

Flathead Basin Commission Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2012

DNRC, 655 Timberwolf Parkway, Kalispell

Quorum present. Members in attendance: C. Cartwright, T. Smith, J. Metzmaker, J. Simpson, D. Bangeman, J. Dalsoglio, G. Mathieus, J. Potter, K. Hunt, J. Brown, C. Folden (on behalf of R. Janssen), Susan Brueggeman and Steve Frye.

Others in attendance: C. Miske, E. Sexton, V. Sloan, J. Johnson, B. Baum, Verdell Jackson, Tom Cox, Patti Mason, Richard Hanners, and others.

Action Item: Draft minutes from November 2011 meeting unanimously approved.

Action item: Draft amendments to By-Laws unanimously approved with minor revisions.

Action Item: M. Reller nominated to fill vacant Executive Committee seat unanimously approved, pending final approval from BPA.

FBC Action Plan: Members discussed draft Action Plan and various opinions were expressed as to how to best proceed. Simpson expressed the concern that the Plan was unwieldy, not reflective of the mandated goals and was too ambitious given current capacity. Mathieus offered the suggestion that we keep the Plan broad to accommodate future needs, but prioritize to reflect current capacity. Smith suggested that an estimate of hours also be provided so that we can compare capacity to work load. C. Cartwright suggested that a committee be formed to refine the Action Plan. Members unanimously approved the formation of said committee, consisting of: Jim Simpson, Susan Brueggeman and Jasmine Courville-Brown. Members were to review the Action Plan and get comments back to the committee by the end of February. The committee would then rework the Action Plan for discussion at the April meeting.

FBC Updates: C. Miske reported on funding/grants issues, including the FBC base budget request to DNRC, the volunteer monitoring program, the AIS consultant, and the FBC website, as well as upcoming Crown Managers Partnership Forum.

G. Mathieus stated that DEQ might be able to provide technical assistance on the Biennial Report, and that he would report back to the members regarding this possibility at the next meeting.

Transboundary/Crown Update: C. Miske, E. Sexton and C. Cartwright reported on efforts to move the BC-MT MOU implementation plan forward under the auspices of the GNLCC.

Monitoring Committee Update: Erin Sexton and George Mathieus reported on the status of the plan to update the FBC surface water quality monitoring plan in order to better reflect current economic constraints. The plan would also be expanded to include a section on groundwater resources, and AIS monitoring. Mathieus also discussed DEQ's nutrient reduction strategies, including but not limited to the phosphorus ban, nutrient trading, the Stoltz Lumber project and TMDL efforts.

Groundwater Phase II Presentation: Bonnie Ellis from the Flathead Lake Biological Station presented on the findings of the Phase II groundwater study commissioned by the FBC. Ellis discussed contaminants found in the shallow aquifer and in storm water samples including VOCs, SVOCs, PBCs, coliform and pharmaceuticals and personal care products. The report will be posted on the FBC's website.

AIS updates:

Craig McLane, from the Department of Agriculture discussed the Department's survey work during the 2011 field season, and the plans for the upcoming field season which includes continued management of 3 mandatory inspections stations in Sanders County as per the EWM Management Area for Noxon (at Plains, Libby and the intersection of 200 & 56), and the continued efforts on the Missouri.

Linnaea Schrooer presented boat inspection data and summarized the efforts during the 2011 field season. Questions were raised about the possibility of filling the R1/R2 AIS Coordinator position, and C. Miske and Schrooer both indicated that BPA funds would not be forthcoming. Miske asked if the FWP .5 FTE would still be available, but Schrooer was not certain if the FTE would be made available.

Questions were also raised about the management of the Ronan and Clearwater inspection stations and the Schrooer responded that management would still come primarily from the Helena office, which concerned some of the FBC members. Schrooer informed members that the job announcement for the boat inspectors would be forthcoming, and that FWP hoped to increase the odds of finding contract workers in Eastern Montana by increasing the rate of pay to \$13.00 per hour. Schrooer reported that FWP hoped to hire inspectors in March and have the stations operational by May.

When asked about protocols, Schrooer stated that boat inspection and law enforcement protocols would be forthcoming.

Miske asked Schrooer about the status of the DMT notification procedure for intercepting/tracking high risk boats, and the importance of establishing such a system given that fouled boats had already crossed state lines. Schrooer explained that FWP had met with MDT and efforts were underway. However, Schrooer was unable to estimate when the notification system would be in place.

Schrooer also presented a recommendation generated from a Helena AIS Stakeholders meeting organized by FWP which included a reduction in roving AIS inspectors in exchange for greater coverage on the state borders and highways.

Resolution 1: FBC members unanimously approved the proposal from Linnaea Schrooer to prioritize the use of state AIS funds to establish seasonally permanent border and highway inspection stations, operating 12 hours per day, seven days a week at the following locations: Culbertson, Wibaux, Ronan, Lima and the Lodgegrass/Wyoming border area. The members also encouraged the agencies to “dig deep” to provide additional funding for inspection station coverage at the other major ports of entry into the state.

Greg Ames, from the Department of Agriculture discussed the issue of EWM in Beaver Lake and answered questions regarding the creation of a possible management area, which is unlikely at this time. FBC members expressed concerns about contamination of other water bodies, given the high probability that EWM has not been fully eradicated from Beaver Lake. C. Miske presented the recommendation from the Flathead AIS workgroup regarding the recommended closure of Beaver Lake.

Resolution 2: FBC members unanimously approved the recommendation from the Flathead AIS workgroup to close the Beaver Lake Boat Launch at the start of the growing season to prevent contamination of other water bodies.

Questions were raised about the Curly Leaf Pondweed infestation at Eagle Bend and the status of the treatment efforts. Miske explained that preliminary meetings were held, and a draft treatment plan was developed with key stakeholders. She noted that the Eagle Bend Marina was very cooperative and interested in getting this issue addressed, and that the Weed District, as lead agency, would now need to take the next steps in moving this effort forward.

Miske concluded the discussion by reporting that she was cautiously optimistic regarding the USFS funding to support the Clearwater Station, and that the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers was planning to operate a station at Eureka to protect Kooconusa, but that this station would also provide some protection for the Basin.

VMP update: Josh Gubits summarized the water chemistry and hydrolab data obtained from the Volunteer Monitoring Program during the 2011 season. A meeting with volunteers will be held this spring to review the data in more details, and members are encouraged to attend.

Public comments: Jan Metzmaker discussed the Burlington Northern efforts to remediate the plum in Whitefish, the recently completed Whitefish Septic Leachate Study and the benefits of the proposed floating island presentation.

Meeting adjourned.