

**Clark Fork Settlement Agreement
Management Committee Meeting Record
Noxon Emergency Services Building
September 17, 2019
10:00 a.m.–2:45 p.m. (MST)**

Management Committee Representatives in Attendance

Avista: Nate Hall

Bull River Watershed Council: Tom McDowell (Alternate)

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ): Tom Herron

Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG): Chip Corsi

Lake Pend Oreille Idaho Club: Ryan Roslak

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP): Jim Williams

Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition: Rick Robinson

Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited (PCTU): Loren Albright

Sanders County Commissioners (SCC): Tony Cox

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Ben Conard

United States Forest Service, Cabinet Ranger District (USFS): Doug Grupenhoff (Alternate)

Interested Parties in Attendance

Avista–Bruce Howard, Heide Evans, Annie Gannon, Paul Kusnierz, Shana Bernall, Sean Moran, Lisa Vollertsen, and Davina Brown; Avista Grant Writer–Susan Drumheller; IDFG–Andy Dux, Matt Corsi, Dustin Masin, and Ken Bouwens; Kaniksu Land Trust (KLT)–Regan Plumb and Katie Cox (left at 12:30 MST); Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group (LCFWG)–Brita Olson; MFWP–Ryan Kreiner and Jason Blakney; PCTU- Don Childress

Welcome and introductions

- A quorum was recognized for this 51th meeting of the Management Committee (MC).

Agenda review and approval

- Hall reviewed the meeting agenda and reminded members that several informational packets were sent out prior to this meeting. There were no additions or changes to the meeting agenda.

Consent Mail update

- Lower Bull River Day Use Boat Access Site management plan and 2019 operation and maintenance; funding approved by the MC on 5/7/2019.
- North Shore Campground boat ramp; funding approved on 5/7/2019.
- Vermilion River passive integrated transponder (PIT)-monitoring station; funding approved on 7/31/2019.
- Total dissolved gas monitoring; funding approved on 7/31/2019.

FERC update

- On June 6, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved the 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Implementation Plans.

- On August 8, FERC granted an amendment to the Clark Fork License related to construction and operation of the Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway.

Cultural Resources Management Group (CRMG) update

- CRMG agreed to cancel the fall meeting and reconvene in early March.
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) performed annual monitoring.
- 94 projects with proposed ground disturbance activities were reviewed.

Kaniksu Land Trust update

- Pine Street Woods Project—upgrades/roads prepared for opening for public use this fall.
- Katie Cox introduced herself and relayed she is new executive director for KLT.

2020 Annual Implementation Plans

- Project Plans are due to Avista by November 1. Contact Avista staff or Program Leaders for guidelines and template.

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) update

Appendix G: Implementation of Land Use Management Plan

- Approximately 215 Private Recreation Permits were issued in 2019, a slight increase from last year.
- Continue to utilize the refined Work Authorization forms, puts more onus on requester.
- Relatively quiet year as far as trespass and other issues.
- Thanks to MFWP and IDFG Enforcement Personnel.

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

- Use similar to past years. Slow start with cool rainy weather early then picked up with nice weather mid-July through August. Use data just coming in and will have annual report by January TRTAC meeting.
- Ongoing maintenance at all sites Avista, MFWP and USFS.
- Facility Development Program—couple of larger projects were completed.
 - Cabinet Gorge Dam Viewpoint landscaping
 - North Shore boat ramp and vault toilet improvements
 - Group area at Thompson Falls State Park
 - Noxon Rapids Dam Lower Viewpoint new solar irrigation system, drainage, and hydro seeding.
 - Triangle Pond Development Plan.
 - Kiosks replacement project.
 - Trout Creek Day-Use Recreation Area paving.

Appendix I: Aesthetics Management Plan

- Tree thinning at the Noxon Rapids Dam Upper Viewpoint.

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

- Spreadsheet was sent out on 9/9/19. On March 16, 2011 the MC approved Guidelines for Acquisition of Land Interests, Clark Fork Projects. One aspect of these Guidelines was how to ensure compliance with the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement and FERC License as it related to properties held by Avista. For those properties that are retained in Avista ownership, the MC will review management of the property and final disposition at ten years, and every five years after that. No properties were up for review this year.

Appendix K: Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Enhancement and Management Program

- Purpose: Focus on the types of habitat most significantly affected through the continued operation of the Clark Fork Project, such as wetland and riparian habitat.
- Trestle Creek Timber Management (appendices A and K).
 - Road work to repair slide on past logging road work.
 - Road work in preparation for this winter unit will be about 10 acres on the upland side of the main road and away from the creek.
 - IDFG, PCTU, and Master Naturalists continue to develop content for informational signs for the Trestle Creek Education Center as described in the Appendix D Project Plan.
- Twin Creek
 - Assistance from IDFG Enforcement Officer.
 - Continue with haying contract to help with weed control.

Appendix L: Black Cottonwood Protection and Enhancement

- Purpose: Protect and enhance black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project.
- Based on success of past enclosure, will construct one enclosure (160' x 160') at the Hereford Slough this fall.

Appendix M: Wetland Protection and Enhancement Program

- Meeting with Ducks Unlimited engineer to discuss opportunities for additional enhancement for the wetland areas at Twin Creek this fall.

Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) update

- Review of 2019 Aquatic Annual Implementation Plan efforts: Bernall provided a summary of the highlights and all known variances from appendices A, B, C, D, E, F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, and T Project Plans.

Appendix A: Idaho Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Fishery Enhancement Program

- Purpose: The largest focus of Appendix A over the past couple years has been to better identify, understand, and prioritize areas to focus restoration and enhancement efforts.
- As part of this there are ongoing assessments for Trestle, Caribou, Hellroaring, and McCormick creeks as well as the upper Pack River which are three of the project plans in the 2019 Annual Implementation Plan. All is going well with those three projects.
- Also related to this effort, Jessica Erickson has taken a larger role in leading the charge in the Pack River Watershed and Bouwens is now more focused on the tributaries outside of that watershed.
- In addition, Jessica Erickson, Ken Bouwens, and the Pack River Watershed Council (PRWC) will be updating the Pack River Watershed Management Plan that was

completed in 2006. Since that time numerous watershed assessments have been completed. The idea is to incorporate the findings of those assessments as an addendum to the plan. The original plan was to complete the addendum in late 2020, but recognizing it would be beneficial to incorporate findings from the ongoing assessments, this will likely be pushed out to a later date.

Idaho Field Station Planning

- The decision has been made to move forward with planning the new field station to be constructed on the Trestle Creek property.
- A request for proposals was put out to architecture firms for design and Bouwens received bids. All of the bids came back higher than expected, additional funding will be requested through the 2020 Annual Implementation Plan process.

Johnson Creek Passage Improvement Design and Construction

- The plan is to accomplish the work in two phases, one when lake level is up and another at the lower elevations when the lake level is down.
- All is going well with the project but it will likely be pushed back a year due to permitting and landowner liability constraints.

Lower Clark Fork River Minimum Flow and Water Temperature Monitoring

- This project is going according to plan and some preliminary information will be highlighted under Appendix F4.

Fish Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management Plan

- In terms of tributary monitoring, Bouwens just finished up reports on abundances in 13 different streams and two years of redd counts (East Fork Lightning, Porcupine, Rattle, Savage, Wellington, North Gold, Branch North Gold, Berry, Jeru, Mosquito, Spring, and Char creeks).
- IDFG has a website where you can find and download reports which would be a good way to obtain Bouwen's reports if you are interested.
- This year Bouwen's crew electrofished Johnson, Twin, Strong, Gold, and Granite creeks and redd counts will occur next month.

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

Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Native Salmonid Abundance Monitoring Plan

- Abundance monitoring was conducted in Rock Creek, Crow Creek, and Vermilion River this year. Preliminary results indicate that Bull Trout abundance in Rock Creek and Vermilion River appear to be very low.
- Jason and crew continued fish salvage electrofishing in stranding pools in upper Prospect Creek as sections go dry. This year 32 Bull Trout and 101 Westslope Cutthroat Trout were rescued. The Bull Trout were released in the forks of Crow Creek.
- In July, the MC approved a consent mail to purchase and install a PIT-monitoring station for the Vermilion River which was a cost share between appendices B and C. The system was installed in the lower river in late August and is operating as designed.

Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Project Coordination

- Brita Olson is the coordinator for the LCFWG.

- The LCFWG was involved in the coordination of two habitat projects this year, one was a channel restoration in Crow Creek, and the other was a small-scale pilot project to see if spawning gravels can be retained in Graves Creek.
- The LCFWG have a draft version of the Lower Clark Fork Tributaries Watershed Restoration Plan almost ready to go out.
- The LCFWG has been busy trying to acquire funding for other potential projects as well as maintenance of past projects.

Habitat Restoration, Property Acquisition, and Conservation Easement Allocation

- Jason Blakney and Ryan Kreiner have been working hard on the due diligence for the potential purchase of a 40-acre parcel on the lower Thompson River both as a habitat protection measure with public access benefits. There are a host of potential collaborators and funding sources on this one and a consent mail request may go out in the near future to contribute some Appendix B funding toward this acquisition.

Phase II Crow Creek Stream and Riparian Restoration Project

- There are a few other 2019 project plans that directly supported getting this project accomplished including the Crow Creek Bull Trout Investigation, Lolo National Forest Priority Native Salmonid Habitat Restoration Assessment project, and efforts of the LCFWG.
- This is a habitat restoration project in a powerline corridor that picks up downstream of where the 2007 restoration project left off.
- The restoration is complete and early indication is that it was very successful. River Design Group designed the project and oversaw Elk Creek Construction who did the physical work. There were a host of collaborators and contributors to the project and we will look forward to monitoring the benefits as we move forward.

Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoir Fisheries Monitoring Plan

- Record catch of 715 unique Walleye. Preliminary results indicate approximately 91% of these are from the big 2015 year class that are now age-4 that MFWP have been tracking for a couple of years. Interestingly, 97% of the catch was male and only 19 mature females were captured.

Lower Bull River Day Use Boat Access Site Management Plan and Construction

- Most of the work is done and the site has been open for use.
- Continue to work with the Sanders County Sanitarian to obtain necessary permits in place for a vault toilet.
- Kiosks, signs, and fence will be installed this fall.
- Will start enforcing the “no commercial use” policy in 2020.
- Lastly there is esthetic work to be done figuring out landscaping around the house, spraying weeds, and manicuring small areas (i.e., picnic tables.)

Appendix C: Fish Passage/Native Salmonid Restoration Plan

Upstream Fish Passage Program

- 17 Bull Trout captured downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam to date.
- 16 Bull Trout were transported upstream. The lowest number of transports observed to date, if you exclude Bull Trout genetically assigning to Lightning Creek tributaries.

- The mouth of Lightning Creek is dry, so any Bull Trout genetically assigned to the Lightning Creek drainage will be transported to the East Fork Bull River (four to date).
- The Cabinet Gorge Hatchery Ladder will be operational through mid-October along with hook and line efforts; ladder flows have been approximately 0.6 cfs since the start of operation of the ladder (normally 2.3 cfs). This will be discussed more under Appendix T.
- 29 Westslope Cutthroat Trout were captured downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam and transported upstream to Cabinet Gorge Reservoir.
- Five fish were detected on the Bull River PIT array including one that was detected on the East Fork Bull River PIT array (only one fish detected moving out of the Bull River following the spawning season).
- Currently operating a remote radio telemetry site at the Cabinet Gorge Hatchery and will remove the equipment in the fall.
- Working on a draft comprehensive report.

Tributary Trapping and Downstream Juvenile Bull Trout Transport Program

- There have been 90 juvenile transports to date (79 from Graves Creek and 11 from East Fork Bull River).
- Electrofishing to capture juvenile Bull Trout for transport from the Vermilion River will occur in late October or early November.
- Juvenile Bull Trout abundance monitoring in the East Fork Bull River and the Vermilion River will likely be the focus of strategic discussions as we move forward.
- Improvements to the Graves Creek permanent weir trap are somewhere between 30% and 60% design. Final designs are anticipated in November and then will move into permitting and contracting.

Fish Capture Facilities

- The process of trapping adults in the fish trap being constructed at Cabinet Gorge Dam was reviewed by Hall.
- Contractors were onsite preparing the work area for the Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway project from mid-March through mid-July.
- Hall discussed the progress to date involving Cofferdam construction.
- Overall the project is currently two weeks ahead of schedule.
- Hall requested consensus approval of an additional \$2 million for Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway construction, as described in the 8/27/19 MC memo.

The Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway construction cost as written in the August 27, 2019 memorandum was approved by the MC.

Appendix D: Bull Trout Protection and Public Education Project

- The purpose of Appendix D is to protect Bull Trout through a combination of education and enforcement.
- The Appendix D implementers are working on updating the 5-year plan that serves as a guiding document for efforts under this appendix.
- There was a budget overspend in Appendix D in 2018 that was not discovered until all of the invoices were received a few months ago. There are still sufficient funds within Appendix D to cover the expenditures within the 2019 project plans, but as the overall

budget for this Appendix has been tight, we anticipate this will exhaust the unobligated funds.

Idaho Fish and Game

- With the retirement of Tom Whalen in July, the group welcomed Dustin Masin, the new Bull Trout Officer.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

- Communication and website: radio spots on Bull Trout identification, online Bull Trout identification test will be refreshed.
- Educational outreach: Marc Terrezas provided classroom presentations, kids fishing outreach, and fair/festival presence.
- Game warden support: local game warden, Troy Hinck, continues patrolling tributaries and reservoirs.

Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited

- Recent personnel turnover with the Implementation Lead position occurred earlier this year; Glenn Lefebvre is the new Implementation Lead. This turnover resulted in a scaled-back effort in 2019.
- The Fly Fishing Film Festival and Trout and About Festival were successfully held.

Appendix E: Watershed Councils Program

Pack River Watershed Council, Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District

- The PRWC continued to coordinate partners, develop outreach efforts in the local community, and complete administrative work in support of local watershed projects. The PRWC is partnering with Natural Resources Conservation District and USFWS to implement a project on Grouse Creek that will include placing five to six single large pieces of wood along several point bars.

Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group

- The LCFWG helped coordinate the Fly Fishing Film Tour in Thompson Falls, and has made some great additions to the website including some interactive maps in order to get the word out to facilitate private landowners and others in the Watershed Councils Program—Google the LCFWG and check those out.

Appendix F1: Clark Fork River Water Quality Monitoring Program

- This project is going as planned and things are overall going well with the new laboratory.

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

- The flow trigger did not occur this year until after August 7, so stratification sampling did not take place. Contract with HydroSolutions is in place for when the flow trigger criteria are met.

Appendix F3: Aquatic Organism Tissue Analysis

- There were no project plans for this Appendix in 2019. We anticipate project plan proposals from MFWP in 2020.

Appendix F4: Water Quality Protection and Monitoring Plan for Maintenance, Construction, and Emergency Activities and Appendix T Project Operations Package

- Appendix F4 is the Water Quality Protection and Monitoring Plan for Maintenance, Construction, and Emergency Activities and the purpose is to define a plan and procedures to help ensure we minimize or eliminate negative effects associated with maintenance, construction, and emergency activities at the dams—in particular when we have the need to operate outside of the general operating limits.
- Appendix T is the Project Operations Package and the purpose is to outline the General Operating Limits for Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge Dams. In addition, in 2017, Avista made a one-time commitment of one million dollars for capital projects to address any uncertainty associated with potential effects of reducing the Cabinet Gorge Dam minimum flow to 3,000 cfs. There are two projects underway for this purpose:
 - Priest River Coldwater Bypass Alternative Assessment
 - Chip Corsi provided a presentation on the Priest River Coldwater Bypass Alternative Assessment Project.
 - Cabinet Gorge Fish Hatchery Spring Collection System Upgrade
 - Prior to this summer there were two instances where there was not enough spring water to supply all three facilities (hatchery, ladder, and fish handling and holding facility). Since the start of construction of the cofferdam for the Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway the contractors have been requesting a 12 hour work window of around 3,300 cfs flows out of Cabinet Gorge Dam. At these lower river flows the spring water available in the current spring collection basin is insufficient to provide an optimum amount of water for all three facilities. To compensate for the limited spring water supply we had to partially close the valve to the ladder trap when the trap began operating in early August which has resulted in a supply of only 0.6 cfs. No Bull Trout have been captured in the ladder trap to date.
 - Working with an engineer and contractor on a design to provide a more reliable and sufficient cool water source.
 - The preliminary design is to build a spring collection wall that will contain a 12” perforated pipe that will backup water and supply more water to the current collection basin and install an additional collection chamber within the wall with a backup pump to provide redundancy.
 - The MC approved \$162,421 toward this project in 2018. We hope to get a cost estimate for the final design in the near future. Afterwards, Avista will reach out to interested stakeholders to gauge support, if needed additional funds will be included in the 2020 Project Plan.

Appendix F5: Dissolved Gas Supersaturation Control, Mitigation, and Monitoring
Monitoring and Gas Supersaturation Control Plan Alternative

- Monitoring occurred with no issues this spring. Peak flow at Cabinet Gorge Dam was about 81,000 cfs and total dissolved gas (TDG) peaked at about 136% saturation. The annual report memo is being drafted.
- Contract with Biomark is in place to have real-time TDG data collection in 2020. We anticipate the TDG sites and real-time system will be deployed in mid-March.

- No modifications were made to Cabinet Gorge Dam in 2019. The Gas Supersaturation Subcommittee met twice since July and has a third meeting scheduled in late October. The group has discussed the effectiveness of the spill bay modifications and the transition to Phase III of the Gas Supersaturation Control Plan Addendum.

Mitigation

- The Walleye Geochemistry Study Project Plan was included in the August 27, 2019 email.
- This is a new project and was ranked by the WRTAC and recommended to the MC for approval at the fall meeting.
- Request consensus approval of the Walleye Geochemistry Study project plan as presented.

The Appendix F5 Walleye Geochemistry Study 2019 Project Plan was approved by consensus as presented.

Lake Pend Oreille Experimental Walleye Angler Incentive Program and Population Assessment

- 675 heads turned in through August in the angler incentive program.
- 853 were removed through the population assessment netting with 17 additional tagged fish released.

Lake Trout Programs—Angler Incentive and the Gillnet programs

- Angler Incentive Program: 1,050 Lake Trout heads were turned in as of September 1. Only three Bull Trout were misidentified and turned in, which is a testament in part to the effectiveness of Appendix D efforts.
- Gill net Program: 2,623 Lake Trout were removed using 430,000 meters of gill net in aggregate.
- Bouwens produced a “predator report” tables and figures related to Walleye and Lake Trout suppression efforts that is available on the IDFG website.

Box Canyon Reservoir Northern Pike Suppression

- Northern Pike numbers remain low even with the reduced level of effort.

Lake Pend Oreille Tributary Creel

- The survey has been completed and Bouwens is working on the report. Preliminary results indicate the lower Clark Fork River is still a good trout fishery with a targeted spring effort and good catch of Rainbow and Westslope Cutthroat trout. Efforts dwindled in May as runoff increased and then picked back up in the summer and fall particularly for Walleye and Smallmouth Bass. Angler effort in the Pack River and Lightning Creek was very low to the point where looking at things like catch and effort likely are not very meaningful or even possible.

Grant writer update

- Susan Drumheller provided an update and summary of grants received this year: \$838,000 to date.
- If you have a project that you need help finding funds for please contact Susan Drumheller and/or Ruth Watkins.

Spring meeting date

- March 17 and 18 (if needed), 2020, in Sandpoint, Idaho.

Adjourn Business Meeting

- Hall thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m. (MST).

Appendix C – Fish Capture Facilities Operation, Development, and Testing

Request consensus approval of an increased budget to cover Cabinet Gorge Dam Fishway construction costs as written in the August 27, 2019 memorandum.

Seeking MC Consensus Approval				
First Name	Last Name	Approve	Abstain	Do Not Approve
Loren	Albright	X		
Ben	Conard	X		
Chip	Corsi	X		
Tony	Cox	X		
Doug	Grupenhoff (alt)	X		
Nate	Hall	X		
Tom	Herron	X		
Tom	McDowell (alt)	X		
Rick	Robinson	X		
Ryan	Roslak	X		

Appendix F5 – Walleye Geochemistry Study

Request consensus approval of the Appendix F5 Walleye Geochemistry Study Project Plan as presented.

Seeking MC Consensus Approval				
First Name	Last Name	Approve	Abstain	Do Not Approve
Loren	Albright	X		
Ben	Conard	X		
Chip	Corsi	X		
Tony	Cox	X		
Doug	Grupenhoff (alt)	X		
Nate	Hall	X		
Tom	Herron	X		
Tom	McDowell (alt)	X		
Rick	Robinson	X		
Ryan	Roslak	X		