

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) Meeting Minutes
Fall Meeting, August 30, 2023
10:00 a.m. (MST)
Noxon Multipurpose Room

TRTAC Representatives Attendees:

Avista – Arthur Potts
Cabinet Resource Group – Rob Kjos
Elk Creek Watershed Council – Judy Hutchins
Green Mountain Conservation District (GMCD) Terry Hightower
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Ken Bouwens
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Council – Sarah Busmire
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Brian Schwarz
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rick Robinson
Sanders County Commissioners – Tony Cox
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Caleb Matthew
U.S. Dept. of agriculture, Forest Service, Cabinet Ranger District – Ron Torretta (conference line)

Other Attendees:

Avista – Monica Ott, Eric Oldenburg, Lisa Johnson, Davina Brown, Susan Drumheller (grant writer); Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Zach Farley; Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Reich.

Welcome

Arthur welcomed those in attendance and invited participants to introduce themselves. The purpose of this meeting is to update the TRTAC on the progress of the 2023 implementation efforts and identify any issues and/or actions that need to be forwarded to the Management Committee for their September 20, 2023, Fall Meeting.

Other business

- Instructions for the development of 2024 Project Plans
- Review of Consent Mails
 - RV Park deck (appendix H) – work is currently underway
- Discussion of LUMP 5-year review and update (Land Use Subgroup)
 - Discuss wildfire prevention/response for adjoining properties
 - Pergola design restrictions
- Kim McMahon Update:
 - Status update of the corridor-wide survey
 - Re-inventory of 41 key viewpoint to be conducted in 2023
- Grant Writer update- Susan Drumheller
- Clark Fork Heritage Resource Program – Lisa Johnson
- Winter Meeting Date (Jan 17, 2024)

- Review of properties purchased and held by Avista in support of the CFSA at 5- and 10-year intervals (Appendix G)
- Summary of 2023 implementation efforts and anticipated changes for 2024

Appendix G – Implementation of Land Use Management Plan

1. Administration of the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)

- Continue to implement the Private Recreation Permit Program.
- To date there have been 23 Work Authorization Requests in 2023.
- Avista Land staff has postponed the process to observe and photo catalog all Private Recreation Permits for the time being. We plan to resume this work in fall of 2023.
- Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise.
 - Nothing to note
- Continue to process requests for leases/easements of Avista Project property.
 - As of 8/28/2022, we have received requests for 4 permits to new property owners of existing permits.
 - Road easement on south side of River Road at Twin Creek has changed ownership and we will work on updating that agreement.
 - Avista received an inquiry about a potential access easement on a property adjoining Twin Creek. We communicated to the prospective buyer that we were not interested in granting the easement because they already had access onto their property.
 - Avista Legal and Real Estate are in discussion with BNSF to develop the existing, unused easement through the eastern adjoining property at Twin Creek.
- If a request is received, review and process Rock Creek Mine request to place discharge pipe across Project lands.
 - No requests received.
- Ongoing coordination of land use management program among Terrestrial Resource Technical Advisory Committee, Sanders County, and Green Mountain Conservation District, and the cultural resources, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, and erosion programs.
 - Ongoing
- Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC.
 - Avista Land staff and contractors have treated: Rimrock Trail, Island Park Subdivision, Frog Pond, Pilgrim Creek Park baseball fields and trails, Finely Flats, Lower Bull River, Sellmer's site, Vermillion boat launch, Two Rivers RV Park. Schedule-dependent, will treat leafy spurge in September. At the recommendation of MFWP consultant, Avista will plan to treat South Fork Bull River BMA for spotted knapweed in 2024.

- The Land Use Subgroup and other interested parties will complete the 5-year review and update of the LUMP, incorporating information included in the completed Recreation Resource Management Plan update.
 - Pinnacle is conducting a Project-wide comprehensive recreation survey and will deliver findings in late 2023/early 2024.
 - At Kim's suggestion, we will also be implementing an online option for interested adjoining landowners to provide feedback since the rec survey is not geared towards them. These responses will not have direct effect on LUMP/RRMP update but all feedback will be considered for potential changes to management strategy.
- LUMP Update:
 - Propose adding design specifications for pergolas: require use of pier blocks or similar above ground foundation.
 - Propose inclusion of specific language to address short-term rental use of Avista-issued recreation permits. Would include that listed permittee is responsible for all violations/damages to Avista property and can result in legal/financial repercussions, including loss of permit. Eric- Commercial? what determines?
 - Arthur to speak with legal to propose language to go into LUMP
 - Lisa- suggest guideline from tree removal
- Lands for Review:
 - Avista recommends maintaining both Trestle and Prospect Creek properties under current management strategy. Avista recommends transferring both Granite Creek parcels to IDFG.
- The Special Uses Subgroup and other interested parties will evaluate new requests for special use permits by private, and for-profit rental companies to use Avista owned and managed recreation areas as needed.
 - Avista has received 12 Special Use Permit requests for space reservations, primarily at Pilgrim Creek Park. No requests have required the Special Use Subgroup involvement.
- Continue to participate on the Sanders County AIPTF to implement an Integrated Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) Management Plan.
 - The AIPTF selected 8 plots in Noxon Reservoir totaling 143.58 acres (Noxon: 126.10 acres; Cabinet: 17.48 acres) for herbicide treatments using a combination of liquid endothall and liquid diquat. Clean Lakes, Inc., performed treatments in all selected plots between 8/14-8/16. A legal ad was placed in the local newspaper, notifications were posted at boat launches (Trout Creek Boat Launch down to Noxon Rapids Dam), and email notification was sent to rec permit holders by Avista. Post-treatment monitoring is planned for mid-September, and the Task Force will meet December 7 to review results.

2. Monitoring Associated with the LUMP

- Avista staff have performed shoreline observations on Noxon Reservoir on 3 separate occasions, looking specifically for recreation/land use violations. We plan to make this more regular with improved staffing.

- Avista Land staff postponed efforts to catalog Private Recreation Permit sites for compliance with their issued permits. Schedule permitting, we will continue this work in the fall.
- Land Staff continues to respond to reports of violations as they arise and monitor the Project Area during routine operations.
 - Violations in 2023 include lot owner in Island Park whose tree contractor erroneously removed 4 trees that were flagged for limbing.
 - Camping/offroad violations were identified at Sandy Beach (Cabinet) and Stephens Creek (Noxon).

3. Enforcement Associated with the LUMP

- Per MFWP request, the CFSA is no longer providing financial support for patrols of the Project Area; however, MFWP personnel continue to assist in the prevention and when appropriate prosecute violations of the law, permit and lease conditions and other unauthorized uses of project lands and waters.
- Continue to provide funding for Idaho Fish and Game enforcement personnel to assist in the prevention and when appropriate prosecute violations of the law, permit and lease conditions and other unauthorized uses of project lands and waters.
 - IDFG continues to patrol Avista sites.
- Continue to provide funding for Avista real estate, legal, land survey, and cultural personnel to assist in the prevention and when appropriate prosecute violations, permit and lease conditions and other unauthorized uses of project lands and waters.
 - There have been no uses of these funds to date in 2023.
 - The MacSpadden property on Elk Creek Bay has been vacated and is now under Avista control. We will work to determine what to do with the structures.
 - Rick Robinson- signage for boat ramps on wake, Brian to follow up

Appendix H – Implementation of Recreation Resource Management Plan (RRMP)

1. RRMP Administration and Resource Integration

- Administer the RRMP with Recreational Specialist, clerical, consultant, and technical support.
- Integrate RRMP programs and projects with land use, cultural resources, wildlife, fisheries, aesthetics, and erosion control programs.

2. RRMP Monitoring

- Work with the recreation subgroup to continue to implement electronic recreation site evaluations developed as part of the 2017 RRMP update.
 - Recommend that we remove this item from the AIPs. We perform routine evaluations throughout the season. Would like to develop a management plan for recreation facilities with USFS which could be adapted to all sites.
- Continue to utilize up to 21 automated traffic counters to measure use at various developed and dispersed recreation sites and trails.
 - Ongoing monitoring by Pinnacle Research. Annual report to be completed.
- Continue utilizing standardized reporting for recreation use at Thompson Falls State Park, North Shore Recreation Area, and Bull River Recreation Area.
 - Ongoing; update from Brian Schwarz.
- Summarize 2023 recreational use data from Bull River and North Shore campgrounds, MFWP, Thompson Falls State Park, and the Cabinet Gorge Dam and Noxon Rapids Dam viewpoints.
 - Ongoing
- Develop maps showing dispersed recreation areas along the projects and permitted dock locations (showing dock densities per 0.5-mile segments of shoreline).
 - Pinnacle is performing dock density study as part of LUMP/RRMP update. These maps will be developed for the January TRTAC meeting.

3. Operation and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities

- Maintain Avista controlled recreation facilities and undeveloped recreation sites on Avista lands.
 - Ongoing; host at Pilgrim Creek Park for 2nd year. Largely just act as a presence; will have them back next year if they are interested.
- Assist USFS with the maintenance of Finley Flats Recreation Area, North Shore Recreation Area, Marten Creek Recreation Area, Triangle Pond, Bull River Recreation Area, Quinn's Cut Recreation Area, and Big Eddy Recreation Area.
 - Ongoing; host at Finley Flats this year that has been great and expressed interest in returning for 2024
 - Co-host assisted with RV park and parked camper at Pilgrim Creek Park; current host plans to move out in the fall and the cohost will take over for them; we will look for a new cohost for 2024
- Assist MFWP with the maintenance of Thompson Falls State Park and Flat Iron Ridge Fishing Access Site.
 - Ongoing
 - Provide low-cost leases or permits to the community or civic groups providing recreation opportunities (i.e., Thompson Falls Golf Course).

- Received a request to lease or purchase an area between Aitken’s and the Noxon bridge. The request was denied because this is a key viewpoint/day-use parking area.

4. Interpretation and Education Program

- Implementation of Interpretation and Education Program will be integrated with the measures developed and approved by the CRMG in 2008. The Interpretation and Education Program is funded through the facility development program. Maintenance dollars will be used to inventory, standardize, and maintain informational kiosks and EWM signs throughout the project.
 - Ongoing
 - Added new EWM signs at boat launches

5. RRMP Recreation Facility Development

Recreation Sites	Identified Opportunities	Status
Annual activity		
Corridor Wide	General clean up, open facilities, end of year cleaning, projects, etc.	Ongoing
Corridor Wide	Noxious Weed Management/Recreation Sites	Sites previously referenced; may revisit
Corridor Wide - boat ramps/docks	Invasive Eurasian watermilfoil control	Previously discussed.
Corridor Wide	Receive assistance in the removal/installation of docks	Deployment completed; Jason Helvey is new contractor.
Finley Flats, Two Rivers RV Park & Campground	Dust control as needed	Completed
Flat Iron Recreation Area	Dredge boat ramp area	Discussion to follow...
Primary Recreation Projects		
Big Eddy Campground	Address access road improvements	Completed
Noxon Dam Upper Viewpoint	Address access road improvements	Completed
Noxon Dam Lower Viewpoint	Address access road improvements	Completed
Cabinet Gorge Viewpoint	Repave entrance road	Completed
Bull River Campground	Address sedimentation issue with potable water tank	Scheduled for September

Recreation Sites	Identified Opportunities	Status
Bull River Campground	signage for campground	Completed
Kirby Gulch Boat Ramp	Improve/expand parking lot	Will reevaluate in 2024
North Shore Campground	Address paving needs for North Shore Parking lot, day use, campground area	Discussion to follow...
Triangle Pond	Implement master site plan developed in 2019	Completed
Noxon/Bicentennial Park	Improve boat ramp	Waiting on quote from contractor
South Shore Boat Ramp	Reposition section of boat ramp	Waiting on quote from contractor
Bull River Campground	Valve Replacement	Scheduled for September
Frog Pond	Road grading	Will reevaluate in 2024.
North Shore Campground	Sample tap/line repair	Completed
Secondary Recreation Projects		
Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs	Work with Appendix B to investigate opportunities for low water boat launch opportunities	Completed in fall 2021; see North Shore above.
Antelope Lake	Road repairs	Evaluating bids from 2 contractors with IDFG; hope to complete in Spring 2024. Budget split with Appendix A.
North Shore Campground	Land purchase to expand parking	Discussion to follow...
Corridor Wide	Evaluate access roads previously blocked off; add boulders as needed	Ongoing
Heron, Centennial, Trout Creek, and South Shore Boat Launches	Address bulkhead approaches at docks	Waiting on estimate from contractor
Clark Fork Access	Address entrance and ramp grade	Not initiated; reevaluate in 2024

Recreation Sites	Identified Opportunities	Status
North Shore boat launch	Ramp extension	Discussion to follow...
South Shore	Address access road	Completed

Flat Iron Dredging: Avista is coordinating with Elk Creek Contracting to perform the sediment removal. MFWP is coordinating necessary waiver for the work. Avista will have a contractor conduct testing for contaminants prior to initiating work. The material will be removed with a long-arm excavator and loaded into side dump trucks and hauled to the Graves Creek parcel and dumped in the gravel pit there. Avista will oversee the material to assist with reclamation of the area. Golf course may utilize some of the material.

North Shore Redevelopment: Avista is currently working to finalize an RFP for design services to produce a Master Redevelopment Plan. Avista plans to pursue acquiring adjoining acreage by the end of 2023. Avista and USFS will work with design contractor to identify desired changes and additions. Once design is completed, we will seek bids for implementation of the redevelopment plan. Anticipate this could begin as early as 2024.

Appendix I – Implementation of the Aesthetics Management Plan

- Monitor recreation, land management, erosion, and facility construction programs to ensure AMP guidelines are considered.
 - Ongoing
- Continue to investigate measures to restore views and remove vegetation as needed, also addressing any identified issue from the 2018 re-inventory of 41 key viewpoints. Sites will be revisited again in 2023 to take photos to compare to past inventories.
 - Pinnacle conducting re-inventory of key viewpoints and will produce a report as part of the LUMP/RRMP update.

Appendix J – Implementation of the Wildlife, Botanical and Wetland Management Plan

- Utilize the Wildlife, Botanical and Wetland Management Plan to help guide implementation of Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement programs.
 - Ongoing
- Continue to update the habitat protection spreadsheet as acquisitions are completed.
 - Ongoing

- As approved by the Management Committee at their March 15, 2016 meeting, observations regarding bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and common loons will be reported here annually.
 - Received a report of a Common Loon on Cabinet Gorge; forwarded information to Ron Torretta with USFS.

Appendix K - Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Enhancement and Management Program

- Twin Creek – Continue to develop site plan and install infrastructure that will allow public use of this property that was acquired in 2016. Work will include noxious weed control, enforcement, and development of revegetation/wetland enhancement plans for the property.
 - Ongoing. IDFG is addressing noxious weeds on the property. Multi-year process.
 - Avista Legal/Real Estate are working with BNSF to develop existing, unused access easement through adjoining property to the east.
 - IDFG will continue working on riparian enhancement plan for northern portion of the property.
- South Fork Bull River Wildlife Management Area complex – Activities include monitoring, weed control, development of infrastructure (roads, parking areas, fences), development of timber management plan, enforcement, etc.
 - At the suggestion of MFWP monitor, Avista will pursue spotted knapweed treatments in 2024.
- Monitoring of other Avista owned habitat properties and implementing management measures as needed.
 - Avista received request from the Ross Conservation Servitude to perform some tree clearing activities. Through consultation with KLT and the logger (Bill Jensen) we determined the work was inline with the Servitude.
 - KLT conducted assessment of the Twin Creek CE.
- Funding is available to conduct due diligence (landowner discussions, property inspection, habitat information, title search, and appraisal), in order to provide the Management Committee a detailed proposal for their consideration. Includes working with partners such as Kaniksu Land Trust on identifying and vetting potential projects.
 - Currently pursue a CE purchase at the request of KLT and working with IDFG. Parcel is 40 acres on Swan Creek, west of Clark Fork. Property offers a low cost opportunity to put land under a CE. Property has an oxbow of a tributary that flows through it and will allow for preservation/potential enhancement of wetlands and waterfowl habitat.
 - **Criteria ranking for Swan Creek (ID) parcel**
 - Pending review of draft for CE
 - Request Regan Plum to present at MC- Arthur to reach out to Regan KLT

- Wood Duck Re-Vegetation Maintenance (Surah Busmire)
 - No work proposed in 2023.

Appendix L – Back Cottonwood Habitat Protection and Enhancement

- Continue to protect black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project through the implementation of the Land Use Management Plan.
 - Ongoing
- Continue to monitor and maintain the exclosures at Hereford Slough.
 - Continues to function well. Will visit the site this fall to make sure fences are in place prior to winter.

Appendix M – Wetland Protection and Enhancement Program

- Continue to investigate the potential for a wetland enhancement project on the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition.
 - IDFG will continue to evaluate.
- Monitor enhancements previously completed at Hereford Slough, McKay Creek, Finley Flats, and Blacktail Bay/Islands.
 - All enhancements continue to function as designed

Appendix P – Forest Habitat Protection and Enhancement

- Continue to manage those areas that have been classified as Conservation 1, and as such are afforded the maximum protection provided through the Land Use Management Plan.
 - Ongoing
- Honey Flats is being managed to minimize impacts to the site (e.g., no motorized vehicles, no timber harvest, and minimize human use of site). The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe and CRMG have expressed an interest in having this site managed for traditional plants and uses. Continue to work with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe to define management options.
 - No activity
- Continue to monitor and enforce the road closure to Stevens Creek Point (closure was instituted in 2001).
 - Evaluating whether the point needs to be fenced as a result of recent timber sale on adjoining USFS land
- Continue to prohibit motorized use of Finley Flats Point.
 - Ongoing. Camp host helps ensure compliance

- Continue to utilize the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Block Management Program to provide hunter access to the Tuscor, South Fork Bull River, and Wood Duck properties.
 - All properties continue to be enrolled in this program. Per FWP recommendation, we will continue facilitate access through use of sign-in boxes.
 - Arthur to follow up with reservation after next meeting
 - Plan to develop some roads in Tuscor BMA to improve access for PTHFV hunters.

- Continue weekly patrols of the forested lands surrounding the State Shop property and continue to reduce the amount of disturbance and litter in this area.
 - Ongoing

- Initiate timber stand improvement efforts in stands that have disease (beetle kill, root rot, mistletoe, etc.), high fire danger or other problems. This work will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and specific proposals will be presented to the TRTAC and MC as they are developed.
 - Nothing to report.
 - Inland Forest Management for on-call forestry services.

Appendix Q - Reservoir Island Protection

- Continue to ensure restrictions developed for the protection of these areas utilizing the land use classifications described in the Land Use Management Plan.
 - Ongoing

Appendix S – Erosion Fund and Shoreline Stabilization Guidelines Program

- Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG.
 - Elk Creek Contracting will address erosion concerns at Pilgrim Creek Park after October 1.

- Utilize a geotechnical contractor to assist with evaluating erosion control proposals received by Avista.
 - Will contract if needed.

Meeting Adjourned 2:01 MST