

HENRY'S FORK WATERSHED COUNCIL GROUP MEMORY
COMPONENT GROUP DISCUSSIONS RE: ISLAND PARK FUTURES STUDY
FEBRUARY 18, 2014 – ASHTON COMMUNITY CENTER

Objectives

1. To get Council member input on the questions that should be answered to guide future decisions on natural resource management, community vitality and economic development in the Island Park area.
2. To gain Council consensus on the scoping process and meeting schedule associated with the Island Park Futures Study
3. To help prospective members of the Futures Project Subcommittee decide if they want to apply

General Comments on the Island Park Futures Study

1. Before each meeting, compile a basic list of existing documents and reports relevant to the topic of that particular meeting. Ideally, these documents would be posted on a web site prior to the meeting. Certainly more documents will surface at the meeting itself, and these should also be posted on the web, even if that occurs after the meeting on that subject. Throughout the process, the documents should all be added to a bibliography so that by the end, we have a complete record of all existing information on the resources being discussed. The literature should consist of relevant agency management plans, gray-literature technical reports, and scientific papers.
2. Related to the item above, at each meeting, provide a brief review of the existing agency management plans and guidance documents relevant to the resources being discussed at that particular meeting. The April meeting could provide a broad overview of existing management and planning, and resource-specific details could then be discussed at the other meetings. After reviewing the existing management, we should discuss what needs there are for updating or modifying this management and how those needs could be met or could be prevented by a National Monument designation.
3. Again related to above, a thorough review of existing management plans and research should be sufficient for assessment of most resources. There should not be much need to fund outside consultants to conduct additional study. External studies will be costly and require more time than we have for this process. However, if there are glaring knowledge gaps that are identified through this process, appropriate studies could be funded and conducted, with the understanding that it would be difficult for them to be completed by November 2014.
4. During each meeting, devote some time to discussion of what geographic area is most relevant to the subject matter of that meeting. This area will be different for each of the different resources, but if we keep a record of these areas from each meeting, at the end of the process we can compile all of them and identify the most appropriate area for consideration of all of the resources combined. For example, the most appropriate area for considering water resources may be the watershed upstream of Ashton, whereas the most appropriate area for managing winter recreation may exclude some of this watershed

area (e.g., Robinson Creek headwaters) but may include other areas outside the watershed (e.g., Flagg Ranch Road). – CG and AR also mentioned better definition of study area and going well beyond road corridor for the study

5. Invasive species are potentially relevant to all of the April through August meetings.
6. Talk about how national monument designation would affect each topic area we cover and try to get input based on other monument experiences
7. Make sure we focus on the FUTURE and not just on current conditions. Perhaps the subcommittee could conduct a SWOT analysis between meetings as use an introduction for presentations and/or component group discussions
8. Let's not forget to include shoulder seasons in the discussion
9. We need more irrigator and general citizen involvement
10. Be sure to coordinate work with the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC)

March 11 – Winter Recreation

- *What are the latest trends in winter sports and the latest user statistics? Should we contract for case studies on winter sports meccas?*
 - *Based on our understanding of what will be happening next door in Yellowstone NP, to what extent can Island Park/Ashton benefit by expanding their winter sports offerings?*
 - *What is legal and/or possible on National Forest system lands? What changes have already happened?*
 - *What cooperative marketing avenues can be pursued? Would it help to review case studies on community success stories like Leavenworth, WA?*
1. Include USFS in perspectives on motorized winter recreation, not just on the “other” winter recreation. What is the current winter travel plan on the CTNF?
 2. Contact Dan Garren about potential speakers from IDFG on winter wildlife habitat.
 3. Describe the current infrastructure necessary for winter recreation and its capacity to accommodate increased demand.
 4. Is there a “carrying capacity” for winter recreation in Island Park?
 5. Is there sufficient winterized housing to meet needs?
 6. Allow USFS to share a broader perspective than just snowmobiling (put on first panel)
 7. Consider adding ITD and Department of Lands if they have winter recreation regulations/responsibilities
 8. Make sure that the trends and future ideas for all sports are shared – not just snowmobiling – and that views from those who want to restrict use are balanced with those who want to expand use
 9. Should someone present the latest modeling data for climate?

April 8 - Land Use/Land Management Analysis

- *Is a 3rd party analysis of resource vulnerability and management gaps needed? (All groups said yes)*
 - *How well coordinated and aligned are the agencies' land management plans and policies with one another and the city/county comprehensive plans?*
 - *In what resource areas and multiple uses do we have seriously differing management objectives and activities?*
 - *Where are the greatest threats to IP resource values or sustainability of multiple uses?*
1. This would be a good meeting to invite a speaker from outside of our region who has experience with National Monument management plans and what they can and cannot do.
 2. Speakers should include representatives from USFS (District Ranger or Forest Planner), BLM (RMP Revision), Fremont County, City of Island Park, and ID Dept. of Lands (Pat Brown). Also include The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Fish and Game, and State Parks and Recreation. Should private lands and conservation easements situation be dealt with here or in August?
 3. How well do all the above agencies coordinate their efforts?
 4. Look at permitting issues, obstacles to multiple use such as timber harvest of both younger stands and old growth, and economic development issues
 5. The agency analysis should look at how the area of impact between the city and county plans is being managed
 6. Address any vulnerability to drilling for geothermal resources on private, state or federal lands

May 13 - Housing/Transportation/Public Infrastructure

- *Should we pay for an updated assessment of how IP development has and continues to affect groundwater quality?*
 - *Need a 50-year history of subdivision plats and community development activities in Island Park. (Both Tom Cluff and Jeff Patlovich have offered to help with this). Summarize historic and ongoing impacts, enforcement of building codes and rental policies, and an overview of sewer system history.*
 - *A DEQ presentation on its oversight of community water systems and solid waste management in Island Park and what portends for the future as capacity is limited*
 - *A Fall River Electric presentation on tis electrical generating capacity and delivery of service to a largely transient population. Include a perspective on encouraging use of renewables. It was felt that Dee Reynolds could provide a good historic overview of FRREC's activities in Island Park.*
1. Move the transportation discussion from the July meeting to the June meeting for three reasons: 1) transportation issues are intimately tied to infrastructure, 2) transportation issues span the whole year, not just summer, and 3) summer recreation is a huge topic that deserves its own meeting.
 2. To what extent does the current ITD study give specific direction to address wildlife crossings and the need to better manage semi-trailer truck traffic? Need a presenter on history of long-haul truck traffic, impacts and alternatives
 3. What would be the transportation impacts related to monument designation?
 4. What about road maintenance, snow removal and the plan for Highway 20 improvements over time

June 10 - Summer Recreation

- *Should we use research funds to update the economic valuation of the Henry's fork fishery and other wildlife?*
 - *Panelists from FS, IDPR, County Parks & Rec, BLM and F&G on user trends, impacts etc.*
 - *Business perspective on general tourism; OHV and non-motorized trail needs and potential*
 - *Angler and outfitter perspectives – trends, accommodations, access issues*
1. OHV/motorized discussed should include perspectives from outfitters (rental/retail shops), advocacy groups (e.g., Blue Ribbon Coalition), and local OHV clubs.
 2. USFS road and trail maintenance and travel plan discussion belongs here rather than under transportation, because under current management, USFS roads/trails almost exclusively serve summer recreation needs and not transportation per se. Include all state park trails and examine concept of linking into an inter-county trail network
 3. Include a panel on non-angling water recreation, including use of Big Springs Water Trail, flat-water recreation (boating and water skiing on HL and IP Reservoir), and non-angling recreational floating concerns (Box Canyon, Sheep Falls, Warm River to Ashton).
 4. Also address bird watching and wildlife viewing as increasingly popular non-consumptive activities
 5. Conduct an economic analysis of the Island Park area that considers the summer recreation demand and potential. What does the summer economy in Island Park and the entire 4-county region look like and how can the shoulder seasons be addressed? The University of Idaho Economic Plan for the whole state might be helpful

July 8-9 - Water Management and Aquatic Resources (Two days shown to include possible field trip)

- *Should we fund an assessment of the value of Island Park's water resources and potential external threats to state primacy?*
1. The drought management planning presentation needs to be much broader and include discussion of the original Adverse Storage Agreement (1971) and the FMID Conveyance Act (2003). We recommend a comprehensive overview of the history of water management in the basin, including Basin Plan, facility ownership, roles and responsibilities, and how Henry's Lake and IP Reservoir are currently managed.
 2. It may be helpful to review the Winters Doctrine/federal reserved water rights and how this might pertain to monuments
 3. An overview of state and federal river protection statutes along with the discussion of budgets.
 4. IDFG and its partners can provide an overview of fisheries and other aquatic (e.g., waterfowl) resources, such as Trumpeter swans.
 5. Include presentations on threats, particularly climate change and invasive aquatic species. Bryce Fowler can present invasive species information. There are numerous climate scientists who work in the region that we can name.
 6. Is there a need to address previous studies on increasing surface water yield (e.g. clearcuts)?

August 12-13 - Terrestrial Resources – Timber, Range, and Wildlife

- *Should we fund a study of small sales program potential accompanied by Forest Stewardship Certification?*
 - *Do we need a university assessment of public and private range resources and long-term cooperation in range stewardship?*
 - *Do we need ONE study that integrates all we know about the importance of Island Park for wildlife connectivity and protection of remnant populations?*
 - *What have we learned from the range of agency and nonprofit studies that better inform our understanding of individual species' needs and the ecological underpinnings of Island Park?*
 - *What do we do when the values of Island Park cannot be protected by any one land management entity and we rely on the stewardship ethic of primarily non-resident major landowners and numerous non-resident cabin owners?*
 - *To what extent can we address inholdings and what are the particular parcels of concern?*
1. Include panel presentation on private-land conservation (TRLT, TNC, Henry's Fork Legacy Project)
 2. Involve IDFG, FS, BLM, State Lands, State Parks & Rec, ranchers/permittees. How vulnerable are each to lawsuits?
 3. Post some maps from existing GIS layers on the web prior to the meeting. These maps could include information such as land ownership, extent of invasive plant species, big-game winter range, and wetland areas with high ecological value. Include migration corridors
 4. Include discussions of mineral/geothermal resources and human-wildlife interactions.
 5. Consult the report and accompanying paper in Conservation Biology that Reed Noss prepared about 10-12 years ago on ecological importance of Island Park wetland areas.
 6. Is there a need to consult/involve absentee landowners?

September 9 - Cultural & Historic Values

- *Do we need a cultural/historical study comparable to what the Henry's Fork Legacy Project has done for the landscape?*
 - *Do we have a complete understanding of native people's occupation of and movement through the Island Park area? How well are we preserving and interpreting their history (Bannock Trail, Nez Perce, seasonal occupation by Shoshone and Bannock ancestors?)*
 - *How well are we preserving and interpreting the early history of Island Park and particularly the relationship with Yellowstone Park and the growth of tourism?*
 - *Is there a correlation between the outstanding natural values and resiliency of species in Island Park and the resiliency of the people who have built a life there?*
1. Potential speakers on history include Rick Holmer and Tom Howell.
 2. Include perspectives from Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, SHPO, and CTNF Archaeologist.
 3. Related to Tribal perspectives, we probably want to make them aware of the entire processes at the beginning rather than just inviting them to one specific meeting. Critical to approach Tribes as partners given their sovereign nation statuses
 4. Harriman Ranch history needs to be incorporated

5. Where do the scenic byway designations and interpretation fit? Contact the Nez Perce National Historic Trail Foundation

October 14 - Community Vitality

- *Will we be ready to discuss the questions of representative governance and share responsibility for the natural, economic and social well-being of Island Park? What case studies might be useful to prepare us for this discussion?*
 - *Need an outside business viewpoint of the obstacles to prosperity in Island Park – e.g. overcoming challenges of seasonality, investment capital, deteriorating infrastructure, absentee land and business owners*
 - *Someone to address the sociological challenges facing a dispersed population that for 50 years has lacked a grade school and other shared community responsibilities. What obstacles are there to building community in Island Park?*
 - *Identify forces or jurisdictional bodies who have decision making authority and could be problem-solvers in this area.*
1. Include perspectives from local business owners, examples of how national monument designations have affected local economics, and presentation on general economic trends around the region, especially recreation/tourism (Ray Rasker or some other expert on economics in the Rocky Mountain region).
 2. Consider using the October meeting to discuss issues that have emerged throughout the process but fell through the cracks at earlier meetings.
 3. Include in the discussion the local, underserved (minorities, elderly, disabled) residents and the visitors who support the tourism base
 4. Address the distribution of wealth and how public lands may help boost the economy. This study or discussion could address the entire 4-county region
 5. How does one build community when there are so many transient rentals and investment properties?
 6. Also address EMS (medical services) and the school situation in Northern Fremont County

November 11 OR 18 - Annual Conference –Summary of Findings

- *Findings from all studies and discussions will be summarized for presentation and discussion*
 - *Relevance of national monument or other designation may also be discussed at this meeting*
1. The November meeting should summarize our findings rather than make recommendations (similar the HF Basin Study).
 2. Include an exercise that integrates and interprets the geographic scope information from all of the individual meetings. The outcome of this exercise would summarize our findings on the geographic region that is common to managing all of the resources discussed throughout the year.