

November 16, 2023

Blue Ribbon Fisheries Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

In Attendance: TJ Tsakalos, Trina Hedrick, Terry Hill, Rebecca Granillo, Mickey Anderson, Dave Behunin, Russ Lawrence, Ryan Newman, Rich Lobrovich, Larry Finch, Stuart Bagley, Tyler Robinson, Natalie Boren, Brenda Carlisle, Randy Oplinger, Clint Brunson, Nic Braithaite, Calvin Black, Chris Crockett, Daniel Keller, Jamie Sparger, Jon Hudson, MaKayla Roundy, Michael Hadley, Taylor Shamo, Trina Hedrick.

Welcome & Introductions

TJ welcomed Trina into her new role with the BRFAC. He also thanked Randy for his work and efforts with the Council. Trina introduced herself to the Council; she's excited to move into her new position after working in the Northeastern Region for many years. She thanked Randy for his help with this meeting and for his help in transitioning her into her new role.

Approval of June 2023 Meeting Minutes

There was a question on a water that Clint was discussing at the June meeting, it was Lost Creek. The correction will be made on the notes, and the Council can vote on them at the next meeting.

Regional Updates, potential 2024 projects

Central Region – Tyler Robinson

Tyler presented the following information on the region's creel work.

Lower Provo River Methods

- Provo River creel began mid-January 2023 running through January 2024
 - River access issue caused hiccups with early surveys
- Survey days were randomly selected with regard to weekday, weekend/holiday days
- Provo River was divided into 3 regions
 - Below Murdoch, Below Olmstead, Above Olmstead
- Anglers were counted 3 times per shift in each region

Update From Our Creel Clerk

- Insect hatches seems to be smaller than normal
- Anglers would like to see more signage posed to increase awareness of the differing regulations between the upper and lower reaches
- Guides and float anglers would like improved access for small craft launching
- Flows were high and anglers struggled to fish efficiently until July
- Overall, fishing has been great
 - Most anglers he talks to are catching multiple fish per day
 - Most anglers enjoy that these fish are not stocked fish

Jordanelle Methods

- Jordanelle Reservoir creel began mid-May (ice off) and ran through October 2023
- Survey strata included day of week (weekdays or weekends) and time of day (a.m. or p.m.)
- Survey days were randomly selected with regard to weekday, weekend/holiday days and time of day
- 73 total surveys were conducted
- Jordanelle was divided into 3 regions
 - Provo Arm, Dam, North Arm
- Anglers were counted three times per shift in each region

Update From Our Creel Clerk

- From May – August
 - A lot of angler use around Rock Cliff State Park area
 - Contributed to water and no wake zone
 - Most anglers were targeting Kokanee, Rainbow or Smallmouth
 - Limits of kokanee were easy to get
 - Large chunk of anglers stated they were coming because Strawberry was fishing poor
 - What people want changed
 - Stock more fish
 - Dock at the Rock Cliff access (ramp needs attention and parking needs to be addressed)
 - Stock fish that bite
 - Some positive comments as well
 - Beautiful lake that they enjoyed for more than just fishing
 - Access points were well managed
 - Fish cleaning area was great to use

Electrofishing at Jordanelle and Deer Creek

Methods

- Surveyed Deer Creek June 20 & Jordanelle June 21, 2023
 - Surveys are conducted at night beginning at dark
- Water temperature ranged from 13 degrees C (JR) to 15 degrees C (DC)
- Conducted survey using 4, 20 minute transects across the lake
- Deer Creek Locations
 - North west near Provo, Rainbow Bay, Dam Point north of dam, Walsburg Bay
- Jordanelle Locations
 - Provo arm (south), East of dam, Bass Bay (East of the state park), Northwest Shore

There are currently some high water issues at Jordanelle, but there are still a lot fish. There are less perch than normal, and the smallmouth numbers were a little less. Still no tiger muskies.

At Deer Creek, fish numbers were similar. There were a lot of happy anglers this winter with the ice-fishing season. Rainbows are doing really well.

Conclusions

- Catch declined in both systems from previous years

- o Yellow perch saw the largest decline between years in Deer Creek
 - 2000 – 355, 2023 – 38
 - High water could have scattered fish
- Jordanelle tiger muskie are still missing
 - o They know that they are in there, anglers are catching them but they've been unable to capture any to sample.
 - o Missed one potential muskie
 - o Planning to do targeted sampling in 2024
- Smallmouth numbers declined but size structure was still poor
 - o Deer Creek: 2023 – 182 mm; 2020 – 184 mm
 - o Jordanelle: 2023 -120 mm; 2020 – 130 mm
- Rainbow trout numbers appear high and size structure improved between years

For Strawberry Alan sent the following information:

- Collected 1501 fishing this fall
- Nearly 1 million eggs collected
- Fall netting indicated more silver kokanee than last year's netting
 - o Hopefully more fish for anglers
- Cutthroat populations appear to be at target levels
- Rainbow catch rates near objectives

Tyler said that fishing looks good and that the numbers are favorable, even though some anglers would disagree. Keep in mind that with the high water season, angling becomes more difficult.

Chicken Creek East Project Update

- Ribbon cutting held on July 19
- Old parking lot was reclaimed in August
- Divider dock for the watercraft ramp has been built and will be placed next spring
- Concrete blocks have been purchased and waiting for winter levels to drop

Potential Projects And Proposals

- Hand Launch access points on the Lower Provo (could also include motor boat access)
- Fish habitat structure in Jordanelle
- Diamond Fork stream restoration.
 - o The region would like to work on this water and eventually bring it up for BRF status. Work has been pushed back due to floods and wild fire damage, but they want to get back to it. They would like to beef up this system for all aquatic systems. Tyler isn't sure that all banks are stabilized, but they are working towards repairing the system. They are seeing healthy fish. It was mentioned that there is gravel in some areas that are forming small waterfalls. Tyler said that no work has been done this year, there was some a year prior that they could be seeing.
- Smith – Backpack Shocker. Currently their electro-fisher is over 20 years old, and when they surge they are unable to reset. This would make their work much easier.

Northeastern Region – Natalie

- The region participated in the Owepe cutthroat trout restoration. It went smoothly, however the region will need another phase of treatment, as there are still brook trout in the headwaters. It was more complex and challenging than they expected. Natalie thanked the crews that helped with this treatment.
- Brian is also working on the North Slope South Fork Sheep Creek #1 treatment.
- The region did the index netting at Starvation in October. They got good results; there are still a lot of walleye in the system. The fish are very healthy. There is currently a tagging study going on; many tags have been returned, and they are still getting anglers catching these tagged fish. The perch have come back, and that is probably a big reason that the fishing was difficult here this past year.
- They sampled the Strawberry River in October. Cutthroat were not found in the sampling this time. There are some really nice browns but they are hoping for better this coming year.
- Natalie said that Lake Canyon has come back really nicely. There is good stream flow and that should help with the winterkill.
- Natalie also fished in the Diamond Mountain Lakes, and the fish have grown wonderfully and are incredibly healthy. She mentioned that Crause has survived.
- At Pelican Lake, bass fishing is doing really well, however the bluegill are struggling. Tiger muskie was stocked, however the bass can eat even really large tiger muskie. Walleye have also been stocked. They have seen some yellow perch, meaning that they have gotten through the screens. Natalie just isn't sure how, and they are working on investigating this.
- The region may ask for some funding for the Cedar Springs marina project. Boater Access may be paying for this.

Northern Region – Clint Brunson

- Clint said everyone is talking about water capacity; they have some waters up to 80-90% full. It makes things a little more difficult to catch fish and anglers have struggled.
- At Pineview, they stocked eight-inch fish and in the fall when they did their collection, they were up to 12-14 inches. The muskies look really good here. They couldn't electrofish due to the fish being scared of the boat motor. This year they will be installing structures and habitat, and could use Council help with the installation if there is any interest. Chris Penne and the outreach team made some videos of releasing crappie and perch under the ice that will be released later this month.
- At East Canyon, they netted in the summer, and the wipers here were the biggest they saw in the region. The water is doing okay, but the wipers are doing really well. Not as many crawdads on the banks.
- At Lost Creek, they had some nice cutthroat in their nets in the summer. They went back in the fall and saw several species of fish, and no chubs. They will be checking this water again in the spring.
- The Willard netting is complete, and the wipers look amazing. They purchased wiper fry and stocked them here. The catfish look really good. The water was really clear this year.
- Not much going on in the Weber, there are water fluctuations.
- They did find Eurasian Water Milfoil at Tony's Grove Lake. They will be investigating this coming up this week. The Forest Service will be draining, and treating it.
- There was a question about algae bloom at Ensign Ranch. Clint said that it's a huge nutrient load, with perfect environment for their growth.

- Clint mentioned that there is a project that they may be requesting BRF funding. They would like to do some tiger muskie tagging at Pineview. The tags would work like pit tags, and you can ping them every so often to see their location. As well as adding some habitat.
- He also has some Weber River projects, but WRI will be funding most of that.
- There may be some work on East Canyon Creek as well. They are hoping to purchase some additional access.

Southeastern Region – Calvin Black

- The region did a fall gillnetting at Huntington Reservoir. The tiger trout numbers look great, and they are fat and healthy. They were over a pound. Splake were introduced in 2021 and they are averaging 16-19 inches.
 - Tiger Trout
 - Catch rate – 29.0 fish per net per night
 - Mean length – 14"
 - Mean weight – 1.2 lbs.
 - Mean condition factor – 1.01
 - Splake
 - Catch rate – 12.33 fish per net per night
 - Mean length – 15.9"
 - Mean weight – 1.54 lbs.
 - Mean condition factor – .98
 - Utah Chub
 - Collected 5
 - Shiners
 - Collected 52
- At Joe's Valley, numbers are similar. Fish look really good, and are producing quite well.
- At Duck Fork, due to the heavy snow pack, they weren't able to get in to do their spawning until late June. They collected 892 cutthroat (345 males, and 247 females) to spawn. They spawned 65 fish on 7/5 and 45 fish on 7/12. They finished with 112,046 eggs and 63,012 cutthroat were produced. They were stocked into several waters.
- They did some fall electrofishing at Huntington Creek; they found good numbers and recruitment of brown trout. They are stocking cutthroat and they are surviving.
- At Scofield Reservoir, they did fall gillnetting. Calvin would like to propose this as a BRF, and will present numbers at a future meeting.
- Electric Lake looks really great, and there were good returns in the gillnets. The fish here spawned a little later than usual, in October. This is a great place to go right now.
- Calvin has been working hard on a La Sal cutthroat trout project. They have a unique lineage of Colorado cutthroat trout here. After several treatments, they have reintroduced native cutthroat here. They put in over 3000 fish.

Update on Last Year's Projects

Huntington Creek's Factor Analysis

- They will have the final report next month. They will be reviewing the report and putting together a stream restoration plan, including identifying what sections can be improved for spawning habitat.

Recapture Reservoir Improvement Project

- They have a draft design of a new boat ramp and parking lot for Recapture. They ran into some snags with cultural surveys, and had to hire a consultant to map out the entire project. They are still planning to move forward with this, it may just be a year behind schedule.

Upcoming Projects

- The region has three projects that they would like to move forward with.
 - Bob Wright / First Water Restoration – This area was impacted by the Sealy Fire in 2012. There is good enough recovery that they would like to restore those streams for native cutthroat. It is a cooperative project between DWR, Trout Unlimited and the Forest Service.
 - The region would like to work on the restoration of five miles at La Sal. Some new water rights have been obtained, and they want to improve that habitat and help expand that new population.
 - At Recapture Reservoir, they will be installing fish habitat structures for black crappie and largemouth bass. Perhaps even for some northern pike, as this is the brood source for tiger muskie.

Dave asked about Blanding 4. Calvin said that it is very full, and spawning was late, due to runoff. It came up 15-16 feet; he anticipates seeing a lot of bass next year.

Southern Region – Nic Braithwaite

Fish Lake

- There are more big lake trout, and more lake trout are transitioning from eating invertebrates to fish. They were concerned that the fish were only eating the invertebrates, not eating fish, and not gaining the length that they were hoping they would get. They reintroduced kokanee to Fish Lake in 2014 to provide forage fish, and they have seen a steady increase in the numbers. There are more fish, and bigger fish that were not there before. There is a lot of potential here, and they are planning a food study here.
- They did two kokanee egg takes with a total of 620,000 eggs.

Clear Creek

- Clear Creek is a BRF, and is one of the largest native fish drainages in the western US. They had an unexpected project on Clear Creek to allow fish passage and improve habitat, \$3000 was used from Blue Ribbon funds. There was a major fire here years ago, and floods after. This project repaired fish passage structures and fixed erosion.

Trend data + scoring + votes EF Sevier (Kingston, Black Canyon)

These waters are up for reevaluation, so Nic will go through them, and the Council members who fished them will report on their visit.

East Fork Sevier River – Black Canyon

- Moderate sized flowing water (average width 15-30 feet)
- Located just south of Otter Creek Reservoir
- ~10 miles of accessible stream (BLM, WMA, easement)
- Artificial flies and lures only section

- Variety of different types of habitat and fishing experiences
- Three formal stations and “spot” electrofishing sampling in 2023
- All trout captured during multiple passes to determine species present and abundance
 - o 92% brown trout
 - o 7% Bonneville cutthroat trout
 - o 1% brook trout
- Exceptional biomass (Platts and McHenry 1988; Hepworth and Beckstrom 2004)
 - o All three sections are above average, two sections are exceptional. Fish are really healthy.
- Trout between 10-14” and 0.25-1.0 lbs. were common, with a few much larger fish present
 - o The largest fish that they caught was 22-23 inches in length, and about 3 ½-4 lbs.
- Trout were generally in good condition
- Nic scored the following categories; he scored them as objectively as possible.
 - o Fish population characteristics: 4 points
 - o Management initiatives: 4 points
 - o Access: 7 points
 - o Water quantity: 10 points
 - o Water quality: 8 points

Russ said that there aren’t many people that make it there, as access is an issue. He said that it has some nice populations, and a lot of diversity. It was asked if they have done a survey lately, and Nic said that they haven’t.

TJ said that it is very remote, and full of brush, but also feels that it was a good spot. Rebecca said that she enjoyed fishing the third section and it was beautiful and a special experience. There were a lot of fish.

This was a thumbs up/thumbs down vote. It was a unanimous thumbs up vote from the BRFAC.

East Fork Sevier River – Kingston Canyon

- Moderate sized flowing water (average width 15-30 feet)
- Located below Otter Creek Reservoir
- ~7 miles of accessible stream (BLM and WMA)
- Tailwater fishery, significant habitat work has been completed
- Three formal electrofishing stations in 2015 (and ever 2-4 years from 2004-2015)
- “Spot” electrofishing in 2023
- All trout captured during multiple passes to determine species present and abundance in 2015
- All trout weighed and measured to assess size and condition
 - o 76% brown trout
 - o 19% rainbow trout
 - o 5% Bonneville cutthroat trout
- High biomass (Platts and McHenry 1988; Hepworth and Beckstrom 2004)
- Most trout were small (6-10” and <0.5 lbs.), but larger fish (>20” and 3.5-4.0 lbs.) were also present
- Trout condition varied, but was generally fair to good
- Nic scored the following categories; he scored them as objectively as possible.
 - o Fish population characteristics: 2 points
 - o Management initiatives: 4 points

- o Access: 7 points
- o Water Quantity: 10 points
- o Water Quality: 8 points

Nic said that this water has some of the largest stream fish that he sees, and it's not uncommon in Kingston Canyon to really large fish.

Rebecca asked if there were carp in the fishery a few years ago. Nic said that there are large Utah suckers, but no carp. The region will do some specific shocking next year, and will look for anything unusual.

This was a thumbs up/thumbs down vote. It was a unanimous thumbs up vote from the BR FAC.

Russ said that we should probably be promoting this water better. He said that it's a great fishery, and very beautiful and with the biomass, he feels that it should be better frequented. Nic said that it could handle a lot more pressure without affecting the fishery. Rebecca said that when she's gone there, there has been quite a few people. Randy mentioned that in the surveys, anglers emphasize that they like solitude, and it maybe it wouldn't be able to handle the additional pressure. It seems that it's determined by time of year, and the time of day, you go how you feel about this water.

Trend data + scoring + votes Otter Creek Res, Lake Powell

Otter Creek Reservoir

- Large, coldwater (~2,500 acres)
- Located in south central Utah, about 1 hour south of Richfield
- Primarily a Rainbow Trout fishery maintained by annual stocking of ~225,000 7" fish
- ~20,000 2" wiper also stocked annually (effective control on Utah Chub and provide another trophy species)
- Extremely popular (~60 angler hours / acre and 0.75 fish caught / hour)
- Extremely productive (~2.5 lbs. of rainbow trout harvested / 1.0 lbs. stocked)
- Rainbow trout population characterized by two cohorts: 10-14" fish stocked the year before and 16" + fish stocked > 1 year ago
- 0.5 – 1.0 lbs. fish stocked the year before and 1.5 – 2.5 fish stocked > 1 year ago
- Rainbow trout are generally in good condition
- Nic scored the following categories; he scored them as objectively as possible.
 - o Fish population characteristics: 2 points
 - o Management initiatives: 4 points
 - o Access: 4 points
 - o Water Quantity: 4 points – no conservation pool
 - o Water Quality: 8 points

Nic said that a variety of fish can grow really big at Otter Creek.

Jamie said that he heard that there was smallmouth bass in Otter Creek. Nic said that there is a smallmouth bass population, however most people go there for trout.

This was a thumbs up/thumbs down vote. It was a unanimous thumbs up vote from the BR FAC.

Lake Powell Update

Dan Keller came and went through an update on Lake Powell. His information is based on the current water year.

- Overview of water year / boater access, current conditions, what to expect in near future
- How are fish responding to recent conditions?
- Future opportunities and potential challenges

Lake Level For The Past Months

- The level on April 12th hit a record low point at 3,519 ft. This was an all-time low for the lake.
- It reached 3,584 on July 8th, which was a 65 ft. gain, due to a great water year.
- November 15th it was measured at 3,572, showing that it dropped 12 ft. since July.

Boater Access (<https://lakepowell.water-data.com>)

- Currently there are 7 out of 10 major access points open.
 - Castle Rock cut was briefly open only for about 2 weeks in the springtime. Currently it is 7.82 below the absolute minimum.
 - The Bullfrog Main launch is down. It is below 3.82 of the absolute minimum.
 - Antelope Point public ramp is also down at 13.82 below minimum. It was close to opening this year, but they were unable to do so.
- In addition, they had 9 out of 10 major access points open.

The future project of what we can expect as far as the Bureau of Reclamation is concerned is 3525 feet in elevation. They are committed to doing everything they can to maintain that level. That elevation is what the Park Service has poured the ramp.

Species

Dan shared some data on the fish populations in Lake Powell.

- **Striped Bass**
 - This is the number one fish that anglers come looking for, and there is no limit for them. This is a great opportunity to target many and large striped bass. There are high numbers in all areas of the lake, but the Good Hope area has the most.
- **Smallmouth Bass**
 - With the smallmouth bass, the Rincon area has the largest population, mostly due to lake levels. It could also be that the nutrients are moving downstream, and providing fish with more food.
- **Walleye**
 - The catch rates at Good Hope Bay are significantly higher.

Fish Response

- Low water concentrated predator and prey; we have seen decrease in TFS however there was a GZD increase.

- Contraction of bays and loss of surface area could have forced fish to the lower end of reservoir.
- Low water has altered the sediment flow and nutrients are moving further down lake. Also, there are new and potentially exposed gravel bars/spawning areas.
- Newly flooded vegetation created vast amounts of habitat cover for young of year shad and other species such as crappie.

Future – Management

- They have a creel survey scheduled for 2024, and that will provide in depth data on the fish populations. It will also show how anglers are using the lake and what kind of harvest we are getting.
- They are planning to implement quagga density monitoring to correlate and predict young of year shad cycles. This may include rovers, or a diver survey. Trina, who is a diver offered help if needed. Dan said that the numbers of quagga do fluctuate quite a bit; they are drawn to the photic zone, so it will vary from year to year. It was asked if they would add red-eared sunfish, to help control the quagga populations. Dan said that it's been looked into, and they don't think that ecologically, the additional species would add anything that the current species don't already provide.
- Continue to educate anglers and promote angling opportunities, including highlighting underutilized or developing resources such as channel catfish, walleye, and crappie.

Lake Powell - Scoring

They went through and scored the water with the following results.

- Fish Population Characteristics: 6 points
- Management Initiatives: 4 points
- Access: 4 points
- Water Quantity: 6 points
- Water Quality: 8 points

Dan left his contact if the Council had any further questions. Dan Keller danielkeller@utah.gov (435) 691-0963.

The Council thanked Dan and Nic for the trip that they took this past year. They had a great time, and it was very educational. Lake Powell is actually one of the highest rated BRF.

Jamie mentioned that when scoring Lake Powell, he did give the boating access a lower score. He felt that the access wasn't as good as it could be. Dan said that the Parks Service is working on an EA, and looking for funding. They have the means to build a launch at Staten Creek, should the levels go below the 3525 minimum average. Currently, the water levels are stable enough that isn't necessary. There is a drought contingency plan that requires all states to make considerable cuts if the water levels go low enough.

The Council did a thumbs up/down vote, the thumbs up vote was unanimous.

Debrief on 2023 scoring process (what did/didn't work)

In the handbook, it states you need at least a third of the Council for the vote to move forward. The actual scoring limitations were created years ago with the addition of the Hepworth/Walker criteria scale. Trina said that she would check with Craig Walker to get a rationale on why certain limitations were included.

Next year the Washington county waters; Sand Hollow, Gunlock and Quail Creek should be reevaluated. Usually the reevaluations come in November, but the region is looking at updating these water's management plans, and it would be nice to have a clear vision on what the BRF status would be. There will be a discussion at the January meeting, and they would like some members to visit them in order to get a good variety of scores. Nic will also bring some information to add to the discussion in January. A possible new warm water representative knows those waters well, so if he is approved, he can provide some insight.

Trina asked for any comments on the scoring process. Randy mentioned that the scoring and voting today went really well. TJ suggested multiple visits to waters in different seasons and conditions, as it would give a more in depth look at the water. Also, there should be additional training on the system at the June meeting. Calvin suggested having Craig come in to a meeting to give an explanation on the process.

Jamie said that maybe the reason the Washington county waters didn't get enough visits is due to members not having access to a boat. There was a discussion of getting together to fish them using Dave, TJ, and Jamie's boat. Rebecca also offered to let the Council know when she is going out. She feels that having a boat available not only increases the enjoyment in fishing these waters, but to also to explore the area better. Dave also mentioned that he uses a kayak and has great success at these waters.

Trina suggested that maybe there should be a more even number of Council members for every fishing type. Randy agreed, and said that perhaps for the next round of new waters to have something for everyone. The Council should start thinking about what waters they feel would be a good choice to reevaluate. It also doesn't have to be just one region each year. Many waters were approved at the beginning of the BRFAC that could be looked at.

Development of promotional priorities for 2024

Trina put together a list that shows last year's topics for Outreach, and options for new opportunities. She suggested using social media as a major platform, and went through several suggestions.

The Council discussed the following projects. Randy suggested inviting Faith and Jessica to the January meeting, and they can give their advice.

- Boat/water craft cleaning process and rules.
- Walk In Access program updates.
- Randy suggested the upcoming angler survey. There's an angler survey that goes out every five years, and it would be a good BRF feature.
- Clint suggested a catfish seminar in the north for Willard and Bear River in April or May. It was also suggested that one be in the south as well. Randy said that seminars are very popular. The Council agrees that they enjoyed the seminars and they were all well attended. Natalie said that they did a bass clinic in the NER, and it went over very well.

- It was suggested to continue going to conferences and sportsman's shows and expos. There's a sign to take to these, but there isn't much as far as outreach materials. That may be something that should be included.
- They had a bbq last year where anglers could come and bring their catch, and ask questions. There is some interest in doing that again.
- Outdoor Recreation Day in February at the Capitol. This is a good opportunity to get with the Legislature and be available for the public to ask questions. Randy said that could be a good lead in to the economic survey. He has wanted to see this happen again as it hasn't been done in years. The new results will be available by July. He suggested making a one-page sheet outlining those results.
- Russ suggested including projects that are being done at BRF. Including normal projects such as gillnetting and electrofishing surveys.
- Update on the Pineview structures.
- Randy said that the DWR library of angling photos are sparse. Any photos anyone has could be submitted and included in that library.

Trina will make a list to send out via email for the Council to prioritize. She said that if there's any additional thoughts, to please send them to her and she will add them.

Warm Water, SER rep nominations

There is a need for a new warm water representative. Trina spoke with Neil, and thought that he would be a good choice. Dave said that he is an avid warm water / bass fisherman and knows warm water fish really well and he thinks he would be a good fit.

The Council did a vote, and there was no opposition.

The next step is to have him fill out the application on the Governor's website.

Jordan Nielsen's time is up, and Stuart Bagley is being nominated as his SER representative replacement. He has worked with both Jordan and Richard Hepworth at the Division, and several other areas including wildlife and hatcheries, and is now working at Trout Unlimited.

The Council voted in favor of including Stuart.

Stuart will need to move onto the next step with the Governor's Office.

Blue Ribbon volunteer opportunities

There are plenty of opportunities within the Council's Outreach efforts, but within the Division, there are several occasions to help via surveys, electrofishing and gillnetting. Trina suggested attending RAC meetings, and supporting the Division there. She will look into creating a site for the Council to go to that will house all BRF information including the volunteer opportunities spreadsheet. The regions will list their priorities, for the Council to choose.

Natalie said that if there's an opportunity that members would like to experience, to get with her and she will try and make it happen. If something new comes up, Trina can send out an email.

Blue Ribbon budget review

Trina presented the approved projects for the year, and where they are standing as far as expenditures. Not all of the expenditures have been submitted as of yet. All of the budget is available on the Google drive.

Debrief/discussion on whether new Blue Ribbon format is working

It was mentioned that the Council liked the monthly meetings; it is easier for the Division staff to stay with the quarterly meetings. Clint mentioned that having less meetings is more beneficial since he stays focused on the important data. TJ suggested that they may need additional meetings, or the scheduling of the meetings be discussed. Randy said that the reasoning behind the change was that the Division is focusing on the direction that the Council was created.

Trina suggested adding a field day where the Council could fish a particular water, or be a part of a project either a field trip or a service project.

It was asked about the litigation with the Provo River that was talked about in the June meeting; Trina said that they are unable to talk about that within the Division. The Council can discuss it, but the Division is under a legal order. There was concern that some things that are discussed at the meetings aren't reported on and the Council doesn't hear the results. It was determined that some things are not pertinent to the group.

It was also mentioned that the Council would also like notes sooner.

This new regime has been in process for a year. Trina will keep a list of items that the Council doesn't have time to be addressed and we can determine if additional time/meetings are needed. She would like to see how the process runs for a year, before changing it. Natalie suggested that perhaps they could just add an hour to current meetings if things are not all being addressed. Randy mentioned that they have already cut a half hour from lunch.

Rebecca said that from her perspective, she likes the quarterly meeting. She has a very full schedule, and adding additional meetings would make fitting everything in very hard. She would love opportunities to help in between meetings though.

TJ mentioned that if there is a need, that the Council can call a meeting.

Nic said that it is hard to find interested prospective members that can commit to such a busy schedule, especially when they are not in the Wasatch Front.

Randy mentioned that in the past, they have added a short meeting to field trips, and that could be a possibility in the future.

New Business

Trina mentioned that volunteer hours need to be reported. She would like an accounting of any hours that the Council members spend on their BRF commitments. Any volunteer time, any time fishing BRF and traveling to/from, meetings, and extra commitments, such as committees you are a part of.

It was moved, and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meetings: January 18, 2024, March 21, 2024 (review proposed projects)