

**Flathead Basin Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**January 12, 2011**  
**10:00 am – 2:00 pm**  
**DNRC Office**  
**655 Timberwolf Parkway, Kalispell**

Members in attendance: Bob Sandman, Ed Heger, Chas Cartwright, Tom Smith, Jim Simpson, Jan Metzmaker, Jim Satterfield, Pam Holmquist, Susan Brueggeman, Dan Bangeman, Jason Gildea, C. Weber, C. Whitney (phone), Mike Durglo and DEQ representative.

Others in attendance: Kirby Campbell-Rierson, Virginia Sloan, Larry van Rinsum, Joel Tohtz

Action Item: Minutes from last meeting unanimously approved.

Discussion surrounding AIS related issues, including the following:

Status of the Lake Sample: DNA testing was inconclusive as the samples were not able to be adequately amplified. Diver testing was negative, but not necessarily conclusive. Discussed the need for new protocols to be employed during the 2011 field season for AIS testing, and Miske agreed that she would be working with the Flathead AIS workgroup to identify such protocols. Miske also explained that the work group will be working with the Flathead Lake Biological Station to obtain funds to expand an experimental DNA protocol. If successful, the new protocol would greater reduce cost and improve identification capabilities.

Status of FBC's AIS letter: Mark Reller drafted a letter on behalf of the FBC urging watershed groups and others to support more funding and mandatory boat inspection stations during the legislative session. Jim Simpson agreed that he would work with Reller to finalize the letter so that it can be sent out shortly.

Status of the pending AIS legislation: Miske explained that the bill draft was not yet out of the legislative council. However, she noted that the primary components of the legislation, including the statutory requirement related to mandatory boat check stations remains in the bill. She also explained that funding mechanisms, such as a boat fee, were still being considered, but were not necessarily a given. Members debated whether the FBC should support the specific legislation, or if the FBC should refrain from such a position, and instead rely upon the generic letter urging greater support of AIS program(s) at the state level. Members were unable to resolve the issue, and it was determined that this would be discussed at the facilitated meeting on 2/10/11.

Status of future programmatic funding for AIS at the State level: Miske explained that several pockets of funding currently were planned: the \$343,000 annually remains in the Governor's budget, and FWP has base funding and federal dollars to support their existing AIS program (under \$200,000). In addition to support from Verdell Jackson and Janna Taylor, several legislators had stepped up on their own accord, and had also requested that FWP increase AIS funding, and as a result, an addition \$100,000 annually is currently slated for AIS work beginning in the summer of 2011. However, Miske explained that it was still very early in the session and current funds could disappear or more funds could be found to support the AIS work.

FBC's role in current and future AIS work: Members discussed the FBC's current and future role in AIS work, including the AIS legislation, the proposal to hire an AIS consultant for one year (depending on funding availability) and the possible need for a Cooperative Agreement. While some members asked what the appropriate role was for the FBC in regard to AIS, others expressed the opinion that the FBC needed to do more not less. Members were unable to resolve the issue, and it was determined that this would be discussed at the facilitated meeting on 2/10/11.

Overview of FWP and Dept. of Agriculture AIS plan for the 2011 field season: Ed Heger, Chas Cartwright and Caryn Miske reviewed the meeting that was held with FWP and the Dept of Agriculture in December. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of Flathead Lake in view of the suspect status of the Lake, and plans for the 2011 field season. At this meeting, all parties agreed that an Action Plan was needed quickly to ensure that a program is in place at the start of the field season (April 2011), and that funds are spent more efficiently and effectively. FWP and the Dept. of Agriculture agreed to provide a draft work plan by mid-January for the FBC and the Flathead AIS work group to review. In order to facilitate this dialogue and planning, Miske agreed that the Flathead AIS work group would provide feedback to both Departments by the end of December to inform their work product. Joel Tohtz and Jim Satterfield explained that the timeline had to be slightly adjusted, and the draft plan from FWP would not be available until the end of January. Miske stated that she would disseminate the plan with the FBC members upon receipt.

Action Item: members unanimously agreed that a facilitated emergency meeting should be held on February 10, 2011 to further discuss the items noted above. Chip Weber from the USFS agreed to provide his meeting facilitator free-of-charge to assist with this meeting.

Recognition of Service presented to Joe Brenneman.

Report from the Executive Director – C. Miske

*Budget:* No change, but Miske speculated that future budget cuts were a likely possibility.

*Website:* Website is now functional, and updating was now required.

*Water Quality District:* The planning for this effort has slowed, but the Flathead and Lake County Commissioners will be meeting within the next month or so to discuss next steps. Depending upon the results of this conversation, the County Commissioners will also be meeting with Conservation Districts and CSKT.

*Biennial report:* Disseminated to members.

*Volunteer Monitoring Program (VMP):* A full-time VMP coordinator was hired, and the new Coordinator will be starting in February or March 2011. Costs for the position will be split three ways by FWP, FBC and the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI). The position will be housed out of WLI.

*Grants:* Miske pointed out that as many of our grants draw to a close, the FBC will need to focus on identifying and obtaining new funding. This is a topic that will need more attention at a future meeting(s).

*Transboundary:* Based upon feedback from the Governor's Office and others, the process continues to move forward. Although a date for completing the federal-state-provincial dialogue

has not been made public, it appears that the parties would like to complete negotiations within the next few months if possible. In addition, Federal efforts to retire the existing oil and gas leases in the North Fork continue. To date, much progress has been made with no cost to taxpayers.

*AIS:* Miske explained that she was preparing an AIS White Paper for the Congressional staffers, and would continue to work with the delegation on funding at the federal level. She also reported on the continued effort to bring the hydro interests to the table in order to build partnerships both on the ground and at the state level. Lastly, she said that the Flathead AIS workgroup would be meeting in February to review the State plan for the 2011 field season, and to develop a plan at the local level to fill in gaps (based on funding availability).

*TMDL update:* Jason Gildea reported that the TMDL process is progressing, and technical reports continue to be produced. He also noted that legislation was pending that would allow DEQ to have more flexibility in prioritizing TMDL work across the State.

*No Wake Zones:* Jim Satterfield discussed the proposed no wake zones in the Flathead. Satterfield will provide additional information for review by the FBC.

*Voting Procedures:* Susan Brueggeman discussed the possibility allowing voting by proxy. Members debated the issue, and some felt that the issue had already been aired at a previous meeting. However, given the language in the FBC's enabling legislation, it appears that all members other than the non-citizen members (who are appointed directly by the Governor) may be permitted to vote by proxy, IF proxies were appointed by those identified in statute, rather than by individual FBC members at their own discretion. Therefore, it was agreed that Miske would seek a legal opinion on this issue, and report back at the next FBC meeting.

*Crown of the Continent Roundtable:* presentation by Shawn Johnson was canceled and will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned.