

Henry's Fork Watershed Council Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2020

Introductions and Community Building

Aaron Dalling, Fremont-Madison Irrigation District (FMID) welcomed everyone to the March Watershed Council meeting, explaining that the Henry's Fork Watershed Council is co-facilitated by the Henry's Fork Foundation and Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. The group went around the room with introductions and then Aaron explained that the Council has a long history of trust building and the group begins each meeting with a moment of silence.

The meeting was then opened for announcements or comments.

No announcements were made.

History of the HFF Intern Program

Kamberlee Allison, Henry's Fork Foundation

The Henry's Fork Foundation's (HFF) intern program began in 1989 with an intern from Washington and Lee University conducting restoration work and monitoring. Since then, five other internships have been added over the years and HFF's new Community Campus provides housing and office space for interns each year. Also in recent years, each intern is given an independent project to take the lead on and a mentor, in addition to helping with broader HFF work that the intern team and staff share. Interns make crucial field work possible and end the year by presenting the results of their independent projects at HFF's summer seminar series. The intern program continues to grow and develop to provide a competitive professional development experience for students and meaningful mission accomplishment for HFF.

Bringing New Life to an Old Refuge

Brian Wehausen, Camas National Wildlife Refuge

In 1937, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) began purchasing land for Camas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) the area was a wetland oasis within the high desert of Southeast Idaho. Abundant surface water at that time fed a network of wetlands that provided migration and nesting habitat for tens of thousands of wetland bird species, especially waterfowl. The wetland habitat lasted until the mid 1980s when big changes began to happen on the landscape.

Innovations in irrigation practices started about the mid 1980 when many farmers switched from time intensive flood irrigation to much more efficient sprinkler irrigation systems. This change marked the start of the decline of wetland habitat on Camas NWR and the surrounding area. This change was the first among many to affect wetland habitat in eastern Idaho. Today

the staff of Camas NWR face not being able to meet the mission for which the Refuge was established. To attempt to meet as much of the mission as possible the Refuge staff is proposing some changes to the Refuge infrastructure to provide more stable wetland habitat. We are also seeking partners that would be interested in restoration work on Camas and Beaver Creeks that would provide benefits to the local aquifer and its users.

ISDA Invasive Species Program Update

Cole Morrison, Idaho State Department of Agriculture

The Idaho Invasive Species Act of 2008 established a list of species that cannot be propagated in Idaho. The Act also established the invasive species sticker fund which raises between \$1.1-1.4 million per year. The Idaho Noxious Weed law established a list of weeds that, if they are on your property, you are responsible for controlling. Anyone can petition to have species added to the lists. For the invasive species stickers, the only exceptions are for non-motorized inflatables that are less than 10 feet in length. The species of greatest concern in Idaho are quagga and zebra mussels. These invasive species disrupt water delivery and drainage, damage fisheries and aquatic habitat, and would have an estimated \$114 million of annual impact if they come to Idaho. As part of the check station program, most of the “hot boats” (boats that had mussels) in 2019 were coming from the Great Lakes and Lake Powell. Also, in summer of 2019 the ISDA discovered the first population of Eurasian Water Milfoil in Bear Lake. This year they will begin leading edge treatment to address it.

Linderman Dam Safety Project

Mike Hilliard, US Bureau of Reclamation

The Linderman Dam is located approximately 7 miles upstream of Teton Dam on the Teton River, just passed the Milk Creek confluence. Linderman Dam was initiated and designed by Shayne Linderman to divert irrigation water to Linderman’s farmland lying along the south canyon rim. The dam was constructed in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s; largely by local forces. The original structure included a 10-foot hydraulic drop; water pooled 3,600 feet upstream. Reclamation purchased the land and facilities in early 1970’s in preparation for the construction of Teton Dam. The Linderman Dam structure was largely dismantled to make way for Teton Dam after 1972; the remaining structure was to be inundated by the reservoir. After the failure of Teton Dam in 1976, the Teton river resumed its previous course and the footings of Linderman Dam were exposed once again. The structural remnants of Linderman Dam are composed of concrete that is eroded and vertical pipes that are exposed and protrude into the river flow. Over the years a dangerous hydraulic jump at Linderman Dam has formed and must be addressed. The Teton River is used heavily by the public and outfitters, boaters are currently encouraged to portage upstream of the dam structure. This project will remove majority of remaining dam features, build a natural riffle and boater passage through the river channel and remove future water hazards at this location. The project drivers are addressing the safety hazard; improve Yellowstone cutthroat trout habitat; and provide water to the nearby irrigation pumps of the adjacent landowner.

Diversion Dam Signage on the Lower Teton

Aaron Dalling, Fremont-Madison Irrigation District

Last summer a young man floating the Teton River drowned in a current created by an irrigation diversion. In response, the US Bureau of Reclamation and Idaho Department of Fish and Game led an effort to install signs in key spots along the river to notify floaters of upcoming dangers.

Community Building and Wrap Up

Jamie Laatsch, HFF called for one minute of silence to reflect on the meeting and prepare any final announcements or comments.

The meeting was open to final announcements and comments.

Keith Esplin, EIWRC shared that the meeting topics were fascinating and asked if meeting presentations were available to view online. Yes → <https://henrysfork.org/watershed-council>

Bryce Oldemeyer, HFF thanked Brian Wehausen for his presentation at the meeting.

Aaron Dalling, FMID appreciated USBR's willingness to improve safety and the fishery near Linderman Dam while ensuring actions do not harm local agriculture.

Daniel Wilcox, HFF was introduced as the new Upper Snake River Collaborative Farms & Fish Program Manager. He shared that the collaborative is made up of HFF, FTR, TNC and TU and he aims to facilitate on-the-ground implementation of projects and scale those across the watershed.