

Bear River Environmental Coordination Committee
Final Meeting Notes
June 17, 2009
Grace, Idaho

ECC Members Present

Mark Stenberg, Environmental Coordinator, PacifiCorp
 Warren Colyer, Trout Unlimited
 Katie Strong, Greater Yellowstone Coalition
 Greg Mladenka, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
 Mary Lucachick, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, participating by telephone

Others Present

Tom Lucia, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
 Deb Mignogno, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
 Joselin Matkins, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
 Miriam Hugentobler, Project Coordinator

Commitments Made at the June 17, 2009 Meeting	
Lucia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain accurate description for the location of the Christensen property in Fairview. Forward to Stenberg for distribution to ECC.
Colyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send letter explaining need for repairs to Ovid to Stenberg. Include photos.
Mladenka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route draft ECC policy regarding streambank stabilization (sedimentation) projects for project applicants to ECC members for comment.
Stenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact project proponent for the Black Canyon clean-up project in regard to funding. • Obtain updates on the Oregon Trail Road and Keetch projects. • Send long form and map of Alexander riparian planting project to the ECC for consideration • Coordinate with ECC regarding Ovid repair funding. • Draft a response to Mink Creek project proponents. Circulate to ECC members for comment. • Follow up on the Anderson 8-mile proposal – speak with Larry Mikkleson. • Contact proponent for Bailey Creek fencing project about project material purchase. • Circulate 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 in fall 2009.
Action items in blue have been carried over from previous ECC meetings.	

Consensus Decisions Made via Email Since Last ECC Meeting

Granted approval to Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to proceed with preparing a draft purchase agreement with Laurie Harris for a conservation easement on the Harris property between Gentile Valley Road and the Bear River. Approved an expenditure from the Land and Water Acquisition Fund for an appraisal of the property.

Decisions Made at This Meeting

Granted approval to Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to proceed with preparing a draft purchase agreement for the Wilde property. Authorized funding for an appraisal.

Review of Agenda

A discussion of repairs needed to Ovid fish screen was added to the day's agenda.

Review of Notes and Action Items

Notes from the previous ECC meeting were approved without changes. Action items carried over appear in blue in today's action item list.

Project Updates

Stenberg reviewed the status of ongoing habitat improvement projects with the ECC. The Harris project has now been completed, below estimated cost. Stenberg said the ECC may discuss NRCS funding of such projects with Davies at a future time. The Clegg Trout Creek project is complete. The Mathews project has been half funded. An update is needed on the Oregon Trail Road project. Colyer said survey work is done on the Cub River project, work on the design is now underway with plans to build in the fall. The screen tender project has been funded and is going well. Colyer said the Panter, Ames and Harris project has been cancelled. Stauffer has been half funded. The Black Canyon clean-up project has not yet been funded, although the project is complete. Stenberg will contact the proponent. Planning for the Kackley Springs project is underway. Stenberg said the area was checked for grades with Mladenka last week, and he has obtained two bids for the work. Stenberg reviewed the scope of work for Kackley Springs with ECC members. Colyer said the Upper Cub River project has been surveyed and planning is underway. The Aquatic Nuisance Species Signage project is complete. An update on the Keetch project is still needed.

Ovid Fish Screen Repairs – Colyer

Colyer discussed the need for repairs to the Ovid fish screen. He said a design fix has been drafted, which would insert a drum driven by a paddle wheel. He estimated that two days of backhoe and earthwork would be needed, at an estimated cost of \$11,000. Colyer said the work would need to be done at a time that does not interfere with canal operations. He said he had planned to ask NRCS for half, but they may not be able to provide funding. Stenberg asked Colyer to send him a letter including an explanation of what is needed and photos.

Stenberg brought up another project that may be of interest to the ECC: shrub planting at Alexander Reservoir. He said the project would include the planting of approximately 7000 shrubs, with Monstanto

providing labor. They are looking for matching funds, and Stenberg asked if the ECC would be interested in participating. FWS Partners Program is funding \$10k and Monsanto \$5k. He will send a long form and map to ECC members via email for consideration.

Boater Flows

Stenberg noted that he distributed results of recent boater flows to ECC members prior to the meeting and asked for any comments. A discussion of scheduled versus inflow dependent flows followed. Stenberg said PacifiCorp is hoping to move in-flow dependent releases to scheduled flows. He said that boater numbers have been low during inflow dependent flows, but higher on scheduled days. He said so far it looks like water quality limits are exceeded every time but noted that PacifiCorp and IDEQ are still in the process of collecting data and studying the issue. Stenberg said so far the story is simple, boaters are not showing up for inflow dependent releases. Mladenka noted that exemptions can be granted for short-term impacts that may ultimately be beneficial, like high (flushing) flows. Colyer expressed concern over water quality exceedences. Stenberg said he is not taking a position – his interest is in complying with license and the law. Stenberg said the study will be completed in 2011, and he is looking forward to further discussion.

Current Land Trust Activities – with Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust

In regard to the Mink Creek proposal that is under consideration by the ECC, Stenberg said Dettmer had notified him of additional landowners who are interested in participating – this would make the easement contiguous. He showed ECC members the location on a map via overhead. Stenberg noted that he circulated a packet of information on the proposal after the last ECC meeting, as requested, and asked for comments. He noted that Teuscher responded via an email cc'ed to ECC, which indicated that he is not as interested in large expanses of uplands. Strong noted that the purpose of the easement is to preclude housing, but the area would still be subject to livestock grazing. Lucia raised concerns over land stewardship, and said he believed the easement agreement would need to include strong accountability measures. Colyer said that the family issue concerned him, i.e., agency personnel who would hold the easement and landowner are brother and sister. Stenberg agreed that this was probably not ideal. Mladenka asked that since they are proposing no development as their goal for the conservation easement, would monitoring then be to drive up, see that nothing is being developed, and assume that all is well? Colyer said he believed riparian protection measures needed to be included in the terms of the easement. He suggested that the ECC reply to the proponents, stating its goals and saying we would need to see a plan for protection of riparian areas. Based on the day's discussion, Stenberg will draft a letter of response and circulate it to ECC members for comment. Based on today's discussion he will also request that the ECC would want Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to hold the easement.

A discussion was held regarding potential projects by Sagebrush Steppe. Project applications were reviewed for the Christensen property in Fairview and the Wilde property in Birch Creek.

Proposal: Grant approval for Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to move forward in preparing a draft purchase agreement for the Wilde property. Authorize funding for an appraisal. Consensus was reached.

Next ECC meeting

Next ECC meeting will be held September 16 at PacifiCorp's Grace Administration Building and will include a field review of the completed Kackley Springs project.

Adjourn

The regular ECC meeting adjourned to a Conservation Action Planning session with representatives from The Nature Conservancy.