

**Bear River Environmental Coordination Committee
Final Meeting Notes
May 21, 2008
Grace, Idaho**

Commitments Made at the May 21, 2008 Meeting	
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on Twin Lakes preliminary permit application due to FERC June 6. • Review and comment on the BCT Restoration Plan prepared by Shrier (Comments from ECC members due to Stenberg by July 2)
2008 Grant Project Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact project proponents for any projects you sponsored this year to inform them of grant awards. Official award letter from EC to follow in June.
Mark Stenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a future agenda item: an “expiration date” for project funding. • Write a letter to USU regarding deliverables for Kackley Springs. • Update ECC records to reflect that Fox declined his grant award. • Prepare grant award letters and funding instructions for 2008 grant recipients. • Continue work on Bailey Creek culverts with Capurso. • Forward PacifiCorp’s response to FERC letter regarding Twin Lakes to ECC members. • Distribute BCT Restoration Plan to ECC members for review and comment. • Coordinate incorporation of information on IDFG fish stocking efforts (from IDFG fish stocking database) into fish stranding study and Black Canyon Monitoring Report. • Revise study plan for fish stranding study based on discussion and consensus agreement by ECC members at this meeting. • Contact Sagebrush Steppe regarding development of a purchase agreement for a conservation easement on the Harris property.
Lynn Van Every	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with Jeff Horsburgh of USU Water Lab about attending an ECC meeting to discuss adding information on the ECC’s conservation projects to the WIS database.
Eve Davies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Phaedra Budy re: deliverable for Kackley Springs

[Carryover action items in blue](#)

Decisions Made at this Meeting

- Continue to collect both single and composite samples for Black Canyon Monitoring Study.
- Ask Sagebrush Steppe to begin work on a purchase agreement on Harris property option B – the east side of the road.
- Continue with the fish stranding study this year and start with an 0.25 foot per hour rate next spring, conducting four test flows during 2009.
- Fund 2008 habitat enhancement grant applications as recommended by the ECC and approved by PacifiCorp.

ECC Representatives Present

Mark Stenberg, Environmental Coordinator, PacifiCorp
Warren Colyer, Trout Unlimited
Damien Miller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Teuscher, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Greg Mladenka, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Arn Berglund, Bureau of Land Management
Mary Lucachick, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (participating by telephone)
Charlie Vincent, American Whitewater (participating by telephone)

Others Present

Eve Davies, PacifiCorp
John Gangemi, Oasis Environmental
Glen Pond, PacifiCorp
Miriam Hugentobler, Project Coordinator
Kevin Colburn, American Whitewater (participating by telephone)
Brett Marshall, Oasis Environmental (participating by telephone)
Frank Shrier, PacifiCorp (participating by telephone)
Bryan Dixon, Cirrus Ecological Solutions (participating by telephone)

Previous Meeting Notes

Notes from the March ECC meeting were approved without changes.

Updates

Hoops Creek Project

Teuscher informed the ECC that Lawrence Fox, a 2007 habitat enhancement project grant recipient, has decided not to accept ECC funding for his project. The project consisted of installing a fish screen on Hoops Creek. Fox did not wish to sign an access agreement for his property, Teuscher said.

Twin Lakes

Stenberg updated ECC members on PacifiCorp's recent activities regarding Twin Lakes' proposed dam on the Bear River Narrows. Stenberg said Twin Lakes had sent a letter to FERC requesting relief from required studies as PacifiCorp would not allow access to its land to conduct the FERC-required studies. FERC would not grant relief, and PacifiCorp recently received a letter from FERC stating that PacifiCorp should allow Twin Lakes access to conduct their studies. Teuscher asked whether FERC can order PacifiCorp to allow access. Stenberg said that is unclear; however, the FERC boundary is fairly narrow by the river.

Colyer noted that comments are due June 6 on Twin Lakes' preliminary permit application, and all interested in being considered interveners should resubmit comments. Lucachick mentioned a recent letter from the state Attorney General's office regarding the project.

Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Restoration Plan

Stenberg told ECC members that the draft BCT Restoration Plan will be sent out for ECC review within the next week. The goal is to complete the plan by the end of the year.

Grant Project Updates - Stenberg

Trout Creek – Clegg is anxious to begin work on this project.

Whiskey Creek – Clegg has now received permits for this work.

Harris – Davies will update later in the meeting.

Wallin – Continuing to coordinate.

Mickelson – Continuing to coordinate.

Funding for Habitat Enhancement and Land and Water Acquisition

Stenberg provided an update on PacifiCorp funding for these two accounts. The land and water fund carried over \$197,000, with \$936,548.00 currently available in the account. Habitat enhancement fund currently has \$197,214 available.

Colyer asked whether funds were available to repair damage at Ovid, as discussed at a previous meeting. Stenberg said funding for problems such as this could be managed on an as-needed basis.

Black Canyon Monitoring Report – Year 3 – John Gangemi

Gangemi presented the results of Year 3 monitoring in the Black Canyon via Powerpoint presentation. He noted that this year marks the end of baseline studies. The next three years will be treatment years (variable flow regime). Gangemi said that some data has not yet been incorporated into the report (river discharge). The data will be included in his annual report and provided to ECC in the near future. Gangemi said he will be asking ECC members to make some decisions about hypotheses to test, and suggested that these decisions be made this summer.

Single samples vs composite samples (taxa richness) were discussed. The ECC agreed to continue to collect both.

Fish Stranding Study – Stenberg/Dixon

Stenberg noted that an initial report on the study, which included more information on methods and weather observations, had been distributed to ECC members. Stenberg said he was concerned that no fish were found and the question arose that this could be due to 1200 cfs rate. Stenberg said he requested comments from ECC members via email. He said the input from fisheries biologists was that fish were likely “hunkered down” somewhere. Stenberg said he did not believe there was a fish kill, as Idaho Department of Fish and Game had recently stocked a lot of fish, and no dead fish were reported downstream. Stenberg said ECC members agreed via email to proceed with the study. Stenberg said he will document the concern, attaching emails from ECC members, and the study will go forward.

Dixon described Cirrus’s efforts to locate stranded fish during the study. He said Cirrus did not find any fish. Stenberg said that PacifiCorp also conducted fish reconnaissance on the 14th, and did not find any fish either.

Teuscher said he would not go as far as Stenberg in saying there was no fish kill. He said there could be up to a 10 percent kill without being noticed and it wasn’t possible to know how many fish may have been flushed downstream. He said he did not know whether the fish community was affected. Teuscher said Capurso had expressed to him that he (Capurso) did not believe the evaluation should be halted, but the 0.25 rate should be repeated at the end of the study to address concerns that this flow had affected the study. Davies said if that were done, it should be next spring during a very cold period,

similar to conditions this year. Shrier said he believed the most important thing would be to replicate the temperature. Berglund said he believed the most telling sample would be the next sample. He said he thought there had not been significant mortality during the first sample, but perhaps a lot flushed downstream, and had only six days (between the 1200 cfs release and 900 cfs release when sampling occurred) to get back into the study area. He thinks the fish have had time to get back now. Colyer expressed concern that there would be no way to separate the result of the change in temperature.

On May 1, Idaho Department of Fish and Game electrofished reaches 2 and 4. Results were shown as an overhead. Teuscher noted that the numbers reflected relatively few fish.

Colburn asked whether information on fish stocking was included in the Black Canyon Monitoring Report. Teuscher said that information was available in IDFG's stocking database, and it would be good to start to incorporate that information into the report and also into the stranding study.

Stenberg discussed options for the study. He said the ECC could rerun the 0.25 rate next spring or stop now, skip scheduled flows this year, and start again with 0.25 next spring—but that would get the study out of pace with the Black Canyon monitoring study. Stenberg said the flow could also impact the Black Canyon Study, and wondered whether to skip Black Canyon monitoring this fall as well, just run whitewater flows and pick it all back up again once things stabilize more. Gangemi noted that the Black Canyon monitoring study looks at life stages, and there is variability in flows from year to year anyway, including in the reference reach.

Shrier suggested using the same ramp rate, but different temperatures. He said when there are cold temperatures, the fish take shelter in the substrate.

Mladenka asked whether there are existing studies regarding flushing at certain flows. He also discussed turbidity between the 1200 and 900 cfs events. He said turbidity numbers were huge for the first event, perhaps comparable to the effect of a thunderstorm over a recent burn area, then much lower for the 900 cfs event. Mladenka passed around a graph of the turbidity data (attachment 1)

Stenberg said that over the next three years, PacifiCorp will monitor turbidity during whitewater boater flows. This will coincide with the completion of the Grace/Cove water quality monitoring. Mladenka said he believed that everyone wants some high flows to go through the Black Canyon, but there needs to be some adaptive management. He said there is a need to stay in line with state criteria (water quality standards). Stenberg said PacifiCorp cannot be required under the Settlement Agreement to provide flows if they cause a "non-compliance" with water quality standards.

Stenberg reminded ECC members that a decision was made in January that the ECC would only modify the study plan by consensus, and asked for a proposal.

Teuscher proposed that the ECC continue with the study this year, including Black Canyon monitoring studies by Oasis, and start with an 0.25 foot per hour rate next spring, conducting four test flows during 2009:

2008	2009	2010
0.25	0.25*	1.0
0.25	0.50	1.0
0.25	0.50	1.0
	0.50	

*replaces first 2008 rate

Stenberg said he supported Teuscher's proposal, and would proceed with firming up plans for four flows next year. Consensus on the proposal was reached by ECC members.

2008 Grant Fund Projects - Stenberg

2008 Habitat Enhancement Grant Funding Recommendations						
Project	Action Area	Sponsor	Amount Requested	Points	Funding Amount Approved	EC Recommendations
Bailey Creek Culvert	In	Capurso	\$25,000	145	0	Recommend defer until next meeting
Cub River Irrigation Upper Diversion	Out	Colyer	\$45,000	134	\$45,000	PacifiCorp approves out of Action Area, recommend approval
Montpelier Ranger District 2008 Travel Plan Imp.	Out	Capurso	\$3,450	130	0	PacifiCorp does not approve out of Action Area.
Screen Tender	In and Out	Teuscher, Capurso and Colyer	\$14,000	129	\$14,000	PacifiCorp approves out of Action Area, recommend approval
Panter/Ames & Harris Ditch Diversion	In	Colyer	\$30,000	124	\$30,000	Recommend Approval
Stauffer Creek	In	Teuscher	\$40,000	120	\$40,000	Recommend Approval
Black Canyon Turner Bridge	In	Van Every	\$5,740	95	Up to \$5,740	Recommend approval and seeking of other matching funds.
Subtotal					\$134,740	
Harris Completion					\$15,500	
Total			\$163,190		\$150,240	

Available 2008 fund amounts:

- 1) Habitat Enhancement Grant Funds \$195,714+1,500 (Hoops Creek not funded).
- 2) Land and Water Conservation Funds \$946,548.
- 3) Hold \$25,000 for Bailey Creek.
- 4) Hold \$23,974 for emergencies repairs and additional Bailey Creek.

Bailey Creek Project

Stenberg told ECC members there were some problems with the Bailey Creek application. He said the map submitted with the project application was incorrect, and the application needed more clarification. He recommended that the application be resubmitted upon further consultation, etc. and that the ECC defer action on the project until the July ECC meeting. Stenberg suggested that work on other perched culverts in the immediate area be considered in conjunction with this project. Mladenka suggested that the ECC consider being involved in the design of the project to be sure that it functions as the ECC intended.

2008 Grant Fund Projects – Subcommittee Recommendations

Stenberg reviewed the Funding Proposal subcommittee's recommendations with ECC members (see table). Consensus was reached to fund grant applications as recommended by the ECC and approved by PacifiCorp, but deferring action on the Bailey Creek project until the July ECC meeting.

Stenberg reviewed fund balances with ECC members. The ECC is proposing to spend \$134,740 on habitat enhancement projects this year. The balance in that fund was \$195,714, Stenberg said, plus the 2007 Hoops Creek project funds will be available. This leaves a surplus of approximately \$64,000.

Harris Project

Davies said money for piping, originally estimated at \$43,000, is still needed to supply water for an alternative water source. The amount is now down to \$30,000, with NRCS covering \$14,000. There is a gap in funding of approximately \$15,500. Davis proposed that excess habitat enhancement funds be used to cover this expense and complete the project.

Stenberg suggested also leaving the \$25,000 for Bailey Creek in the fund, reserving the remaining \$23,974 for possible work on additional culverts in that area.

Harris Conservation Easement – Davies

Davies said the Harrises are interested in putting their entire place under a conservation easement. The ECC is most interested in the land along the river. Sagebrush Steppe was asked to look into three options and consider a phased approach, starting with the land on the river side, in order to protect the river portion first. The next step would be to ask Sagebrush Steppe to begin work on a purchase agreement on option B – the east side of the road. The question on whether to proceed was posed to ECC members and consensus was reached to ask Sagebrush Steppe to begin work on a purchase agreement on option B – the east side of the road.

Next ECC Meeting July 16 in Grace

Agenda Items:

- Twin Lakes
- Kackley Springs planning
- Bailey Creek project
- BCT Restoration Plan
- Hypotheses for Black Canyon monitoring plan

- Update on fish stranding study
- Cove decommissioning site updates
- Project updates

Remaining meetings this year were scheduled for Sept. 17 and Nov. 19

Attachment 1: Turbidity Graph

