

Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) Meeting Notes
Winter Meeting, January 20, 2021
Call in Meeting
10:00 a.m. (MST)

WRTAC representative attendees:

Avista – Eric Oldenburg
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Ken Bouwens
Kalispel Tribe – Ken Merrill
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group– Brita Olson
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) – Jason Blakney
Montana State Historic Preservation Office – Jessica Bush
Montana Dept. of Natural Resources – Valerie Kurth
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Kevin Aceituno
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Chris Rossel

Other Attendees:

Avista – Shana Bernall, Lisa Vollertsen, Paul Kusnierz, Arthur Potts, Sean Moran, Davina Brown and Susan Drumheller; Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) Drew Ransom, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) Travis Rehm, Mike Hensler (11:00), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Craig Neesvig

Welcome and Introductions:

Eric welcomed those in attendance, Introduced and congratulated Travis Rehm who is the new Appendix B Aquatic Program leader. Also expressed appreciation for Jason Blakney for pulling double duty in the interim since accepting the management Biologist position. The purpose of this meeting is to review the draft 2021 Aquatic Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs) and provide recommendations to the Management Committee (MC). The emphasis of this meeting will be to discuss those projects that are new (and/or need ranking), or have had significant changes.

Other business:

- Consent mails:
 - Appendix C – Cabinet Gorge Fish Handling Facility Modifications
 - Appendix C – Graves Creek Fish Handling Facility
 - Appendix F5 and Appendix D – Idaho Bull Trout and Protection and Education Officer Funding and Idaho Native Fisheries Education Trailer Funding Request
- Investigating two potential acquisitions on Graves Creek
 - Land swap for just under 5 acres on the west side of Graves Creek
 - 342 acre parcel on the east side of Graves Creek
- Investigating a potential conservation easement on the Bull River
- Grant writer update
 - Susan Drumheller provided an update
- Fall Meeting Date
 - The group agreed on **August 24, 2021**

Review of draft 2021 Annual Implementation Plans:

Appendix A: Idaho Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Fishery Enhancement Program

Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement

1. Habitat Restoration Scoping Allocation
2. Habitat Restoration and Acquired Property Maintenance and Monitoring Allocation
3. Priority Native Salmonid Habitat Acquisition and Conservation Allocation
4. Idaho Field Station Construction, Furnishing, and Operation
5. Pack River Watershed Management Plan Addendum
6. Lower Clark Fork River Minimum Flow and Water Temperature Monitoring
7. Trestle Creek Habitat Enhancement Project Phase I

Fishery Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management

8. Fish Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management Plan

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix A Project Plans as written.

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

Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement

1. Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Native Salmonid Abundance Monitoring Plan
2. Redd Surveys in Montana Tributaries
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed.
3. Sim Meander Stream and Floodplain Restoration Project
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed.
4. Stream Gage Monitoring
5. Cabinet Ranger District Automated Snow Recording Site Operation and Maintenance 2020-2021
6. Crow Creek Bull Trout Investigation
7. Graves Creek Pilot Habitat Enhancement Project
8. Upper Prospect Creek LWD Project
9. Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Project Coordination
10. Habitat Restoration Monitoring, Maintenance and Contingency Allocation
11. Habitat Restoration, Property Acquisition, and Conservation Easement Contingency Allocation
12. East Fork Bull River Morphology, Connectivity, and Habitat Enhancement Project
13. Decode The Cabinet
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and will move forward without consensus to the score the AIT proposed. Chris Rossel ranked as A (3), B (1), C (3), D (1), E (?), and F (1). Eric suggest we don't rank and provide both to MC
14. St. Paul Trailhead Improvement Project
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project with no objections, however will wait on ranking at this time.

Recreational Fishery Enhancement

15. Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoir Fisheries Monitoring Plan
16. Pilot Project: Modification of Eurasian Watermilfoil Beds on Noxon Reservoir for Fishery Benefits
17. Mountain Lake Fisheries Monitoring Project
18. Lower Bull River Day Use Boat Access Site Construction
19. Noxon Reservoir Boat Ramp Improvements

20. Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants on Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs
21. Dreissenid Mussel Sampling on the Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs
 - New project: does not need to be ranked because it is being proposed through the Recreation Fishery Enhancement portion of Appendix B. –These projects do not get ranked

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix B Project Plans as written.

Appendix C: Fish Passage/Native Salmonid Restoration Plan

Annual Operations

1. Upstream Fish Passage Program
2. Graves Creek and East Fork Bull River Genetic Study
3. Tributary Trapping and Downstream Juvenile Bull Trout Transport Program
4. PIT-Monitoring Station Operation and Maintenance
5. Bull Trout Emigration Study
6. Non-Native Fish Suppression Project in the East Fork Bull River
7. Evaluation of Potential Actions for Reducing Non-native Threats to Native Salmonid Populations

Facilities

8. Fish Capture Facilities Operation, Development, and Testing
9. Graves Creek Permanent Weir Trap Enhancements

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix C Project Plans as written.

Appendix D: Bull Trout Protection and Public Education Project

1. Idaho Bull Trout Protection and Education Officer Support
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed.
2. Montana Bull Trout Education and Communication Support
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
3. Montana Bull Trout Education Outreach Support
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
4. Montana Game Warden Support
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
5. Trout Unlimited Outreach Coordination
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
6. Pend Oreille Water Festival
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix D Project Plans as written.

Appendix E: Watershed Councils Program

1. Pack River Watershed Council, Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District
2. Lower Clark Fork Watershed Council Projects

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix E Project Plans as written.

Appendix F1: Clark Fork River Water Quality Monitoring Program

1. Clark Fork River Water Quality Monitoring Program

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F1 Project Plans as written.

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

1. Monitoring of Noxon Reservoir Stratification and Mobilization of Sediment Nutrients/Metals

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F2 Project Plans as written.

Appendix F3: Aquatic Organism Tissue Analysis

1. Noxon Reservoir Fish Mercury Study

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F3 Project Plans as written.

Appendix F4: Water Quality Protection and Monitoring Plan for Maintenance, Construction, and Emergency Activities

- There are no 2021 Project Plans associated with Appendix F4.

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F4 Project Plans as written.

Appendix F5: Dissolved Gas Supersaturation Control, Mitigation, and Monitoring Operations

- There is no project plan for operations; however, Avista will continue to utilize spillway operations at Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge dams as outlined in the GSCP.

TDG Monitoring

1. Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring

TDG Mitigation and Monitoring Program

2. Project Scoping Allocation
3. Analysis of Gas Bubble Disease Monitoring Data
4. Lake Pend Oreille Experimental Walleye Angler Incentive Program
5. Lake Pend Oreille/Clark Fork River Walleye Population Assessment
6. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Angler Incentive Program
7. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Netting Program
8. Demography of Adfluvial Bull Trout in Lake Pend Oreille
9. Lake Pend Oreille Bull Trout Survival Study
10. Lake Pend Oreille Bull Trout Population Monitoring and Evaluation

- The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
- 11. Lake Pend Oreille Nearshore Index Netting
- 12. Box Canyon Reservoir Northern Pike Suppression
- 13. Trophic and Phytoplankton Monitoring in Lake Pend Oreille River Idaho
- 14. Temperature Monitoring Data Compilation
- 15. Walleye Geochemistry Study
- 16. Priest River Coldwater Bypass Limnology Assessment
- 17. Idaho Protection and Education Officer Support
- 18. Lake Pend Oreille Tributary PIT-Monitoring Station Installation
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
- 19. Lake Pend Oreille Tributary PIT-Monitoring Station Operation and maintenance
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
- 20. Clark Fork River Population Monitoring
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
- 21. Lower Clark Fork River PIT-Monitoring Station
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed
- 22. Lightning Creek Delta Connectivity Project
 - The WRTAC discussed the ranking score for this project and approved the score the AIT proposed

GSCP Alternative:

- 23. Gas Supersaturation Control Program Total Dissolved Gas Abatement

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix F5 Project Plans as written.

Appendix T: Project Operations Package

1. Project Operations and Coordination
2. Cabinet Gorge Fish Hatchery Spring Water Collection System Upgrade
3. Clark Fork River (Derr Island) Boating Access Site Improvements-New

The WRTAC recommends that the MC approve the Appendix T Project Plans as written.

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.