



CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FLATHEAD LAKE AND RIVER CO- MANAGEMENT PLAN

NEWSLETTER NO. 4

April 25, 2000

Advisors focus on Alternatives at Fourth Advisory Committee Meeting



Advisors Dan Paschke, Pat Lefthand, Tom McDonald, Ron Mohn, Cindy Foster, and Jim Landwehr at the April 19 meeting of the Flathead Lake and

River Fisheries Advisory Committee meeting in Polson.

The 12 citizen advisors working on the Flathead Lake and River Co-Management Plan worked to reach agreement on some overall guiding management principles and began work on framing fisheries management alternatives.

The session, held at the Rio Café in Polson, was anything but easy. Advisors grappled with the same issues that have challenged managers for over a decade: how to balance protection and recovery of native fish while maintaining a recreational and subsistence fishery.

Advisors and facilitator Virginia Tribe worked for seven straight hours, through lunch and throughout the day with no breaks.

Several issues received a lot of attention, including:

- The nature of the recreational fishery, particularly for lake trout; what defines a trophy fishery, a viable fishery, how various size fish should be managed, issues surrounding the “slot” limit now in place on lake trout in Flathead Lake;
- The extent of additional native fish recovery that could be accomplished through habitat work and nutrient load reduction;
- In the lake and river system, what values draw anglers: native fish, fish of any size, large fish, etc., and the economic value of these various fish;
- The need for better year-around access to Flathead Lake for recreation and to put more fishing pressure on lake trout;
- The issue of white sturgeon, for which there are cultural accounts of their existence in the lake;
- The importance of research and further information gathering as part of the management plan as it goes forward.



Facilitator Virginia Tribe works with advisors to reach agreement on guiding principles for the management alternatives. Advisors (from left) are Darrel Clairmont, Arlen Roll, and Patty Stevens.

During the last few hours of the meeting, advisors discussed and debated broad management alternatives. Five general management scenarios or alternatives were composed. Over the coming weeks, advisors will review this information and bring further thoughts to the next meeting. Also during the interim period before the next meeting, advisors will receive information on northern pike in the Flathead River, the past management plan, and more detail on the sturgeon issue.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting Set for May 23

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23 at the Outlaw Inn in Kalispell. The meeting will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. At that meeting, Advisors will begin to refine draft fisheries management

alternatives and strategies for evaluation.

The public is invited to attend and observe all Advisory Committee meetings. Most of the time advisors will be in working groups and in discussion. The public will be able to visit with advisors at breaks, lunch, and for a period after the working meeting concludes.

Advisors include: Tom Branson Philip Catalfomo, Darrel Clairmont, Cindy Foster, George Hover, Jim Landwehr, Patrick Lefthand, Jr., Tom McDonald, Ron Mohn, Dan Paschke, Arlen Roll, and Patty Stevens. The advisors hail from Columbia Falls around the lake to Polson and south to Lolo.

For More Information

For more information on the Advisory Committee or the co-management plan process, contact the plan coordinators:

John Fraley, FWP: 406-751-4564
Rich Janssen, CSKT: 406-675-2700.