

Flathead Basin Commission Meeting
September 9, 2015
Glacier National Park Headquarters, Community Building, West Glacier

Members/Staff in Attendance: Tom Smith, Jeff Mow, Jan Metzmaker, Jim Simpson, Kate Hunt, Jack Potter, Dean Sirucek, Ray Beck, Gale Decker, Clint Folden, Jasmine Courville-Brown, Lee Anderson, John Wachsmith, Jim Williams and Caryn Miske

Consensus items:

- Minutes from June 2015 meeting unanimously approved.
- November agenda items were suggested.
- Vice-Chair nomination. C. Miske to contact Julie Dasoglio.
- Office location. Kate Hunt moved that if office space exists in Missoula, Ray Beck should pursue that option. Seconded by Dean Sirucek. Approved unanimously.
- Strategic Plan. C. Miske will send out the Strategic Plan/Action Plan before the next meeting to discuss and approve.
- Lake County Density Mapping. No action proposed. C. Miske and T. Smith will attend the public hearing and report back.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund. Dean moved to have FBC write a letter in support of LWCF to the Montana delegation with amendments to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service. Seconded by Jack Potter. Approved unanimously. Note: Supt. Jeff Mow recused himself. The letter will be sent to Ray Beck with timeline for approval.
- Harvester Letter. Kate Hunt moved that the FBC support the need to either regulate aquatic harvesters or for such machines to be a permitted activity by the Department of Agriculture. Jack Potter seconded. Approved unanimously.

AIS Council:

Ray Beck noted that the Governor's Invasive Species Council has been formed and that the council has developed and put forth a survey instrument. Survey responses are due on October 30, 2015. Jim Simpson moved for the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full Commission to provide comments on the survey. Seconded by Jack Potter. Approved unanimously.

Flathead Community Foundation:

Lucy Smith, Executive Director and Lisa Schnee, Board Chair, gave a presentation on the Flathead Community Foundation. Several questions needed to be answered before the FBC enter into an MOU with a community foundation. Dean Sirucek moved to authorize C. Miske to look into 2 other community foundations to see which would be the best fit. Recommendations will be made at the November meeting with a goal to enter into an MOU with a community foundation by the end of the year. Jack Potter seconded. Approved unanimously.

Funding:

The current base budget is insufficient with a likely deficit of \$5,000. Heidi Sedivy works for FBC through Express Personnel, however, when the funds run out, her job goes away. Sufficient funds exist for H. Sedivy for another year based on existing grants, but if check stations open early, we will need additional help from Heidi Sedivy. The FBC will work with DNRC to help with administrative needs. Other options need to be explored.

Rep. Mark Nolan was in attendance. FBC thanked him for his assistance last session with the AIS legislation. He stated that it is best to prevent infestations rather than treat them later. There is more interest by DOT and FWP to have more open dialogue with the new director. Note: a new study in Washington State showed that property values decline 15-20% with AIS infestations.

Updates:

- **AIS**
 - **FUNDING NEEDS:** Members unanimously approved the AIS budget presented by C. Miske which calls for, among other things, funding to (1) open the three Flathead Region stations (Clearwater, Ronan and Browning) by March 1, 2016 and (2) additional funding for CLP mitigation. It was understood that the enhanced 2016 AIS efforts will be contingent upon the ability of the FBC to raise the needed funds.
 - **BROWNING UPDATE:** Compliance has been very high due to help from the City of Browning. Vehicles that do not stop are escorted back to the station by local law enforcement. A total of 3,000 boats were inspected with 3 testing positive for mussels. The station is now operational only on weekends. The Tribe approved a self-inspection protocol for non-motorized boats, similar to that of GNP. If watercraft have a motor, and the inspection station is not open, Blackfeet Fish and Game is to be contacted, and wardens are provide inspections. A meeting with the FBC and MT FWP will be held on 9/16 to plan for next year. The FBC/Blackfeet are applying for a grant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund another station on the northeast side of the reservation. St. Mary's (GNP) and Chewing Black Bones Campground (operated by the Blackfeet) can also provide additional support. The new AIS brochure designed to facilitate fundraising was distributed.
 - **MONITORING:** The Whitefish Lake Institute via the volunteer monitoring program undertakes some monitoring for mussels. Field protocol for eDNA early detection is still needed. Yellow Bay Bio Station got a philanthropic gift to do more detection.
 - **CLP:** The Flathead River requires much more intense treatment for Curly Leaf Pondweed. One additional dredge/survey team working exclusively in the Flathead River would help. A management plan is being developed. It will take many decades if full eradication is the goal. Eric Hanson reported on what has been done to date and the cost to treat the system. A \$75,000 grant from Pulling Together has been made and a request to DNRC is pending to support the CLP work.
 - **STATE:** Linnea Schroeer reported that 17 stations were operated by FWP during the 2015 field season. Due to cooperation with Alberta and Idaho, 2 stations were dropped as compared to 2014. Coram was moved to Browning. Schroeer reported that approximately 35,000 inspections were completed by the end of the season. All stations

now closed with the exception of Fort Peck which will be open through the end of September. A total of 220 watercraft failed inspection, mostly due to standing water. A total of 5 mussel fouled boats were intercepted. The Culbertson Station in eastern MT was the most problematic to staff. Drive bys have been reduced due to better signage, more advertising and increased enforcement.

- **RAIL:** Jeff Mow, Supt. of GNP showed an elaborate response plan that establishes a line of communication with BNSF. He said the Sheep Fire engaged the railroad and provided a unified command of agencies. The fire was a good reference point for what a unified command would look like if there was an emergency spill. A meeting with the NPS, Forest Service, BNSF and State is being planned. Once that meeting is held, the FBC will have a better sense of operations and how to proceed. A tracer test was suggested to see how fast a spill (oil or other chemicals) would get into Flathead Lake.
- **CFAC:** National Priority Listing (superfund listing) still pending. Virginia Sloan-Lorranger provided an update. The panel that was created to work with Glenncore is meeting September 10. Lorranger urged the public to be involved. FBC should continue to request a visioning process, which could be used to assist in identifying future use which dictate standards for cleanup.
- **Transboundary :** Transboundary work is on track. The pending CMP MOU needs to be signed before President Obama leaves office. Inroads being made with BC on AIS issues. The next meetings of the GNLCC and CMP are both in November.

Public Comments/New Business:

- A thank you and farewell to Virginia Sloan-Lorranger who is retiring as Senator Tester's Field Director.
- Tom Bansack from Yellow Bay informed the group that a grant obtained by the Swan Lakers will provide for voluntary water quality monitoring for the next 4 years. Bansack also mentioned the need to have additional rules to address failed shoreline septic systems.
- Jan Metzmaker reported that Whitefish has two preliminary engineering grants to assess septic leachate in two neighborhoods on Whitefish Lake.
- Flathead Conservation District obtained a grant to develop a watershed improvement plan. The FBC should have a presentation regarding this effort at a future FBC meeting.

Jan Metzmaker moved, and Jack Potter seconded motion to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned.