

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2019
Noxon Emergency Services Building
10:00 a.m. (MST)

Attendees

Designated TRTAC Representatives

Avista – Nate Hall
Bull River Watershed Council – Kathy Ferguson
Cabinet Resource Group – Rob Kjos
Green Mountain Conservation District (GMCD) – Terry Hightower
Elk Creek Watershed Council – Judy Hutchinson
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho – Scott Soultz
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) – Bruce Sterling
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Reich
Sanders County Commissioner – Tony Cox
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Wayne Kasworm
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Les Raynor

Other Attendees

Avista – Eric Oldenburg
Avista – Susan Drumheller
Bull River Watershed Council – Tom McDowell
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Dave Landstrum
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rick Robinson
Gene Joplin

Welcome

Nate Hall welcomed those in attendance and invited participants to introduce themselves. The purpose of today's meeting is to provide progress update on the PM&Es and identify any issues for the upcoming Management Committee (MC) meeting on September 17th.

Updates

- Wayne gave an update on Grizzly Bears. Two new bears were introduced in the west Cabinets in July.
- Nate provided an overview of the history, process, and procedures of the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement.
- Nate provided an update on Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway construction.

Appendix G: Implementation of the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)

The primary purpose is to manage Avista owned lands within the Clark Fork Project consistent with the LUMP and FERC License.

Administration

- Continue to implement the Private Recreation Permit Program. Only a few new requests

this year.

- Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise – we dealt with two notable trespass issues with driveways built on Avista property. Both of these issues have been resolved.
- Continue to process requests for leases/easements of Avista project property. Currently renewing the lease for the Thompson Falls Golf Course property.
- Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC – a lot of work done this year as always.
- Continue to participate on the Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plants Task Force (AIPTF) to implement an Integrated Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) Management Plan. Provided financial support by funding the coordinator and some outreach. An Army Corps grant funded treatment this year.
- Jason has completed first draft of the 5-year review and update of the LUMP, which is currently undergoing internal review. Nate is not sure if this will get out to the land-use subgroup this year or not.
- 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.

Monitoring

- Continue annual inspections of Avista project lands to assure compliance with permit and lease conditions, and assure compliance with acceptable land uses and restrictions as defined by land use classifications.

Enforcement

- Continue to provide funding for MFWP 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. 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.
- Continue to provide funding for Avista real estate, legal, land survey, and cultural 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.

Appendix H: Implementation of the Recreation Resource Management Plan (RRMP)

Background

The purpose of this measure is to provide for appropriate and adequate recreational opportunities and facilities associated with the Clark Fork Project through implementation of the RRMP.

Seven goals to be met through its implementation include:

1. Manage existing recreation resource needs.
2. Manage future recreation resource needs.
3. Provide adequate and safe public access.
4. Preserve recreation resources.
5. Coordinate recreation planning and needs.
6. Provide cost-effective and desirable recreation opportunities.

7. Provide compatible recreation opportunities.

Year 2019 work efforts are a continuation past efforts and remain focused on implementing the five distinct components of the RRMP:

Administration

- 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.

Facility Development

Objective

Provide for appropriate and adequate recreational opportunities and facilities associated with the Clark Fork project.

- Cabinet Gorge Dam overlook landscaping.
- The new boat ramp and dock at the North Shore Recreation Area was completed.
- A site plan for Triangle Pond is under development.
- In the process of installing new kiosks at all of the recreation sites.
- A new group pavilion was installed at Thompson Falls State Park as well as bear-resistant food and trash storage.
- The lower viewpoint at Noxon Rapids Dam was landscaped and a solar-powered sprinkler system was installed and the site will be hydro seeded in a few weeks.
- A new vault toilet was installed at the North Shore Recreation Area.
- Kathy asked to discuss the Lower Bull River Day Use Area. Nate provided background on the site. Kathy said there was reed canary grass and some noxious weeds in the area, no trash receptacle, overgrown grass around the picnic tables, the tables could use shelter, and that landscaping around the house needs to be landscaped. Kathy suggested a permit fee for commercial use that could help offset operations and maintenance costs. Nate explained that had been considered and the initial reason for not going that direction was that would open us up to additional liability concerns.

Monitoring

Objective

Through monitoring use, management can be modified if needed to ensure that providing the appropriate and adequate recreational opportunities and facilities associated with the Clark Fork project.

- Traffic counters are at 19 of the recreation sites.

Operations and Maintenance

Objective

Ensure that recreation opportunities and facilities are operated and maintained in a manner to

provide for appropriate, adequate, and safe use.

Tasks

- Maintain Avista controlled recreation facilities and undeveloped recreation sites on Avista lands.
- 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. The five-year agreement is final.
- Assist MFWP with the maintenance of Thompson Falls State Park and Flat Iron Ridge Fishing Access Site.
- Provide low cost leases or permits to the community or civic groups providing recreation opportunities (i.e., Thompson Falls Golf Course).

Interpretation and Education

Objective

Ensure that the existing information and education materials associated with the Clark Fork Project recreation resources and facilities are maintained.

Appendix I: Aesthetics Management Plan

Background

The purpose of this measure is to provide for the protection and enhancement of aesthetic resources associated with Avista's Clark Fork Projects and to mitigate for project related impacts to those resources through the implementation of the Aesthetics Management Plan (AMP). Aesthetic guidelines and considerations of the AMP are implemented by permit standards and land use classifications of the LUMP, site design and monitoring in the RRMP, and shoreline stabilization guidelines of the Shoreline Stabilization Guidelines Program. Ongoing coordination with other interest groups and agencies will occur as described for in the AMP.

2018 Project Plans

- Monitor recreation, land management, erosion, and facility construction programs to ensure AMP guidelines are considered.
- There was an inventory 41 key viewpoints last year and the finding was that things were still rural and rustic as appropriate.

Appendix J: Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Management Plan

- Utilize the Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Management Plan to help guide implementation of Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland PM&E programs.
- Continue to update the habitat protection spreadsheet as acquisitions are completed.
- As approved by the MC at the March 15, 2016 meeting observations regarding bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and common loons will be reported here annually.
- Under this program, Nate manages the property acquisition database and described work under this program: no past acquisitions are up for Management Committee review this year.

Appendix K: Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Enhancement, and Management Program

Operation and maintenance, including fence/gate maintenance, noxious weed treatment, forest management plan development and implementation, public information and management, and taxes on Avista owned and managed habitat protection properties.

- Cooperate closely with the aquatic programs in implementing Appendix K.
- There are no currently active acquisitions.
- Judy mentioned there are a lot of potential opportunities for restoration and/or protections in the Elk Creek drainage.
- Scott asked about the intent of Appendix K and what types of opportunities are in the interest of the program.

Appendix L: Black Cottonwood Protection and Enhancement

Background

The purpose of this measure is to provide for the protection of black cottonwood trees and stands on Avista owned project lands through the development of site-specific management and enhancement plans for three specific cottonwood sites identified by the Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetlands Work Group. Additionally, existing stands and trees will be protected through the implementation of land use classifications in the LUMP.

Site-specific management plans were developed in 2000. Efforts were focused on the continued protection of black cottonwood stands and trees through the implementation of land use classifications in the LUMP. The site-specific enhancement efforts at Hereford Slough (completed in early 2003 and treated again in 2007) will continue to be monitored to determine response, and implement additional management efforts as needed.

An 80 x 80 foot woven wire enclosure was built in the spring of 2015 at the Hereford Slough cottonwood site. Even though the spring and summer of 2015 and 2016 were unseasonably hot and dry, cottonwood generation was good within the enclosure. Regeneration occurred from exposed roots, cutoff stumps, and seed germination.

- Nate hopes to get another enclosure installed this fall.

Appendix M: Wetlands Protection and Enhancement Program

- Investigate the potential for a wetland enhancement project on the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition. Nate has had discussions with a Ducks Unlimited engineer and is looking into potential enhancement ideas.

Appendix P: Forest Habitat Protection and Enhancement

Background

The purpose of this measure is to provide for the protection and enhancement of specific forest habitat parcels of Avista project land along the reservoirs. The Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Work Group identified these parcels as having significant wildlife habitat value.

- Timber stand management and managing public management occurs through this program. There are no current timber project but continued public-use management.

Appendix Q: Reservoir Island Protection

Background

The purpose of this measure is to provide for the protection of islands owned by Avista in the project reservoirs. The goal is to maintain the unique and high quality wildlife habitat functions and values of these islands.

- Continue to ensure restrictions developed for the protection of these areas utilizing the land use classifications described in the LUMP.

Appendix S: Erosion Fund and Shoreline Stabilization Guidelines

- Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG.

Other

Eric gave an update on the no flow event associated with cofferdam construction. Rich offered to help get messaging out regarding operations.

Susan provided a grant-writer's update. Of note, the grant writers have brought \$12.7 million dollars to bear in addition to the CFSA financial obligation to date.

Next Meeting Date

Hall stated that the group needed to select a date for a January meeting to review the draft 2020 Annual Implementation Plans. The WRTAC meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2020 and the TRTAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2020. The MC meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2019 and Montana projects tour on September 18, 2019.

The TRTAC meeting ended at 12:15.