

Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) Meeting Notes
Winter Meeting, January 19, 2022
Call in Meeting
10:00 a.m. (MST)

WRTAC representative attendees:

Avista – Eric Oldenburg
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) – Ken Bouwens
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality – Kristin Lowell
Kalispel Tribe – Ken Merrill
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho – Shawn Young
Lake Pend Oreille Idaho Club – Dave Gillespie
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) – Jason Blakney (departed at 11:00)
Montana State Historic Preservation Office – Jessica Bush (10:30)
Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Keenan Storrar
Montana Department of Natural Resources – Valerie Kurth
Rock Creek Alliance – Diane Williams (departed early)
Trout Unlimited – Bill Love
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, Drew Ransom, and Davina Brown
Avista Grant Writer – Susan Drumheller
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group – Brita Olson (departed at 11:00)
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Travis Rehm and Mike Hensler
Noxon Cabinet Shoreline Coalition – Rich Reich
Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited – Luz Chase (joined late and departed at 12:00)

Welcome and Introductions:

Eric welcomed those in attendance and discussed the purpose and format of the meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to review the draft 2022 Aquatic Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs) and provide recommendations to the Management Committee (MC). As such, the emphasis will be to discuss those projects that are new, need to be ranked, or carryover projects with meaningful changes proposed.

Other Business:

Consent mails:

- There was one Consent Mail between our 2021 fall meeting and now. There were two requests associated with this consent mail. The first was for approval of the Cabinet Gorge Dam Fish Passage Facility M&E Plan and the second was for additional funds to complete the Cabinet Gorge Fish Handling Facility upgrades. Both were approved by the Management Committee in December.

Grant writer update

- Susan Drumheller provided an update on Grants

Fall Meeting Date

- Tuesday, August 30, 2022 was proposed and approved for the fall meeting date.

Review of draft 2022 Annual Implementation Plans:

Appendix A: Idaho Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Fishery Enhancement Program

Ken Bouwens provided a brief overview of ongoing and new project plans.

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
8. Trestle Creek Habitat Enhancement Project Phase II
 - a. Bill Love mentioned a benefit of the project is the location of the project, high public use and illustrates stream restoration during field trips. Bouwens clarified the project is a bit upstream and out of the floodplain, but still within reach for public.
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**
9. Rattle Creek Habitat Enhancement Project
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**

Fishery Resource Monitoring, Enhancement, and Management

10. 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

Travis Rehm provided brief updates for ongoing and new projects and minor revisions (table and task addition) that were made to the Redds Surveys in Montana Tributaries project plan post-WRTAC mailout.

Tributary Habitat Acquisition and Enhancement

1. Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Native Salmonid Abundance Monitoring Plan
2. Redd Surveys in Montana Tributaries
3. Sim Meander Stream and Floodplain Restoration Project
4. Stream Gage Monitoring
5. Crow Creek Bull Trout Investigation
6. Graves Creek Pilot Habitat Enhancement Project
7. Upper Prospect Creek LWD Project
8. Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Project Coordination
9. Habitat Restoration Monitoring, Maintenance and Contingency Allocation
10. Habitat Restoration, Property Acquisition, and Conservation Easement Contingency Allocation
11. East Fork Bull River Morphology, Connectivity, and Habitat Enhancement Project

Recreational Fishery Enhancement

12. Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoir Fisheries Monitoring Plan
13. Pilot Project: Modification of Eurasian Watermilfoil Beds on Noxon Reservoir for Fishery Benefits
14. Mountain Lake Fisheries Monitoring Project
15. Lower Bull River Day Use Boat Access Site Construction
16. Noxon Reservoir Boat Ramp Improvements
17. Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants on Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs
18. Dreissenid Mussel Sampling on the Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs
19. Noxon Reservoir Bathymetry Update
 - Rehm explained this new project. This project does not need to be ranked because it is being proposed through the Recreational Fishery Enhancement Fund.

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

Appendix C: Fish Passage/Native Salmonid Restoration Plan

Annual Operations

1. Upstream Fish Passage Program
 - Bernall provided a Fish Passage Facility update and explained budgetary considerations for Appendix C.
2. Westslope Cutthroat Trout Transport Evaluation
 - Bernall and Rehm explained this new project.
3. Tributary Trapping and Downstream Juvenile Bull Trout Transport Program
4. PIT-Monitoring Station Operation and Maintenance
5. Non-Native Fish Suppression Project in the East Fork Bull River
6. Evaluation of Potential Actions for Reducing Non-native Threats to Native Salmonid Populations

Facilities

7. Fish Capture Facilities Operation, Development, and Testing
8. Graves Creek Permanent Weir Trap Enhancements
 - Oldenburg thanked those all involved with their patience due to this project being prolonged.

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

Appendix D: Bull Trout Protection and Public Education Project

Sean Moran provided an update on the program.

1. Idaho Bull Trout Protection and Education Officer Support
 - Continuing project. Moran explained a carryover budget mistake from 2021.
 - Bouwens noted that the proposed splitting of promotional materials needed to be figured out. Moran explained the promotional materials for all project were previously covered

under the Trout Unlimited budget. Meetings with implementers and area-specific talking points resulted in the proposed change for main implementers to have their own \$1,500 budget line items for promotional materials.

- Moran and Love noted a minor revision to task 1 to hire a new PCTU coordinator.
2. Montana Bull Trout Education and Communication Support
 3. Montana Bull Trout Education Outreach Support
 4. Montana Game Warden Support
 - Restructuring by MFWP in 2021 resulted in no CFSA funds being used for MT Warden Support in 2021 and no budget being requested in 2022 for this project. Wardens will continue to patrol Fisheries in the MT portion of the LCFR
 5. Trout Unlimited Outreach Coordination
 - Love mentioned future hire of new BLT coordinator
 6. Pend Oreille Water Festival

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

Appendix E: Watershed Councils Program

Sean Moran provided an update on the 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

Paul? Kusnierz provided an update on the program.

1. Clark Fork River Water Quality Monitoring Program
 - One addition to add funds for 5-year trend analysis.

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

Kusnierz provided an update on the program.

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

Kusnierz provided an update on the program.

1. Noxon and Cabinet 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

Oldenburg provided an update on the program.

- There are no 2022 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

Kusnierz and Bouwens provided updates for ongoing and new projects.

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. Mapping the Potential for Fish to Compensate for TDG in Lower Clark Fork River
 - Bouwens asked if the measurements need to be adjusted if recorded onshore. Kusnierz explained the measurement process will be recorded accurately without a calculation.
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**
5. Nutrient Level Impacts on Salmonid Populations in the Lower Clark Fork River
 - Bouwens outlined this new project. Love asked if nutrient data from Idaho or Montana? Kusnierz before/after nutrient conditions, that will be something to look at and capture.
 - Rehm confirmed population estimates or indices? Kusnierz yes, talked with David about that and something to look into further as data is gathered and potentially move some sites around.
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**
6. Temperature Monitoring Data Compilation
7. Walleye Geochemistry Study
8. Trophic Monitoring in Lake Pend Oreille and Pend Oreille Idaho
9. Box Canyon Reservoir Northern Pike Suppression
10. Lake Pend Oreille Experimental Walleye Angler Incentive Program
 - Expenditure changes. 2022 will not change. Bouwens noted an edit to the Walleye angler incentive plan (date change). Oldenburg added budgets will be revised prior to the MC meeting.
11. Lake Pend Oreille/Clark Fork River Walleye Population Assessment

12. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Angler Incentive Program
13. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Netting Program
14. Demography of Adfluvial Bull Trout in Lake Pend Oreille
15. Lake Pend Oreille Bull Trout Population Monition and Evaluation
16. Lake Pend Oreille Nearshore Index Netting
17. Idaho Protection and Education Officer Support
 - New drone purchased for Dustin Masin.
18. Lake Pend Oreille Tributary PIT- Monitoring Station Installation
 - This is continuing project but Bouwens outlined new sites that are proposed to be installed in 2022.
19. Lake Pend Oreille Tributary PIT- Monitoring Station Operation and Maintenance
20. Clark Fork River Population Monitoring
21. Lightning Creek Delta Connectivity Project
22. Lower Clark Fork River Flow Model
 - Bouwens explained this new project for 2022.
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**
23. Lake Pend Oreille and Pend Oreille River Creel Survey
 - Bouwens explained this new project for 2022.
 - This project will be submitted forward through the Consent Mail process so that work can commence prior to the MC meeting and will include an increase in flight cost of \$10,000 as compared to the current version.
 - **The WRTAC ratified the project evaluation and ranking score**

GSCP Alternative:

24. 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

Oldenburg provided an update on the program.

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

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

- The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.