

**Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**September 13, 2017**  
**Noxon Emergency Services Building**  
**10:00 a.m. (MST)**

**Attendees**

**Designated TRTAC Representatives**

Avista Corp. - Nate Hall  
Bull River Watershed Council – Kathy Ferguson  
Green Mountain Conservation District – Terry Hightower  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game – Kathy Cousins  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Dave Bennetts  
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Richard Reich  
Sanders County Commissioner – Tony Cox  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Wayne Kasworm  
U.S. Forest Service – Les Raynor

**Other Attendees**

Avista Corp. – Heide Evans; Eric Oldenburg; Jason Pignanelli  
Avista Grant Writer - Ruth Watkins

**Welcome**

Nate Hall welcomed those in attendance and invited participants to introduce themselves. The purpose of today's meeting is to update the group on the progress of the PM&Es and identify any issues for the upcoming Management Committee (MC) meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Updates**

- New Clark Fork Manager – Nate let the group know that Tim is retiring October 1 and that he is the new License Manager. Nate hopes to replace his old position by this fall but Nate will likely run the winter TRTAC meeting.
- Proposed Hydro One acquisition – Nate updated the group on the details of the proposed acquisition.
- New process for meeting minutes – Nate informed the group that we will be proposing to the MC to greatly reduce the content of meeting minutes. We will capture consensus decisions and take additional steps to ensure representatives fully understand the consensus request. Abridged minutes will be maintained for the TACs as well. recommendations/decisions only
- Consent Mails – Nate brought the four 2017 consent mails to the groups attention: Trestle timber, Swamp timber, Bull River boat ramp, phase one of Twin Creek Property management.
- Grant writer update – Ruth updated the group on Grants so far in 2017. Ruth explained why no EWM treatment occurred this year and that we are monitoring EWM in the reservoirs. Kathy Cousins requested a copy of the Alternatives Analysis.

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

Pignanelli provided background information on the plan and explained that the primary purpose is to manage Avista owned lands within the Clark Fork Project consistent with the Land Use Management Plan and FERC License.

### **Administration**

Continue to implement the Private Recreation Permit Program.

- Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise – no major issues this year but have put up some rock barriers.
- Avista and USFS will work to determine future management of the abandoned railroad right-of-way from Noxon Rapids Dam to Triangle Pond – Nate informed the group that Avista went to court over the right-of-way by Noxon. The land is now part of rails to trails and Nate would like to work with the Cabinet Ranger district to establish as a trail from Noxon to Triangle Pond.
- Continue to process requests for leases/easements of Avista project property – none this year.
- If a request is received, review and process Rock Creek Mine request to place discharge pipe across Project lands – Nate let the group know that there has been no new action or requests made of Avista regarding the Rock Creek Mine.
- 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.
- Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC. See the attached document outlining 2017 planned pesticide and herbicide use on Avista project property – 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.
  - a. Management activities in 2017 will be driven by the results of a Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation funded alternatives analysis to be completed by June 2017 – Nate provided additional information regarding the alternatives analysis, lack of treatment during 2017, and monitoring. The Task Force's new focus will be treating public recreation sites (ramps, etc.) and boat dock areas, etc. The task force will likely also identify certain, strategic large EWM stands to treat. One big change is that approval has been granted for adjacent landowners to rake to clear around their docks. This will be effective in 2018.
  - b. Appendix G will again fund an individual to serve as a coordinator for the AIPTF. This effort helps ensure effective communication among the members, maintaining timelines for deliverables, and improving overall coordination.
  - c. Appendix G will once again fund educational efforts of the AIPTF that include maintaining informational signage and having a person interviewing recreational boaters at the various recreation sites during the peak recreational season.
- 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. Initiate this fall. Jason requested an email from those interested in participating. – Richard, Dave, Jason are on the current Land Use

Subgroup. Jason let the group know that we currently have 200 active permits with 10 new requests this spring and 12 this fall. The subgroup will meet immediately following TRTAC today and all are invited to participate. Jason will be pushing for more shared docks.

- 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.
- Jason asked the TRTAC to review four applications today:
  - a. Englebart/Finch – Nate suggested adding stipulations to prevent bear conflicts. Wayne provided more detail and the group agreed with the idea. There were no objections to this shared dock application.
  - b. Cox – Tony acknowledged a conflict of interest and offered to step out of the room. Tony did step out for the final discussions and for the vote on the issue. In Tony's absence, the group agreed that Tony's originally proposed location is more appropriate than the site closer to the mouth of Mosquito Creek. The group would like to include a clarification to the land classification intent along with the permit. Jason will include the fence, benefit to fisheries, and rationale for land classification in the permit. The group approved the permit.
  - c. Meade – Nate suggested allowing one-time vehicle access for construction but walk-in thereafter. Wayne suggested adding food storage language to this permit as well. It was suggested that this should be standard language in new permits. The group approved this permit.
  - d. Sandy Beach – Kathy Cousins raised several questions pertaining to the appropriateness of allowing private landowners to manage (e.g., mow) adjacent Avista ground. The group approved this permit.

#### 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 Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks 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 Recreation Resource Management Plan (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 2017 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.

- See attached spreadsheet identifying all potential facility development projects for 2017. Also note that more projects are listed than the budget allows to allow for flexibility as grant dollars are secured, or projects are delayed due to permitting or other constraints.
- Jason read through and discussed the projects in the Facility Development plan. Ruth suggested that Jason send her and Susan the facilities spreadsheet so they could try to identify projects that may be able to be supplemented with grants.

#### Monitoring

##### **Objective**

Through monitoring the 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.

##### **Tasks**

- Work with the recreation subgroup to implement electronic recreation site evaluations developed as part of the 2017 RRMP update.
- Finalize RRMP update.
- Continue to utilize up to 20 automated traffic counters to measure use at various developed and dispersed recreation sites and trails.
- Continue utilizing standardized reporting for recreation use at Thompson Falls State Park, North Shore Recreation Area, and Bull River Recreation Area.

- Summarize 2017 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. Also include in this summary will be maps showing dispersed recreation areas along the projects and permitted dock locations (showing dock densities per 0.5 mile segments of shoreline).

### 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 current 5-year funding agreement is for 2014 to 2018.
- 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.

#### **Tasks**

- 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.

## **Appendix I: Aesthetics Management Plan**

**Introduction and 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 Land Use Management Plan, site design and monitoring in the Recreation Resource Management Plan, 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.

### **2017 Project Plans**

- Monitor recreation, land management, erosion, and facility construction programs to ensure AMP guidelines are considered.
- Continue to investigate measures to restore views, as appropriate, identified in the 2013 re-inventory of 41 key viewpoints. Sites will be revisited again in 2018 to take photos to compare to past inventories.

## **Appendix J: Wildlife, Botanical and Wetland Management Plan** (Nate took over discussions)

- Utilize the Wildlife, Botanical and Wetland Management Plan to help guide implementation of Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement programs.
- Continue to update the habitat protection spreadsheet as acquisitions are completed.
- As approved by the Management Committee on 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 Nate described the work he does under this program and described the 2017 projects: conservation easement on the Pack River, Fox property acquisition, and Thompson Falls field station.

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

1. 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.

Specific projects include:

- Trestle Creek site plan – development and implementation of site plan for the old Bear Paw Campground. Area is heavily used during kokanee spawning. Project is being implemented in cooperation with Appendix A and D of the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement.
- Trestle Creek timber management plan – finish the timber management plan for all the Avista owned properties and implement if permits and conditions allow. This one was not discussed during the meeting.
- Twin Creek – Develop site plan and install infrastructure that will allow public use of this property that was acquired in 2016. Work will include road and parking development, installation of gates, signs, noxious weed control, enforcement, and plantings (in conjunction with Appendix A re-vegetation work).
- South Fork Bull River Wildlife Management Area complex - Activities include

monitoring, weed control, development of infrastructure (roads, parking areas, fences), vegetation management, enforcement, etc.

- Monitoring of other Avista owned habitat properties and implementing management measures as needed.
- Clark Fork Delta – as approved by the Management Committee in 2016, provide funding to be used in conjunction with BPA, DU and Idaho Fish and Game to address erosion concerns to the newly constructed breakwater on the Clark Fork Delta. Provided \$30k to help with repairs/maintenance.
- Hall and Kaniksu Land Trust worked with a private landowner for a conservation easement on 415 acres along the Pack River.
- The forestry management plan for the Bull River WMA is being initiated this fall with completion by the end of 2018.

#### Acquisition Fund

##### **Objectives**

- Provide a funding source for due diligence on potential habitat protection projects in order to provide a detailed proposal for Management Committee consideration.
- Once approved by the Management Committee, provide funding to acquire and protect habitat properties.

##### **Tasks**

2. 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.
3. Purchase (either in fee title, conservation easement, or conservation servitude) and protect habitat properties once approved by the Management Committee.
4. Nate discussed the acquiring the parcel next two Twin that would make the other Avista parcels contiguous.
5. Nate discussed the potential conservation easement on the EFBR that would be held by KLT.

#### Wood Duck Revegetation Project

##### **Objectives**

1. Maintain existing re-vegetation project on the Wood Duck project in order to maximize the benefit it provides to fish and wildlife.

##### **Tasks**

1. Remove 3 failed exclosures - they were planted in a wetland that is inundated late into the summer and supports sedges over vegetation that was planted (Objective 1).
2. Fix remaining exclosures - modify shape, add t-posts to stabilize weak areas in the fencing, patch holes, etc. (Objective 1).
3. Plant supplemental vegetation in more sparsely vegetated areas of the exclosures (Objective 1).
4. Continue to monitor the success of re-vegetation efforts on this property (Objective 1)

## Blasko

### **Background**

While this project has been discussed in conceptual terms with the Management Committee since 2014, final agreement among all the parties on the appraised value of the conservation easement (\$710,000) and conservation easement terms were obtained in early 2017.

The subject property (354.9 acres) is river bottom farm and timber lands, and includes 1.5 miles of Pack River frontage, riparian area, and wetland habitat. Matching funds have been acquired through a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) program at 50% (\$355,000) and the landowner will donate 25% (\$177,500) of the value. The remaining 25% (\$177,500) is being requested from Appendix K. The conservation easement will be held and enforced by Kaniksu Land Trust, with additional oversight and enforcement authority by NRCS.

### **Objectives**

- To protect 354.9 acres that includes 1.5 miles of Pack River frontage and associated riparian, wetland and associated upland habitat.

### **Tasks**

6. Provide funding to assist with the purchase of the conservation easement and provide funding to offset due diligence (survey, appraisal and KLT costs that will be paid at closing.)

## **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 (WBWWG). Additionally, existing stands and trees will be protected through the implementation of land use classifications in the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP).

Site-specific management plans were developed in 2000. Efforts in 2016 will focus 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. Efforts in 2017 will include continued monitoring of the enclosure and conduct any needed maintenance to the fence that is needed.

**2017 Project Plans**

- Continue to protect black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project through the implementation of the Land Use Management Plan.
- Continue to monitor and maintain the enclosure at Hereford Slough.
- Based on success of the Hereford Slough enclosure, construct two more enclosures within this stand.

**Appendix M: Wetlands Protection and Enhancement Program**

- Investigate two new potential wetland protection and enhancement projects. Once specific plans for either of these options are developed, they will be forwarded onto the Management Committee for review and approval.
  - The purchase and protection of 18 acres of shoreline habitat adjacent to the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition. Approximately a 1/2 of this parcel is wetland habitat.
  - Investigate the potential for a wetland enhancement project on the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition.
- Monitor enhancements previously completed at Hereford Slough, McKay Creek, Finley Flats, and Blacktail Bay/Islands.

## **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.

### **2017 Project Plans**

- Continue to manage these areas that have been classified as Conservation 1, and as such are afforded the maximum protection provided through the Land Use Management Plan.
- 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.
- Continue to monitor and enforce the road closure to Stevens Creek Point (closure was instituted in 2001).
- Continue to prohibit motorized use of Finley Flats Point.
- 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.
- Continue weekly patrols of the forested lands surrounding the State Shop property continue to reduce the amount of disturbance and litter in this area.
- 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.
- Jason explained the Swamp Creek timber project.
- Nate explained the Honey/Copper flats project to manage for traditional plants and uses.

## **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.

### **2017 Project Plans**

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

## **Appendix S: Erosion Fund and Shoreline Stabilization Guidelines**

### **2017 Project Plans**

- Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG.
- Address a site where erosion threatens to go past Avista ownership on Cabinet Gorge Reservoir (Laundry site).

- It was determined in 2014 that the erosion control work adjacent to the Finley Flats boat ramp parking lot would be best addressed as part of a larger potential redesign of the entire parking area. Survey work has been completed and implementation will occur in 2017.
- Continue to evaluate and provide technical assistance for an erosion control project being undertaken by an adjacent landowner on Noxon Reservoir (Vermilion Point Area).
- Utilize a geotechnical contractor to assist with evaluating erosion control proposals received by Avista.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

Hall stated that the group needed to select a date for a January meeting to review the draft 2018 Annual Implementation Plans. The WRTAC meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2018, so the TRTAC meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2018. The MC meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2017 and MT tours on September 7, 2015.