Flathead Basin Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2013
Flathead Lake Biological Station

FBC members/staff in attendance: Chas Cartwright, Tom Smith, Jan Metzmaker, Kate Hunt, Jack Potter, Susan Brueggeman, Dean Sirucek, Melissa Brickl, Chip Weber, Jan Metzmaker, Jim Simpson, Mark Reller, and Caryn Miske.

FBC Administration -- Consensus items:

- Minutes from April 10, 2013 meeting unanimously approved.
- Highway 2 AIS inspection station in Coram – members unanimously approved the recommendation that the FBC continue to manage this seasonally permanent inspection station for the 2013 field season.
- Letter to Representative Daines thanking him for support of North Fork bill unanimously approved.
- Federal Lacy Act legislation – members unanimously approved providing support as needed for federal effort to amend AIS Act.
- September Field Trip – members unanimously approved recommendation to tour CFAC and 1-2 other sites currently undergoing remediation as part of the September 17, 2013 FBC meeting, with the understanding that the goal of the field trip would be to aid the FBC in its future efforts to improve water quality in the Basin.
- Lake trout EIS not yet released. Will continue discussion regarding this topic at the September FBC meeting.

Updates:

- AIS: Miske discussed the proposed revisions to the federal Lacey Act, and explained that letters of support may be requested to support amendments that would strengthen and improve the federal act. The FBC members agreed that such support from the FBC was warranted. Seasonally permanent AIS inspection stations in and adjacent to the Basin currently operational at: Ronan, Clearwater Junction, Coram, Eureka and sites to the west associated with the EWM management effort in Noxon. Aquatic Invasive Plant survey work and dredge work for Curlyleaf pondweed to commence in July.
- Columbia River Treaty: Dean Sirucek presented in the CRT public meeting he attended on May 16, 2013. The meeting focused on various alternatives related to flood control, power generation and ecological function. BPA and the Corps hope to select a preferred alternative to forward to the State Department by the end of 2013.
- Boat pump out regulations: C. Miske reported that she contacted George Mathieus at DEQ regarding that status of promulgation of regulations. Based on the contact provided by Mathieus, it is Miske's understanding the regulations are not being promulgated at this time. Miske will follow up again with DEQ to see if the FBC can be of assistance in developing draft regulations.
- FBC Budget: The FBC operating budget for fiscal years 2014/15 was further reduced. These reductions are making it increasing difficulty for the FBC to fulfill its mandate and commitments. For instance, in fiscal year 2013, the FBC contribution to the AIS consultant fund was drastically reduced. This is also causing the Executive Director to spend an increasing proportion of her time on fundraising and grant writing. It additional budget cuts ensue, alternative funding sources/structures should be considered by the FBC.

Public Comments: None

Flathead Lake Biological Station presentation with Bonnie Ellis, Jack Stanford, and Gordon Luikart

The FLBS briefed the FBC on some of its newest research efforts focusing on the recent installation of two new monitoring buoys.

The FLBS worked with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to develop the two buoys in Flathead Lake. These buoys provide a platform for a suite of instruments that allow continuous, automated measurements of water quality in the water column and meteorological conditions on the Lake. Conditions in the water column are measured by sensors on a device called a profiler that travels up and down a cable from the buoy to the bottom of the lake. The meterological sensors are mounted on the buoys. The buoys are located along the deep trench in the middle of the lake. One is deployed west of Yellow Bay and the other west of Woods Bay.

These monitoring systems were originally designed for use in the Arctic Ocean by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute but have been modified for use in Flathead and Crater Lakes. Data generated from the surface meteorological sensors is radio-telemetered back to FLBS while water quality information from the automated subsurface profiler is telemetered via satellite to Woods Hole and FLBS. All data will be available near real-time to the public via the FLBS website. The meteorological station measures and provides averages of wind speed, wind direction, barometric pressure, air temperature, solar radiation and humidity every 15 minutes. The subsurface automated profiler travels down through the water column at least 4 times per day. Sensors measure water temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, algal pigments, light, and dissolved organic matter every 25 centimeters as the profiler travels from the surface to the bottom. Video surveillance for security purposes is present on both buoys.

Information from the buoys gives boaters midlake weather conditions making it easier to plan open water travel. Fishermen may be particularly interested in temperature changes throughout the water column, allowing them to concentrate on fishing particular thermal regions. Federal, State, county and tribal agencies as well as local schools may benefit from the wide array of water quality information for Flathead Lake while data generated from these two sites will provide scientists at the Biological Station better resolution of changing conditions in lake water quality and surface meteorology. Funding for the buoy-tethered profilers was provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

After the presentation, FBC members visited one of the buoys via a boat trip hosted by the FLBS.

FBC Priorities for the Next 3 Years: Based on discussion with FBC members, it was agreed that at a minimum, the following priorities issues would be the focus of the FBC's efforts.

- AIS – continued needs in the basin related to inspection station funding and operation, invasive plant survey and treatment, Crown-based planning efforts, leadership for the Flathead AIS workgroup, legislative needs/long term funding sources, etc. would continue to be needed for the 3-year planning horizon.

- Transboundary – the FBC's participation with the Crown Manager's Partnership, and the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative will continue into the foreseeable future to do

these organizations roles in operationalizing the BC-MT MOU, as well as the greater emphasis on landscape level planning initiatives aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, due to its expertise on transboundary issues, the FBC will continue to provide technical support to its partner organizations related to developments in the Kootenai.

- Wastewater – the FBC will work with partner organization to determine what, if any, role it can play in further the fledging efforts of the wastewater management group, including but not limited to the development of workshops and conferences aimed at disseminating information on alternative treatment systems that will improve water quality and increase the life of existing landfills.

- Drought Planning – will likely be wrapped into the state water supply initiative as the FBC sits on the Clark Fork Task Force which is charged with revising the existing water supply plan for the Basin. The new plan will contain a drought component, and as the process moves forward, specific roles for the FBC may be identified. In addition, as areas in the Basin prone to drought are identified, efforts could be undertaken to reduce conflicts between water users and in-stream uses based on the model developed by the Blackfoot Challenge. C. Miske has met with Gary Burnett from the Blackfoot Challenge, and cooperative efforts may be considered if specific projects are identified.

- Land use – is a critical issue in the Basin. At the current time, the FBC efforts related to land use are minimal. However, if issues present themselves, the FBC should reprioritize as needed to accommodate our participation in strategic land use issues.

- Other – a variety of issues come up over time that require the attention of the Executive Director, the most recent example being boat pump out regulations. In addition, continued partnership on groups such as Community of Resource Educators (CORE), Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Cooperative (COCEEC), etc. will require a sustained investment of time and energy.

The next FBC meeting to be held on September 17, 2013. Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned