

MINUTES
Blaine County Levy Advisory Board
Regular Meeting
March 4, 2020
Old County Courthouse
206 S 1st Avenue, 3rd Floor Meeting Room
Hailey Idaho

I. Call to Order and Quorum Determination

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Jim Phillips, at 6:00pm.

The members of the Levy Advisory Board (LAB) were present as follows: Alan Reynolds, Lili Simpson, Nancy Linscott, Abby Rivin, Kurt Eggers, Rob Santa, Denise Ford, Jim Phillips, and Jay Sevy

Also Present: Tom Bergin, Blaine County Land Use Department Director, Wendy Pabich, LWWP Program Administrator, and, representing the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA), Area Ranger Kirk Flannigan, Recreation Manager Susan James, and Wildlife Biologist Robin Garwood

II. Review of Pre-Application for the SNRA Big Wood Travel Management Plan

Blaine County Land Use Department Director Tom Bergin introduced the project and the purpose of the Pre-Application as specified in the Program Guide. Bergin noted that the SNRA Big Wood Travel Management Plan is complete and the project is located on federal land. Bergin noted that the LAB has had significant debate regarding whether funding projects on federal lands is appropriate for the Land, Water, and Wildlife Program (LWWP).

LWWP Program Administrator Wendy Pabich explained that the purpose of the Pre-Application phase is for the LAB to determine if the proposal meets Levy objectives and LWWP goals.

SNRA Wildlife Biologist Robin Garwood and Recreation Manager Susan James presented the Pre-Application to the LAB. Garwood explained how the Big Wood Travel Management Plan goals align with LWWP objectives, including managing impacts to natural resources, rehabilitating non-system and user-created routes, and providing a system of trails for public access. She described that the four elements of the plan are to (1) decommission and close non-system routes that damage resources, (2) designate dispersed campsites, (3) relocate the North Fork and Gladiator Creek trailheads, and (4) prevent motorized use of groomed ski trails. Garwood and James explained the components of each of these four elements and answered LAB-member questions.

Garwood explained that the project has partnered with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to rehabilitate the Owl Creek sub-watershed and with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to reroute the motorized trails in the Mill Creek area. She noted the project has received license plate funds to restore non-system routes and designate dispersed campsites within the North Fork

area. Garwood stated that funds are pending from the National Forest Foundation to restore non-system routes and designated dispersed campsites.

James presented the Big Wood Travel Management Plan budget and schedule spreadsheet that the SNRA utilizes to prioritize projects and funding. She explained that the spreadsheet identifies priority sub-watersheds, lists tasks within each area, and assigns target dates for completion of each task.

Garwood noted that work within the Owl Creek sub-watershed is done and that certain tasks within the North Fork sub-watershed are complete.

James explained that the applicant's approach in their Pre-Application was to include the comprehensive spreadsheet in their proposal and receive direction from the LAB on project components and tasks appropriate for LWWP finding.

Following the conclusion of the applicant's presentation, LAB Chair Phillips opened the meeting for LAB-member comments and questions.

LAB-member Linscott noted her appreciation for the spreadsheet ranking priorities and assigning tasks. She stated that certain project components align more closely with LWWP objectives and that LAB funding should be directed towards tasks with lasting conservation outcomes.

James noted that most of the priority sub-watersheds have tasks associated with each of the four elements of the Big Wood Travel Management Plan.

Linscott asked if the tasks noted within each sub-watershed are listed in order of priority or chronologically in the order each step would occur. Garwood explained that certain tasks utilizing specific equipment run by construction and maintenance crews would be conducted concurrently to enhance efficiency.

LAB-member Linscott questioned whether the LAB should consider funding the entirety of tasks listed within a sub-watershed priority area or funding specific types of tasks with multiple sub-watershed areas.

LAB-member Eggers thanked the applicants for their presentation and noted his appreciation that the project focused on the Big Wood River Watershed. Eggers suggested that the LAB consider offering a preliminary, blanket approval for the Big Wood Travel Management Plan project with subsequent approvals authorizing funds for certain tasks within specified sub-watersheds. Eggers asked if the target dates listed in the spreadsheet represented a realistic timeframe for completion. James explained the timeline specifies target dates assuming funding is secured for each component.

The LAB discussed the distribution of LWWP funds in relation to the project timeline with the applicant.

LAB-member Linscott suggested the LAB consider funding project components that have secured matching funds to maximize partnerships.

Vice-Chair Reynolds asked the applicant to explain the funding contribution from the Forest Service. Area Ranger Kirk Flannigan explained the budget strategy and responded that projects tasks have an expected contribution from the SNRA.

LAB-member Simpson noted that the LAB requires a match to leverage funding through partnerships and suggested the applicant consider the LWWP funding request in relation to the percentage of the total project cost. Simpson stated that she would be in favor of funding a specific sub-watershed priority area.

LAB-member Santa expressed support for allocating funds to tasks with the highest value for Blaine County taxpayers.

LAB-member Sevy stated he would be in favor of funding the project components that most closely align with LWWP objectives, such as tasks associated with habitat restoration.

LWWP Program Administrator Wendy Pabich suggested that the Full Application connect each project task with a particular resource and include a summary of the conservation outcomes associated with each resource.

LAB Chair Phillips suggested the applicant submit a refined Pre-Application proposal with a defined project specifying tasks and sub-watershed areas. The LAB discussed whether the applicant should submit a refined Pre-Application proposal or submit a Full Application based on feedback given at the meeting.

LAB-member Ford suggested the LAB set certain parameters within the motion to invite a Full Application that may include a preference for funding project components slated for completion in 2020 and 2021 and tasks associated with system naturalization and restoration.

The LAB discussed parameters to include within a motion, including specifying timeframes, sub-watershed areas, and project tasks.

LAB-member Simpson asked if the applicant would be willing to return with a refined Pre-Application proposal that incorporated LAB feedback regarding timeline, priorities, conservation outcomes, and matching funds.

LAB-member Eggers moved to invite the applicant to submit a Full Application for LAB consideration.

The LAB discussed the motion and continued to debate whether the applicant should return with a defined Pre-Application proposal specifying project tasks and sub-watershed areas.

LAB-member Ford moved to amend the motion to specify that the LAB invites the applicant to submit a Full Application for project tasks within the Prairie Creek sub-watershed slated for completion in 2020 and 2021 for non-system trail naturalization.

LWWP Program Administrator Wendy Pabich directed the LAB's attention to the Pre-Application Phase section of the Program Guide that states that the LAB should determine whether the project, if implemented as proposed, would generally meet the objectives of the Levy and goals of the LWWP, and should be pursued further.

LAB-member Linscott seconded the amended motion.

Area Ranger Kirk Flannigan noted that the applicant would narrow the scope of the project proposal based on LAB direction and feedback.

The LAB voted on the amended motion. LAB-members Ford, Reynolds, and Eggers voted in favor of the amended motion. LAB-members Phillips, Rivin, Sevy, Simpson, Linscott, and Santa voted against the motion. The amended motion failed.

The LAB discussed the motion to invite a Full Application as proposed by LAB-member Eggers without the amendments proposed by LAB-member Ford.

The LAB voted on the motion to invite the applicant to submit a Full Application. LAB-members Sevy, Rivin, Linscott, Ford, Eggers, Reynolds, and Santa voted in favor of the motion. LAB-members Simpson and Phillips voted against the motion. The motion to invite the applicant to submit a Full Application passed.

LAB-members Denise Ford and Rob Santa left the meeting following this motion and were absent for the remaining agenda items.

III. Public Comment

No members of the public were present to give comment.

IV. Review and Approval of the January 22nd, 2020 Meeting Minutes

The LAB approved the January 22nd, 2020 meeting minutes.

V. New Business

Vice-Chair Reynolds noted that Trout Unlimited had suspended review of their Stream Alteration Permit for the Bridge-to-Bridge Project due to personnel turnover, but had not withdrawn the application.

The LAB discussed the purpose and function of the Pre-Application process and considered changing the LWWP Program Guide to assign responsibility for this preliminary review to Staff. The LAB directed Staff to add a discussion of the Pre-Application phase to a future meeting agenda.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.