

Terrestrial Resources Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) Meeting Minutes
Fall Meeting, August 25, 2021
Call in Meeting
10:00 a.m. (MST)

TRTAC Representatives Attendees:

Avista – Arthur Potts
Green Mountain Conservation District (GMCD) – Terry Hightower
Elk Creek Watershed Council – Judy Hutchins
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho – Scott Soultz
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Dave Bennetts
Montana State Historic Preservation Office – Jessica Bush
Noxon-Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Robinson
Sanders County Commissioners – Tony Cox
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Les Raynor
U.S. Dept. of agriculture, Forest Service, Cabinet Ranger District – Ron Torretta

Other Attendees:

Avista – Eric Oldenburg, Lisa Vollertsen, Davina Brown, Sean Moran, Susan Drumheller; Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Ken Bouwens and Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group – Britta Olson

Welcome

Arthur welcomed those in attendance and invited participants to introduce themselves. The purpose of the this meeting is to update the TRTAC on the progress of the 2021 implementation efforts and identify any issues and/or actions that need to be forwarded to the Management Committee for their September 21, 2021 Fall Meeting.

Other business

- Arthur updated on Work Authorizations due to latest wind storm.
- Fire update
- Property review
- Cultural/Historic update- Lisa Vollertsen
- Grant Writer update- Susan Drumheller
- Winter Meeting Date set for Jan 20, 2022

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

1. Administration of the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)
 - Continue to implement the Private Recreation Permit Program- 61 Work Authorization Request received from 56 individuals thus far
 - Continue to address property ownership/trespass issues as they arise- Relatively few trespass issues, will continue to monitor
 - Continue to process request for lease/easements of Avitsa project property- 4 new permits, 3 permits to new property owners where there had been existing permit in place, and 3 changes to existing permits.

- No request received from Rock Creek Mine to discharge pipe across Project Lands.
 - Ongoing coordination of LUMP among TRTAC, Sanders County, GMCD, Cultural Resources, Wildlife, Recreation, Aesthetics, and Erosion programs.
 - Continue implementation of the Pesticide and Herbicide Use Plan in consultation with the MC- Pilgrim Creek, Finley Flats, South Shore and Sellmer's. May be revisited in the fall.
 - 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.
 - 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- 19 Special Use Permit request for reservations. Primarily Pilgrim Park. No request have required the special Use Subgroup involvement. Avista NR staff to require minimum 2 week reservation request.
 - Continue to participate on the Sanders County AIPTF to implement an Integrated Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) Management Plan- Clean Lakes, Inc., conducted herbicide treatments to control invasive watermilfoil on August 4, 2021. A total of 63.96 acres in 7 treatment plots were targeted using a combination of liquid endothall and liquid diquat. Follow-up assessments of treatment efficacy are planned for September 15, 2021, six weeks after treatments were conducted.
2. Monitoring Associated with the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)
 - Avista Land staff will begin effort to catalog Private Recreation Permit sites for compliance with their issued permits in August 2020. If schedule permits, we will continue effort in fall of 2021, with hopes to complete this project in 2022.
 3. Enforcement Associated with the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP)
 - Based upon the request from MFWP, the CFSA is no longer providing financial support for patrols of the Project Area. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks enforcement personnel will continue 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- Warden Travis Johnson will be covering Thompson River west to the border starting this fall. Morgan Post still available as needed
 - 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 continues to patrol Avista sites.
 - 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- This funding was used in 2021 to pay for a cadastral survey to help resolve a property boundary question on upper Noxon Reservoir.

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

1. RRMP Administration and Resource Integration
 - 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
2. RRMP Recreation Facility Development- See spreadsheet
 - Scott Soultz requested that USFS- Les Raynor consult Kootenai Tribe of Idaho on developing signs for Bull River
3. RRMP Monitoring Operation and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities
 - Work with the recreation subgroup to continue to implement electronic recreation site evaluations developed as part of the 2017 RRMP update- Site evaluations will occur this fall. Annual report to be completed.
 - Continue to utilize up to 21 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.
 - Continue utilizing standardized reporting for recreation use at Thompson Falls State Park, North Shore Recreation Area, and Bull River Recreation Area- Ongoing
 - Summarize 2021 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
 - 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 will be developed for the January TRTAC meeting.
4. Operations and maintenance of recreation Facilities
 - Maintain Avista controlled recreation facilities and undeveloped recreation sites on Avista lands- Ongoing and adhering to COVID-19 and fire restrictions
 - 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; same co-hosts at Finley Flats. Host present for approx. 1 month at Pilgrim Creek Park.
 - 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)- No new request
5. Interpretation and education Program
 - Currently exploring educational signage to be incorporated with Pilgrim Creek Park redevelopment

Appendix I: Aesthetics Management Plan

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

- Continue to investigate measures to restore views and remove vegetation as needed, also addressing any identified issue from the 2018 re-inventory of 41 key viewpoints. Sites will be revisited again in 2023 to take photos to compare to past inventories- No action taken in 2021

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 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement programs- Ongoing
- Continue to update the habitat protection spreadsheet as acquisitions are completed- Two new Graves Creek acquisitions
- No observations of new bald eagle nest territories noted in 2021

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

- 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 IDFG crew is addressing noxious weeds on the property. Multi year process
- 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- No activity required to date
- Monitoring of other Avista owned habitat properties and implementing management measures as needed- No activity
- 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- While have investigated a number of potential projects, no new projects are being actively pursued at this time
- Wood Duck Re-Vegetation Maintenance- Brita indicated she will need to do more work this fall with MCC crew

Appendix L: Black Cottonwood Habitat Protection and Enhancement

- Continue to protect black cottonwood stands along the Clark Fork Project through the implementation of the Land Use Management Plan- Ongoing
- Continue to monitor and maintain the enclosure at Hereford Slough- Functioning well, will visit site in the fall

Appendix M: Wetlands Protection and Enhancement Program

- Continue to investigate the potential for a wetland enhancement project on the 2016 Twin Creek acquisition- Ongoing discussion with Duck Unlimited

- 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)- Ongoing
- 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. Changed the process last year where hunters could sign in on site. Undecided on process for the upcoming hunting season. Although with the current Avista COVID protocols, will be likely the same as last year
- 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- No project being proposed at this time

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

- Address erosion concerns identified by the CRMG- Ongoing
- Continue to evaluate and provide technical assistance for an erosion control project being undertaken by an adjacent landowner on Noxon Reservoir (Vermilion Point Area). This is a continuation of a 2017 project. The ability to complete this project will depend upon the adjacent landowner's availability- No activity
- Utilize a geotechnical contractor to assist with evaluating erosion control proposals received by Avista- Will contract if needed

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.