

Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) Meeting Notes
Winter Meeting, January 22, 2019
Noxon Emergency Services Building
10:00 a.m. (MST)

WRTAC Representative Attendees:

Eric Oldenburg, Avista; Ken Bouwens, IDFG; Ryan Kreiner, MFWP; Bill Love, Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited

Other Attendees:

Shana Bernall, Paul Kusnierz, Susan Drumheller, Sean Moran, Susan Frawley and Josh Storaasli, Avista; Bob Steed, IDEQ; Brita Olson, LCFWG; Jessica Erickson, PRWC (Jessica left the meeting at 2:05 p.m. MST).

Welcome and introductions:

Eric welcomed those in attendance and invited participants to introduce themselves. The purpose of this meeting is to review the draft 2019 Aquatic Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs) and provide recommendations to the Management Committee (MC). Eric mentioned that as there are over 80 individual Project Plans that the emphasis of this meeting will be to discuss those projects that are new (and/or need ranking), or have had significant changes.

- Ken asked if Jessica Erickson can be considered the WRTAC rep for PRWC for today, Eric will investigate.

Other business:

Eric addressed the government shutdown as to how it relates to the WRTAC and upcoming MC meeting. As of now, the MC meeting is still scheduled as planned, and Avista will keep the MC updated as we get closer if any decisions to the contrary are made.

- Consent mails
 - November 7 request to reallocate funds for designing improvements to the Graves Creek permanent weir trap was approved on December 3.
 - November 7 request for approval of the Lake Pend Oreille Experimental Walleye Angler Incentive Program was approved on December 3.

Eric asked the WRTAC if it would be beneficial to the group to have a list denoting which projects are new, which are continuing but have meaningful changes proposed, and which are continuing with no changes – perhaps immediately following Project Plan titles in each Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement (PM&E) measure's Main AIP.

- The WRTAC replied, “Yes, that would be helpful” knowing what is new versus what is continuing or continuing with meaningful changes.
- Fall Meeting Date
 - The group agreed on **August 21 at 10:00 a.m. MST.**

Review of draft 2019 aquatic AIPs:

Eric described the new budget table format, which is an effort to increase transparency and improve the tracking of carryover dollars. The budget table in each project plan now includes a carryover column. Ultimately, this will help more accurately estimate the amount of unobligated

funds associated with each PM&E measure. Eric noted that there will be slight changes to some AIPs, specifically, a few technical reports, and report due dates from what went out for review and that these came up during the Annual Report editing meeting. In addition, Eric noted that there would likely be some minor changes to proposed budgets prior to the MC mail out, particularly associated with the estimated carryover dollars. Eric also noted that every aquatic PM&E measure will have an Annual Work Summary moving forward.

Appendix A: Idaho Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Fishery Enhancement Program

- Ken began by stating that most projects are a continuation. He introduced Susan Frawley, a technician who has been helping with data analysis and report preparation and Jessica Erickson of the Pack River Watershed Council (PRWC) who has been helping with formulating a plan for the upper Pack River projects.

Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement

1. Habitat Restoration Scoping Allocation
2. Habitat Restoration and Acquired Property Maintenance and Monitoring Allocation
3. Priority Native Salmonid Habitat Acquisition and Conservation Allocation
4. Lightning Creek Rootwad Salvage
 - Bob inquired if the burned-over trees were from the active channel. Ken replied that no the trees were from blow down and discussion regarding using burned-over trees for restoration followed. The plan is to have the trees available for future restoration projects.
5. Habitat Prioritization Evaluation for Trestle Creek
 - Bob inquired about the Fish Biologist's thoughts regarding all of the developments going on in lower Trestle Creek (i.e., marina, etc.). Ken replied that he and others looked into many options (Conservation Easement, Fee Title, etc.), but they did not feel benefits to the resource were great enough to justify the cost. There was some discussion about the marina providing habitat for predators, but lake drawdown and colder water during juvenile Bull Trout outmigration should minimize this.
6. Habitat Prioritization Evaluation for Caribou and Hellroaring Creeks
7. Spring and Mosquito Creeks Pathogen Survey
8. Idaho Field Station Planning
9. Habitat Prioritization Evaluation for the Upper Pack River and McCormick Creek
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking criteria.
 - The WRTAC discussed the AIT's recommended ranking score for this project and agreed to change criteria E to a score of 2.
10. Pack River Watershed Management Plan Addendum
 - The WRTAC discussed the AIT's recommended ranking score for this project and agreed to change criteria E to a score of 2.
11. Johnson Creek Fish Passage Improvement Design and Construction
 - The WRTAC discussed and approved the AIT's recommended ranking score for this project.
12. Lower Clark Fork River Minimum Flow and Water Temperature Monitoring
 - The WRTAC discussed the AIT's recommended ranking score for this project and agreed to add IDEQ in-kind and to change criteria F to a score of 1.

Fishery Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management

13. Fish Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management Plan

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix A Project Plans as written with the addition of: change criteria E to a score of 2 for the Habitat Prioritization Evaluation for the Upper Pack River and McCormick Creek; change criteria E to a score of 2 for the Pack River Watershed Management Plan Addendum; to add IDEQ in-kind and change criteria F to a score of 2 for the Lower Clark Fork River Minimum Flow and Water Temperature Monitoring; and to add clarifying language to the budget section of the Fish Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management Plan Project Plan regarding the allocation being permanently increased to \$96,000 available annually with any unexpended dollars remaining in the Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement fund.

Appendix B: Montana Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Recreational Fishery Enhancement Program

- Ryan filled in for Jason.

Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement

1. Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Native Salmonid Abundance Monitoring Plan
 - Eric explained the consolidation of stream electrofishing monitoring programs (previously conducted under both Appendix B and C) to Appendix B going forward. Sean mentioned that Appendix C monitoring sections and rotation considerations have been incorporated into this consolidated monitoring strategy.
2. Miners Gulch Stream and Riparian Restoration Project
 - Discussed Project Completion Report items.
 - Discussed monitoring following projects.
3. Vermilion River Sims Reach Restoration Survey and Design
 - Discussed Completion Report items.
 - Brita mentioned a grant for \$200,000 that has already been received.
4. Mainstem Bull River Reforestation on Forest Service Lands and NEPA Process
5. Match Funds for Outreach in Bull River Revegetation (Section 319 Project)
 - Brita mentioned USFS received comments against the Dry Creek road decommission and project is in “perpetual delay”
 - Request to the MC to apply the Green Mountain Conservation District’s carryover of \$1,200 from the Dry Cr road NEPA towards the Bull River Revegetation, Sean to fix the Budget Table and explanatory text.
6. Stream Gage Monitoring
7. Cabinet Ranger District Automated Snow Recording Site Operation and Maintenance
8. Crow Creek Bull Trout Investigation
9. Lolo National Forest Priority Native Salmonid Habitat Restoration Assessment and Planning.
 - The NEPA is very close to completion for this which included the Graves pilot project
10. Graves Creek Pilot Habitat Enhancement Project
 - The group noted the need to expedite the AIT review of the design for this project.

11. Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Project Coordination
 - o Brita updated the watershed restoration plan development status.
 - o Change Project Completion Report due date to June.
12. Habitat Restoration Monitoring, Maintenance and Contingency Allocation
13. Habitat Restoration, Property Acquisition, and Conservation Easement Contingency Allocation
14. Phase II Crow Creek Stream and Riparian Restoration Project
 - o The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed.
 - o Change \$29,600 to \$30,000 (in phrasing below Budget Table).
 - o Eric to check to see if \$8,000 is accurate for Consent Mail for LiDAR (Brita mentioned that she was invoiced for \$8,800).

Recreational Fishery Enhancement

15. Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoir Fisheries Monitoring Plan
 - o Ryan outlined the addition of larger mesh size gill nets during 2019 to better sample larger size classes of walleye.
16. Eurasian Watermilfoil Literature Review and Noxon Reservoir Existing Data Analysis
17. Mountain Lake Fisheries Monitoring Project
 - o This is the last year of field work and the report will be completed in 2020.
18. Lower Clark Fork River Pathogen/Disease Survey of Montana Tributaries
 - o Eric mentioned that there is a small chance that this could be a Consent Mail prior to MC meeting in order to do the work in March.
19. Thompson Falls Field Station Facility Feasibility Study
 - o Ryan mentioned that they moved into the new office last Thursday, and that they might have new phone numbers.
20. Thompson Falls Field Station Phase II
21. Lower Bull River Day Use Boat Access Site Management Plan and Construction
 - o Eric mentioned that an Avista employee is living on site and keeping an eye on things.
22. Noxon Reservoir Boat Ramp Improvements
 - o Ryan mentioned that one option is to extend the Thompson Falls State Park boat ramp which would also require partial opening of the park earlier in the year than what is currently done.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix B Project Plans as written with the additions of: request to the MC to approve the Green Mountain Conservation District's request to use the \$1,200 Dry Creek NEPA carryover towards the Bull River revegetation component for the Match Funds for Outreach in Bull River Revegetation (Section 319 Project); change the Project Completion Report due date to June for Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Project Coordination; for the Phase II Crow Creek Stream and Riparian Restoration Project, change \$29,600 to \$30,000 (below Budget Table) check to see if \$8,000 is accurate for Consent Mail for LiDAR.

Appendix C: Fish Passage/Native Salmonid Restoration Plan

1. Upstream Fish Passage Program
 - Westslope Cutthroat Trout are now included in this project. For 2019, they will not be radio tagged and size, seasonal, and phenotypic constraints will be similar to last year per AIT discussions
 - The plan is to continue transporting Lightning Creek origin Bull Trout to Region 2 when the mouth of Lightning Creek is dry.
2. Tributary Trapping and Downstream Juvenile Bull Trout Transport Program
3. Bull Trout Emigration Study
4. PIT-Monitoring Station Operation and Maintenance
5. East Fork Bull River Bedload Sediment Sampling 2016–2020
6. Redd Surveys in Montana Tributaries
7. Non-Native Fish Suppression Project in the East Fork Bull River
 - The plan is to comprehensively evaluate and report on this project. For 2019, the Downstream Program will do their best to prevent non-natives from moving upstream of the trap sites and Brown Trout eggs will be sampled.

Facilities

8. Fish Capture Facilities Operation, Development, and Testing
 - Discussion regarding pipes freezing at the FHCF and if some of those same problems could happen with the Fishway.
 - Bob Steed mentioned he hoped to have the IDEQ 401 water quality certification out for a 20-day public comment period by next week.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix C Project Plans as written.

Appendix D: Bull Trout Protection and Public Education Project

Sean mentioned that the overall tasks implemented under each implementer remained similar, but to follow the structure of other PM&Es, individual Project Plans were broken out for MFWP and Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited (PCTU).

1. Idaho Bull Trout Officer Support
 - Upcoming opportunity to examine what the future of this Project Plan will be following Tom's retirement.
2. Montana Bull Trout Education Communication and Website Support
3. Montana Bull Trout Education Outreach Support
4. Montana Game Warden Support
5. Bull Trout Booth Events
6. Fly Fishing Film Tour Support
7. Summerfest Support
8. Trout and About Festival Support
9. Trout Unlimited Website and Social Media Support
10. Bull Trout Education Promotional Items
11. Interpretive Signs and Kiosk Component for Trestle Creek Education Center

- Eric clarified the cost share between appendices A and K. (i.e., timber receipt dollars).
 - Ken updated the group regarding the progress of the dirt work and the signs.
12. Draft Five-Year Implementation Plan (2020-2024)
- Eric further clarified the reason why there are individual Project Plans for Appendix D this year, and how it relates to the draft 5-year plan (i.e., should be easier for folks to track).

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix D Project Plans as written.

Appendix E: Watershed Councils Program

1. Pack River Watershed Council, Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District
2. Lower Clark Fork Watershed Council Projects

Some discussion on trend of less private landowner involvement in watershed councils and efforts, including development of Lower Clark Fork Tributary and Pack River Watershed Restoration plans, may help in this regard.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix E Project Plans as written.

Appendix F1: Clark Fork River Water Quality Monitoring Program

1. Clark Fork River water Quality Monitoring Program

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F1 Project Plan as written.

Appendix F2: Monitoring of Noxon Reservoir Stratification and Mobilization of Sediment Nutrients/Metals

1. Monitoring of Noxon Reservoir Stratification and Mobilization of Sediment Nutrients/Metals

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F2 Project Plan as written.

Appendix F3: Aquatic Organism Tissue Analysis

There are no 2019 Project Plans associated with Appendix F3.

- Samples will be collected from Cabinet Gorge and Noxon reservoirs in 2020 to assess mercury levels.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve Appendix F3 as written.

Appendix F4: Water Quality Protection and Monitoring Plan for Maintenance, Construction, and Emergency Activities

There are no 2019 Project Plans associated with Appendix F4.

- Eric noted that construction of the cofferdam associated with the Fishway is likely going to require that we operate below the Cabinet Gorge Dam minimum flow criteria on multiple occasions during 2019.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve Appendix F4 as written.

Appendix F5: Dissolved Gas Supersaturation Control, Mitigation, and Monitoring Operations

There are no 2019 Project Plans for operations under Appendix F5.

TDG Monitoring

1. Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring

TDG Mitigation and Monitoring Program

1. Analysis of Gas Bubble Disease Monitoring Data
2. Lake Pend Oreille Stock Identification of Bull Trout
3. Lake Pend Oreille Experimental Walleye Angler Incentive Program
4. Lake Pend Oreille/Clark Fork River Walleye Population Assessment
5. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Angler Incentive Program
 - Two new (7 total) Derby Sponsorships
6. Lake Pend Oreille Trap and Gill Net Program
7. Demography of Adfluvial Bull Trout in Lake Pend Oreille
8. LPO/Lower Clark Fork Strontium Isotope Baseline Collection
9. Lake Pend Oreille Bull Trout Survival Study
10. Lake Pend Oreille Nearshore Index Netting
11. Box Canyon Reservoir Northern Pike Suppression
12. Lake Pend Oreille Tributary Creel
13. Trophic and Phytoplankton Monitoring in Lake Pend Oreille Idaho
14. Temperature Monitoring Data Compilation
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and agreed to change criteria E to a score of 2.

GSCP Alternative:

15. Gas Supersaturation Control Program Total Dissolved Gas Abatement
 - Paul to add more detail to the Budget Table regarding consultant and contractor.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F5 Project Plans as written with the addition of: change criteria E to a score of 2 for the Temperature Monitoring Data Compilation; and, to add more detail to the Budget Table regarding consultant and contractor for the Gas Supersaturation Control Program Total Dissolved Gas Abatement

Appendix T: Project Operations Package

1. Project Operations and Coordination

2. Priest River Coldwater Bypass Alternatives Assessment
3. Cabinet Gorge Fish Hatchery Spring Collection System Upgrade

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix T Project Plans as written.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. MST.