

**Bear River ECC  
Final Meeting Notes  
August 21, 2019  
Pocatello, ID**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
x	Mark Stenberg	PacifiCorp
x	Lynn Van Every	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
	Jim DeRito	Trout Unlimited
	Corey Lyman	U.S. Forest Service
x	Cary Myler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
x	Carson Watkins	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
x	Allison Michalski (by phone)	Greater Yellowstone Coalition
x	Ryan Beatty (Lyman's Proxy 8-21-2019)	Bureau of Land Management
	Charlie Vincent	American Whitewater
	Hunter Osborne	Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
	Kirk Rich	Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
	Susan Rosebrough	National Park Service
	Kevin Lewis	Idaho Rivers United

<b>Others Participating</b>		
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
x	Eve Davies (by phone)	PacifiCorp
x	Ryan Hillyard	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
x	Matt Lucia	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
	Tom Lucia	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
x	Greg Mladenka	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
	Steven Smith	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
x	Kelly Conde	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
	Sophie Nosworthy	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
x	Eric Duffin (for Soda Spin discussion)	Cirrus
x	Justin Barker (for Soda Spin discussion)	RedFish

<b>Commitments Made during the August 2019 Meeting</b>	
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The October 16 ECC meeting has been converted to a site visit to subject properties on Mink Creek, next regular ECC meeting will be held December 4, 2019.</li> <li>Small group (organized by SSLT) will meet October 14, 9 am–noon, to remove the smaller pieces of wood left from the Russian olive removal project at Kackley Springs.</li> <li>A site visit to Kackley Springs to plan fall plantings (upper area first) will take place October 25. Plantings to take place in November.</li> <li>A field trip to Steve's Creek and Bear Creek will be held October 30. Group will spot-shock and evaluate flows and fish habitat in Bear Creek and will further explore BLM property upstream.</li> </ul>
Stenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Obtain cost estimate for Mink Creek water right analysis.</a></li> <li><a href="#">Provide ECC with an update on adjudication of the Bear River.</a></li> <li><a href="#">Amendment to conservation hatchery agreement regarding IDFG and broodstock ponds.</a></li> <li>Revisit screen repair set-aside with IDFG.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send sample invoices for habitat enhancement projects to Hillyard.</li> <li>• Check PacifiCorp LiDar data for Kackley.</li> <li>• Address weed concerns at Bonneville cutthroat trout (BCT) broodstock ponds as needed.</li> <li>• Share Biota’s proposal for Bear Creek with the ECC.</li> </ul>
Lucia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provide information on water rights encumbered on SSLT’s Mink Creek projects.</a></li> <li>• Proceed with plantings at Kackley Springs this fall, after ECC planning visit is complete.</li> <li>• Narrow list of potential conservation easements and complete desktop studies by September.</li> <li>• Coordinate October 16 Mink Creek site visits, as needed.</li> <li>• Review projects with ECC at December 4 meeting. A vote will be called for conditional approval of the projects.</li> <li>• Submit selected projects to NRCS in February.</li> </ul>
Cirrus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor edits to final Soda Spin land use report.</li> <li>• Q&amp;A on the Soda Spin reports at next regular ECC meeting</li> </ul>
Watkins, Hillyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provide information on fish populations and distribution in Mink Creek. Summarize Twin Lakes data. Consider future sampling.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Document repairs to fish screens funded by the ECC in the annual conservation hatchery report (yearly--going forward).</a></li> <li>• Contact Chris Banks to discuss the possibility of a larger project with additional landowners on Steve’s Creek and coordinate site visits.</li> <li>• Conduct redd counts at Kackley Springs next year.</li> </ul>
Myler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check on possibility of USFWS drone flight of Kackley.</li> </ul>
Lyman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Update interested ECC members, as needed, on Bartschi/Stauffer Creek project.</a></li> <li>• Share Paris Creek proposal with ECC members.</li> </ul>
Action items in <a href="#">blue</a> have been carried over.	

### Decisions Made by Email Vote Since Last Meeting

None

### Decisions Made at This Meeting

- Approved draft notes from the May ECC meeting.
- Approved expenditures from the habitat enhancement project fund for the following projects at Kackley Springs:
  - \$5,600 (plus mobilization) for reshaping the weir at the BCT broodstock ponds
  - \$6,600 for placement of gravel and fence repair at the BCT broodstock ponds
  - \$10,000 for demolition of the upper Kackley Ponds
- Approved \$19,468.90 in habitat enhancement funding for the Mink Creek Hwy 36 culvert project.
- Approved the Larsen fee title acquisition, as revised to reduce the acreage to 28 acres.

### Agenda Review

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

- Update on the Fox conservation easement
- Kackley extension project

## **Updates**

Mladenka said he ran into a graduate student working on BCT in the Bear Lake area. IDFG confirmed they have a graduate student from University of Idaho working on BCT in this area. Stenberg asked about the different forms of BCT (Bear River and Bear Lake BCT). Watkins said the difference is only how they carry out their life cycle.

**Bartchi** – Stenberg said costs for this project are currently being scoped. He said he expects to see more information on this project in the fall.

### **Open Habitat Enhancement Projects**

**Mussler** – Fencing and troughs have been worked on. Rock work and plantings were also funded but have not yet been completed.

**Cove Genetics** – Funding for this project has been disbursed.

**Cove Streambank** – Lucia will provide an update later.

**Eightmile** – Footings for this project are going in today. However, Bear Lake County has said the ECC funding was not needed to complete the project and they plan to return it.

**Screen Tender** – Funding for this project has not yet been disbursed.

**Station Creek** – Bouwes has invoiced for about half the project award so far and reported that a beaver already found the lowest beaver dam analog, did some work there, and left. Beatty asked about the status of the statewide BRAT model. Watkins said he thinks it's inhouse now.

**Screen Repair Set Aside** – Stenberg said an invoice from IDFG is needed to disburse the screen repair set-aside funds, set this year at \$5,000 annually. Hillyard said IDFG averages \$8,000 a year on repairs. Stenberg said the set aside amount can be revisited and larger repairs can also be submitted as projects.

**Fund Balance Review** – Stenberg reviewed balances in the habitat enhancement fund.

\$412,233 – Current Balance

\$91,000 – Obligated Funds

\$321,233 – Unobligated Funds

### **Kackley Springs Restoration – Matt Lucia, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust**

Lucia showed drone footage of the project, including the Russian olive removal carried out earlier this summer. He said the company had done a good job except they had agreed on a certain length for the logs to be left in the area and the logs were cut shorter. Lucia said removal of the trees has allowed better access to the stream by anglers. Stenberg said 259 trees were removed. Lucia said some were up to 4 feet in diameter. Stenberg said it is expected that the stumps in the water will sprout. He will have staff target those for ongoing treatment. Beatty said the removal will affect shading of the stream and replanting will be important. Lucia said he sees this as a great opportunity to improve this area. He said volunteers could be used to sort and move logs and replant. Stenberg said he would mark the longer, useful logs to help sort. Beatty suggested moving the shorter ones to the road, perhaps. Beatty said in talking with Lyman, he believes the group should consider a more strategic engineering phase to achieve

increased spawning habitat if the support is there, while focusing on less expensive work this season, such as planting or large woody debris placement. Myler will check on the possibility of drone flights of the area by USFWS.

### **Cove Broodstock Pond Repairs – Stenberg**

Stenberg reviewed estimates for work needed at the Cove broodstock ponds. Changes needed to the ponds include modifications to weirs, installation of walkways for workers, and measures to help control algae buildup. IDFG stated they can build and provide new grates for the outflow structures. Watkins requested a visit to the ponds with their craftsman. Stenberg will work on providing walkways and discussed proposed materials.

Stenberg reviewed a bid from Whitaker to modify the weirs. Stenberg asked for ECC approval of Whitaker's line item 7 from their proposal to repair the weirs. Line item cost is \$5,600 + mobilization. Approval was unanimous.

Stenberg also asked for approval of \$6,600 for placement of gravel and repair of a hole in the fence. Approval was unanimous.

Hillyard said a co-worker had recently been down to tour the ponds and noted a weed problem. Stenberg will pass the information along to Westerberg.

### **Steve's Creek – Hillyard**

Hillyard said IDFG recently sampled above and below the pond on this property and found BCT in both areas. He said it's very good habitat—the project is in the Thatcher reach and has one of the only naturally occurring populations of BCT in the area. Hillyard said the fish sampled appeared to be pure BCT but he will have genetics checked. He noted a straightened channel below the pond where the landowner takes irrigation water. He said the project still needs to be scoped and could include channel work. The current estimate is around \$40,000 for the design portion of the project, which does not include channel work. Myler said he has some modular fish screens available that could be used on this project. Stenberg said Chris Banks is talking to three additional property owners below this project. He suggested an early fall site visit, possibly including Banks and additional landowners with the goal of working towards a larger project. ECC members discussed helping the landowner with short-term fixes to the pond to help save money to enable more beneficial changes to the stream channel. There is currently a gravity-fed irrigation initiative underway, which could possibly be a source of additional funding. Van Every checked the water right for Steve's Creek. It is 1.6 cfs at the point of diversion above the pond.

### **Fish Trap Repair - Stenberg**

Stenberg noted that high water this year had caused some damage to the fish trap. PacifiCorp will pay to repair this damage. He reviewed details of the proposed repair by KCA with the ECC. Cobble was proposed; Mladenka recommended angular rock be used instead. Total cost was estimated at \$11,360.

### **Kackley Ponds - Stenberg**

Stenberg discussed the recent damage to Kackley ponds by muskrat. He reviewed an estimate (also by KCA) to repair the ponds. Cost for this work would be \$14,300. Stenberg reviewed the details with the

ECC. The alternative would be to demolish the ponds, which would cost \$4,800. Watkins asked about the value of the ponds. Stenberg said bald eagle were currently feeding there. They are also used by the public for fishing. Stenberg said there are actually two ponds, but both are shallow. Myler said the ponds should function well if they are repaired. Stenberg said right now they are about a foot deep. Hillyard said \$4,800 sounded low and suggested the amount be amended to \$10,000 as a contingency.

Stenberg asked how the ECC would like to proceed. ECC members unanimously agreed to demolish the ponds. Stenberg will consult with the Corps of Engineers on any permitting required.

### **Bear River Soda Spin Studies - Duffin, Barker**

Copies of the land use and water reports were distributed to ECC members by email prior to the meeting. A review will take place at today's meeting. A question and answer session will take place at the October ECC meeting.

### **Land Use – Duffin**

A copy of the final report was displayed, including land use assessment maps. There are 454 acres of inundation areas, affecting 31 landowners. No structures are within the inundation area, although some irrigation structures were noted. The study included a bank stability survey. Cover types and pollutions potential were also mapped. The ECC discussed revising the category 'bare ground and potential grazing,' as it makes conditions sound worse than actual conditions. Cirrus will revise this category before the report is distributed.

### **Water Temperature – Barker**

A copy of the final report was displayed, including temperature logger data over time and with Soda spin experimental flow. Barker reviewed result with the ECC. A question and answer session will take place in October.

### **Kackley (continued)**

Stenberg asked if ECC members would consider a site visit to Kackley Springs in fall to plan plantings. Hillyard, M. Lucia, Watkins, Myler, Stenberg, Davies, and Van Every expressed interest and requested notification. The group discussed conditions and vision, i.e., would a more ambitious project be appropriate? Hillyard said to consider the function, which is fish production. Currently IDFG overstocks the area and very few fish (on the order of 30) return. He said the area could benefit from additional cover. Watkins suggested a redd count to see whether the area is reaching its full potential. Stenberg said there is money in the budget for planting that needs to be spent this year, as well as some nursery stock.

### **Next Steps**

- Stenberg will check PacifiCorp's LiDar data.
- Myler will check on the possibility of a drone flight by Fish and Wildlife Service.
- A small group will work on a planting plan on site.
- Stenberg will proceed with pond demo.
- IDFG will conduct redd counts next year
- Planting will take place this fall.

- Pick up wood left from Russian olive removal – the small pieces only.

### **New Habitat Enhancement Projects**

Project sponsors reviewed proposals for two new habitat enhancement projects with the ECC.

#### **Bear Creek – Myler, ECC Sponsor**

This project is to produce a comprehensive conceptual design report that presents objectives, methods, alternatives, preferred conceptual design details, and a cost estimate for project advancement through implementation. Amount requested is \$39,963. Total project cost is \$49,963. A copy of the project application is included in Attachment 1.

Myler said the pros include that the area has good potential, the landowners owns most of the water rights, and they have a good conservation ethic. But, Mladenka said, it's a small system and a small amount of water--at the time of the field visit, flows were less than 0.5 cfs. Myler said he thinks some retention is needed up high, like a beaver dam.

Stenberg asked how the ECC would like to proceed. ECC members decided to hold for completion of next steps, including:

- Site visit for BLM – Check the length of the creek, distance to adjacent BLM land, and recon below the property.
- Scope to Fellows
- Spot shock, check flows, habitat, and fish (Van Every, Myler, and Beatty)

Stenberg reviewed Biota's bid for this work, which was \$39,963, not including topo. This could possibly be flown with a drone. Will hold until further scoping (next steps) is complete.

Stenberg said he would share Biota's proposal with ECC members, gather more information, and consider the project during next year's grant fund cycle.

#### **Mink Creek Hwy 36 – Stenberg**

##### **ECC Sponsor: Lyman**

This project is to design crossing and stream channel improvements at a perched culvert crossing at the Highway 36 crossing of Mink Creek. The ECC toured the location during the June site visits. The purpose of the project is to improve fish passage. Biota's estimate for this work \$17,699. Total request for the project is \$19,468.90

Stenberg asked for ECC approval of the project. Approval by the ECC was unanimous.

### **October Agenda**

Next meeting takes place September 18, 2019<sup>1</sup>

- Land Trust Conservation Easement Priorities for NRCS funding applications – 2 hours

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<sup>1</sup> Revised – October 16, 2019 meeting converted to field visits to subject properties