of a potential resolution to designate the Russian olive as a noxious weed.

14:27

Bryce yes, thank you, Commissioners, good afternoon.

14:31

So we've brought forward a resolution based on recommendations from the Missoula County Weed Board to list.

14:38

Russian olive is a noxious weed within Missoula County.

14:41

I'm going to run through a presentation on, you know, what that species is, how to identify it, what the impacts are, what the condition of the population is within Missoula County.

14:52

And then Jim Alvarez, our Weed Board Chair is also here to provide comment on how they reach this decision.

15:00

So just to start out with a little bit of background on Russian olive.

15:03

It's native to Eurasia like any species that's been brought in as a horticulture plant for human uses.

15:11

We don't really have good information on when it was exactly brought into Montana.

15:16

We do know there was the early 1900s and we know that it was used to be planted as windbreaks since at least 1953.

15:23

We have a first documented record within the herbarium specimens of planting in Missoula in 1957 and then 1966 as

the first documented specimen that was outside of intentional planting and that was at the Bison range, at least in western Montana Bison.

15:44

Again, the means of introduction for this species originally was because it was a horticultural valued plant, especially for shelter belts.

15:52

And the status currently in Montana is that it is a regulated species, not a noxious weed.

15:57

And so within MCA, we have or within actually a rule from the Department of Agriculture, we have 3 categories of noxious weeds and then we have a 4th category of regulated plant species.

16:12

And what that essentially means is it doesn't have the same weight as a noxious weed, but it does restrict the sale and movement of that plant species within Montana.

16:22

And that's of particular interest for this species because DNRC for a long time was one of the biggest producers and sellers of Russian olive, especially into our agricultural communities as a shelter bell tree.

16:40

So to give you a little bit of a botany lesson, want people to be able to correctly identify Russian olive.

16:47

These are the large shrubs or small trees.

16:49

And most of our noxious weeds that we have on the list currently are smaller Forbes species.

16:54

We do have some larger woody species and this would be joining that list grows up to 8 meters tall from Oh, I'm sorry, can you switch to the next slide?

17:07

I'm, I'm switching, but the presentation isn't switching from that previous slide.

17:12

You could see the stems have very long thorny stems and that if from these, these pictures here in particular, you could see that they start out kind of as a white, grayish color and then turn to this kind of darker town or orange brown color.

17:28

The leaves are alternate and lanch laid, so they're very long, narrow leaves.

17:33

They have smooth margins as opposed to any kind of ridges or teeth.

17:37

They're three to 10 centimeters long.

17:39

And they have the short petioles, which if you're unfamiliar with petioles, that's the little stem that connects the leaf to the branch.

17:46

And you can kind of see from these pictures that both on the flowers and on the leaves, they have kind of a shorter petiol.

17:52

The flowers are not very showy.

17:54

You can see from the picture in the corner there that they grow from the leaf axles.

17:59

They have no petals, but they have these interior yellow colored sepals and then that kind of whitish Gray again on the outside.

18:08

And then obviously its fruits are olive shaped, which it gets its name Russian olive.

18:15

I could go to the next slide, please.

18:18

All that is important because we do have very similar beneficial native species that we value in Missoula County.

18:24

The three that are most often confused with Russian olive, if there is confusion, is silverberry, which is in the same genus.

18:31

You can see from this picture that it's leaves are not lanchillate, they're very Oval and they don't have that same pedial.

18:38

They're connecting right to the stem.

18:39

So an easy distinguishing feature for that native species in that genus versus the invasive that we're talking about today.

18:48

We also have silver Buffalo Berry and Canada Buffalo Berry, which also distinguishing features from the Russian olive and even the silver Berry.

18:56

Their leaves are alternate on the stems, whereas the silver Berry and silver Buffalo Berry and the Canada Buffalo Berry have opposite leaves.

19:04

So if you take anything away from this today, that's the quality botany lesson of being able to distinguish this from the the native species that we value here.

19:16

OK, so getting it a little bit into Russian, Russian olive habitat, this is where we start to see some of the issues arise from Russian olive and that this species could probably be considered a generalist, but rather than most of our generalist that do OK in in pretty much any habitat.

19:32

This generalist species does very well in a broad spectrum of habitats.

19:37

It thrives really well under a range of moisture and soil conditions.

19:41

It prefers areas where the water table is, is fairly high, but it can move out of those sites into areas in the uplands that that have as little as 8 inches of annual precipitation.

19:53

So it does very well in our borrow pits along roads, along rail lines.

19:56

And that's kind of been a vector of spread is that we've seen from intentional plantings into some of the natural areas and and fence lines that we do not want this species in.

20:07

In particular, it grows very well in sandy, silty and loamy soils, and I'll get into that in a second here of why that's important for us here in Missoula County.

20:17

It also has a pretty high tolerance for salt or alkali soils.

20:23

So again, very generalist.

20:25

It doesn't have a specific habitat that it's looking for, but it does well in a number of habitats, which for invasive species is is one of those triggers of concern for us.

20:37

Another factor with this species that is very shade tolerant, meaning that the seeds from this plant, we can fall into the understory of a thick monoculture of Russian olive canopy and germinate and establish and continue to grow.

20:53

So unlike some of our other native species where you would have what you consider a monoculture of the canopy and then a separate level of diversity in the understory, with this particular species you tend to get a monotypic canopy and a monotypic understory just of Russian olive.

21:14

And as I said earlier, it has those larger spines on all of the stems, which can make it inaccessible for people to be accessing in that stuff.

21:23

But in particular in the riparian areas in eastern Montana where they have much larger infestations of this.

21:30

It prevents cattle grazing.

21:32

It prevents live wildlife grazing and utilization of that space and essentially creates a very thick barrier between a river system and the uplands.

21:45

And again, studies of older Russian olives show that there's a huge diversity of the age class within the Russian olive.

21:52

And because it doesn't require disturbance like our Cottonwood galleries do in order for germination, it begins to crowd those, those native species that we value in those areas out.

22:04

These pictures are from a study that was done in 2017 in eastern Montana looking at predicting the distribution of Russian olive in some of these eastern Montana river systems.

22:16

And you can see, well, maybe you can see or not, these run from 2005 to 2015.

22:24

Russian olive has a very like minty green color signature to it.

22:31

If you do get a chance to look at these pictures much closer, you can see in 2005 there are very few Russian olives individuals in that picture.

22:38

And just in the span of 10 years, you can see the increase of all of the dots along this is in the Marias River.

22:45

But all of the dots along the the bank on the upper part on that island system and then further down into the right lower corner, you have very thick patches of just Russian olive.

22:59

So from just in the a span of 10 years, if you have just a few individuals because it doesn't require disturbance and it can grow in any any condition, you start to see these these monocultures develop rather rapidly.

23:16

So next one.

23:18

So why do we care about that?

23:19

Well, one is that these preferences because of that generalist nature and being very successful in that it threatens both, you know, managed systems.

23:28

And I'll talk a little bit about some of those places or what we would consider landscaped or places that we're utilizing as well as natural areas like riparian areas.

23:38

It does, as I said, create these dense monotypic stands that prevent the establishment or the success of valued beneficial species in those sites.

23:49

And just to reiterate that shade tolerance and the the quick growth creates just what you would define as a a very comprehensive monotypic stand.

24:03

And one thing that they've been able to find, especially in researching this species in Eastern Montana river systems, is that it tends to be immune to Beaver or bevery.

24:14

And this creates kind of a double impact when it starts to get into these riparian zones.

24:19

The, the wood is harder than our Cottonwood galleries.

24:23

And so if Beavers are utilizing it, they're only pulling off smaller branches towards the bottom of the plant.

24:28

They're not impacting the actual growth of that plant.

24:31

And so Beavers tend to start to select for our desirable native species in those areas and open up more space for Russian olive.

24:39

And so this picture kind of showcases what you see when Russian olive moves into these systems where because the Beavers are selectively removing the Cottonwood that's closest to the river, they're pushing that gallery out of the riparian system farther into the the back of that riparian gallery and then creating this flood barrier.

25:02

So we have Russian olive creating a monoculture and pushing out our native, our native system.

25:08

And so you you tend to see a more rapid decrease of the Cottonwood gallery that you would that you wouldn't regularly see or you would see at a slower pace if you weren't seeing this double, double impact.

25:22

OK, so next, next slide.

25:25

Yeah.

25:26

So as I said, as far as the impact of this species on Missoula County, it was first documented as an ornamental in 1957.

25:33

We have seen escape from some of those ornamental plantings in and around Missoula for a number of years, but this last year in November we received a petition from a community member following our policies within the Missoula County Weed Plan to list it as a county noxious weed, which the County Weed Control ACT7-22-21O3 allows for a noxious weed to be listed at the county jurisdiction.

26:04

That would mean that it would have all the weight of a state listed noxious weed, but within the boundaries of our county.

26:11

At the recommendation of the Weed Board, after reviewing that petition, they directed staff to begin a mapping effort of the species through the winter of 2023.

26:22

Because it has that minty green signature and it holds its leaves longer into the season, we are both able to do on the ground mapping but also use ortho imagery to begin looking at some of these areas and assess the extent of the population as we knew it.

26:40

As part of that mapping effort, we were not just looking at what how many individuals we have.

26:44

We wanted to be able to determine which ones we could consider ornamental plantings because they were existing and and clear shelter belts or in ornamental settings in people's backyards.

26:57

We also wanted to be able to identify which ones were clearly escaped in fence lines, roadsides, rail lines, etcetera.

27:04

And we wanted to be able to begin measuring the class structure of the population that we have in in Missoula County.

27:12

So looking at what would consider saplings, new trees and established trees.

27:19

The petitioner actually was very helpful in volunteering his time in to contributing to that mapping effort and was able to plug into our field map system and and provide a lot of data as well as our staff.

27:32

We also got a request from the weed Board to reach out to local, state and federal land managers working in Missoula County to see if they had any concerns around the listing of this species is obnoxious weed if it would impact them negatively or positively.

27:47

All the feedback that we received was unanimously in support of listing Russian olive is a noxious weed within Missoula County.

27:55

And again, we have the authority through the County Weed Control Act to, to take this action based on a public hearing with you all today.

28:05

Next slide.

28:06

So just to give you a little bit of information, I, I, we are by no means have a complete and comprehensive picture of the population of Russian olive within Missoula County.

28:17

But the red within this map, excuse me, are all individuals or polygons of Russian olive that we were able to find through this exercise over the last winter.

28:29

And I wanna also highlight the blue in this, which is the grassland or Grass Valley, silky clay loam soil within Missoula County, which we've been able to utilize to predict recruitment of some of our other noxious weeds within Missoula County that do better in that soil.

28:51

And then go out and look at those areas in particular.

28:53

And then if you could go to the next slide in, in that, that soil type, you have the industrial park that we were just talking about in the previous agenda item.

29:10

The, the red in here is mostly lines and polygons because this is where we were seeing the most recruitment of Russian olive within our mapping effort.

29:21

So on that previous picture, there's a lot of red within Missoula city proper.

29:26

The majority of those are all ornamental plantings that do not show any recruitment in or around them.

29:34

In this area in particular, there was enough recruitment that it no longer made sense to be marking each individual in that space.

29:43

So we are certainly seeing recruitment of this from an escape from our ornamental populations.

29:48

On the next slide, in 2023, the Montana Natural Heritage Program conducted a suitability exercise for Russian olive within the state of Montana.

30:00

I should say that that regulated or that yeah, that regulated designation occurred in 2010.

30:06

At that time it was it was the decision was made to not listed as a noxious weed because there was a feeling that it was mostly an issue in eastern Montana would never be an issue in Western Montana.

30:20

This exercise to take another look at suitability, red is highly suitable, yellow is low suitability.

30:28

But within Western Montana you can see the Clark Fork and Lower Bitterroot through Missoula County as one of the only areas in Western Montana that's highlighted as highly suitable for this species.

30:41

So that is that is an additional concern of ours seeing that we are are having recruitment and we have highly susceptible habitat within Missoula County within our riparian system.

30:55

And then next slide, there's a lot of information out there that I'm not going into today about the invasiveness of this species.

31:04

There's also current efforts for long term management of the established populations in Eastern Montana, where you're seeing extreme monocultures take over those riparian systems, particularly on the Marias, the Yellowstone and the Milk River.

31:21

The document on the left is the petition for approval from Cabbie, Switzerland to USDAUSDAFS for a biocontrol agent that controls the fruit production of Russian olive.

31:37

That is currently in consultation with tribal governments at the USDAFS level, but they were able to show significant, the significant invasiveness of Russian olive is documented in that petition as well as the impact of that agent.

31:53

So there are tools beyond where we are to help control it in Eastern Montana.

32:01

And the document on the right in 2014, there was a 2 day symposium held in Boise specifically on the impacts and what to do on Russian olive that was conducted by federal, state, local and tribal agencies who all had concern about this species.

32:18

So just additional backup information about why people are concerned about this species.

32:26

And then next slide.

32:26

So what are we going to do about it?

32:28

What, what, what is listing the species within Missoula County provide provide us as far as a strategy.

32:34

I just want to quickly reference this amazing graph that I enjoy putting in almost every presentation that I do of a generalized invasion curve showing what kind of tools are available and what makes the most sense economically and realistically.

32:50

When we're approaching the management of of an invasive species at the lower left, we have prevention, which means we don't have this species at all.

32:57

We can spend a lot of time doing public education and outreach to try to prevent the movement of that species into our county.

33:05

You can see the green arrow at the bottom that shows the entry of this invasive species.

33:10

At that point, we have a lot of tools at our disposal to try to eradicate small infestations.

33:17

If we feel that we can get our hands around some of these individual plants, you know it's worth the use of pretty intensive herbicide tools and intensive mechanical removal to attempt removing it and and protect any kind of investment into not having to put a lot of work and effort onto the ground.

33:38

Finally, we move into containment if we know that we can keep a population contained to areas that it does not cause concern for us.

33:49

In the case of Russian olive, there are a number of plants, PC or individuals within ornamental settings within Missoula, aren't in susceptible soils and aren't close to water bodies that we're concerned about.

34:02

We're fine creating a buffer, a barrier around those areas and not necessarily removing every single Russian olive from Missoula County.

34:14

The red arrow, unfortunately, is where the public starts to take notice of an invasive species.

34:19

So we're well past all of those other tools.

34:21

And then we begin to move into things like Spotted Napoli, Leafy's purge, where we have tools like bio control that I mentioned.

34:28

It will also soon be available for Russia and Olive, but for us, we are not.

34:35

We are probably around the line that separates eradication and containment.

34:40

We know we have small populations in Missoula County.

34:44

We are not at a point that we can eradicate this species from Missoula County, but we can create a containment strategy around the populations that have the least economic and environmental impact to Missoula County and then focus our eradication efforts on areas where we would have the most susceptible habitat.

35:05

So we're proposing to, if, if listed, we're proposing to continue mapping or can continue our mapping effort to fully understand the extent of the population using that information to prioritize control and management in areas where we're seeing recruitment and especially in areas where we're near waterways where we know we'll have expanded, expanded recruitment and some of the potential ramifications described earlier.

35:32

So we'd essentially be creating weed management areas around our high priority sites.

35:37

We'd also be initiating public outreach and awareness efforts in those high priority areas to engage private land owners to assist in the management of those, and also work with federal, state or county land managers in those areas to also engage them in that work.

35:54

As a noxious weed designation.

35:55

That frees up funding for us to do this work.

35:58

So any species that's listed as a noxious weed, whether it's a county or state level listing, we have access to the Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Trust Fund.

36:09

Federal agencies are also able to provide us funding to assist in cost share work to control species.

36:15

So listing us, listing the species gives us additional resources.

36:21

And then our control efforts will be focused on mechanical removal.

36:24

And in some of those areas where we're now just starting to see sapling and young tree recruitment, there's the potential for us to use folio herbicide applications and where we would avoid having to remove a bunch of large woody debris of dead trees.

36:42

And I think that might be the last slide.

36:47

Oh, yes, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have about the species or if you want to talk about any happy to do that too.

36:57

And then the chair of the weed board gym, all there is also here to provide comment.

37:02

Yeah, good.

37:03

So first, thanks Bryce and thanks to a petitioner and to the weed Board for being on it and dealing with this now before it's, you know, eating our county.

37:12

So what do you what would you say to some of the folks who own property?

37:17

I'm thinking of the red places on the map that looked like they were in urban Missoula that have a Russian olive tree as an ornamental.

37:24

Yeah.

37:26

That's a good question.

37:27

So this species does have a very passionate following in eastern Montana.

37:31

Oh, it's shelter belt Is it's this is a super.

37:34

Yeah.

37:35

A popular one in shelter belts in central and eastern Montana.

37:37

Yeah.

37:38

But Even so, a number of those, a number of those folks, whether they're part of a ranching or farming community, have also begun to see the real ramifications within riparian areas.

37:52

So while they want to protect that individual tree or shelter belt, they also recognize and are are participating in active work to control it in the riparian areas where they're seeing either direct impact to their cattle grazing operations or seeing the larger natural resource ramifications.

38:13

So in our sense, I think we could, we can make a case that we have the background information to show whether or not an individual tree is, is a seed source or propagule source for what we're trying to manage.

38:30

For the most part, these, these, the fruits do move, animals do move them, but for the most part you see that recruitment directly under the adult individual.

38:42

So if it's in the backyard, I don't think we would necessarily have to remove it.

38:48

We do have other programs in Missoula County.

38:50

Japanese knotweed is a perfect example.

38:53

That's a noxious weed that we provide incentives to those individuals.

38:57

If they work with us to remove, then we can work with them to have a replacement tree or shrub in that space.

39:04

So we, we have a number of incentive options that we would provide and, and it sounds like one tree, one isolated tree in a backyard isn't necessarily sending fruit and seed across the valley, not wind dispersed.

39:17

We're not seeing a lot of movement like you would see it with some of our Forbes species.

39:22

Awesome, thanks.

39:24

How long lived is Russian olive?

39:28

That's a great question.

39:29

I would, I would have to get back to you on that one.

39:32

No, no problem.

39:33

My, my decision will not turn on that answer.

39:37

I mean, they, they are fairly long lived trees in comparison to even some of the Cottonwood galleries that they're in.

39:42

You know, they're, they're a hard wood or a harder wood species.

39:46

So they're, they're fairly resilient.

39:49

Thanks, Jim.

39:54

Anything.

40:02

I don't really think I have anything to add.

40:04

I'm here more just as as a board representative to support this initiative, as you can tell.

40:12

By your past and current experience, we have a a very hot shot staff, very thorough, very complete and very, very dedicated.

40:24

So I didn't really have anything to add other than to say I'm here as a chair to support him and this effort.

40:32

Thanks.

40:32

And if you could just state your name for the record, that would be great.

40:36

For the record, my name is Jim Oliveris, chair of the Weed Board.

40:39

Thank you very much.

40:41

Anything else Josh for for Bryce?

40:43

Oh, Bryce.

40:44

Yeah.

40:44

Come on back up.

40:46

So I'm thinking about places where I've dog walked along with Clark Fork not far from my house where I've seen these guys.

40:52

And it's and I should know this, but it's it's definitely in the flood way.

40:57

If not in the flood plain, is that, would that be owned by the state?

41:05

It's it's below the, it's above the high watermark.

41:07

I guess I'm thinking of like what What's this called?

41:10

Like the Clark Fork Natural area at the end of Tower Rd.

41:13

where Tower meets meets the river.

41:15

Yeah, I would say, you know, if it's above high watermark, it's going to go to the, you know, the adjacent lane, whatever landowner is there.

41:26

But this, this wouldn't be the first time I guess that we've had to develop collaborative efforts along for system river systems in the Blackfoot, for example, we work with both Powell County, the Blackfoot Challenge and all the adjacent land owners to manage leafy spurge both below the high watermark and above the high watermark.

41:51

And in those instances we've built, we've built relationships with the private land owners where we're coordinating with a contractor to treat below the high watermark and then areas where we're seeing movement out of that area onto private lands and those private land owners have agreed to cost share with it.

42:11

So if it's below the high watermark, the counties that are participating foot the the bill and then they agree to foot the bill for any of the above ground work because access is a big issue in a lot of those areas.

42:24

So we try to make the most of having a contractor that knows what they're doing on site to get as much as we can.

42:31

So like in the the area I'm talking about, would we we'd be working with the city, I think.

42:34

Yeah.

42:35

And we did get comment back from the city conservation lands.

42:39

They were very supportive of the listing of this species.

42:43

Awesome.

42:44

Thanks.

42:44

Yeah, Thank you.

42:47

Any public comment on this item?

42:53

Do we have motion language?

42:55

Yeah, I believe we do.

43:00

Anyone online who would like to comment on the proposed designation of the Russian olive as a noxious weed?

43:10

How about a motion?

43:11

Thanks.

43:12

I would move to list Russian olive as a Missoula County noxious weed.

43:19

I'll second that.

43:19

Any further discussion on the motion?

43:22

See.

43:22

None.

43:23

All in favor, aye.

43:25

OK.

43:26

Thanks, Jim.

43:27

Thank you very much for all of your work.

43:30

Anything else to come before the board today?

43:35

Seeing none, we'll be adjourned.

43:36

Oh, hang on.

43:37

We've got oh, if you activate the microphone.

43:43

My name's Ted Morgan.

43:44

I just wanted to thank the Board of county commissioners for allowing ride alongs for community council members.

43:49

I'm here following them around today and just wanted to thank them.

43:52

Thank you, Ted.

43:53

Thank you, Ted.

43:54

I'm glad to have your involvement.

43:56

All right.

43:57

If there's nothing else, we'll be adjourned.

43:59

Thanks everyone.