

In cooperation with:



Idaho Water
Resource Board

&



Henry's Fork
Watershed Council

Henry's Fork Basin Study

Meeting Summary

May 19, 2011

Meeting date: May 16, 2011 (Meeting #1)

Summary prepared by: Mark Bransom/CH2M HILL

Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation requested that a series of interim meetings be held independent of the larger Stakeholder Workgroup meetings to informally discuss the Henry's Fork Basin Study (Study). The focus of this meeting with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) was to review and discuss environmental flow needs (e.g., location, quantity, and timing), habitat, fish population dynamics, and other technical fisheries management issues within the Henry's Fork basin. Meeting attendees are listed at the end of this summary.

Meeting Agenda

Bob Schattin/Reclamation opened the meeting by summarizing the current status of the Draft Needs Assessment relative to environmental flow needs which identifies that there are various recommendations from various sources.

Members of IDFG provided a summary of the following aquatic considerations relative to the Henry's Fork basin:

- Focus should be given to Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) as they may be petitioned again to be listed under the Environmental Species Act (ESA)
 - YCT are best supported by high peak spring flows and declining late-summer and early-fall flows
 - There is a less robust YCT “buffer population” in Yellowstone National Park relative to historic conditions
 - On the Teton River there are 3 YCT populations: Valley, Canyon, and Lower River. The 3 different populations don't mix much. The Canyon population is the strongest due to Bitch Creek flows (natural hydrograph).
 - Based on the previous research on South Fork Teton River a ratio of peak flows to base flows greater than 15:1 favors YCT while a ratio less than 15:1 favors rainbow trout. This may not be applicable to other systems, but could be a hydrologic “rule-of-thumb” for evaluating ability of Study alternatives to enhance flow conditions where it may be beneficial.
- Areas that would have the least impact on YCT include the following:
 - Ashton Expansion (IDFG indicated there may be 60,000 AF block not being used)
 - General area which includes: Warm River, Marysville, Boone, and Howell Ranch.

- Planning-level focus should be on Level 5 HUC basins
- The Study would benefit from additional mapping which shows reach-specific priorities along with a qualitative narrative.
- Could new storage from Lane Lake be used to improve flows in the Fall River?
- Currently there are low-flow issues in Canyon Creek
- Aquatic flows in the Upper Henrys Fork would benefit from an additional 500 cfs from November 1 to mid-April. An Island Park Dam raise could potentially provide water to meet this flow enhancement need.

Meeting Attendees

Meeting Attendees included:

- Tom Bassista – IDFG
- Dan Garren – IDFG
- Steve Schmidt – IDFG
- Greg Schoby – IDFG
- Brett High – IDFG
- Bob Schattin – Bureau of Reclamation
- Mark Bransom – CH2M HILL