**Flathead River Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 1, 2022, 7:00 PM**

**133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901**

**ATTENDANCE**

Flathead River Commission members:

Mark Siderius, Pam Holmquist, Kenny Breidinger, Donna Pridmore, Bob Storer, Ron Trippet

Others in attendance:

Samantha Tappenbeck, Flathead Conservation District; Mitch King, Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation; Bill Whitsitt, Eagle Bend HOA

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mark Siderius called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the minutes as presented”. Kenny Breidinger seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* Pam reported on the quarterly flood forecast meeting (which now encompasses multiple natural disasters – flood, fire, drought, snowpack, etc. and lots of stakeholders are involved):

The snowpack is hanging on but is 145% of normal for this time of year. Snow is hanging on at the higher elevation. Depending on any sort of rain event there is still the potential for flood. As far as drought conditions we are sitting pretty good because we’ve had recent moisture and cool spring. Expect a late fire season and a hot, dry summer. Drought conditions could change with winds, etc. We could set up a flood forecast meeting if need be, but it does not seem necessary.

Mark’s concern is what they do with Flathead Lake, whether they plan to be full by the typical date but there is still a lot of snow hanging on in the high country. Bob noted that the fill curve is rising fast. They need to be at full pool by June 15th, but there is provision in there to mitigate for flood risk. Mark added that about a week from now is when we see a normal peak for water level at his house (usually around the 10th) and normally by the 20th or so it has passed, usually by July it’s at the normal high elevation.

Discussion was had about how the normal patterns of spring weather have changed drastically in recent years.

* Review of recent WPIC meeting
  + Samantha provided a report on the findings of the May 18 WPIC meeting.
  + Pam asked how we might get the pulse of the community on the issue without spinning our wheels. Kenny mentioned FWP is going through their regulation process now, and it's very difficult to get people engaged.
  + Pam asked if the FCD was to have an open house or public meeting. Samantha mentioned that it might be a good opportunity to present the results of the findings of the scientific study.
  + Kenny thinks we should be able to get at that information without an off-year of recreation. Noted that we need more information, professional help from a hydrologist/geomorphologist to collect data and come up with some potential solutions.
  + Bob suggested that if we push forward with a recommendation, it would be for more stakeholder involvement and resources for study.
  + Donna noted that it doesn’t really matter because WPIC has not engaged the stakeholders that they were directed to engage through SJ28.
    - DP suggested that we might be able to engage the landowners as primary recreators on the river; Bob said he didn’t think they represent a large proportion of the boaters on the river
  + Kenny suggested that we engage the motorized boating community through Launch Motorsports
  + Pam noted there are a lot of marinas out there, but there is not an organized local group
  + Mark noted that Phil Kilbreth at FWP in Helena said it is really the manufacturers that are really the driving force on pushback on wake regulations
  + It would be helpful to have a history of how the no-wake zone was put in on Fennon Slough – need to consult Pete Woll about this
* Update on erosion study
  + Samantha provided an update on the status of the study. June 20 and 21 are target dates for installation of monitoring equipment.
  + The group discussed options for monitoring site locations. It was suggested that in addition to the Trippett and Louden sites that a site be established near the Ranchettes section of the river (Diamond B would be good) and Foys Bend at the staff gage location
* Membership outreach
  + Advertised in the Flathead Beacon
  + Bill Hodges from Bob Marshall Foundation is interested but could not attend the meeting tonight
* Schedule next meeting
  + July 6th at 7:00pm

**ADJOURN**

Bob Storer motioned “to adjourn”. Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.