

**Bear River ECC  
Final Meeting Notes  
March 15, 2023  
Pocatello, Idaho**

<b>ECC Meeting Participants</b>		
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
x	Mark Stenberg	PacifiCorp
x	Jennifer Cornell	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
x	Jim DeRito	Trout Unlimited
x	Lee Mabey	U.S. Forest Service
x	Matt Bringham	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
x	Patrick Kennedy	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
	Allison Michalski	Greater Yellowstone Coalition
	Drew Retherford	Bureau of Land Management
x	Charlie Vincent	American Whitewater
	Hunter Osborne	Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
	Andy Stokes	Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
	Dan Miller	National Park Service
	Nic Nelson	Idaho Rivers United
<b>Others Present</b>		
x	Steven Smith	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
x	Ryan Hillyard	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
x	Becky Johnson	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
x	Eve Davies	PacifiCorp
	Matt Lucia	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
x	Matt Schenk	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
x	Matt Coombs	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
x	Jeremy Jirak	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
x	Jaime Campbell	Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust

<b>Commitments Made at the March 15, 2023, Meeting</b>	
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant applications (long forms) for 2023 habitat enhancement projects are due by April 7.</li> <li>Funding subcommittee meets April 19 to rank projects.</li> </ul>
Stenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post Soda Spin studies to the Bear River website.</li> <li>Distribute BOR funding information to the ECC.</li> <li>Call email vote to approve \$900 in funding for Jensen Deed Correction.</li> <li>Send Station Creek project scoping reports out for ECC review. Allow two weeks for comments.</li> <li><a href="#">Check status of 2022 fish screen repair and screen tender invoice/payment.</a></li> <li><a href="#">Coordinate with Lyman to visit Kackley.</a></li> </ul>
Stenberg & Hillyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rescope Elkhorn and Stauffer projects prior to 2023 grant cycle.</li> </ul>
Hillyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check status on diversion projects invoices.</li> <li>Provide Mink Creek fisheries presentation for distribution to the ECC.</li> <li><a href="#">Coordinate any necessary rotenone treatment at Paris.</a></li> </ul>
DeRito	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with IDFG to get easement in place (template) for maintenance of the Paris diversion.</li> </ul>
Coombs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get an update on the Larsen Management Plan for the ECC.</li> <li><a href="#">Look into the cancelled Cottonwood Creek habitat enhancement project as a potential conservation easement.</a></li> </ul>
Lucia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Provide information on water rights associated with SSLT's Mink Creek projects.</a></li> </ul>
Action items in <a href="#">blue</a> have been carried over.	

## **Previous Meeting Notes and Action Items**

January meeting notes were approved by email vote. Action items carried over appear in blue in the table above.

## **Decisions Made by Email Since Last ECC Meeting**

- Approved an updated letter of support for Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust's RCPP Project ID# 2759 – Bear River Watershed Agriculture and Habitat Connectivity application.
- Withdrew designation of Fox as a conservation easement subject property.
- Approved January 2023 meeting notes.
- Reached consensus on the 2023 whitewater boater flow schedule.

## **Decisions Made at This Meeting**

None

## **Items Added to Agenda**

- Twin Lakes Canal Company - Mink Creek
- Soda Spin/BLIS
- Grant Opportunity – Steven Smith

## **ECC Calendar Review**

Applications (long forms) for 2023 habitat enhancement projects are due April 7, 2023. Ranking subcommittee members are Matt Schenk, Patrick Kennedy, Jim DeRito, Steven Smith, Corey Lyman, Drew Retherford, and Jeremy Jirak.

## **Whitewater Boater Flows**

Stenberg reported that repairs are continuing to units at Grace, and PacifiCorp will spill into Black Canyon during summer for two more years. This will result in additional 300 cfs or so in Black Canyon in summer.

## **Updates - ECC Fund Balances**

### **Habitat Enhancement Fund**

\$518,000 – Outstanding obligations

\$316,200 – Available for grants

## **Land and Water Fund**

\$2.5 million – Currently in fund

\$1.6 million – Available for grants

## **Current Habitat Enhancement Projects**

**Mussler** – This project was 75 percent complete by winter. The project proponent received an extension to complete the remainder of the work.

## **2022 Annual Report**

The 2022 Bear River Annual Report was filed as required prior to March 1 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and American Whitewater acknowledged review of the annual report. There were no requests for edits to the draft annual report.

## **Paris Decommissioning**

The Paris Decommissioning documents are currently routing for signatures at PacifiCorp and will be filed with FERC soon. An order and license amendment from FERC will be needed for decommissioning to proceed. While there is no set timeframe for that, decommissioning could potentially go forward next year. Work on the irrigation diversion will go forward in the meantime. The Army Corps of Engineers permit application has been submitted. Cultural is still needed for one piece of the project. Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) will need to survey before stream renovation can occur, so this will not happen in 2023.

## **Twin Lakes Canal Company**

Twin Lakes Canal Company (TLCC) currently has water rights applications in to pump water from the Bear River under certain situations. IDFG has found there are more brook trout in Mink Creek than previously thought. They would not like more water added to the system as this would benefit non-native fishes at this point and asked if the ECC would consider purchasing water rights to reduce the need for this. Stenberg suggested asking TLCC for a test flow this summer to see what 10 cfs would do. He estimated it would probably take closer to 28 cfs to see a difference.

## **Watershed Approach to Habitat Enhancement Projects**

Not much headway has been made on this discussion since it was raised in 2022. Steve's Creek has been suggested as a possible area of focus. Schenk suggested the Thomas Fork, as it's one of the largest tributaries. The biggest issue with this approach is finding willing landowners. Some ECC members stated they were reluctant to specify a focus area if that would result in valuable projects outside of a focus area being passed over.

## **Review of New Information in the BCT Restoration Plan – Hillyard**

**Stauffer Creek** – Bonneville cutthroat trout (BCT) populations are declining in Stauffer Creek. IDFG was hoping to use that stream as a source of genetics for Nounan but may have to rethink. It would be good to work towards increasing populations in Stauffer.

**Williams Creek** – Williams Creek is located in the Thatcher reach. IDFG would like to target this stream for improvements.

**Steve’s Creek** – IDFG is pausing on this location pending further discussion with the landowner.

The [BCT Plan](#) is available online. Hillyard suggested if reviewing the plan, start with actions and priorities.

## **2023 Habitat Enhancement Projects**

The ECC reviewed project proposals for 2023 habitat enhancement projects (Attachment 1).

**Cub River Fish Ladder** – Kennedy requested this project focus on the fish ladder. He said he is not sure IDFG would permit the other proposed activities. Trout Unlimited and IDFG will discuss this further next week. This project will likely be revised for long form.

**Fish Screen Tender** – Kennedy noted that many of the screens are getting older and are in need of repair. He said it may be time to re-evaluate the screens to see if they are affecting fish at a population level.

**Paris Aquatic Organism Passage Project** – Lyman said although this project needs a funding obligation this year, it won’t take place until next year and could potentially come out of next year’s budget.

**Reeder Ranch** – Stenberg said Site A is potentially of most interest to the ECC and asked if the proponent would still be interested if the ECC chose to fund one site rather than all three. Smith said probably. Stenberg noted that fencing is included for Site A only. He requested fencing be included on the map for the project application.

**Stauffer/Bartschi** – Lyman said the project has the potential to receive Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding this year. Hillyard suggested that Stauffer Creek would be a good priority reach. More willing landowners are needed in the center of the reach.

**Paris Diversion Project** – DeRito said estimates for this project are coming in higher as time goes on. This project may be funded partly with habitat enhancement funds, partly with land and water funds.

### **Potential New Funding Source - Smith**

The Bureau of Reclamation has announced a \$30 million program to restore and protect aquatic ecosystems across the U.S. Stenberg will forward information on this program to the ECC.

Davies said there's a PacifiCorp property at the confluence of Cub River and the Bear with a troublesome diversion. It may be good to consider removing it at some point.

### **Additions to Agenda**

Stenberg provided information on two PacifiCorp projects: BLIS and Soda Spin.

#### **BLIS – Bear Lake Increased Storage**

BLIS will require PacifiCorp to have an increased ability to move water through Gentile Valley. 2500 cfs is needed.

#### **Soda Spin – Reserve Power**

This is a new initiative to integrate variable power sources like wind and solar. It involves scheduled power delivery in blocks of time, so higher flows would occur in up to 5-hour blocks. These are the test flows Stenberg discussed previously. Landowner agreements are needed before these can happen, so they may not occur this year.

The ECC adjourned to closed session for Land and Water Fund Updates.

**Attachment 1 – 2023 Habitat Enhancement Project Proposal Summary**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; ECC Assignments</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>ECC Funding &amp; Overhead Requested</b>	<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>In-kind Match</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
Cub River Fish Passage and Assessment	<b>Applicant:</b> DeRito <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Hillyard <b>Funds Manager:</b> Lyman	Operate and assess the Cub River fish ladder and associated trout population.	\$38,891.00	N/A	\$26,569.00	\$65,460.00
Fish Screen Tender 2023	<b>Applicant:</b> Hillyard <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Stenberg <b>Funds Manager:</b> Kennedy	Operate and maintain all fish screens on irrigation diversions within the action area and a few outside of the action area.	\$48,839.00	N/A	\$8,000.00	\$56,839.00
Fish Screen Maintenance	<b>Applicant:</b> Hillyard <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Stenberg <b>Funds Manager:</b> Kennedy	Repair and maintain fish screens in the Bear River drainage. An additional \$10,056.00 is requested for specific repairs in 2023.	\$35,000.00	N/A	N/A	\$35,000.00
Paris Creek Aquatic Organism Passage	<b>Applicant:</b> Todd Boehme <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Lyman <b>Funds Manager:</b> Amy Bishop	Replace a culvert that inhibits fish passage on Paris Creek.	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$180,000.00
Reeder Ranch Stock Water	<b>Applicant:</b> Brett Reeder <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Steven Smith <b>Funds Manager:</b> Stenberg	Develop springs, install 3 watering troughs, a storage tank, and solar pumps. Install cattle exclusion fence.	\$15,000.00	\$42,000.00	\$13,000.00	\$70,000.00
Stauffer Creek Fish Passage, Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Imp., Phase III	<b>Applicant:</b> Lyman <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Stenberg <b>Funds Manager:</b> DeRito	Stream restoration, fencing, and stock water.	\$150,000.00	\$110,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$280,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$362,730.00</b>			<b>\$687,299.00</b>

Paris Creek Irrigation Diversion	<b>Applicant:</b> DeRito <b>ECC Sponsor:</b> Lyman <b>Funds Manager:</b> Stenberg	Rebuild Paris Creek irrigation diversion. Fence to exclude cattle. Document flows before and after decommissioning.	\$710,600.00	\$2,604,723.00	N/A	\$3,315,323.00
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