



YAKIMA TRIBUTARY ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Core Team Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2007, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Location: USDA Service Center conference room,
1606 Perry St. Yakima

Attending: Michael Tobin, David Child, Henry Fraser, David Girth, Anna Lael, Alex Conley, Dave Myra, Jennifer Scott, Richard Visser, Ed Harrell, Carol Ready, Ken Schuster.

1. ADMINISTRATION

a) Approve Agenda: Dave M. asked if everyone had a copy of the agenda and it appears everyone did.

b) Approve December Minutes: Dave asked if anyone had any questions about or corrections to the January minutes as e'mailed. No corrections or comments.

c) Update on funding and contracts: Ed explained that there was little news about where we stand with BPA funding. He said we have received the amendment extending the YTAHP Expense contract through February and March, so that funding is in place. However, we have not received the amendment for the YTAHP Capital contract, which is the more significant amount of funding. But BPA has said it is approved and the amendment should be coming soon. Ed said he did see a notice on the BPA website about approval of BPA funding for the FY 07 – 09 period from BPA's Expense budget. According to the table on the web site YTAHP funding from the BPA Expense budget for FY 07 – 09 is listed at \$121,726.00 per year. There was no information about FY 07 – 09 funding from the BPA Capital budget.

Alex, interjected that actually the information regarding the Expenses funding had been retracted by BPA due to some "legal" issue between BPA and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. Alex said that when the decision information is re-issued the dollar amounts will probably remain the same. The legal concerns don't affect most of the dollar amounts.

This uncertainty about what BPA is going to decide on FY 07 – 09 funding is of some concern. David G. asked how this delay in making an announcement may affect year end activities for YTAHP. Dave M. said it could be a problem if BPA delays and then provides a large amount of capital funding at the end of the year when YTAHP is not able to use it because of construction timing constraints.

Ed said that the unofficial information he has from BPA is that our funding, both expense and capital, will probably be about the same as we received

previously (\$880,000). The funding we have available for use during the first six months of FY 07, through interim contracts is a little more than half that amount.

Ed also mentioned the “in-lieu” issue that BPA has expressed. BPA is concerned about providing BPA funds to organizations, agencies, to pay for actions that those entities are already legally required to perform. Using BPA funds in-lieu of their own dollars to do what they are legally required to do on their own. According to a table on the BPA web site the in-lieu position of YTAHP is 55% BPA. It appears from this that BPA may require a 45% match from other sources for the YTAHP program/projects. If this is true it should not be a big problem because YTAHP already applies about 45% or more of other funding to YTAHP projects.

2. UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS, PENDING PROJECTS, PERMITS AND MONITORING

a) NYCD: David C. gave an update on several NYCD projects. The Schneider habitat project is moving toward implementation this summer. Preliminary engineering was completed and given to the landowners for review. The Technical Work Group also met and reviewed the pre-design and visited the site. Some minor changes were suggested. The design is being finalized and will be given to Jennifer to begin the permitting process. Jen said she already has a good project description from the SRFB application. Mike said they want to get the instream work done this summer. Additional work will be done over the next couple of years, primarily revegetation and fencing.

Richard asked if there might be some savings due to the changes in the design. If so, he was wondering if other landowners in the area may want to have some habitat improvement work done.

David C. reported on the Boyd Brown project, diversion removal and installation of a ring-well. Because NRCS is involved with the project through EQIP funding it was believed that they could do the Cultural Resource Survey. However, it looks like this will take too long to coordinate so NYCD will get it done.

Jen said that it will help to know when NRCS is involved in a project as early as possible. With enough time to coordinate, the question of who will do what in the permitting process can be worked out without causing any delays and sometimes it would be best to use the NRCS process.

Hank had some questions about the distance of the ring-well from Rattlesnake Creek and would it have continuity with the creek water. David said it will be about 200 feet away from the Naches river and have continuity with the river. Hank said there had been some WDFW issues with earlier ring-well proposals regarding concern about small fish moving through the cobbles and gravels and getting into the ring-well. Richard said he was unsure of the current WDFW thinking on that but he did not think it would be a concern with the Boyd Brown ring-well, but he would double check to make sure there are no surprises during the permitting process.

David said he and Jennifer met with Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County, out at the Rattlesnake Creek confluence with the Naches River. Joel had considered doing some work to correct a problem with the creek going subsurface at low

flows. After visiting the site they saw that this seemed to have been taken care of by nature during a recent high flow event. The sediments and gravel at the confluence had been washed away. The County will still be providing some flood mitigation funds to the project to make other minor improvements reducing flood hazards.

Mike said that the process to change the point of diversion for Boyd Brown had required a re-evaluation of Browns water rights. This resulted in a loss of water rights, by Brown for about ten acres through relinquishment. This should not be a big problem because he still has water rights for the land he does irrigate. Ken was aware of the issue and explained what was going on there.

Regarding the north Ahtanum creek gauging station, David said there had been a meeting of stakeholders on January 24th. There was a good turn out and good discussion of alternatives to correct the passage problem.

Richard asked if the project was fully funded. David said no, they were still in the information gathering phase. Richard said there may be grant source from USFWS. Mike was concerned about the time remaining to get an application prepared. David G. said this is a pre-application period so a full application would not have to be done at this time.

David C. said the Cowiche Creek Water Users pipeline project was coming along. Some additional pipeline routing needs to be worked out and some permitting work remains. Richard mentioned that there are some water shares for sale and purchasing water shares may make implementing the project easier.

David completed his update by saying the minor repair work on the Upper Lust project has been completed, the water measuring devise has been installed on Diversion-31, and he will be working on getting some pump screens installed, asking Jerry Anhorn (WWCC) to do some pump screen assessments.

b) KCCD: Anna displayed a new map showing the location of KCCD projects. Starting at the south with Lmuma Creek she reported on the status of projects. Lmuma Creek information on “hardened” crossings is about ready to give to Jen for preparation of permit applications. Alex ask if Community Salmon funds were being used by the project. Anna, said yes, along with other funding. There was some discussion of the actual location of proposed habitat improvements and fencing.

The planting crew is working today (Feb. 21) on the Eaton habitat project on Wilson Creek.

Sorenson and Ludwick pump screen cranes are being installed in the next few days. The concrete pads have cured sufficiently.

The Ludwick pipeline on Lyle Creek is about 96% completed.

SRFB funding has been acquired to do two projects on Cherry Creek.

The concrete pad for the Sorenson and Ludwick pumps on Parke Creek has been poured and the pump screens will be installed for this irrigation season. Correction of passage problems at the original diversion will be taken care of in two years once the land owners are confident the pump diversion will work satisfactorily.

On Caribou Creek the City of Kittitas expects to do the road construction work and consolidate the Gibb diversions this spring.

On Coleman Creek, the Buris and Nisbet projects, there is still an issue with the requirement to put saved water in trust in perpetuity.

The preliminary design for the Durand project on lower Reecer Creek will be ready this week and can be used in preparing permit applications.

The Monroe pump screen is in the permitting process and should be installed for this irrigation season.

The USFS still has \$100,000 for the Indian Creek and Jack Creek culvert projects but we need to find matching funds. David G. said he may be able to help find funding.

Carol reported that she is researching funding sources for the Reecer Creek Flood-plain project. Gina McCoy, WDFW, is working on design and engineering. Because of the trail and recreation component of Ellensburg's plans for the area, Carol is also searching these sources for funding. Gina is hoping SRFB may provide some funding. Carol will probably prepare the SRFB application.

c) KCT: David G. gave an update on the Taneum Study, Bruton diversion. He had a draft of the report prepared covering the alternatives for Bruton. Basically there are two options that seem to be viable at this time. One option is to construct an improved fish-way at the existing diversion to enable passage past the dam. The other option is to lower the dam approximately 4 feet and re-grade approximately 700 feet of the stream channel upstream and downstream of the existing diversion, enabling fish passage. There are two different approaches to implementing the last option, both of which include piping the water from a new diversion point. David and Hank will continue to work with the USBR and irrigators to determine the best option.

Ken asked if the water users know there may not be sufficient water in-stream after July to meet their needs. Hank said the water users are aware of this. Ken said he should go and talk with the water users.

In regard to the Pott diversion on Currier Creek, David said the landowner is refusing to sign the landowner agreement until he gets some concessions on future development plans from the Yakama Indian Nation. It is unlikely he will get the concessions he is hoping for. Also, the landowner of the Pautzke diversion has a potential buyer for the property and does not want any landowner agreement established that may create issues with the prospective buyer. So both of these diversion removal projects are on hold for now.

David said that Pat Deneen, landowner of the two diversions on Swauk Creek, has slowed the process of getting those diversions screened. David still believes the screens will be installed.

3. PROJECT MONITORING (OVER ALL PROCESS)

a) Reminder please get any comments on the Monitoring and Prioritization plans to Jennifer by Feb 28:

Jen reiterated that she would like to get any comments on the Monitoring and Prioritization plans by February 28th. She said monitoring activities are still

on hold for a while. She has not heard anything regarding the 4d permit application. In this case no news is probably good news.

Alex said he and Richard are working to improve coordination of monitoring in the Yakima Basin. There is some funding available from NOAA. They have applied for funds and should be receiving about \$50,000 for use in the Basin. The goal is to do some more intensive monitoring in Cowiche Creek and a couple of Kittitas County tributaries. Plans are tentative at this time but it is hoped that the \$50,000 will help get a program in place that can get ongoing funding (ten years or so). Richard said this program could mesh with the monitoring YTAHP will be doing.

4. ITEMS OF INTEREST

Mike took a moment to report that NYCD will soon be receiving several thousand Ponderosa Pine seedlings. These are bred for survival at lower elevations so they should be good for locations between the elevations of Prosser and Ellensburg. NYCD will be potting many of the seedlings. Some they will keep in the green house for 2 to 5 years so they can be planted as more mature trees. If anyone has a use for lower elevation Ponderosa Pine they will be available from NYCD.

Ken mentioned there will be an Open House for the Columbia River Program on March 7th. If you are interested in learning more talk to Ken at 509-454-4263.

David C. mentioned that there had been a tour of YTAHP projects last summer for some of the BPA Environmental Compliance staff. He thought tours of this type are very helpful in generating support and permitting cooperation from state and federal agencies. He thought that we should arrange other tours. Alex agreed that such tours are valuable. He said he would like to be involved in any future tours.

a) Update from YBFWRB: Alex provided some information from the Federal Register about the request for comments on Washington State's Habitat Restoration Program which has been submitted to NOAA for approval. If the Habitat Restoration Program is accepted it will help streamline the federal permitting process. Letters of support to NOAA would be helpful. Comments are due by 5 p.m. March 14, 2007.

Also, the northwest congressional delegation is trying to get additional funding from NOAA for Washington State. If efforts to get funding for the Puget Sound Initiative are successful it may provide a good precedent for getting funding for some kind of Columbia Basin initiative in the future.

Alex, reported on the upcoming Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant application schedule. He said the amount of funding will be about the same as last year, from seven hundred thousand to one million dollars.

b) Strategic Plan Review and Update: Richard explained that the current Strategic Plan is out of date. Some major rewriting needs to be done to better explain how YTAHP operates now. Jennifer is taking an initial try at making

changes and additions to the plan. Dave M. suggested that once Jen has a draft a small working group can review it and finalize the update of the Strategic Plan. Carol, who wrote the original Plan should be on the review subcommittee.

c) Decision on Cultural Resource Consultant RFQ: Dave M. asked Mike about what has been arranged with Yakima County regarding use of the Small Works Roster for hiring Cultural Resource consultants. Mike said he and David C. have talked with the County. The County is working on revising the Small Works Roster to include Cultural Resource consultants but this has not been completed yet. He and David will continue to work on it with the County. Dave M. asked Mike to keep Anna informed about how she can help interested consultants get on the list.

5. **NEXT MEETING: 21 March, 2007 9:30am-Noon
Kittitas County PUD, 1400 E. Vantage Hwy. Ellensburg**