

## APPENDIX 98

# Flathead River Subbasin Planning – Public Involvement/Communication Component

### **Public Involvement/Communication Objectives**

1. Provide inclusive opportunities for citizens to:
  - Become informed about the Flathead subbasin;
  - Understand and explore the current situation and its potential from their perspectives;
  - Provide input toward vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for ongoing management in the subbasin.
  - Provide social/political information to the Technical and Planning Teams.
2. Inform and involve citizens in general terms and in a focused manner to establish a system that identifies, evaluates, and confirms the concerns, attitudes and desires of the public.
  - a. Convene subbasin “Working Groups” that will serve as focused discussion forums for subbasin management goals and strategies.
  - b. Conduct general public sessions (i.e., open houses) to confirm the products of the Working Groups and draft documents.
  - c. Create printed and electronic opportunities for informing and involving citizens.

### **Predicted Questions/Concerns from the Public**

- What is the goal of the plan and what will it do and not do?
- What might it prevent “us” from doing?
- How might local land uses and potential land development be effected?
- How will information/data be gathered and used?
- How inclusive will the process be?
- What kinds of decisions will be made and who will make them?
- How can the public influence the process and products?
- How will the plan be implemented and within what timeframe?
- How much will the process and plan cost and where will the money come from?
- What should be the long-term vision related to ecological functions, water quality, and fish and wildlife in the Flathead subbasin?
- How will electricity-generating costs be effected?
- How might hunting, fishing and recreation opportunities be effected by the plan?
- How can “we” use the process to get funding for projects?
- How might current funding be affected?
- What will other agencies be asked to do in the planning process?
- What will other agencies be asked to do in project implementation and where will the money come from?

### **Specific Public Involvement Strategies/Activities**

#### **Target Group Analysis**

A “Target Group Analysis” was completed to identify groups and interests who have a stake in the subbasin planning process; to discuss their probable issues and concerns; and to explore the most effective tool for informing and involving them. The Analysis includes the “general public” as an interest.

### **Establishment of a Citizen Working Group**

A Citizen Working Group representing key interests was organized to discuss key concepts regarding subbasin planning in the Flathead subbasin. The Working Group assisted in defining critical issues; recommending subbasin vision and guiding principles; and identifying and analyzing potential management objectives and strategies for the subbasin. Working groups met early in the process to help identify issues, vision and guiding principles, and was re-convened near the end of the process to review the Assessment, Inventory, and draft Management Plan.

### **Criteria for selection of Working Group members included:**

- Not be ideologues and be willing to participate in a collaborative process.
- Be listeners and communicators while representing and acting for their interests.
- Be diverse in a variety of ways including geographic representation.
- Be able to contribute information, perspective and history and bring “new ideas”.
- Include those who can influence and bring integrity to the process.
- Be willing to commit the time to the process.

### **Mailing List**

An extensive mailing list of 270 stakeholders and agency representatives was maintained throughout the process and these individuals were kept posted via quarterly newsletters.

### **Open Houses**

Open houses were held to provide individuals to hear and see information, talk to planning and technical team members one-on-one, ask questions and provide input on draft documents.

### **Website and Newsletters**

Current information and periodic newsletters were available on the website throughout the process and periodically sent out to individuals on our mailing list. The website also served as an interactive communication tool related to reviewing and commenting on draft products.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES SPECIFIC TO THE FLATHEAD RIVER SUBBASIN**

### **Flathead Working Group Members (Not all members were in attendance at all meetings)**

Susan Howe, 406-752-8293, [flt@bigsky.net](mailto:flt@bigsky.net) (conservation group interest)  
Bob Stone, 406-883-4/59, [mosscreeklily@compuplus.net](mailto:mosscreeklily@compuplus.net) (general citizen interest)  
Ralph Goode, 406-883-7905, [goode@missionvalleypower.org](mailto:goode@missionvalleypower.org) (utility interest)  
Dick Heitman, 406-75/-440/, [richard.heitman@flatheadelectic.com](mailto:richard.heitman@flatheadelectic.com) (utility interest)  
Brian Sugden, 406-892-6368, [brian.sugden@plumcreek.com](mailto:brian.sugden@plumcreek.com) (general citizen; corporate interest)  
Mark Maskill, 406-758-6870, [mark\\_maskill@fws.gov](mailto:mark_maskill@fws.gov) (general citizen; federal government interest)  
Constanza Von Der Pahlen, 406-883-1341, [constanza@flatheadlakers.org](mailto:constanza@flatheadlakers.org) (watershed interest)  
Cindy Foster, 406-74/-3530, [cindyf@cskt.org](mailto:cindyf@cskt.org) (general citizen interest)  
Delbert Hawkins, 406-849-5531, [pvtycby@yahoo.com](mailto:pvtycby@yahoo.com) (landowner interest)

Thad Briggs, 406-881-2819, [perchin@cyberport.net](mailto:perchin@cyberport.net) (angler group; general citizen; small business interest)

John Winnie, Trout Unlimited (conservation group;angler group interest)

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## **Flathead Working Group Meeting Dates and Notable Results**

### **Convening Meeting – January 23, 2003 (Kalispell, Montana)**

#### Public Involvement Objectives for Subbasin Planning

1. Provide inclusive opportunities for citizens to:
  - Become informed about Subbasin Planning.
  - Explore the results of the Subbasin Assessment and better understand the current situation in the Flathead Subbasin and its potential.
  - Provide input toward vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for the Subbasin Plan.
2. Inform and involve citizens in general terms and in a focused manner to identify, evaluate, and affirm the concerns, attitudes and desires of the public:
  - Convene a Subbasin “Working Group” that will serve as a focused discussion forum to review the Assessment and contribute to Subbasin vision, goals, objectives and strategies.
  - Conduct general public sessions (i.e., open houses) to expand input, and direct and affirm the products of the Working Group.
  - Create printed and electronic opportunities for informing and involving all interested citizens.

#### Working Group Charter

The purpose of the Flathead Subbasin Working Group is to review the Subbasin Assessment and provide input and advice regarding vision, goals, objectives, strategies and a timeline for the Flathead Subbasin Plan. Products from the Working Group will be directed to the Flathead Subbasin Planning and Technical Teams to assist in the development of the Subbasin Plan.

### **Second Meeting – March 13, 2003 (Polson, Montana)**

#### Draft Subbasin Vision – 10 Years

The Flathead Subbasin is an area where growth is accommodated while maintaining clean air and water.

#### Draft Guiding Principles

- Protect open areas by encouraging cluster development.
- Aggressively enforce sanitation rules including “grandfathered” systems.
- Encourage industries that contribute to clean air and clean water.
- Use wetlands whenever possible to act as natural filters for streams.

#### First Thoughts Toward Subbasin Objectives

- Improve water quality.
- Maintain healthy fisheries.
- Improve our economy.
- Preserve traditional livelihoods (Western heritage).
- Sustain outdoor opportunities and quality of life.

- Assess and protect sufficient resources to keep the wildlife we all enjoy.
- Protect open space.

#### Important Questions That Need to be Addressed in Subbasin Planning

- How can the Subbasin Plan leverage funds?
- How will the Plan address cultural issues?
- How can the Plan emphasize a diversity of functional habitats?
- How can the Plan incorporate unique, important natural environments that are not abundant?
- Does the Plan identify habitats most critical for long-term viability of fish/wildlife species?
- Can the Plan, as projects are implemented, utilize incentive-based and/or education approaches in addition to on-the-ground projects?
- To what extent does the Plan afford property rights?
- Does the Plan consider providing technical and financial assistance to improve land use and water practices (urban, agricultural, rural/suburban water users) in sustainable ways while taking economic wellbeing into consideration?

#### Third Meeting – May 15, 2003 (Big Fork, Montana)

##### Additional Thoughts Toward Subbasin Objectives

- Enhance habitat.
- Improve water quality.
- Protect air standards.
- Develop strategies to enhance habitat including replanting desirable trees, shrubs and grasses and spraying weeds; implementing reforestation after burns; curbing erosion.
- Improve water quality as follows: Eliminate roadways adjacent to streams and unnecessary roads and stream crossings; utilize wetlands as natural stream filters; enforce sanitation laws; eliminate “grandfathered” septic systems; encourage electric boating.
- Protect air standards by eliminating roadways in valley bottoms; dust-coating gravel roads; and enforcing air quality burning regulations.
- Assure that objectives are measurable with a plan to document changes so that money is spent on projects that have positive results.
- Ensure that some westslope cutthroat populations remain in protected areas (behind barriers) so we will always have some.
- Ensure that we sustain and/or restore native habitat and species that remain as follows: Inventory current natural resources; identify the stresses most apt to have measurable impact on the natural resources that remain; determine workable, affordable strategies that can be implemented and sustained at a reasonable cost; determine what success looks like (i.e., increasing species populations? Retention? Improvement of water quality? Improvement in species reproduction and genetic variability? etc.); use a quantifiable example such as the Flathead Lakers' Critical Lands Study to identify wetlands and riparian zones most beneficial to the ecosystem and water quality and address their nine priorities; address key stresses like development; explore opportunities for conservation easements.
- Consider measurement in terms of assessing management practices and monitoring the results of practices as well as acreage treated.
- Utilize the goals from the subbasin summary.
- Improve rather than maintain water quality in lakes like Flathead. Stop the decline in clarity and increase in nutrient-caused problems through fencing and decommissioning roads.
- Give proper weight to projects when measuring performance.

**Fourth Meeting – May 18, 2004 (Polson, Montana)**

- Final review of the Flathead Subbasin Assessment
- Review and discussion of the Flathead Subbasin draft Management Plan and how “we got here”:
  - Vision and guiding principles
  - Measurable biological objectives
  - Prioritized strategies
  - Influence of the Working Group – How your comments were used
  - Role of the Technical Team

**Open Houses**

Two Open Houses were held in May in Kalispell and Pablo, Montana. Both meetings were poorly attended. Topics discussed included:

- Final review of the Flathead Subbasin Assessment
- Review and discussion of the Flathead Subbasin draft Management Plan and how “we got here”:
  - Vision and guiding principles
  - Measurable biological objectives
  - Prioritized strategies

**Other Meetings**

The Subbasin Coordinator and/or the contractor made formal presentations on the Flathead Subbasin Plan to the following groups:

- Flathead and Lake County Conservation Districts
- Flathead Basin Commission
- Flathead Lakers Critical Lands Group
- CSKT Tribal Council