

**Bear River Environmental Coordination Committee
Final Meeting Notes
April 15, 2009
Grace, Idaho**

ECC Members Present

Greg Mladenka, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
 Mark Stenberg, Environmental Coordinator, PacifiCorp
 Carey Myler, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Warren Colyer, Trout Unlimited
 Katie Strong, Greater Yellowstone Coalition
 Mary Lucachick, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, participating by phone
 Charlie Vincent, American Whitewater, participating by phone
 David Teuscher, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Others Present

Arnie Brimmer, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Kelly Holt, PacifiCorp
 Eve Davies, PacifiCorp
 Glen Pond, PacifiCorp
 Miriam Hugentobler, Project Coordinator
 Joan DeGeorgio & Kara Butterfield, The Nature Conservancy
 Lyla Dettmer, Soil and Water Conservation District, and Phil Christensen, private landowner

Commitments Made at the April 15, 2009 Meeting	
Project Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify project proponents of grant awards.
Teuscher and Colyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on the Anderson 8-mile proposal – project scope and merit.
Mladenka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft ECC policy regarding bank stabilization (sedimentation) projects for project applicants. Route to ECC members for comment.
Stenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together a packet of information for ECC members for the Mink Creek conservation easement proposal. Call for consensus and inform applicant by approximately May 6. • Speak with Joselin Matkins about watching for properties of interest to the ECC – i.e., properties in key locations, etc. • Notify Stauffer Creek proponent of award of an additional \$3,305 for the purchase of gates. • Purchase and provide materials for Bailey Creek fencing project. • Circulate draft declaration of trust between Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust and PacifiCorp to ECC members for their information. • Schedule Jeff Horsburgh, USU Water Lab, to attend an ECC meeting early in 2009.
Action items in blue have been carried over from previous ECC meetings.	

Decisions Made at This Meeting

- Approved an additional \$3,305 for the Stauffer Creek project to purchase gates.
- Funded 2009 habitat enhancement projects as recommended by the subcommittee, holding Anderson 8-mile for additional information.

Review of Day's Agenda

The following items were added to the day's agenda:

- Alexander 2009 Project – update
- Kackley Springs – update

Review of Previous Meeting Notes

Notes from the January 2009 ECC meeting were approved without changes.

Alexander Reservoir Drawdown

Stenberg notified ECC members of an upcoming drawdown of Alexander Reservoir in early May. The annual drawdown is conducted for maintenance purposes.

2009 Boater Flow Fish Stranding Study

Stenberg reviewed preliminary results of the first flow for the 2009 Boater Flow Fish Stranding Study, which took place April 11, 2009. A table of flows was shown as an overhead. In a memo to the ECC, PacifiCorp's Connely Baldwin said he believed operators were successful at minimizing the "hole" and "pillow" effect, as previously discussed by the ECC, though quantitative results are not yet available. Stenberg also reviewed the instructions that were provided to operators (to illustrate the complexity).

Teuscher asked whether water quality was monitored by IDEQ during the event. Mladenka said PacifiCorp conducted the monitoring.

Stenberg asked for comments. He noted that some turbidity was observed during the flows. Teuscher said some anglers in the area of Cottonwood Creek had called in after seeing a wave of dark water go by. Holt requested that Teuscher inquire about the date and time of this observation and let him know.

Current Grant Projects

Stenberg reviewed the funding status of the projects via a spreadsheet shown as an overhead.

Stenberg noted that a request for additional funding was received from proponents of the Stauffer Creek project, originally funded during 2008. The additional funds would be used to purchase gates that are needed to complete the project. An additional \$3,305 was requested. Stenberg asked for consensus. There were no objections and the additional funding was approved.

Colyer informed the ECC that the WHIP grant for the Panter, Ames and Harris project had been cancelled, so money allotted for that project by the ECC during 2008 would not be used.

2009 Project Rankings

Stenberg reviewed the results of project rankings for 2009 Habitat Enhancement Fund proposals from the March 18 ranking meeting. Results are shown in tabular form, below. Stenberg noted that the subcommittee chose not to fund all the projects that were ranked. Projects totaling \$110,500.00 were approved. Approximately \$80,000 in funds remain. He noted that alternative funding has since been found for the Alleman and Georgetown projects, which were not funded by the ECC.

Stenberg said that after the ranking meeting there were still a few questions on some of the projects, including:

Bailey Creek Fencing - Stenberg said PacifiCorp will purchase and provide materials.

Georgetown Bypass - ECC members discussed complications with the Georgetown Bypass project. Mladenka said he would like to request that the Forest Service provide an ECC representative, as Capurso is not attending. Mladenka said he feels Forest Service representation is needed on matters such as this.

Bank Stabilization Projects - Stenberg discussed bank stabilization projects, including the Bartholme proposal, and problems that may arise with projects such as these. Mladenka asked why put rock and hard structures in places where none currently exists? Colyer said he was also concerned about the land stewardship practices of some project proponents, i.e., not excluding cattle from banks. Teuscher suggested that the ECC develop a 1-2 page summary of the types of habitat enhancement projects that are acceptable to the ECC, i.e., exclusion fencing and restoration rather than riprap. He said he believed this would help the ECC respond consistently to project applicants. Colyer noted that installation of hard structures is a band-aid approach, which may meet the mandate to improve water quality temporarily but cause problems elsewhere down the road. Mladenka offered to draft a policy and route it to ECC members for comment.

Anderson 8-Mile Creek - Colyer said he would like to defer to IDFG on this project, as they know more about this area. Teuscher said he would like to set a time to meet with the proponent. He said he is concerned about the project, as it could potentially do harm. Stenberg said he will hold this project for more information and act on it later.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Survey – Stenberg presented comments provided by Capurso via email. Teuscher noted that recent legislation has created a funding stream for ANS species surveys and a team is being assembled to begin work. Teuscher said that IDFG is going to do the work whether the proponent (PCU) proceeds or not and that he believed there was no need to spend habitat enhancement funds on this project. Davies said she had spoken with Capurso and he said that no one knows how far south New Zealand mudsnail occurs. She said she believed that funding this project would help obtain this information sooner and enable tracking on the Bear River system. She said she believed that some of the species may take communities by storm in the near future. Mladenka asked whether it would be wiser to spend money on prevention versus surveys. Stenberg summarized ECC concerns regarding the proposal – prevention vs. survey, that habitat enhancement funds be used for Bonneville cutthroat trout and habitat restoration. Colyer said he thinks the “snapshot” the survey

<p style="text-align: center;">Ranking Results 2009 Habitat Enhancement Project Proposals</p>					
Project	Proponent	Description	Amount Requested	Sponsor	Score
Kackley Springs Flow Reroute	Mark Stenberg	Existing dikes and flow control structures in the wetland area will be rebuilt or removed. A channel will be dug to move water from the spring complex to the under crossing of the Cove Road	\$9,000	Stenberg	150
Cub River Upper Fish Screen	Trout Unlimited and Preston Whitney Irrigation Company	Install a fish screen on upper Cub River, simultaneously with middle Cub.	\$40,000	Colyer	132
Aquatic Nuisance Species Signage	James Capurso	Prepare and install interpretive signs	\$3,000	Berglund	130
Keetch Fish Screen/Water Control	Dan Keetch	Replace flood irrigation with sprinkler, install a fish screen. Bear River/EQIP Grant	\$7,500	Colyer	124
Bailey Creek Fence	Dennis Duehren	Have a scout troop build 500 feet of riparian fence at the headwaters of Bailey Creek	\$5,000	Teuscher	118
Battle and Mink Creek Corral	Franklin Co. Soil Conservation District	Move livestock operations off the streams at 6 sites.	\$46,000	Colyer	110
		<p>RECOMMEND TO HERE</p> <p>Yellow = request more information</p>	\$110,500.00		
Jorgensen Streambank Stabilization	Carl Jorgensen	Restore streambanks and exclude livestock from river bank, Bear River near Thatcher.	\$50,000	Colyer	100
Alleman Georgetown Ck Diversion Dam Passage Project and Restoration Planning	Paul Alleman	Fish passage and stream restoration	\$25,000	Capurso	107

<p style="text-align: center;">Ranking Results 2009 Habitat Enhancement Project Proposals</p>					
Project	Proponent	Description	Amount Requested	Sponsor	Score
Barthlome Stabilization Project	David Barthlome	Stabilize streambanks on Bear River, install riparian exclusion fencing	\$62,998	Stenberg	100
Montpelier Creek Sediment Reduction Project	James Laprevote	Stabilize channel of Montpelier Creek	\$6,650	Capurso?	88
Anderson 8-Mile Creek Irrigation Upgrade and Fish Screen	Marvin Anderson	Upgrade irrigation system, install fish screen, set up rotation grazing to distribute cattle/EQUIP	\$50,000	Colyer	75
Aquatic Nuisance Species Survey	James Capurso	Identify the location and extent of invasive species in the water and riparian areas of Bear River and associated reservoirs – A STUDY	\$25,000	Berglund	0
Conservation Unit Mapping	Idaho State University	ID Conservation Units of freshwater fishes in the Bear River Watershed. A STUDY	\$38,849.53 (year 1 of 2 year proposal)	Teuscher/Stenberg	0
Georgetown Bypass Flow Infrastructure Project	James Capurso	Provide minimum flow to the Georgetown Fish Ladder	\$7,000	Capurso/Berglund	0
Sharon Loop Crossing of North Canyon	Greg Skinner, Bear Lake Roads	Replace road crossing	\$35,000	Van Every	0
TOTAL REQUESTS			\$410,997.53		

would provide may be valuable and requested more discussion before ranking it. The issue was tabled until the end of the day.

Conservation Unit Mapping Study – It was noted that this study primarily involves leatherside chub. Myler noted that USFWS will soon be conducting a status review for leatherside chub, based on a petition to list this species.

Sharon Loop Crossing – Additional information was provided by IDEQ and circulated to the ECC prior to this meeting (North Canyon Creek – Sharon Culvert Fish Passage Assessment (dated 4/10/09)). Mladenka said it appeared this structure was not a barrier to fish. Colyer and Teuscher agreed.

Stenberg asked for approval of projects recommended by the subcommittee (to blue in the table, above), holding the Anderson 8-Mile and ANS Survey projects pending further discussion. Consensus reached.

Mink Creek (Stuart/Christensen) Project

Project proponents Lyla Dettmer, Soil and Water Conservation District, and Phil Christensen, private landowner, were introduced to the ECC. Stenberg showed a map of the area. Dettmer noted that an adjacent landowner in Dry Creek may also be interested. Stenberg noted that this would be the first easement held by the Soil and Water Conservation District. He also noted in the interest of disclosure that Dettmer and Christensen are brother and sister. Davies asked who would be responsible for monitoring the easement. Dettmer said she or possibly a contractor would be responsible. She noted that there are two different landowners for the property but it is within the same family. Stenberg explained that the ECC has historically been more interested in purchasing conservation easements on riparian areas than on large tracts of upland ranchlands. Mladenka asked about terms. Dettmer said terms would include no development but allow agricultural practices to continue. Christensen said he is not trying to get rich, he just wants to keep his family's land together as a ranching operation, not split up for development.

Stenberg said he would put together an informational package for ECC members, including maps, and distribute it via email for their review. He proposed seeking consensus via email and will inform the applicant in approximately 3 weeks (~May 6). Dettmer said she will need a letter of intent from the ECC in order to proceed with a supplemental funding source.

Conservation Action Planning – Joan DeGeorgio, The Nature Conservancy

DeGeorgio gave a Powerpoint presentation to the ECC on The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process. She noted that it is a science-driven planning process being used worldwide. DeGeorgio discussed other groups that TNC is currently working with and the areas where they are working. She said TNC has teams in place on the upper and lower Bear and would like to form a central team for Idaho. She asked whether TNC and the ECC could work together, with the ECC providing a venue, where so many are already participating on ECC meeting days.

Davies said she believed this would be valuable, as the ECC is the most active group on the central Bear. It would also be valuable to know what those on the upper and lower Bear are doing. Colyer said it would be valuable to have more groups participating on proposals, etc. DeGeorgio said TNC could provide planning framework and ideas for working with others.

DeGeorgio volunteered to facilitate an afternoon meeting to set up planning tables for the middle section of the Bear in conjunction with the June 17 ECC meeting. She noted that this would catch the middle Bear group up with groups working on the upper and lower Bear. ECC members agreed to take part.

The regular June 17 ECC meeting will take place from 9 a.m. to noon. CAP planning will follow from 1 to 4:30 p.m. DeGeorgio will work with Stenberg to send out an advance prior to the meeting.

Trout Creek/Whiskey Creek

Field trip was cancelled due to inclement weather. Stenberg showed photos of the project area via overhead.

Properties on Streams of Interest to the ECC

Brimmer noted that a key property had been sold recently, and that the ECC had no idea it had been available. He suggested putting a realtor on retainer, providing them with information on what the ECC would be interested in. Mladenka suggested speaking with Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust (SSLT). Stenberg will speak with Matkins.

ECC members discussed a property of interest just north of the Utah border, where land is selling for approximately \$2,000/acre. SSLT is in talks with the landowner.

ANS Survey

ECC members returned to discussion of the ANS Survey proposal. Some stated they were not sure the survey was a fit with the habitat enhancement program. Stenberg asked for a show of hands of those who supported ranking the proposal. No hands were raised. ECC members agreed by consensus not to rank the proposal.

Kackley Springs

A field review of Kackley Springs reroute project for interested ECC members took place after the regular ECC meeting.

Next ECC Meeting and Agenda

Next ECC meeting will take place June 17 at PacifiCorp's Grace Administration Building.