

Upper Yellowstone River Task Force Meeting Summary

June 24, 1999

Members Present:

John Bailey	Mike Atwood
Jerry O'Hair	Rod Siring
Allan Steinle	Michelle Goodwine
Roy Aserlind	Brand Oswald
Ellen Woodbury	Bob Wiltshire

Others Present:

Jim Robinson	David Haug
Chuck Dalby	Stan Todd
Amy Miller	Duncan Patten
Tom Hallin	Andy Dana
Harold Stevenson	Jack Stults
Bob Ebinger	Steve Golnar
Lionel Dicharry	Will Rizzo
Dennis Glick	Tom Pick

Prior Meeting Minutes

The May 6, 1999 meeting minutes were approved with no modifications.

June 17th Interagency Meeting-Status Report

A management-level interagency meeting was held in Helena on June 17, 1999 for discussion on river corridor management issues for the Yellowstone River. In response to a proposal from Colonel Robert Volz, District Engineer of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Omaha District, Governor Marc Racicot asked Mark Simonich, DEQ Director, to convene a meeting of appropriate state and federal personnel with the goal of developing an integrated agency approach to publicly-led management initiatives for the Yellowstone River. The primary purpose of the meeting was to provide and update on the Upper Yellowstone River Task Force's activities, and to discuss opportunities for funding and continued collaboration into the future. Secondly, the agenda contained a section for discussing any initiatives or opportunities for similar efforts in the remainder of the river. Several of the officials from various agencies praised the cooperative effort on the Upper Yellowstone for their work so far, and made commitments to help the Task Force as best they could. Jim Robinson did a presentation on the Cumulative Effects Study on behalf of the Task Force and explained the budget. The state agencies present at this meeting were DEQ, Fish Wildlife & Parks, DNRC, and Department of Transportation. The federal agencies present were Fish & Wildlife Service, Corp of Engineers, NRCS, and EPA. Other groups present were American Rivers, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, MT Association on Conservation Districts, Montana Audubon, Yellowstone Conservation District, and Part Conservation District. Also present were Senator Conrad Burn's staff, Senator Max Baucus's staff, and staff of Congressman Hill. The Conservation District's were called upon to share their ideas and recent activities. The governor's office had sent the district's recent (June 15, 1999) letter to the meeting, along with the district's resolution, and copies had been made for all meeting participants. Representatives from Park CD, Yellowstone CD, and MECD were on hand to explain, in theory, the district's proposal for the rest of the river. A number of people in the room offered

to help the districts in any way they could, and everyone in the room was glad to have the conservation districts taking the initiative, as mentioned by several participants.

Report from Technical Advisory Committee

Duncan Patten, Technical Advisory Committee Chair, reported to the Task Force about the June 1, 1999 meeting that was held at the USDA Building in Livingston. The committee reviewed rewritten proposals from the different areas (Hydrology/Geomorph, Riparian Resources, Fisheries, and Wildlife) and modified the proposals. Duncan discussed the importance of the cumulative effects study and each element needing to be studied and information integrated, the study needs to be a series of steps all sitting together. Duncan had submitted the modified proposals to others for peer review located in different areas. John Bailey cautioned Duncan Patten that the Technical Advisory Committee needs to get their direction and approval from the Task Force. The Technical Advisory Committee will explain their involvement process in the cumulative effects investigation work plan at the next Task Force meeting on July 15, 1999 held at the Yellowstone Motor Inn.

Landowner Contact/Public Involvement re: 1999 field season

Jim Robinson, DNRC, explained the need to send out a post card or a letter to landowners along the Yellowstone River for permission to access their land to complete the cross sections of the cumulative effects study. Jim has a data file from Department of Revenue listing all landowners along the Yellowstone River and their address, and he will develop a mailing list from this file. After the correspondence is sent out to landowners then a follow-up visit before agency people are in the field would be done (hopefully be Coordinator). Jim will pull together a mailing list of landowners so the Task Force will have a better understanding on how much this correspondence project will cost.

Report from the Task Force Coordinator Selection Committee

The selected subcommittee (John Bailey, Ellen Woodbury, Teri Marceron, Mike Atwood, David Haug, and Brant Oswald) has chosen four applicants from the 16 submitted for the Coordinator position and will interview four individuals. The subcommittee will meet to discuss questions that will need to be asked during the interviewing process. The subcommittee will bet up interviews with the four applicants and report to the Task Force.

Other Business Mark Simonich, Director of DEQ, has confirmed with the Jim Robinson that the Governor's office will extend the Task Force for another two-year term ending on July 1, 2001. The Governor's office will issue the new Executive Order closer to July 1, 1999. John Bailey asked Mark Simonich about receiving more funds for the Task Force; Mark will look into the matter. The 319-nonpoint source grant deadline is on August 27, 1999. The Task Force discussed applying for a 319 this year for coordinator expenses, Tom Pick mentioned that the Task Force would need to correlate water quality and the coordinator position.

The operating agreement between the Task Force and the Park Conservation District has been approved by the Task Force and Jim Robinson will present a copy at the next Task Force meeting for John Bailey to sign, and at the Park Conservation District meeting the agreement will be signed by Martin Davis, Chairman.

Tom Pick, MRCS, mentioned a proposal submitted to the Task Force by NRCS last year to study the land use on the Yellowstone River (channel and upland conditions), however Shirley Gammon withdrew the proposal and wrote a letter stating the NRCS did not have the staff to help the Task Force with the Cumulative Effects Study. Shirley Gammon has now decided to move forward with the proposal, to help with the study by providing Technical assistance and Tom Pick will resubmit the proposal to the Task Force for their approval.

Steve Golnar, City Manager, asked the Task Force to become involved with the Section 205 Structural/Non Structural Flood Control Project study being undertaken by the Corps of Engineers, Omaha Branch Office.

At this time Park County does not want to become involved with this study, they feel enough studies are being done on the Yellowstone River. The City of Livingston is asking for the assistance, cooperation and coordination of the Task Force in supporting and understanding the investigations and results of the City's Section 205 study for flood plain management for Livingston. The Task Force has give their acceptance and requested the Steve work with the Technical Advisory Committee of the Task Force and the Corp of Engineers.

Amy Miller, Park Conservation District, handed out a copy of the Task Force budget on the DEQ funds (\$49,138.00), and reported that the DNRC 223 grant has been spent on the slight of the Yellowstone River and the report for the grant has been completed.

Next Meeting

The Yellowstone River Task Force will be holding its next meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday, July15, 1999, at the Yellowstone Motor Inn.