

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) Meeting Minutes
Fall Meeting, August 27, 2025
10:00 a.m. (MST)
Noxon Multipurpose Room

TRTAC Representatives Attendees:

Avista – Monica Ott (alternate)
Elk Creek Watershed Council – Judy Hutchins
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Rob Ryan
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Tony Powell
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rick Robinson
Sanders County Commissioners – Tony Cox (10:25)
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Caleb Matthew
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Wayne Kasworm (conference line)

Other Attendees:

Avista – Eric Oldenburg, Lisa Johnson, Davina Brown, Susan Drumheller (Avista Grant Writer);
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Council – Sarah Poiesz (conference line); Montana Fish, Wildlife
and Parks – Zach Farley (conference line); Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Reich;
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Ron Torretta.

Welcome

Monica 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 2025 implementation efforts and identify any issues and/or actions that need to be forwarded to the Management Committee (MC) for their September 23, 2025, fall meeting.

Other Business

- Instructions for the development of 2026 Project Plans
- Review of Consent Mails
 - Stimson Timberland Legacy Conservation Easement (Appendix B)
- Grant Writer update – Susan Drumheller
- Clark Fork Heritage Resource Program update – Lisa Johnson
- Avista Environmental Department shoreline clean-up day – Monica Ott will send the 2026 invite to Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition.
- Winter Meeting Date (January 20, 2026) – Davina will send a calendar invite to TRTAC members.
- Summary of 2025 implementation efforts and anticipated changes for 2026

Appendix G – Implementation of Land Use Management Plan

Administration of the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)

1. Continue to implement the Private Recreation Permit Program.
 - As of today, we received 3 private recreation permit requests for new adjacent property owners of existing dock permits.
 - To date there have been 33 Work Authorization Requests reviewed, 1 denied, 1 potential violation, and 3 requests pending.
 - 10 Special Use Requests in 2025.
2. Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise.
 - No Trespass signs posted – Graves Creek and upstream of Cabinet Gorge Hatchery.
 - Caleb will contact Eric/Monica on how to address OnXmaps and public use on property lines.
3. Continue to process requests for leases/easements of Avista Project property.
 - Ongoing
4. Commercial Use Subgroup
 - Monica/Davina will send meeting invites early this fall for regularly scheduled meetings.
5. Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC.
 - Application has continued throughout the summer. Avista reports gallons/acre at the end of the year.
6. The Land Use Subgroup will continue working to identify potential changes to the LUMP in preparation for the 5-year review to be completed in 2025.
 - The Subgroup has not met yet, but the process is underway to complete LUMP and RRMP updates.
 - Once a draft report is available it will be sent to TRTAC and CRMG for 30-day review.
7. Replace recreation permit markers on both reservoirs. The markers were originally installed in the early 2000's and many are missing, damaged, or severely weathered. Additionally, many new permits have been issued which do not have markers. Avista will keep additional markers on hand for new permits that are issued in the future.
 - Approximately 80 have been installed to date, with 140 remaining to be replace.
8. Forest Risk Assessment
 - Surveys began in early 2025 and are halfway completed, targeting some higher priority properties first. The goal is to identify high risk areas and recommend treatment for 2026 projects.
 - Once a draft report is available it will be sent to TRTAC and CRMG for 30-day review.
 - The final report was due July 31 but will likely be completed by end of the year.
9. Rock Creek Mine
 - No new requests have been received.

Monitoring Associated with the LUMP

1. 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.
 - Avista staff have performed shoreline and vehicle patrols, looking specifically for recreation/land use violations.
 - Land Staff continues to respond to reports of violations as they arise and monitor the Project Area during routine operations.
 - Twin Creek camping in day-use area: Monica will let Rob Ryan know what the technician finds out.

Enforcement Associated with the LUMP

1. Continue to coordinate with 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.
 - MFWP did not request funding in 2025.
2. 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 contract is nearly complete for funding.
3. 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.
 - A property boundary investigation is underway on Blue Slide Road, looking at current surveys and property lines.

Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants on Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs

1. Pretreatment survey
 - 26.9 acres of dense EWM beds in Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas and 141 acres of Tier 3 priority areas were surveyed in June.
2. Herbicide treatments
 - 26.9 acres of EWM were treated in July. A six-week post-treatment inspection will occur in September.
3. Program Management
 - Updates to the Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plant Management Plan were completed, focusing on clarity and comparison of treatment to control plots.

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

RRMP Administration and Resource Integration

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

3. Update RRMP and document utilizing information obtained from monitoring surveys conducted every five to ten years.
 - RRMP 10-year update is due December 31. Although this effort is underway and a Recreation Subgroup meeting will be held to get input from partners, the due date is not likely to be met. Once a draft report is available it will be sent to TRTAC for 30-day review.

RRMP Monitoring

1. Work with the recreation subgroup to continue to implement electronic recreation site evaluations developed as part of the 2017 RRMP update.
 - Based on RRMP language, we need to be performing site evaluations. Will begin working to develop an electronic form for recreation sites using ArcGIS Survey 123.
 - Monica will connect with Caleb on standard data from key recreation sites.
2. Continue to utilize up to 22 automated traffic counters to measure use at various developed and dispersed recreation sites and trails.
 - 24 traffic counters were deployed between May – September. Annual report to be completed by December 15, 2025.
3. Continue utilizing standardized reporting for recreation use at Thompson Falls State Park, North Shore Recreation Area, and Bull River Recreation Area.
 - Ongoing.
4. Summarize 2025 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.
5. Develop maps showing dispersed recreation areas along the projects and permitted dock locations (showing dock densities per 0.5-mile segments of shoreline).
 - These maps are developed around the end of the year and are available upon request.

Operation and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities

1. Maintain Avista controlled recreation facilities and undeveloped recreation sites on Avista lands.
 - Ongoing.
2. Assist MFWP with the maintenance of Thompson Falls State Park and Flat Iron Ridge Fishing Access Site.
 - Ongoing.

Interpretation and Education Program

1. 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.

North Shore Expansion Due Diligence (Tier 1)

1. Acquire property
 - Met with landowner to discuss the 8.5 acre appraisal. Landowner would like to only sell ~1 acre. Next steps are to revise conceptual design to see what goals can still be achieved.
 - North Shore Recreation Area swim dock status – Monica will look into the status and send an update to Rick Robinson.

Thompson Falls State Park Group Use Shelter (Tier 1)

1. Construction of a replacement picnic shelter, adequate parking, walkway, and pit toilet.
 - Monica will coordinate with MFWP to determine future of this project. The project plan will likely need to be revised in 2026.

Flat Iron Boat Ramp Extension Survey, Design, and Permitting

1. Tasks were to survey, get proposals and select a design contractor, work through to issued-for construction design along with engineers cost estimate, and obtain all required permits.
 - Survey is complete and designs are at 30%. Monica will send Tony Powell the designs and project information.
 - Permitting will commence when designs provide sufficient information to provide to permitting agencies.

Supplemental Projects (Tier 2)

1. Table of Tier 2 projects was discussed.
 - Some of the boat ramp projects will be assessed during the 2026 boat ramp assessment project plan to reprioritize work.
 - Kirby Gulch Property Acquisition: reevaluate project.
 - Bull River Potable Tank: completed.
2. Unanticipated Repair and Improvement Projects
 - Pilgrim Park fence repair in March, rebar removal at Flat Iron, and dumpster repair – \$4,000 to date.

Appendix I – Implementation of the Aesthetics Management Plan

Implementation of the Aesthetics Management Plan (AMP)

1. Monitor recreation, land management, erosion, and facility construction programs to ensure AMP guidelines are considered.
 - Ongoing.
2. Update the AMP by doing a re-inventory of the 41 key viewpoints on a five-year cycle and in conjunction with field surveys for recreation resources. The re-inventory was conducted in 2023 and will be attached to the AMP as an addendum in 2024. The next re-inventory will be conducted in 2028.
 - Completed by Pinnacle in 2023; will be updated as an amendment to the RRMP.
3. Continue to investigate measures to restore views and remove vegetation as needed or as identified during the re-inventory efforts.

- Of the 41 Key viewpoints, 28 remain unchanged and unobstructed since 2018. Views could be enhanced or restored at 6 viewpoints: Blue Slide Road, Beecher Flats, Noxon Bridge, Quinn Cut, Blue Creek, Highway 200 VP7.
- Views at 4 sites remain completely obstructed and might be candidates for removal from the 4 list of key viewpoints.
- Avista will look at those 6 sites that could be enhanced or restored for potential 2026 project plans.

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

1. Utilize the Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Management Plan to help guide implementation of Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement programs.
 - Ongoing.
2. Continue to update the habitat protection spreadsheet as acquisitions are completed and present future management of any parcel owned by Avista for more than ten years to the Management Committee. If the subject property(s) remain under Avista ownership each parcel will be revisited every five years after that.
 - 3.84 – Graves Creek Steep River Ranch
 - TRTAC recommended Avista to retain ownership for the next 5 years.
3. 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.
 - Monica will contact Ron Torretta regarding loon monitoring assistance.

Appendix K – Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Enhancement and Management Program
Operation and Maintenance of Acquired Property and Contingency Fund

1. Operations, maintenance and monitoring of Avista-owned and managed habitat protection properties.
 - Ongoing.
2. Develop a Twin Creek Management Plan in conjunction with the IDFG.
 - Monica will discuss the plan with Rob Ryan.
3. Develop a South Fork Bull River Wildlife Management Area Management Plan.
 - Avista is seeking a contractor to help complete these management plans and others associated with the CFSA.
 - Once a draft report is available it will be sent to TRTAC and CRMG for 30-day review.

Habitat Acquisition and Conservation Contingency Fund

1. Conduct due diligence in order to provide the MC a detailed proposal for their consideration.
 - No properties have been identified since last TRTAC meeting.

Wood Duck Re-Vegetation Maintenance

- Conducted monitoring and maintenance on existing planting.
- Management Plan being finalized.
- Once a draft report is available it will be sent to TRTAC and CRMG for 30-day review.

Appendix L – Back Cottonwood Habitat Protection and Enhancement

Black Cottonwood Habitat and Protection and Enhancement

1. Continue to protect black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project through the implementation of the LUMP.
 - Ongoing.
2. Continue to monitor and maintain the exclosures at Hereford Slough.
 - Deliverable Hereford Slough Black Cottonwood management plan drafted by August 1 has not been complete. Avista is working on hiring a contractor to help complete past due management plans and develop a template for future management plans.

Appendix M – Wetland Protection and Enhancement Program

Implementation of the Wetland Protection and Enhancement Program

1. Monitor enhancements previously completed at Hereford Slough, McKay Creek, Finley Flats, and Blacktail Bay/Islands.
 - Ongoing.
 - In 2026 there will likely be a project plan to evaluate potential wetland projects. A contractor would be retained to assess areas in the project boundary.

Appendix P – Forest Habitat Protection and Enhancement

South Fork Block Management Area Spotted Knapweed Treatment

1. Conduct round 2 of herbicide treatment in spring of 2025.
 - This is the second year of treatment. Sprayed in August, will go back and treat areas around stumps with backpack sprayer.
 - Will monitor success in 2026.

Tuscor Block Management Area Road Development

- There was discussion around administration of this site after the project is complete.
 - MFWP is taking over reservation system with possibility of 2 other sites.
 - Monica will provide the TRTAC with further clarity on what types of hunting allowed and seasons of use along with details of registration. This will be provided at the spring 2026 TRTAC meeting.
 - Judy Hutchins requested a Tuscor site visit.
 - Monica will email the TRTAC information on specific projects in the event that members of the TRTAC would like to do on site visits.
- The project will be sent to CRMG for their 30-day review.

- Seeking TRTAC approval of request for exception to Land Use Management Plan land classification.
 - TRTAC members approved exception.
- Construction to begin in October 2025.

Honey Flats Revegetation

- Site visit in 2025 with CSKT, including access research.
- Avista will continue to coordinate with CSKT for a second site visit with CSKT elders.

Appendix Q – Reservoir Island Protection

- No official project plans in Appendix Q. 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

Implementation of the Erosion Fund and Shoreline Stabilization Guidelines Program

1. Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG.
 - Avista is coordinating with CSKT and the USFS on a potential project for 2026 at the Bull River Campground, as identified during the 2025 CSKT monitoring.

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m. (MST).