

McNary Fisheries Compensation Committee Meeting

CONFERENCE CALL

Call in Number: 1-971-256-0996, passcode 148967

Updated: 12/18/2015

Friday, December 18, 2015 – 2 PM

Attending: Rick M.-PUD, Gary F.-NOAA, Erick VD-Oregon, R.D. N-USFWS, Brian M.-CRITFC,

Agenda: Proposal discussion and vote.

1. Swauk Creek Flood Plain Reconnection. Submitted by Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. Revised proposal includes money for design work and some of the money for construction. They plan to apply to other sources for the balance of the construction money. Should they get turned down, they would come back to us for the rest of the money needed to complete all of the construction. They are asking for \$219,000.

Gary opened the meeting by reminding the group that we are under no obligation to fund any new proposals. The McNary compensation dollars do not expire at the end of the year like the usual government funding sources, so there is no pressure to fund any particular proposal (other than that put on by the applicants). We need to be careful to get the most benefit from the limited dollars we have and there is no penalty for letting the money accumulate for years, as it has in the past.

Gary opened the discussion with some comments about how high up the section of stream in question was and how it didn't look to be in that bad of shape, and how small it is. He also commented on how well the steelhead stocks in that basin were doing. He didn't think the bang for the buck was there. He also mentioned the FS road that was in the flood plain and how it led to numerous homes, point being it would not sit well if the road flooded as a result of this project and relocating it or adding a bridge were not components of the proposal. For those reasons NOAA voted NO.

Rick said he was on the fence with this proposal since it is habitat work and likely to improve conditions in this stretch. But, he agreed with Gary's comments, and Erick's comments, and he didn't like the planning and design money in the budget. For these reasons, the PUD voted NO.

RD also agreed with Gary's comments, he had seen this section many times driving by and just didn't think improvements would generate enough new production to make the project worth the investment. USFWS voted NO.

Brian said he didn't like the planning and design funds in the budget, CRITFC voted NO.

Brian cast a YES vote for Bob Rose- Yakama Nation Fisheries, who was unable to join the call.

Comment [EVD1]: I am MOST supportive of allocating funds to physical structure and construction efforts... I am less supportive of design and planning documents. I would be interested in considering options to reallocate expectation. For example shift construction cost in full to the MFCC trust fund \$'s (\$192,230) with an additional 10 to 20% buffer in other areas (e.g., admin... less so permitting; \$211,453-\$230,676). This is one of those requests where another suite of users/resource agencies are avoiding absorbing responsibility for an area altered under their watch and potentially will sustain some management actions that led to the current condition of the reach. Given the other users and agencies will continue to manage into the foreseeable future it seems more appropriate that these groups seek to participate in funding these restoration actions, with staff time, planning documentation, permitting responsibilities and administrative support. I think we may be sending the wrong long term message if we don't temper these areas of project funding moving forward.

Erick had many good comments and questions that were added to the agenda and sent out to committee members before the meeting so he didn't go through them all during the CC, saying only that this is the type of project we should be funding but this proposal, as is, was not supportable. He would rather remove money for design work and fund all of the construction. Oregon voted NO.

That concluded the discussion and voting on the Swauk Creek, the project will not receive funding, NO votes: 5, Yes votes:1, Dan R, WDFW, was not present so his vote is not yet known.

2. Yakima Basin Beaver Restoration Project. This is a 3 year proposal with the first year being mostly development, location surveys, gear procurement, logistics, training and the occasional relocation should they get a call. Years 2 and 3 would focus on relocation activities. They are asking for \$236,954 over three years.

Gary opened this discussion with some comments about how the Satus and Toppenish Rivers were doing pretty good, not a dire situation by any means. He also reiterated his personal reluctance to beaver relocation, saying that if we were presented with a detailed assessment of suitable relocation sites and a confirmed corridor issue, explaining why beavers aren't there already, he would be more inclined to vote for this proposal. But for now, with the proposal as is, NOAA voted NO.

Rick commented that he wanted to get a better understanding of the benefits of beaver relocation before funding another beaver project and he didn't care for the development year, he thought that should be funded by the Yakama nation. PUD voted NO.

RD also had questions about the tangible benefits of beaver relocation. He also felt the presentation was lacking and wondered if they had addressed the riparian damage by horse grazing. For these reasons RD-USFWS voted NO.

Erick again had submitted some comments that are to the right. Erick mentioned the potential benefit of a project like this to the ecosystem as a whole, on a broader reach, in light of global warming, but that the budget was not logical and he couldn't support it in its current state. He remarked about the potential downstream benefit, but too many issues with proposal to support it in its current state. For these reasons, Erick – Oregon, voted NO.

Rick mentioned something he heard in the presentation that bothered him and he wondered aloud if the PUD Board would be supportive of a project done entirely on the reservation for the exclusive benefit of tribal members.

Brian wanted to see more clear benefits from the existing beaver relocation project before funding another one. He also had issues with the budget for this proposal. He agreed with others that the potential benefit could be good, that it had potential, but as is, CRITFC would have to vote NO.

Brian cast a YES vote for the absent Bob Rose-Yakama Nation.

That concluded the voting, results were 5 NO votes to 1 YES vote, with Dan R.-WDFW yet to vote.

To Do: Rick will draft denial letters and circulate for comment. Rick will sign the final letter for Gary at his suggestion to simplify the process, no objections to this procedure were noted.

Comment [EVD2]: I don't think this proposal has been updated in a way that makes it ready for a more in-depth review of its merits. Specifically I don't want to guess what amount of the full budget request will go to which line item during which year of the 3-year project period. The budget needs to spell out annual cost for each line item planned for the year. Where are the costs expect for BDA... All I see personnel cost and some marking supplies and equipment. As with the Swauk Creek Proposal I'm less supportive of planning documents but MORE supportive of on the ground actions, so knowing this effort fits within the Yakima basin planning it would be easier to support funding on-the ground work.