

**Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023 @ 1:30 p.m.
Idaho Fish and Game Conference Room**

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Bruce Mulkey, Chair

Agenda Modifications - none

Approval of Meeting Notes - approved

Presentation

- Lower Lemhi Rehabilitation Project modeled flows Jeff Fealko (RIO)
Jeff presented on models of lower Lemhi River flow. Jeff talked about how models are created and how accurate they are. One starts with existing topography through ground field work and lidar flights, then you add roughness. Roughness is a measurement of things that interrupt flow, like willows or other plants on the bank and in the floodplain. This calculation varies across watersheds and basins. Next, you estimate hydrology which is just how much flow to model. Jeff briefly talked about instantaneous peak flow and how we get numbers for 5, 10, 20, etc. year floods. Jeff then talked about how to validate which is done through ground truthing, calibration, and looking at past incidents. Jeff then compared models with similar actual flow events to show where the water was predicted to go and where it actually went. Jeff then showed data and models from floods in 2009, 2017, 2018, and 2022. Next, Jeff talked about existing vs proposed conditions – what’s the difference and why do we model proposed conditions. Jeff overlaid maps of existing conditions vs proposed and what happened during actual high flow events. He highlighted areas of increase, decrease, or no change between the two. Jeff then showed a model that extended 1,000’ upstream of Baker Lane. Showed the model for a 1.5, 5, 25, etc. year floods. Showed flood water levels at Baker Lane. The model is still in development but is nearly complete. The plan is to meet with landowners to discuss risks associated with the model. Jeff suggested that ground truthing this spring during high flow would be a good idea.

- Water Year Outlook for the Lemhi River Ryan McCutcheon (IDWR)
Ryan presented via zoom on this year’s water outlook for the Lemhi/Upper Salmon Basin. Precipitation is looking to be normal, and the snowpack is high. Pahsimeroi snotel reads at 300%, which may not be accurate but is likely in good condition. North Fork is at 100%, headwaters of the salmon at 120%. Soil is abnormally dry but wetter than this time in ’22 or ’21. Ryan showed a graph that represents how snowpack translates to flow over the past 10-20 years. Then he showed everyone how to use the NOAA flood expectancy tool. Ryan then went into details about the water supply forecast which compares prediction of the next few months to the median. Salmon is at 110% and Lemhi is at 140% meaning we are predicted to have a better than normal year for flow in these two rivers.

- Lemhi County Emergency Management Leah Madsen (L. County Commissioner)
County explained that they are responsible only for county property and life and limb. They cannot go on private property unless life and limb are threatened. Commissioners and emergency professionals for the county were at a conference in Boise during the flooding event in Baker. County made an emergency declaration which gives them access to funds to help mitigate the emergency. Reiterated that they are not allowed on private property for modifications or improvements. After the county declaration, if you exhaust those funds, you go to a state declaration, then federal if costs approach 3.5 million dollars. The county has an emergency plan but had their hands tied with private property. Susan N questioned the validity of the county emergency operation plan. She wants commissioners to meet with effected landowners like IDFG has. She expressed that she was though IDFG has been good about meeting with landowners and wants county to do the same. John suggested the county make a plan for icing events in the future. Mary expressed concern that there was no notification from the county that this event was happening, only heard from neighbors. County said that they have a system that you can sign up for to get text or email alerts when an event happens. Bruce made a comment that a lot of people have decided to build within the floodplain knowing that they are in a precarious position if the river floods. This sparked a brief discussion on no rise and building permits in the floodplain and floodway. It was expressed that the county has been letting people build and live in the flood plain and it seems like they are letting people build closer and closer to the river, which increases their chances of being flooded. Shannon W. suggested the formation of a committee to look into making a communication hub for projects and other

**Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023 @ 1:30 p.m.
Idaho Fish and Game Conference Room**

things that may affect property owners. A lot of people at this meeting at the last meeting in April expressed concern of the lack of communication between the county, different agencies, and landowners. This hub would consist of 2-3 community members and 2-3 representatives from the committee and other local/state/federal agencies.

New Business

- Update on reimbursable items from the icing event in Baker Bertram/Murphy

Advisory Committee Membership

- Bureau of Land Management Price
Working on various projects and moving along at a good pace
- Governor's Office of Species Conservation Edmondson
Grizzly Bear lawsuit by governor and attorney general to delist. Lawsuit in MT against Fish and Wildlife Service for not following plan to introduce Grizzly Bears to the bitterroot mountains.
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game Murphy
Everything is late this year including deadwater ice jam, steelhead, and irrigation being turned on. There was injury on landowners property. State doesn't have \$ available for fixes, but they did find funds to funnel in for repairs. Dahle worked with contractors to do the repairs, including a third party appraiser. Lots of lessons learned from this project and the icing event. Reiterated that we (agencies, county, etc) need to do a better job and figure out how to better plan for future events.
- Landowner – East Fork Baker
- Landowners – Lemhi V.D. Olson / Mulkey
- Landowner - Pahsimeroi Wallis
- Lemhi County Commissioner Caywood
- Lemhi SWCD Beyeler
- Non-agency fish and wildlife interest Overacker
- NRCS Rieth
Annual local working group meeting is upcoming which presents an opportunity to identify resources for funding.
- Recreation Stringham
- UI Cooperative Extension – Salmon Williams
Reiterated that she wants to get this communication hub idea moving forward.
- U.S. Forest Service Gebhardt / Schade
Oversaw prescribed burns and thought about being strategic and think long term about floods/fires/climate

Vacant Positions

Shoshone – Bannock Tribe
Custer County Commissioner
Landowner – Main Salmon

Public Comment – Limited to 3 minutes per person

James Whitaker – snow melted and went into the ground, alleged that projects are draining water from rivers and streams. He thinks that the Eagle Valley project is putting water into the ground, which will significantly effect L5 users.

Schedule Next Meeting

Mulkey

Daniel Bertram suggested that a tour of eagle valley could serve as the next meeting. The committee chair agreed. This tour is scheduled for June 6th at 1:30PM. Daniel noted that this can't be an open to the public meeting because parking and space will be limited. Wants only affected landowners from the Baker event and committee members to attend.

Adjourn