

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) Meeting Minutes
Fall Meeting, August 28, 2024
10:00 a.m. (MST)
Noxon Multipurpose Room

TRTAC Representatives Attendees:

Avista – Arthur Potts
Green Mountain Conservation District (GMCD) Terry Hightower
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Ken Bouwens
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Council – Sarah Poiesz (conference line)
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Brian Schwarz
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

Other Attendees:

Avista – Monica Ott, Eric Oldenburg, Lisa Johnson, Davina Brown, Susan Drumheller (Avista Grant Writer); Montana BASS Federation – Don Collins and Dave Anderson; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Zach Farley (10:50); Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Reich.

Welcome

Arthur 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 2024 implementation efforts and identify any issues and/or actions that need to be forwarded to the Management Committee for their September 24, 2024, Fall Meeting.

Other business

- Instructions for the development of 2025 Project Plans
- Review of Consent Mails
 - North Shore Redevelopment (Appendix H) – work is currently underway
 - Swan Creek Conservation Easement (Appendix K) – KLT finalizing
- Grant Writer update- Susan Drumheller
- Winter Meeting Date (Jan 21, 2025)
- Clark Fork Heritage Resource Program – Lisa Johnson
- Summary of 2024 implementation efforts and anticipated changes for 2025
- Discussion of LUMP 5-year review and update (Land Use Subgroup)
- Kim McMahon Update:
- Review of properties purchased and held by Avista in support of the CFSA at 5- and 10-year intervals (Appendix G)

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 8/28/2024, we have received requests for 3 permits to new property owners of existing permits.
 - To date there have been 28 Work Authorization Requests in 2024.
 - 13 Special Use Requests in 2024
2. Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise.
 - Nothing to note
3. Continue to process requests for leases/easements of Avista Project property.
 - Avista received a request for an easement and to perform vegetation clearing at parcel located on Marten Creek Road. The land is Conservation 1. Based on the nature of the request, we do not have concerns about the clearing or easement. The request has been sent to Avista Real Estate for easement consideration.
 - All in favor on moving forward- Approved
4. If a request is received, review and process Rock Creek Mine request to place discharge pipe across Project lands.
 - No requests received.
5. 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.
 - Ongoing
6. Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC.
 - Avista Land staff and contractors have treated: Rimrock Trail, Island Park Subdivision, Frog Pond, Pilgrim Creek Park baseball fields and trails, Finely Flats, Lower Bull River, Sellmer's site, Vermillion boat launch, Two Rivers RV Park. Schedule-dependent, will treat leafy spurge in September.
7. 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.
8. 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 2024.
 - Not ready but we are working on LUMP and RRMP updates
9. Replace Recreation Permit markers on both reservoirs. The markers were originally installed in the early 2000s 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
 - Installation this Fall

10. 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 as needed.
 - Avista has received 13 Special Use Permit requests for space reservations, primarily at Pilgrim Creek Park. No requests have required the Special Use Subgroup involvement.
11. Continue to participate on the Sanders County AIPTF to implement an Integrated Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) Management Plan.
 - 13.7ac of EWM sprayed July 8-9
 - Post treatment survey mid-August
 - Veliger sampling results were negative on both reservoirs
 - 2nd round at lab- Draft plan in place but hasn't been reviewed.
12. 2024 Property Review
 - 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 initially no later than ten years after acquisition, and every five years after that.

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.
 - Avista Land staff will begin photocataloging Private Recreation Permit sites for compliance with their issued permits. Schedule permitting, we will begin while installed replacement permit markers.
 - Land Staff continues to respond to reports of violations as they arise and monitor the Project Area during routine operations.

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.
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.
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

Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants on Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs

1. Control Measures
2. Education and Outreach
3. Program Management

Noxon Rapids Dam Vicinity Hunting Restrictions

1. Gates installed 8/26; signage will be posted prior to rifle season.
2. Work with USFS to implement weapons restriction on adjoining USFS land.
3. Install signage to identify restrictions in the applicable area, including on company website and other public sources.
4. Amend enforcement agreement with Montana FWP to include specific reference to the weapons restrictions area.
5. Per MFWP request, the CFSA is no longer providing financial support for patrols of the Continue to provide funding for Avista real estate, legal, land survey, and cultural personnel to assist in the prevention and when appropriate prosecute violations, permit and lease conditions and other unauthorized uses of project lands and waters.
6. There have been no uses of these funds to date in 2023

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.
2. Integrate RRMP programs and projects with land use, cultural resources, wildlife, fisheries, aesthetics, and erosion control programs.
3. Update RRMP and document utilizing information obtained from monitoring surveys conducted every five to ten years.
 - Update is in progress but not yet ready

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 rec sites.
2. Continue to utilize up to 22 automated traffic counters to measure use at various developed and dispersed recreation sites and trails.
 - Ongoing monitoring by Pinnacle Research. Annual report to be completed.

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 2024 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).
 - In Annual Report

Operation and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities

1. Maintain Avista controlled recreation facilities and undeveloped recreation sites on Avista lands.
 - Ongoing.
2. 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.
 - Ongoing; host at Finley Flats this year that has been great and expressed interest in returning for 2024
 - Co-host assisted with RV park and parked camper at Pilgrim Creek Park; current host plans to move out in the fall and the cohost will take over for them; we will look for a new cohost for 2024
3. Assist MFWP with the maintenance of Thompson Falls State Park and Flat Iron Ridge Fishing Access Site.
 - Ongoing
 - Provide low-cost leases or permits to the community or civic groups providing recreation opportunities (i.e., Thompson Falls Golf Course).
 - Received a request to lease or purchase an area between Aitken's and the Noxon bridge. The request was denied because this is a key viewpoint/day-use parking area.
4. Operate and maintain Two Rivers RV Park
5. Provide low-cost leases or permit to the community or civic groups providing recreation opportunities (i.e., Thompson Falls Golf Course)
6. Dredge Flat Iron Boat Ramp on an approximate 5-year cycle (completed in 2024)

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

RRMP Recreation Facility Development

1. Trout Creek Boat Launch Enhancements (Tier 1)
 - Completed in April
2. Heron and Cabinet Gorge Fence Repairs (Tier 1)
 - Remove all damaged portions of the fence and replace with new components that match the aesthetic for the site
3. North Shore Expansion Due Diligence (Tier 1)
 - 1. Hire consultant to perform due diligence on the acreage to be acquired.
 - 2. Hire consulting design firm to develop a master site redevelopment plan, with input from Avista and the USFS.
 - 3. Consultant will develop 30%, 60%, 90% and 100% designs, as approved by Avista and the USFS, and produce a final Redevelopment Plan.
4. Thompson Falls State Park Group Use Shelter (Tier 1)
 - Construction of a replacement picnic shelter in the fall of the year.
 - Construction of adequate parking for the replacement facility, to include 7 gravel spaces (3 North Parking area, 4 South Parking area), future parking space (5 gravel spaces), ADA concrete parking and signage, and concrete walkway.
 - Construction of a pit toilet near the group shelter to minimize user conflicts of group use and campground users.

5. Supplemental Projects (Tier 2)

Site	Objective	Sponsor	Initial MC Approval	Permitting Requirements	Anticipated Budget
Kirby Gulch Boat Launch	Improve/Expand parking lot	Avista	2019	Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application, Cultural/Historic Resource Review	\$10,000
Noxon/Bicentennial Park	Grout ramp to improve function and address access to boat dock	Avista	2019	Covered by MT 310 Maintenance Permit	\$5,000
South Shore Boat	Reposition section of boat ramp	Avista	2021	Covered by MT 310 Maintenance	\$3,000

Site	Objective	Sponsor	Initial MC Approval	Permitting Requirements	Anticipated Budget
Launch				Permit	
Frog Pond	Grade access road	Avista	2022	Cultural/Historic Resource Review	\$2,000
Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs	Work with Appendix B to investigate opportunities for low water boat launch opportunities	MFWP, USFS, Avista, Sanders County	2019	Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application, Cultural/Historic Resource Review	\$5,000
Corridor-wide	Evaluate access roads previously blocked off; add boulders as needed	Avista	2019	Cultural/Historic Resource Review	\$10,000
Heron, Centennial, Trout Creek, and South Shore Boat Launches	Address bulkhead approaches at docks	Avista, Sanders County	2021	Covered by MT 310 Maintenance Permit	\$6,000
Bull River Potable Water Tank	Excavation and reposition tank	USFS, Avista	2021	NEPA	\$10,000

Unanticipated Repair and Improvement Projects:

- North Shore Swim Dock Rebuild

Additional New Projects:

- Flat Iron Extension Engineering Study
- Bull River Dock Repairs and Potential Extension
- Boat Launch Assessment and Prioritization
- Dettwiler 9ac Parcel

Appendix I – Implementation of the Aesthetics Management Plan

There are no formal project plans associated with Appendix I. There are three requirements associated with this PM&E measure:

1. Monitor recreation, land management, erosion, and facility construction programs to ensure AMP guidelines are considered.
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.

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

There are no formal project plans associated with Appendix J. There are three annual requirements associated with this PM&E measure:

1. Utilize the Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Management Plan to help guide implementation of Wildlife, Botanical, and Wetland Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement programs.
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. 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.

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

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 sites include:
 - a. Twin Creek – Continue to develop site plan, in conjunction with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and install infrastructure that will allow public use of this property that was acquired in 2016. Work will include noxious weed control, enforcement, and development of revegetation/wetland enhancement plans for the property.
 - b. South Fork Bull River Wildlife Management Area complex – Activities include monitoring, weed control, development of infrastructure (roads, parking areas, fences), development of timber management plan, enforcement, etc.
 - Monitoring of other Avista owned habitat properties and implementing management measures as needed.

- Twin Creek – Continue to develop site plan and install infrastructure that will allow public use of this property that was acquired in 2016. Work will include noxious weed control, enforcement, and development of revegetation/wetland enhancement plans for the property.
 - Ongoing. Moving towards transferring this property to IDFG.
 - IDFG is addressing noxious weeds on the property. Multi-year process.
 - IDFG will continue working on riparian enhancement plan for northern portion of the property.

- South Fork Bull River Wildlife Management Area complex – Activities include monitoring, weed control, development of infrastructure (roads, parking areas, fences), development of timber management plan, enforcement, etc.
 - At the suggestion of MFWP monitor, Avista will pursue spotted knapweed treatments in 2024.

- Monitoring of other Avista owned habitat properties and implementing management measures as needed.
 - KLT CE Assessments

- 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.
 - Currently pursue a CE purchase at the request of KLT and working with IDFG. Parcel is 40 acres on Swan Creek, west of Clark Fork. Property offers a low-cost opportunity to put land under a CE. Property has an oxbow of a tributary that flows through it and will allow for preservation/potential enhancement of wetlands and waterfowl habitat.

- Wood Duck Re-Vegetation Maintenance (Sarah Busmire)
 - Sarah and Arthur working to finalize long term management plan
 - In 2024 – 100 trees planted w/ enclosures.

Appendix L – Back Cottonwood Habitat Protection and Enhancement

There are no formal project plans associated with Appendix L. There are two annual requirements associated with this PM&E measure:

1. Continue to protect black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project through the implementation of the LUMP.
2. Continue to monitor and maintain the exclosures at Hereford Slough

Appendix M – Wetland Protection and Enhancement Program

Monica provided an update:

There are no formal project plans associated with Appendix M. There are two requirements associated with this PM&E measure:

1. Continue to explore potential wetland enhancement for the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition.
2. Monitor enhancements previously completed at Hereford Slough, McKay Creek, Finley Flats, and Blacktail Bay/Islands.
3. Continue to investigate the potential for a wetland enhancement project on the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition.
 - IDFG will continue to evaluate.
4. Monitor enhancements previously completed at Hereford Slough, McKay Creek, Finley Flats, and Blacktail Bay/Islands.
 - All enhancements continue to function as designed

Appendix P – Forest Habitat Protection and Enhancement

- Continue to manage those areas that have been classified as Conservation 1, and as such are afforded the maximum protection provided through the Land Use Management Plan.
 - Ongoing
- 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.
 - No activity
- Continue to monitor and enforce the road closure to Stevens Creek Point (closure was instituted in 2001).
 - Evaluating whether the point needs to be fenced as a result of recent timber sale on adjoining USFS land
- Continue to prohibit motorized use of Finley Flats Point.
 - Ongoing. Camp host helps ensure compliance
- 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.
 - All properties continue to be enrolled in this program. Per FWP recommendation, we will continue facilitate access through use of sign-in boxes.
 - Arthur to follow up with reservation after next meeting
 - Plan to develop some roads in Tuscor BMA to improve access for PTHFV hunters.
- Continue weekly patrols of the forested lands surrounding the State Shop property and continue to reduce the amount of disturbance and litter in this area.
 - Ongoing
- 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.

- Nothing to report.
- Inland Forest Management for on-call forestry services.

NEW Project:

Forest Assessment/Management Plan: Working with IFM to assess all CFSA lands and prioritize for management and risk

Appendix Q - Reservoir Island Protection

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

Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG.

- Utilize a geotechnical contractor to assist with evaluating erosion control proposals received by Avista.

Meeting Adjourned 2:10 MST