

Upper Yellowstone River Task Force Meeting Summary

October 7, 1999

Meeting began at 7:00 pm

Members Present:

John Bailey, Chair	Dave Haug
Mike Atwood, Vice Chair	Michelle Goodwine
Jerry O'Hair	Jim Woodhull
Ellen Woodbury	Rod Siring
Bob Wiltshire	Brant Oswald

Others Present:

Joel Tohtz, Ex-Officio	Andy Dana
Allan Steinle, Ex-Officio	Mike Clark
Laurence Siroky, Ex-Officio	Lionel Dicharry
Mary Hektner, Proxy Ex-Officio	Stan Todd
Stan Sternberg, Proxy Ex-Officio	Will Rizzo
Liz Galli-Noble, Coordinator	Jim Barrett
Dick Blodnick	Tom Hallin
Jim Robinson	Tom Pick
Scott Zimmerman	Daryl Stutterheim

Amy Miller, Administrative Secretary

Stuart Coleman, previous Yellowstone National Park representative, has retired and the new representative is Wayne Brewster. Mary Hektner represented the Park in place of Wayne Brewster.

Prior Meeting Minutes

The July 15, 1999 meeting minutes were approved with the following modification: no previous meeting minutes were approved. The August 3, 1999 minutes were approved with the following modification: Rod Siring was present at the meeting.

Task Force Ground Rules revision and re-authorization

The Task Force reviewed the ground rules and the following modifications were made in the *Participation* section (delete subsection h and reword subsection g), *Decisions/Agreements* section (delete number 3), *Roles and Responsibilities* section (do not specify Task Force Chair, Vice Chair, and Coordinator names, and *Technical Advisory Committee* section (add wording that only the Task Force has authority to make decisions, TAC members only give recommendations to the Task Force). Jim Robinson, DNRC, will make the modifications on the ground rules and present a revised copy at the November Task Force meeting for final approval.

Progress report from the Technical Advisory Committee:

(A) Upland Land Use Assessment update

The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the Natural Resources Conservation Service's proposal submitted by Tom Pick at the September 7, 1999 meeting. The Technical Advisory Committee has a few suggestions for the proposal and Tom is currently revising the proposal. Tom will present the final copy of the Upland Land Use Assessment proposal to the Technical Advisory Committee per request from the Task Force if Shirley Gammon, NRCS, approves the final budget for the proposal. Tom Pick is reviewing different options (for example satellite imagery and historic land use, etc.) for the proposals in order to keep the budget workable.

(B) Fisheries and Wildlife Assessment update

The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the wildlife proposal on September 29, 1999. After requesting minor revisions the committee accepted the final revision of the proposal. Duncan Patten, TAC Chair, will present the proposal at the November Task Force meeting. No funding sources as of yet have been secured for the wildlife proposal. The current budget is for \$100,000. Ideally, the wildlife proposal would blend with the Upland Land Use assessment. US Fish and Wildlife Service has secured \$10,000 for literature review for the Wildlife proposal. The fisheries proposal study will begin in the spring field season using a graduate student and Al Zales through Montana State University. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers has funded \$46,500 of the budget for fisheries, and the Corps is attempting to secure funding for the remaining budget. Congress has appropriated \$150,000 for the fiscal 2000 Water Resource Development Act for the Army Corps of Engineers for the Upper Yellowstone River this information was received from the local newspaper.

(C) Remote Sensing Study Announcement

Liz Galli-Nobe, Task Force Coordinator, met with Duncan Patten and he presented a summary for Liz on the *Evaluation of Indicators of Riparian Health* study that was awarded in September of 1999. This study is using the Yellowstone River area/watershed as a lab to test different types and capabilities of remote sensing, to measure indicators of riparian and stream ecosystem health. The study covers Yellowstone National Park plus its tributaries to Livingston. The study is funded through a grant from Environmental Protection Agency for \$870,000. This study is building on a NASA funded study the Yellowstone Ecosystem Studies had from last year. Duncan will explain the Remote Sensing Study in further detail at the November Task Force Meeting.

Liz also gave a summary of *Integrated Approach to Watershed Analysis and Management* a proposal that involves Yellowstone Ecosystem Studies; Professor Jerry Johnson, MSU; and Mary Ellen Wolfe, Montana Watercourse. This study focuses on watershed functions and health, with a cultural (human) component included. The study also, uses riparian systems much like the remote sensing study. The overriding project goal is to develop improved techniques for evaluating and managing watershed quality. Mary Ellen Wolfe and Duncan Patten presented this proposal to the Task Force on May 6, 1999.

Outreach work update

(A) Outreach work accomplished in month one

Liz Galli-Noble outlined (refer to appendix A) that she had completed since her hire date of August 16, 1999 with landowner permission outreach, interpersonal outreach/information gathering, science outreach/exposure, and research and future outreach plans and ideas.

(B) Landowner permission project

Liz explained her involvement with the property owner permission and how intensive the project will continue to be in the future. Liz had pulled ideas from previous Task Force meeting minutes and suggestion from Task Force members on how to handle this project. Suggestions are as follows: (1) develop a database of all property owners along the upper Yellowstone River (by Township and range, would involve working with database of landowners from Department of Revenue that Jim Robinson had received); (2) send formal letter and response card to all property owners (approximately 1,500), include general information on the Task Force as outreach, and possibly include an informal questionnaire; (3) have researchers inform coordinator two weeks in advance of start date, so that special needs property owners can be contacted by phone; have researchers check-in at the Task Force office to confirm permission has been granted, researchers can use maps and data housed within Task Force office. Ellen Woodbury mentioned Park County would allow the Task Force to get copies of the plat maps in the Task Force purchases the milar paper. Rod Siring explained that the local utility company is willing to allow the Task Force to use their computer generated message system to call landowners during their field/research

phases. Details are still being worked out and will be reported on as they develop. The Task Force requested the Liz present a draft permission letter and the cost for mailing the letters to 1,500 individuals at the next Task Force for review and approval.

(C) Coordinator's work priorities

Liz reported the following priorities in the next few months will be: landowner permission project, annual report, and grant sources.

Grant Updates

(A) Termination of the DEQ Start up Grant in June 2000

The Park Conservation District has received word from the DEQ that the start up funds need to be spent by June 30, 2000. Liz Galli-Noble and Jim Robinson met with Mark Simonich, DEQ Director, and he explained that there are a few projects from fiscal 1996 that are not closed, which is the fiscal year of the start up funds. Mark Simonich would like the funds to be spent as soon as possible, however other budgets from that fiscal are still open. Eventually the start-up grant will need to be closed. **The Task Force unanimously agreed for John Bailey to meet with Mark Simonich to discuss further funding for the Task Force's future operating expenses.**

(B) Grant award and spending report

Amy Miller reported to the Task Force that the Park Conservation District has signed the Resource Development Grant Proposal (RDGP) and spending may begin. There is approximately \$31,000 left of the start up funds, and approximately \$4,600 has been spent on the 319 grant for coordinator expenses.

(C) 319 Management Plan Grant Pre-proposal update

Jim Robinson presented the current 319 proposal to the Task Force for comments. Jerry O'Hair and Mike Atwood would not approve the proposal because of issues with the language on the proposal. A subcommittee was formed for the revision of the proposal consisting of Jerry O'Hair, Mike Atwood, and Ellen Woodbury. Liz Galli-Noble and Jim Robinson will also meet with the subcommittee on October 15, 1999 at 7:00pm for final approval of the revised 319 proposal.

Financial business; Financial sub-committee reviewed on 9/30/99

(A) Coordinator's readjusted budget

The Financial subcommittee met on September 30, 1999 and approved the revised coordinator budget, submitted by Amy Miller and Liz Galli-Noble. The budget was revised to accommodate office start up expenses (computer, telephone, etc.). **The Task Force unanimously approved the budget as submitted on October 7, 1999.**

Socioeconomic Assessment update

Liz reviewed general comments on socioeconomic assessments with the Task Force (refer to appendix B). Liz handed out three examples of different approaches to socioeconomic assessments. Liz reviewed several potential funding sources with the Task Force; MDT Research Projects (socio-econ, fisheries, wildlife), Bonneville Environmental Foundation (socio-econ, fisheries, wildlife), EPA Environmental Education Grant (outreach and social feedback), Rural Community Assistance Grant (socio-econ), Montana Watershed Coordinator Council Grant (outreach, coordination, research), and ESRI Local Government Start up Grant (Arc View).

Yellowstone River Meeting

John Bailey explained that he had been invited to a meeting scheduled in Livingston for October 13, 1999 involving Bruce Babbitt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The meeting is closed to the public, and approximately only 15 people were selected to attend, they represent: Park County, City of Livingston, Task Force, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the press, and others. The meeting will involve a round table discussion, by invitation only. John Bailey is invited to attend the meeting as the Task Force Chairman. The Task Force was uncomfortable with the closed-door meeting to the public and requested John Bailey contact the Governor's office for approval of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Next Meeting

The Yellowstone River Task Force will be holding its next meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday, October 19, 1999, and the following meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 16, 1999 at the Yellowstone Motor Inn.