

FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FUTURE FISHERIES REVIEW PANEL MINUTES FOR WINTER 2014

Date: December 19, 2013 @ Montana Wild, Helena, MT

Attendees: Alan Johnstone, Bill Semmens, Gary Frank, Marvin Miller, Jim Stone, Chuck Dalby, Representative Ted Washburn (via video conference), Rick Arnold (via video conference), Ann Schwend (via phone conference), Greg Munther (via email), Corey Fisher (via email), Senator Mike Phillips (via email)

FWP staff: Jim Darling, Mark Lere, and Jackie Windon

Applicants and others in attendance: Jim Olsen, Ryen Neudecker, Beau Downing, Will McDowell, Casey Hackathorn, Bruce Roberts (via video conference), Gary Weiner (via video conference), Carol Endicott (via phone)

Introductions were made and the group approved the **agenda** as prepared.

Mark Lere:

1. Appointments to the Future Fisheries Review Panel – awaiting appointment of 3 new members and the potential re-appointment of several others by Governor Bullock
2. Discussed use of video conferencing for future meetings – the group said they only wish to use it in the winter, if the roads are to be unsafe for travels. The group prefers face-to-face panel meetings.
3. Provided summary of his Power Point on monitoring Future Fisheries projects
4. Reviewed the Future Fisheries balances (See Handout)
5. Gave handout of staff recommendations and handed the meeting over to Chair Marvin Miller

Marvin Miller:

Marvin directed the group in the review process and funding recommendations. The results are as follows:

1. Bozeman Creek (Gallatin County) is a tributary to the East Gallatin River that supports a mixed salmonid assemblage. A portion of the stream, as it flows through Bogart Park within the city of Bozeman, historically was channelized. This reach of stream currently is entrenched with high, unstable banks, little hydraulic diversity and poor fish and wildlife habitat. This proposal calls for re-aligning approximately 820 feet of the channelized stream to improve plan form, profile and cross sectional characteristics. Additionally, an inset floodplain will be constructed and the riparian vegetative community will be augmented. As part of the overall project, additional recreational amenities will be installed to protect resources and better accommodate public use. The purpose of the project is to improve the stream's amenities for nature based recreation and environmental education purposes. The applicant is requesting \$30,000 in Program funds and is contributing about \$193,000 in cash and \$5,000 in in-kind services toward the stream channel and riparian work. The applicant is also providing about \$375,000 in cash and in-kind services toward improving recreational amenities within the park.

Amount Requested: \$30,000

Project Representative: Gary Weiner (National Park Service)

Discussion Points:

- CLOMAR is a FEMA engineer requirement for flood plain projects
- Trout Unlimited is will support with \$10,000 (\$5K in cash & \$5K in-kind)
- Also working with Greater Gallatin Watershed Group
- Estimated time of completion is before Spring floods 2015
- Concern expressed with ability to withstand harsh runoffs of the area. It was asked if upstream restoration wouldn't be a better use of sportsman dollars.
- It was noted this was one of the best design operations with the collaborative efforts of 6 different consulting firms.
- This project not only provides enhanced fish habitat, but also creates synergy amongst the local population and can be readily used as an educational tool.
- Re-vegetation will need to be protected until it is fully established. Hawthorne bushes were recommended in lieu of fencing.

Motion Made by: Jim Stone made the motion to approve the applications presented for the full amount of \$30,000.

Motion 2nd by: Chuck Dalby

Panel action: Yes 6/ No 2

Amount Approved: \$30,000 (License \$)

2. Cabin Creek (Madison County) is a tributary to the Madison River located near Hebgen Reservoir that supports a slightly hybridized population of westslope cutthroat trout. The 1959 Quake Lake earth quake created a scarp that effectively isolated a genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout population residing in Cabin Creek. This scarp has slowly eroded away over time, allowing a few non-native rainbow trout to pioneer into the drainage. Non-native rainbow trout are now hybridizing with native westslope cutthroat trout. This proposal calls for installing a permanent fish migration barrier at the lower end of the drainage to preserve the current level of genetic purity within this relatively large population of westslope cutthroat trout. The barrier would be located within a confined canyon and would consist of a concrete dam with two, 4-foot drops separated by a gently sloping concrete slab. The applicant is requesting \$75,000 in Program funds and is contributing \$329,000 in cash from outside sources and \$35,000 in in-kind services.

Amount Requested: \$75,000

Project Representative: Bruce Roberts (USFS)

Discussion Points:

- Discussion as to the extra high construction & material costs, revealed need for equipment with rubber tires and the remoteness of the location with no road access.
- If costs are not as high as estimate, then funds will be returned to contributors proportionately.
- USFS has obtained input from local groups and outfitters.

Motion Made by: Rick Arnold made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$75,000.

Motion 2nd by: Gary Frank

Panel action: Yes unanimously

Amount Approved: \$75,000 (RIT \$)

3. French Creek (Deer Lodge County) is a tributary to Deep Creek, and ultimately the Big Hole River, that drains a portion of the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management area owned by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The stream currently supports non-native brook trout and rainbow trout, as well as native mountain whitefish, longnose dace and mottled sculpin. This proposal calls for the installation of a permanent fish migration barrier located near the mouth of the stream. The barrier would consist of a concrete dam structure with an accompanying 140-foot long earthen berm installed across the floodplain. Once the barrier is in place, the plan is to remove all of the non-native fish using a piscicide, followed by the reintroduction of westslope cutthroat trout and arctic grayling. The applicant is requesting \$73,000 in Program funds and is contributing \$145,000 in cash from outside sources, as well as providing \$110,000 in in-kind materials.

Amount Requested: \$73,000

Project Representative: Jim Olsen (FWP)

Discussion Points:

- Arctic Grayling introduction via RSI (remote streamside incubation) has been successful
- Removal of non-natives have proven successful in Cherry Creek
- Base flow of French Creek is about 10 cfs. Barrier level would be less than state hazard criteria.
- Fill materials will include local placer tailings that have been found non-hazardous and suitable

Motion Made by: Rick Arnold made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$73,000.

Motion 2nd by: Jim Stone

Panel action: Yes unanimously

Amount Approved: \$73,000 (RIT \$)

4. Gleason Creek (Powell County) is a tributary to Nevada Creek located on USFS property near the community of Finn. The stream supports a slightly hybridized population of westslope cutthroat and possibly some limited bull trout use. An existing USFS road culvert on the stream currently acts as a partial upstream barrier to migrating fish. This project calls for replacing the existing 48-inch culvert with a 137-inch span by 87-inch rise corrugated steel arch pipe. A series of 4 rock weirs would be installed inside the new pipe to maintain the streambed. The applicant is requesting \$10,000 in Program funds and is contributing \$45,270 in cash from outside sources and \$3,380 in in-kind services towards completion of the project.

Amount Requested: \$10,000

Project Representative: Ryen Neudecker (BBCTU)

Discussion Points:

- Gary indicated rock weirs have been successful in DNRC culverts.
- Ryen informed the group of 2 other options researched and priced with their pros & cons; which resulted in the proposed cost effective option.

Motion Made by: Chuck Dalby made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$10,000.

Motion 2nd by: Gary Frank

Panel action: Yes unanimously
Amount Approved: \$10,000 (RIT \$)

5. Johnson Creek (Silver Bow County) is a tributary to the Big Hole River located near Wise River that supports a slightly hybridized westslope cutthroat trout population, as well as a brook trout population. Cattle trespassing onto properties owned by Joel Webster and John Tierney have led to trampled stream banks and over-widening of the stream channel. This project calls for installing riparian fencing that would tie into existing fencing to eliminate the cattle trespass problem. Approximately 2,200 feet of wire fence and 150 of jack-leg fence would be installed. Additionally, a cattle guard would be installed at an access road leading to private property. Livestock grazing would be excluded from the riparian corridor once the fencing is installed. The applicant is requesting \$9,470 in Program funds and is contributing \$2,000 in cash from outside sources.

Amount Requested: \$9,470
Project Representative: Jim Olsen (FWP)
Discussion Points:

- Fencing project is primarily on private land with little to no public access. However, landowners are willing to allow public access as long as permission is asked.
- Fencing costs seemed a little high to the group. They suggested 3 strand wire and steel post as a possible alternative and more cost effective.

Motion Made by: Jim Stone made the motion to partially approve the application in the amount of \$8,200, with fencing costs reduced to \$2.00/foot.

Motion 2nd by: Chuck Dalby

Panel action: Yes 5/ No 2
Amount Approved: \$8,200 (RIT \$)

6. Keep Cool Creek (Lewis and Clark County) is a tributary to the upper Blackfoot River located near Lincoln. The stream supports primarily brown trout, but also supports westslope cutthroat trout in the headwaters and limited bull trout use in its lower reaches. Presently, two undersized culverts located on the Grosfield Ranch act as partial upstream migration barriers to fish. This proposal calls for replacing the lower culvert with a hardened ford, since the need for access is very limited. The upstream 48-inch culvert would be replaced with an 8-foot, 1-inch by 6-foot, 1-inch, steel arch pipe. This new culvert would accommodate the bank full channel width and provide for floodplain function. The applicant is requesting \$6,000 in Program funds and is providing \$7,620 in cash from outside sources and \$2,932 in in-kind services toward completion of the project.

Amount Requested: \$6,000
Project Representative: Ryen Neudecker (BBCTU)
Discussion Points:

- Will landowner allow fishing access along with the fish passage? Yes, they are already a member of block management

Motion Made by: Alan Johnstone made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$6,000

Motion 2nd by: Chuck Dalby

Panel action: Yes unanimously
Amount Approved: \$6,000 (License \$)

7. Racetrack Creek (Powell County) is a tributary to the Clark Fork River that supports primarily brown trout and mountain whitefish in its lower reaches. An existing irrigation diversion owned by Carl Johnson, located about 2 miles upstream of the confluence with the Clark Fork River near the community of Racetrack, currently acts as an upstream fish migration barrier during the irrigation season. The diversion consists of a makeshift of t-posts, sections of roofing tin and tarps. This proposal calls for rebuilding the diversion by installing a folding jack-leg structure fitted with a Denil fish ladder and a simple wooden head gate with a screw gate. The new diversion would be folded down at the end of each irrigation season. The project is part of a larger fish passage and in-stream flow plan for the drainage. The applicant is requesting \$10,100 in Program funds and is contributing \$12,400 in cash from outside sources and \$1,200 in in-kind services toward completion of the project. Although a very similar type of project was funded in the recent past, we have developed concerns that these proposed pin-and-plank diversions would actually further hinder fish passage and potentially contribute to dewatering of the stream.

Amount Requested: \$10,100
Project Representative: Will McDowell (WRC)
Discussion Points:

- Alternative options were discussed and determined there is already one completed passage project and one recently approved, yet to be built passage just below this proposed Denil fish ladder.

Motion Made by: Representative Ted Washburn made the motion to table this proposal to see how the first 2 projects function.

Motion 2nd by: Chuck Dalby

Panel action: Yes unanimously to table
Amount Approved: Tabled

8. The Shields River (Meagher County) is one of the few remaining strongholds for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. However, expanding brook trout populations are threatening the persistence of these native fish, especially in the headwaters. This proposal calls for constructing a fish migration barrier at an existing USFS road crossing located within the Shields River headwaters, just downstream from the confluence of Crandall Creek. The barrier structure would be a precast box culvert that would replace an existing bridge and create a 4.2-foot drop from the end of the apron. Additionally, a 130-foot long berm would be installed along the west side of the channel to protect the existing road. By-pass pipes would be installed within the berm and in the existing road to allow for drainage during flows that exceed bank full. Following this barrier project, non-native brook trout would be removed from upstream waters by electro-fishing and by the use of piscicides. Salvaged Yellowstone cutthroat trout would be returned to reclaimed waters. A design component of this project allows for the new barrier to be removable with relative ease should the opportunity to expand Yellowstone cutthroat trout conservation efforts to downstream waters arise. The applicant is requesting \$129,775 in Program funds and is contributing \$275,450 in cash from outside sources.

Amount Requested: \$129,775

Project Representative: Carol Endicott (FWP via phone)

Discussion Points:

- The group wanted other groups to participate in the funding of this project.
- The barrier as designed should be expected to remain functional at the 100 year event.

Motion Made by: Rick Arnold made the motion to partially approve the application in the amount of \$119,775.

Motion 2nd by: Representative Ted Washburn

Panel action: Yes 5/2

Amount Approved: \$119,775 (RIT \$)

9. Stony Creek (Granite County) is a tributary to Rock Creek that supports brown trout, westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout. Radio telemetry has determined that fluvial bull trout also use Stony Creek. An irrigation diversion located just upstream of the USFS Stony Creek campground currently acts as a fish migration barrier and has been documented to entrain westslope cutthroat trout and brown trout. This diversion, owned by the Rock Creek Ranch, currently consists of a series of concrete ecology blocks and a simple screw-gate head gate. This project calls for rebuilding the diversion using a vortex rock weir structure and installing a horizontal flat-plate fish screen and bypass. The applicant is requesting \$23,774 in Program funds and is contributing \$20,559 in cash from outside sources and \$4,480 in in-kind services toward completion of the project.

Amount Requested: \$23,774

Project Representative: Casey Hackathorn (Trout Unlimited)

Discussion Points:

- Was the screen required by USFS? Initially proposed, but never made a decision on it.
- Will it encourage more brown trout to the detriment of bull trout? No advantage or disadvantage for either species.

Motion Made by: Ann Schwend made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$23,774.

Motion 2nd by: Jim Stone

Panel action: Yes unanimously

Amount Approved: \$23,774 (RIT \$)

10. Browns Gulch (Silver Bow County) is a tributary to Silver Bow Creek located near Butte that supports brook trout in its lower reaches and westslope cutthroat trout in its headwaters. With the ongoing clean-up of Silver Bow Creek, fluvial westslope cutthroat trout now found in Silver Bow Creek are beginning to pioneer into the lower reaches of Browns Gulch. A reach of the stream flowing through property owned by the Ueland Ranches, Inc. was historically channelized and currently is experiencing substantial bank erosion. This project proposes to replace 800 feet of channelized stream with about 1,400 feet of a newly constructed meandering channel. The new channel will have an accessible floodplain and will be re-vegetated with riparian shrubs and wetland sods. Fencing will be installed to encourage the recovery of the riparian vegetation. A grazing management plan will be implemented once the riparian corridor has fully recovered. The old channel will be filled in and re-vegetated. The applicant is requesting \$29,960 in Program funds and is contributing \$68,225 in cash and in-kind services.

Amount Requested: \$29,960

Project Representative: Will McDowell (WRC) & Don Ueland (Landowner)

Discussion Points:

- Will McDowell submitted a letter of support from Karen Boyd, a geomorphologist who is familiar with the project.
- There were budget clarifications
- The landowner will allow fishing access with permission

Motion Made by: Rick Arnold made the motion to approve the application as presented for the full amount of \$29,960.

Motion 2nd by: Jim Stone

Panel action: Yes unanimously

Amount Approved: \$29,960 (RIT \$)

Panel members requested copies of the monitoring power point, as well as copies of the Morrison-Maierle monitoring report.

Rick Arnold was appointed to serve as the Panel's representative for prioritizing funding recommendations.

The next Panel meeting (summer 2014 funding cycle) is scheduled for June 18 and 19. June 18th would tentatively be a tour of completed projects and June 19th would be the regular Panel meeting. The location of the project tour was left open but some suggestions included the Bitterroot, the upper Big Hole, or the Livingston area.

Meeting Adjourned.