

MISSOURI RIVER FISHERIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MoTAC)

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING FOR 2019

MDFWP Office, Great Falls MT

20 November 2018

AND

End of Year Budget Report

Attendees

Rob Beattie (FWP – Lewistown); Grant Grisak (Chair, NWE – Gt Falls); George Liknes (USFS - Lincoln); Brent Mabbott (NWE – Butte); Jason Mullen (FWP-Gt Falls); Jody Peters (BLM – Havre); Adam Strainer (FWP – Helena); Mike Schilz (FWP – Lewistown); Jim Boyd (USFWS – Helena); Mary Gail Sullivan (NWE – Butte); Luke Holmquist (FWP-Lewistown); Jordan Tollefson (NWE – Helena); Katie Vivian (FWP – Gt Falls); Andy Welch (NWE – Helena).

MoTAC Business Items

Recent NWE Staff Changes/Transition. Grant Grisak (NWE) reported Steve Leathe retired from NWE in August and Grant is taking over as chair of the MoTAC and other duties associated with license compliance.

Long-Term Fisheries Monitoring Agreement for Missouri River and Reservoirs. Grant reported the new 10 year monitoring agreement between FWP and NWE was signed in late 2017 and is now in effect. The agreement follows the previous format and the process was captured in the 2018 minutes.

Update of 5-Year Fisheries PM&E Plan. The 5-year fisheries Protection, Mitigation & Enhancement (PM&E) plan for the Missouri River and reservoirs expires at the end of 2018. Steve Leathe distributed the plan in early 2018. Only a few comments were received and basically amounted to changing references to PPLM to Northwestern Energy. Most changes were to Article 417 and involved updates to the seining protocol and creel survey on the Missouri River below Morony Dam. Portions of the pallid sturgeon monitoring section were updated to reflect that juvenile pallid sturgeon are becoming sexually mature adults so monitoring will shift to evaluate spawning of hatchery raised pallid sturgeon and recruitment. Part of the 5-year plan includes a comprehensive evaluation of PM&E progress for the previous 5 year period as well as the 17 year period since the program's inception. Grant indicated the cost share of the program is nearly 1:1. Even though match isn't a requirement of the TAC program, it is encouraged and makes projects more competitive. Over the past 5 years the match has been almost exactly 50:50 (NWE:partners) for \$3.4 million in total cost. Over the past 17 years the match has been 46:54 for \$17 million in total cost. The draft plan (red tab in the annual TAC meeting book) provides a synopsis of the progress evaluation. Andy reported that all TAC-agency members have commented and signatures were just recently finalized. The 5-year plan will be submitted to FERC by the end of December.

Status of Project Completion Reports. Grant reviewed the list of project completion reports from 2014-2018. The list shows 2 missing reports for 2013 projects and 2 missing for 2017 projects. All of those projects are in various stages of planning or implementation. At the time of the meeting, there were three 2018 reports completed and 7 outstanding. Grant said one of the 7 had been completed a few days prior and not reflected in the list. We continue to use the guideline that reports are due within 6-9 months of project completion and we maintain good success over the years. Reports for habitat improvement and other 'on-the-ground' projects that do not involve data analysis and interpretation do not need to be lengthy (2-4 pages often sufficient) can often be completed more quickly. Grant reminded the TAC that reports should contain, at a minimum, location map, budget, photographs. Ideally these should also include timeframe, summary of accomplishment. Grant will contact applicants in 2019 to keep progress reports on track.

Proposed Ryan Dam Operations Amendment. Grant reported NWE is considering a license amendment for operational changes to Ryan Dam. The proposal involves allowing pulse operations for the purpose of stabilizing the power grid. Grant reported that changes in solar, wind and coal generation require some flexibility in hydro to provide reliable levels of power.

Andy said NWE has met with agencies (DEQ, DNRC and FWP) to provide information and gather feedback. Some preliminary work has been conducted to evaluate potential sediment transport from the Ryan forebay. Jordan Tollefson (NWE) reported that sediment samples were collected from about 20 sites in the Ryan forebay to evaluate metals. Samples from 2014, 2017 and 2018 had non-detectable levels of TCLP extractable metals. In response to prior questions raised by FWP about how Morony could attenuate flows, Andy indicated the volume of Morony is more than Ryan and Cochrane combined and the license allows for fluctuations of Morony up to 10 feet, specifically to manage pulsing flows from Cochrane [and Ryan]. Plus, the short duration (60-240 minutes) of typical pulse flows allows increases or decrease to be attenuated by Morony, as the license stipulates. The proposal would include modifying the operation range of the Ryan pool to 9 feet (1 foot up and 8 feet down). The drawdown plan for Ryan would also need changing. Andy indicated NWE plans to address the comments and questions raised and hopefully file for a license amendment in early 2019.

Reserve Account Management. Grant reported the Reserve Account has been operating very close to maximum for the past few years. In 2014 the cap was changed from \$100,000 to \$200,000, then again in 2017 to \$250,000. From 2014-2018 the Reserve has carried an average commitment of 81%. In a few instances the cap was exceeded and funds were returned to Northwestern Energy. It appears that similar discussions within the TAC happened in 2010. The minutes from the Dec 7, 2010 meeting show a desire to manage the Reserve Account "...to be large enough to carry funds for larger-scale projects..." Grant recalled past TAC discussions about a desire to "bank" funds for larger projects like conservation easements or projects of opportunity. The Reserve Account has been largely occupied by committed projects from previous years that have been delayed for various reasons. There was some discussion about revisiting the purpose of the Reserve Account. Adam Strainer commented that a phased approach to larger projects may be helpful going forward. By way of example, he submitted a proposal this year for planning and permitting and intends to apply for implementation next year. The Beaver Creek project is another example of planning first before securing implementation funds. Grant recommended the TAC look at opportunities to phase projects to not tie up funds in the Reserve Account and to help maintain uncommitted funds for larger projects or projects of opportunity. A number of people acknowledged that unforeseen circumstances have delayed some projects.

Status Review for Sicklefin Chub and Sturgeon Chub. Grant reported recent discussions he's had with USFWS and FWP about an up-and-coming status review of sicklefin chub and sturgeon chub relative to a petition filed with the USFWS for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Jim Boyd (USFWS) indicated the Service would conduct a status review by 2022-23. In a similar and recent status review of fluvial arctic grayling, Jim indicated CPUE and population data was available but made it difficult for the Service to make a scientific judgement on the status. Jim recommended other population-level projects to help describe the status of these two species. Grant and Luke Holmquist have been talking about the possibility of genetically mapping these two species in the Missouri River below Morony Dam [and in other parts of Montana] to determine population fitness. Luke has been talking with Dr. Edward Heist at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale to develop genetic markers. George Liknes asked if it was possible to use fin clips or necessary to use whole fish. Luke said they are working on a protocol. Luke said it would cost \$40k to design and run microsatellites for 100 individuals of both species and about \$80k for the ddRAD. The ddRAD would get tenfold useful information. Jim indicated the partners should talk about this issue in the coming months to help collect the most useful information for a status review. Luke reported low catches of both species during standardized sampling over the past few years. In 2018 his staff conducted experimental sampling in October further upstream and captured 60x more sicklefin and 11x more sturgeon chub. Luke will look at modifying the sampling for these two species to be more representative of their status. Grant indicated a similar status review was conducted in 1994-1996 and paid for largely by Montana Power Company. The Service used that information in its 2001 status review for these two species, which concluded listing was not warranted.

Review of Selected 2018 Projects

2018-2. Fisheries Monitoring. Adam Strainer (FWP) reviewed fisheries monitoring results and habitat restoration projects completed in the Hauser/Holter reservoir areas. Monitoring is based on a three year running average of gill net catch. In Hauser, walleye numbers are above target at 6.9 per net, rainbow trout numbers are above target at 5.3 per net and perch are slightly above target at 4.3 per net. In Holter, walleye numbers are below target at 2.8 per net, rainbow trout numbers are below target at 3.6 per net and perch are above target at 15.3 per net. Although perch numbers are high, the decline is indicative of the 2011 yearclass reaching maturity. Kokanee salmon remain present but at very low levels. In even years a fall electrofishing survey is conducted in the Holter tailrace. In 2018 the rainbow trout estimate was 5,160 per mile which is higher than the past two years. Hatchery origin rainbows made up about 11% of population. Brown trout numbers remained relatively consistent at 229 per mile

Luke Holmquist (FWP) reported on Missouri River fisheries monitoring from Morony Dam to the headwaters of Fort Peck Reservoir. River flow in 2018 was high and reached a peak of 41,000 cfs at the Virgelle gage. The Marias and Teton rivers both experienced high flows this year. Electrofishing of five standard river sections yielded ~8,300 fish from 35 species. The combined catch of all species was slightly less than last year but within the historic range. In 2018 there were record numbers of northern pike and channel catfish sampled. Seining surveys showed 60 fish per seine haul and 27 species. Hybognathus spp. Numbers were higher than last year while the other seven most common species were slightly down. Trawling for YOY fish and other minnows captured 527 fish from 20 species. Trawling for sicklefin and sturgeon chub yielded low numbers as in past years. Experimental sampling in October further upstream and captured 60x more sicklefin and 11x more sturgeon chub. Pallid sturgeon net catch was slightly lower than last year. High flows in the Marias River attracted 7 tagged adult pallid sturgeon as far as 30 miles upstream. Luke suggested these fish were attempting to spawn. One tagged pallid sturgeon was detected at the Carter Ferry radio receiver. High flows in the Marias and Teton complicated monitoring PIT tagged fish from the Missouri River.

Jason Mullen (FWP) reported rainbow trout numbers in the Craig section downstream from Holter Dam have been above average for the 8th year in a row. Rainbow numbers were average in the Cascade section and brown trout numbers were near average in both sections. For brown trout the same patten was observed in each section, respectively. In both sections, a large number of 9 inch rainbow trout were sampled, suggesting good recruitment for the next few years. Flows were very high in this section of river in 2018 and flow magnitude and duration was similar to 2011. Based on comparisons with past years, it would be consistent to see higher numbers of rainbow trout in future years. Katie Vivian provided an update on the Missouri River PIT tag study (759-14). High water in 2018 flooded several of the PIT stations and removed their antennae. About 11,000 fish have been tagged from 2014-2017. There have been 30,400 detections; 4,600 of 11,000 (41%) of tags have been detected at least once. Data collection will continue into 2019 and then analysis and reporting will be conducted.

2018-4. Habitat Project Consultant. Allen McNeal worked on several projects this year, including completing the Sevenmile Creek project, permitting on Prickly Pear Creek (Tryan property); planning and survey on lower Hardy Creek; survey and planning on Little Prickly Pear Creek, scoping of a riverbank restoration project on the river below Wolf Creek Bridge; scoping on Smith River/Johnson river bank restoration; Merritt spring Creek scoping, Missouri river construction oversight at Kaste. This project was overspent in 2018 largely because of unforeseen changes to the Sevenmile Creek restoration project and the addition of several new projects.

2018-5. Wegner Creek WCT Restoration. Jason Mullen reported survey and planning was completed in early 2018. In June, non-native fish were removed with rotenone. Restocking is expected to occur in 2019 after a slight modification to the barrier.

2018-6. Conservation Easement ABN Ranch. Grant reported closing on this easement has been slow by process involving some of the partners. Grant said Montana Land Reliance believes the project will be completed in 2018. Grant said he is preparing a contract with MLR to provide payment in 2018. Following a similar protocol for closing an easement on O'Dell Creek in 2015.

2018-7. Conservation Easement Tall Grass Ranch. Grant reported the easement will not be completed in 2018 and the project will be held over into 2019.

2018-8. Middle Missouri River Fish Tracking. Mike Schilz (FWP) summarized progress on the Missouri River fish tracking project. There were 8 wild pallid sturgeon and 73 hatchery-raised pallid sturgeon monitored in 2018. About 2800 relocations were made. Fourteen automated land-based detection stations located at various points between Carter Ferry and the headwaters of Fort Peck Reservoir were operated. About half (51%) of the hatchery pallids went upstream of the Judith River confluence and 33% went upstream of Coalbanks landing. Six of the radioed pallids entered the Marias River during the spawning season. Four of the radioed smallmouth buffalo showed a predictable pattern of behavior during the summer months over 4 years. One radioed northern pike traveled from Fort Peck Lake to Loma and back again. It was harvested by an angler near Crooked Creek.

2018-9. Blue Sucker Telemetry Data Analysis. This project was completed in 2018.

2018-10. Hardy Creek Restoration. Jason Mullen reported this project is moving ahead but slower than expected. A contract was added to McNeal to sub-contract with Hydrometrics to map the stream course and provide drawings for permitting. MDOT is balking at allowing two culverts to be replaced. High water in 2018 caused the pond to remain full which has hampered wetland survey and design. Jason has met with ACOE and Flood Plane Coordinator on permitting. The project will be help over into 2019.

2018-11. Missouri River Bank Restoration at Kaste. Jason Mullen reported the project was completed in early 2018. Because it was during high[er] water a portion of the bank did not receive willow sprigs. FWP staff went back in October and sprigged more willows at lower flow. Photographs of the project site show a great deal of revetation and some bank toe build-up. Jason believes the project was successful at stabilizing the bank.

2018-12. Prickly Pear Water Exchange. Adam Strainer reported the project was conducted in 2018 and provided a lot of water for the stream. High flows in 2018 precluded his crew from sampling it. Grant reported L&C County has received the data from 2018, will summarize it, write a report and invoice New before the end of 2018.

2018-13. PIT Tag Tracking Station. Katie Vivian reported ice jams and sustained high flows in 2018 destroyed most of the readers and arrays. Most have been replaced through insurance claims and two are currently operating. Still need some parts to restore remote tracking capabilities. No data analysis has taken place yet. A report will be prepared in early 2019.

2018-14. North Fork Highwood Creek Riparian Improvement. George Liknes (USFS) reported this project was cancelled in early 2018. Grant reported the TAC redirected these funds to the Sevenmile Creek restoration project overruns and the Tryan diversion project overruns.

2018-15. Relocate Little Prickly Pear Creek Irrigation Diversion. Grant reported this project was completed in 2018. A progress report was just recently completed. The irrigation system operated in 2018 by pumping water from the Missouri River.

2018-16. Missouri River Watergaps – Sterling Ranch. This project was completed in early 2018. A progress report was completed and forwarded to NWE.

2018-17. Water Lease – Little Belt Creek. This project was not completed in 2018. A Change in right was filed with DNRC. It is currently held up in Havre. It is approved for a one time payment that covers a 10-year period. Grant reported the TAC redirected these funds to the Sevenmile Creek restoration project overruns and the Tryan diversion project overruns.

2018-18. Weed Control – Helena Area. Adam Strainer reported the project will be completed in early 2019.

2018-22. Water Lease – Teton River. Grant indicated the leases were not executed in 2018 for two reasons. First, very high water in the Teton did not require a call on water in 2018. Second, the change of right was filed with DNRC and is currently held up in Havre. This lease is for an annual payment based on actual water left in the stream for habitat. Grant reported the TAC redirected these funds to the Sevenmile Creek restoration project overruns and the Tryan diversion project overruns.

2018-23. Holter Rainbow Trout Marking. Adam Strainer reported the project was implemented in 2018. An MCC Crew was hired to mark fish at the Lewistown Hatchery. Those fish were stocked in Holter and Hauser reservoirs in 2018.

2018-24. Prickly Pear Creek Fish Passage – Tryan. Adam Strainer reported the project was completed during the week of November 20. A No Rise Flood Analysis caused costs to increase. The contractor requested an additional \$8,600 for willows, sprigging and oversight. Grant reported the TAC approved redirecting funds from the Teton and Little Belt water leases and the NF Highwood projects to help cover the overruns. Grant indicated this project should be completely billed by the end of 2018.

2018-25. Sevenmile Cr Project Addition. This project was funded to help pay for analyses, permitting and fees to move the point of irrigation diversion on Sevenmile Creek within the restoration project section. The analysis showed the change in location was not substantial enough to warrant formal filing with DNRC. Most of the funding was used for survey, research and consultation with DNRC. A small amount of remaining funds were directed to implementation of the construction project. A report has been filed with NWE.

2018-26. Missouri River Bank Restoration at Wolf Creek Bridge. Jason Mullen reported he has been in discussion with the contractor and this project is expected to be completed in late 2018.

2018-27. INTERIM – Hardy Creek Engineering Study. Jason Mullen and Grant Grisak indicated this project was completed by McNeal Resources Inc. and Hydromentrics. The product is design data and plan drawings for permitting. A portion of the funding was provided by the Contingency fund.

2018-28. INTERIM – Holter Tailwater Macrophyte Survey. This project was completed in late 2018. River Design Group submitted a report that concluded the four test sites had 53-86% macrophyte coverage and that UAV data collection and modeling can predict macrophyte coverage on the streambed in most habitats but is less effective in deeper water.

Review of Projects Carried Over From Previous Years

754-14. Tenmile Cr Irrigation System Conversion – 7G Ranch. This project was completed in 2018. Adam Strainer gave a presentation on the project and indicated the project resulted in more efficient use of Tenmile Creek water. A report was submitted to NWE in mid 2018.

2016-11. Carpenter Cr Fish Barrier. Jason Mullen reported EPA continues to work with the neighboring landowner to allow work to occur on private land upstream from the proposed new culvert/fish barrier location.

2017-5. Beaver Creek Restoration Design – Phase 2. A draft plan was provided to the USFS and FWP in early 2018 for review and comments. River Design Group incorporated comments into a final design that was submitted in late 2018. This design project was completed in 2018 and the product is plan drawings suitable for bidding. Final payment should be completed by the end of 2018.

2017-10. Prickly Pear Cr Construction Oversight – Tryan. Adam Strainer reported this project was expected to begin in late 2018 and be completed in early 2019. The funding for this project is dedicated to construction oversight and cultural survey.

2017-14. Sevenmile Cr Restoration – Prickly Pear Land Trust. Adam Strainer reported this project was completed in 2018. There were some cost overruns by having to construct a temporary high gradient step-pool at the end of the project to connect the new channel with the old. The contractor requested an additional \$16,095 for equipment and \$2,000 for oversight overruns. Grant reported the TAC approved redirecting funds from the Teton and Little Belt water leases, NF Highwood project and the Reserve Account to help cover the overruns. Grant asked about an overtopping issue at the retention ponds and Adam said soil at the outlets was subsequently protected with straw waddles to aid in revegetation and stabilizing the sites. Adam said a survey of the north hillside did not identify any noticeable source water that is likely contributing to the ponds overtopping. Grant said a report was completed and the project has been completely billed.

Review of 2018 Expenses and Reserve Account

There were four projects from 2017 that were not completed and were moved into the Reserve Account in 2018 totaling \$176,696. As such, the TAC approved purchasing equipment (trammel nets, PIT equipment, boat motor) for \$24,500 and pre-billed the first installment of the FWP monitoring contract for \$91,562 using 2017 funds. About \$116,000 of 2017 year end funds were used to purchase equipment and monitoring that was approved on the 2018 budget. By doing so, about \$116,000 of the 2018 budget was freed-up.

The MoTAC budget for 2018 was \$621,385 and MoTAC approved 28 projects (includes 2 'interim' projects that came up during the year) totaling \$757,092 (see summary below). Hence, there was a projected overspend of the 2018 budget by an estimated \$135,707. The 2018 expenditures totaled \$546,236 and \$210,856 went unspent. Part of this underspending comes from projects approved for the 2018 budget but paid from the 2017 budget. Ideally, these funds would have rolled into the Reserve Account as uncommitted funds, but approved projects continued to languish in the Reserve Account. As such, the unspent 2018 funds exceed the Reserve Account cap of \$250,000.

The Reserve Account at the beginning of 2018 was estimated to be at the full capped amount of \$250,000. After 2017 end-of-year corrections the amount was actually \$247,323. In 2018, approximately \$180,000 was spent from the Reserve Account to complete four projects and provide a small amount of funding for the over expenses of Sevenmile Creek Construction (2018-25). The estimated Reserve Account at the end of 2018 includes \$51,948 (2016-11, \$25,200 and 2017-10, \$26,748) for past projects, plus \$19,131 in uncommitted funds, plus \$210,856 in unspent commitments for a total end of 2018 Reserve Account balance of \$281,935. The Reserve Account cap is \$250,000, which means it is over committed by an estimated \$31,935.

MOTAC Estimated Expenditures for CY2018

As Of: 21 Dec 2018

Project #	Project description	Approved amount for 2018	Estimated amt spent in 2018	Project #	Grisak comments
2018-1	Contingency /emergency fund	\$10,000	\$10,379		includes \$9171 for Hydrometrics 2018-30
2018-2	Fisheries Monitoring - FWP	\$274,686	\$183,124		only billed 2/3 in 2018
2018-3	Field Operations - NorthWestern	\$10,000	\$10,000		
2018-4	Habitat Projects Consultant	\$20,000	\$24,330		
2018-5	Wsl Cutthroat Trout Restoration - Wegner Cr	\$4,924	\$4,924		
2018-6	Conservation Easement - ABN Ranch	\$75,000	\$75,000		
2018-7	Conservation Easement - Tall Grass Ranch	\$16,699	\$0		
2018-8	Middle Missouri Fish Tracking	\$47,405	\$47,405		
2018-9	Blue Sucker Telemetry Data Analysis	\$6,100	\$6,100		Anticipated \$1525 bal billed before Dec 2018
2018-10	Hardy Creek Restoration	\$84,200	\$3,082		
2018-11	Mo River Bank Stabilization - Dearborn-Kaste	\$2,175	\$2,562		
2018-12	Prickly Pear Cr Water Exchange	\$5,000	\$5,000		Anticipated \$5000 billed before Dec 2018
2018-13	Pit Tag Tracking Station - Marias/Teton	\$3,300	\$3,300		TAC Redirected to Sevenmil Overrun
2018-14	NF Highwood Cr Riparian Improvement	\$4,140	\$0		Cancelled. TAC redirected to 2402 to Tryan and 1738 to Sevenmile
2018-15	Relocate LPPear Cr Irrigation Diversion	\$7,815	\$7,815		
2018-16	Mo River Water Gaps - Sterling Ranch	\$6,990	\$8,619		Additional \$2115 for pollution insurance
2018-17	Water Lease - Little Belt Creek	\$5,725	\$0		Not implemented in 2018. TAC redirected to Sevenmile
2018-18	Weed Control - Helena Area Stream Projects	\$2,290	\$2,290		
2018-19	Equip - Boat Motor - Holter Tailwater	\$16,862	\$0		purchased with 2017 funds
2018-20	Equip - Pit Tags - Middle Missouri River	\$1,568	\$1,568		TAC Redirected to Sevenmil Overrun
2018-21	Equip - Pallid Sturgeon Trammel Nets	\$3,920	\$3,150		TAC Redirected to Sevenmil Overrun
2018-22	Teton River Water Leasing	\$6,198	\$0		Not implemented in 2018. TAC redirected to Tryan
2018-23	Holter Rainbow Trout Marking	\$6,753	\$6,723		
2018-24	P Pear Cr Fish Passage Construc - Tryan	\$102,190	\$110,790		TAC added \$8,600 for willow planting
2018-25	Sevenmile Cr Restoration Project Addition	\$7,500	\$25,595		
2018-26	Mo River Bank Restoration - Wolf Cr Bridge	\$12,200	\$0		
2018-27	INTERIM - Hardy Cr Engineering Survey	\$8,972	\$0		\$9171 billed to the contingency
2018-28	INTERIM - Holter Tailwater Macrophyte Delineation	\$4,480	\$4,480		
	TOTAL	\$757,092	\$546,236		
	Budget for CY2018	\$621,385			
	Total approved for CY2018	\$757,092			
	Balance	(\$135,707)			
	Unspent balance		\$210,856		

*****RESERVE ACCOUNT*****

Projects Approved in Prior Year(s) But Not Fully Completed Yet:

Project #	Project Description	Remain Commitment	Amount spent in 2018	Balance of commitment remaining
754-14	Tenmile Cr Irrig System Convert - 7G Ranch	\$51,608	\$51,608	\$0
2016-11	Carpenter Cr Fish Barrier	\$25,200	\$0	\$25,200
2017-5	Beaver Cr Restoration Proj Design - Phase 2	\$38,724	\$38,724	\$0
2017-10	Prickly Pear Cr Construc Oversight - Tryan	\$33,000	\$6,252	\$26,748
2017-14	Sevenmile Cr Restoration - PPear Land Trust	\$71,667	\$71,667	\$0
2017-21	Smith River Bank Restoration	\$11,493	\$11,493	\$0
		TOTAL	\$179,744	\$51,948

Estimated Reserve Account balance at end of CY2018 (Reserve account capped at \$250K beginning in 2017)

\$71,078

Subtract Remaining Reserve Account Commitments for 2018

\$51,947

Estimated Un-Committed Reserve Account funds available in 2018

\$19,131

Review and Comments on Selected 2019 Proposals

There were 25 proposed projects for 2019, totaling \$618,087. In most cases, there was little discussion following the brief presentations by project sponsors. There were questions or comments on a few of the proposals as follows:

The proposed values for the NWE Operations and Habitat Consultant were superimposed. This was easily fixed by changing the numbers. There was no change to the overall proposed amounts or the annual budget.

2019-18. Water Lease – Teton River. This project was approved by the TAC in 2017 (2017-22). The nature of this lease involves paying annually, up to \$6,198, only if water is leased for instream flow. Because 2018 was an exceptionally high water year and the leases are not finalized yet, this project went unspent in 2018. The TAC approved moving the 2018 funds dedicated to this project to help pay for project overruns in 2018. As such, because this project and its funds will not be moved into the Reserve Account, it was necessary to reapprove the project in 2019.

2019-19. Water Lease – Little Belt Creek. This project was approved by the TAC in 2018 (2018-17). The nature of this lease involves paying up-front for a 10 year lease (est ~\$500/year). Because the project was not implemented in 2018, the TAC approved moving the 2018 funds dedicated to this project to help pay for project overruns in 2018. As such, because this project and its funds will not be moved into the Reserve Account, it was necessary to reapprove the project in 2019.

2019-21. Little Prickly Pear Creek Channel Maintenance. The proposal speculated the large bedload deposit was a failure of the grade control structures in this section or the very high flow experienced in 2018. The TAC questioned the proposed design of the grade control structures to determine if the channel would likely continue to laterally or vertically migrate. Jason Mullen (FWP) indicated the structures were intended to prevent this. Jason committed to discussing the issue with Allan McNeal to provide the best level of assurance to stabilize the channel. Grant pointed out the history of the channel to mobilize bedload and migrate are reasons why the TAC assisted with moving it several years ago. A number of members expressed reluctance for long-term maintenance. The TAC approved the proposal with the understanding Jason would discuss these concerns with Allan McNeal to incorporate a design that provide the highest probability of success.

2019-22. Sevenmile Creek Design and Permitting. The TAC asked for clarification of the proposal on page 65. Section III states that PPLT will contract with Confluence to accomplish the goals. Section V states that a firm with experience will be used to conduct the work. Adam indicated the design and permitting is expected to be done by Confluence and the construction part would go out for bid. The TAC asked for firm clarification from PPLT that a bid process will be used for construction. The TAC also asked for clarification that the deliverables of this project include a design that is fully permitted and can be bid for construction. The TAC asked for a commitment to keep cost down and if permitting and cultural survey costs are not fully used, those funds be reserved for construction. [On November 27, 2018, PPLT emailed Grant and Adam Strainer (FWP) and stated all of the above conditions could be met].

2019-23. WCT Assistance. George Liknes commented that this project is a joint effort between two TAC partners (FWP and USFS). It is proposed for funding through USFS mainly to keep overhead cost down. If the funding cannot be routed through USFS, it would be routed through FWP but at a higher overhead level. Jason Mullen reported on the uncertainty of SWiG funding. He recommended increasing the budget to cover operations and to cover increased overhead costs. There were no objections to increasing the budget. The TAC approved this project and its modifications. A revised proposal, that includes these modifications, was requested by the TAC.

Summary of 2019 Funding Decisions and End of Year Budget Report

After review, comments and questions for the 25 proposals, MoTAC voted on the proposals and unanimously approved the 25 projects proposed for 2019. The total amount approved was \$618,087. The budget for 2019 is \$633,813, which means the 2019 budget is slightly underspent by \$15,726. There was some discussion about dedicating this \$15,726 to the Contingency fund but it was determined leaving it as uncommitted funding would essentially have the same result.

There were four projects from 2018 totaling \$210,856 that went unspent and those commitments will be rolled into the Reserve Account. Billing for project 2018-6 was uncertain at the time of the TAC meeting, so it was assumed the unspent 2018 balance was \$285,856. The two previous projects (2016-11 and 2017-10) that remained in the Reserve Account totaled \$51,948. The estimated Uncommitted funds in the Reserve Account at the end of 2018 are \$19,131. The total estimated Reserve Account balance at the end of 2018 is \$356,935, which is overcommitted by \$106,934. In order to prevent overcommitting the Reserve Account, the TAC approved Grant pre-billing \$91,652 from the 2018 budget toward the 2019 Fish Monitoring project (2019-2) and purchasing the boat motor for \$17,826 (2019-16) from the 2018 budget. This is the second year in a row that current-year expenses were approved to pay ahead and avoid account overtures. Grant indicated the flexibility to do so should be an uncommon practice. Grant reminded the TAC that \$109,388 in approved 2019 expenses will be paid from 2018 funds which has the potential to cause another budget overrun next year, unless there is enough room in the Reserve Account. To improve the likelihood of moving these funds to the Reserve Account in 2020, the TAC was encouraged to free-up projects parked in the Reserve Account.

By mid December 2018, billing for project 2018-6 was completed. As such, at the beginning of 2019 the estimated Reserve Account includes \$51,947 (2016-11, \$25,200 and 2017-10, \$26,748) for past projects, plus \$110,017 in unspent 2018 projects (2018-7, \$16,699; 2018-10, \$81,118; 2018-26, \$12,200), plus \$19,131 in uncommitted funds for a total balance of \$181,095.

MOTAC Projects & Budget for CY2019

As Of: Dec 21, 2018

Project #	Project description	Proposed budget for 2019	Approved amount for 2019	Page #	(Numbers in PINK are estimates)
2019-1	Contingency / Emergency fund	\$10,000	\$10,000		
2019-2	Fisheries Monitoring - FWP	\$244,977	\$244,977	1	
2019-3	Habitat Projects Consultant	\$20,000	\$20,000	5	
2019-4	Field Operations - NorthWestern	\$10,000	\$10,000	6	
2019-5	Holter Boat House Maint	\$11,000	\$11,000	7	
2019-6	Missouri River Fence - Willo Ranch	\$18,584	\$18,584	10	
2019-7	Blue Sucker Report Publication	\$2,000	\$2,000	13	
2019-8	Middle Missouri Fish Tracking	\$57,646	\$57,646	16	
2019-9	Equipment - Boat Motor - Middle Missouri	\$11,700	\$11,700	19	
2019-10	Middle Missouri Creel Survey	\$67,465	\$67,465	21	
2019-11	Equipment - Pit Tag Antennae	\$880	\$880	24	
2019-12	Equipment - Sonar	\$700	\$700	26	
2019-13	Equipment - Pallid Sturgeon Trammel Nets	\$3,965	\$3,965	28	
2019-14	Equipment - Gill Nets	\$1,373	\$1,373	30	
2019-15	Equipment - Trolling Motor	\$330	\$330	31	
2019-16	Equipment - Boat Motor - Holter Tailwater	\$17,826	\$17,826	32	
2019-17	Prickly Pear Cr Water Exchange 2 yrs	\$10,000	\$10,000	34	
2019-18	Water Lease Teton River (2017-22)	\$6,198	\$6,198	37	Project approved in 2017 for 10 years - annual payment
2019-19	Water Lease Little Belt Creek (2018-17)	\$5,725	\$5,725	40	Project approved in 2018 for 10 years - one payment
2019-20	Wegner Creek -WCT Transfer	\$5,152	\$5,152	43	
2019-21	LPP Creek - Channel Maint at Sieben	\$38,375	\$38,375	46	
2019-22	Sevenmile Creek Design and Permitting #2	\$39,000	\$39,000	60	
2019-23	WCT Assistance	\$16,400	\$21,200	68	
2019-24	Smith River Bank Restoration	\$11,930	\$11,930	71	
2019-25	Missouri River tributary Sauger Track	\$2,061	\$2,061	77	
	TOTAL	\$613,287	\$618,087		
	Budget for CY2019		\$633,813		
	Total approved by TAC for CY2019		\$618,087		
	Balance		\$15,726		

*****RESERVE ACCOUNT*** (capped at \$250K beginning in 2017)**

Projects Approved in Prior Year(s) But Not Fully Completed Yet:

Project #	Project Description	Project Cost	Amount spent in 2018	Balance of commitment remaining	
2016-11	Carpenter Cr Fish Barrier	\$25,200	\$0	\$25,200	Orig proj for \$80K cancelled. TAC approved \$25,200 in Sep 2016 for new design at new location. Waiting for EPA to get easement from pvt landowner
2017-10	Prickly Pear Cr Construc Oversight - Tryan	\$33,000	\$6,252	\$26,748	
2018-7	Conservation Easement - Tall Grass Ranch	\$16,699	\$0	\$16,699	
2018-10	Hardy Creek Restoration	\$84,200	\$3,082	\$81,118	
2018-26	Mo River Bank Restoration - Wolf Cr Bridge	\$12,200	\$0	\$12,200	Contract ends Dec 31, 2018. May be complete?
			TOTAL	\$161,965	
	Estimated Reserve Account Bal 12/7/18	\$71,078			
	Subtract Remaining Reserve Account Commitments through 2018	\$51,947			
	Estimated Uncommitted Reserve Funds available in 2018	\$19,131			
	New Reserve Commitments into 2019	\$110,017			
	Total Reserve amount beginning 2019	\$181,096			