

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Science Work Group Meeting

19 January 2010 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:30 PM

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque, NM

Decisions

- The December 15th, 2009 meeting minutes were approved for finalization with no changes.

Actions

- Terina Perez will contact Connie this week regarding the scheduling (date and location) of the next propagation group meeting; science work group members would like to have the meeting held in February instead of waiting until March.
- Jeanne Dye will follow up on the estimated time for the Program's database management system (DBMS) to be up and running and populated in order for the Science work group to determine if the Analysis and Evaluation of Spawning Data project would be feasible for this fiscal year.
- Jericho Lewis will look into providing the Science work group with the SWCA egg monitoring in canal data (from 2002 to 2007).
- Jeanne Dye will update the ScW 2010 work plan with suggested changes and will distributed the to ScW membership for final review and input. She will also distribute the work group membership list for agencies to update their official primary and alternate representation.
- Jeanne Dye will send a list of ScW projects with the final contracting year for the work group to see where in process all the projects are.

Meeting Summary

- Jeanne Dye called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Andrew Monies (NMDGF) will be replacing Nic Zymonas and will in time become NMDGF's primary representative on the science work group. The agenda was approved with no changes.
- The work group finalized the December 15th, 2009 meeting notes with no changes.
- The work group reviewed the December action items. All actions were completed except the action for members to review the Spawning Monitoring in the Main Channel scope which is ongoing and provision of the gate and flow settings at the Albuquerque Drinking Water RGSM Bypass to Jason Remshardt for use in the PIT tag study which is of unknown status.
 - During the action item review, attendees briefly reviewed the Spawning Monitoring in the Main Channel draft scope and made several clarifications and suggested changes. Attendees also discussed that the hatcheries do not have the number or size of fish at this time to do any tagging now. Although there is still approximately \$5,000 worth of PIT tags available there are only about 500 fish sizeable enough to tag and it would take a couple thousand fish to make it cost effective (from a staffing and time perspective) to do.
 - During the action item review, attendees also discussed how to correlate, analyze, and/or compile previous spawning monitoring data. It was suggested that the work group wait until the Program's database management system (DBMS) is populated as the single data repository and use the DBMS analysis tools as a first step.
 - The work group discussed the egg monitoring in canals. Due to MRGCD's operational constraints and changes, the egg entrainment in the canals is apparently decreasing based on presence/absence monitoring. While it appears that the changes are effective, it is ultimately up to the action agency to discuss with the Service if criteria have been met. It

was suggested as a first step that the work group start with reviewing the SWCA egg monitoring in canal data (either from reports and/or actual spreadsheet data) and then determine what questions need to be answered. If the data that exists is not sufficiently robust to answer the questions, the work group should design a study to gather the necessary data to answer the questions.

- The work group then discussed recommendations for deliverables/reports for peer review. There was discussion on whether or not peer review should occur during the first few years of a project in order to allow ample time for subsequent years work to be improved or waiting until a project is already more mature. The work group agreed that they would like to see a list of all the ScW projects with indications on those that are ongoing and where they are in the contracting cycle (first year, final year, etc.). The work group will then prioritize ongoing projects for peer review.
 - The genetics project was one suggestion for 2010 peer review. The sampling methodology report and age and growth were both recommended for peer review in 2011; the floodplain/main channel hypothesis testing was recommended for peer review in 2012 or 2013.
- The work group was given an update on the San Acacia Reach (SAR) Analysis and Recommendations (A&R) peer review. The peer review has been completed and there is a final report that is not open for comment. The SA A&R is a final report from 2004. The main purpose of this review was to test the peer review process. There will be a presentation from the peer review panel tentatively scheduled for February 24th. All work group and Program participants are encouraged to attend this presentation.
- In a working session, attendees reviewed the 2009 work plan and provided suggested changes for 2010.
- In the Program Update, it was shared that Tom Pitts presented an update on Chapter 7 of the Draft Long-Term Plan (LTP) at the December Executive Committee (EC) meeting. Tom recommended that, once the LTP has been finalized and approved, the EC consider an LTP implementation workshop. No further details about the suggested implementation workshop are available at this time. The current contracted time frame for the LTP is probably not going to be sufficient considering the non-federal meetings and the workshop. It is probable that Tom's contract will be extended until June 2010. There is a non-federal partners meeting with Tom Pitts scheduled for this afternoon. The Coordination Committee (CC) will be discussing the Long Term Plan (LTP) with Tom Pitts at their meeting tomorrow (01/20/10). There have been discussions on how to populate the activities in the LTP and concerns expressed about basing the plan on a draft recovery plan.
 - In an update on the draft minnow recovery plan, it was shared that the recent internal review indicated no significant issues with the current version, so it is expected to be finalized within the next few weeks.
 - The next Population Viability Analysis (PVA) work group meeting is January 26th, all day, and January 27th; half day. Reese Fullerton will be facilitating this 2-day meeting. The Population Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) work group will be meeting on January 26th from 9:00am to 11:00am. The PVA and PHVA will meet in a joint session from 10:00am to 11:00am.

Next ScW Meeting: February 16th, 2010 from 9:00am to 11:30am at COE; Terina Perez will lead

- Tentative Agenda Items: (1) work group suggestions for Jason Remshardt's analysis work of VIE/PIT tag data; (2) review of ScW project list to prioritize ongoing projects for peer review; and (3) review of a list of ScW projects that are new, ongoing, or expiring to begin considering 2011 projects.
- Read aheads expected: (1) list of ScW projects with indication on those that are ongoing and where they are in the contracting cycle (first year, final year, etc.);

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U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque, NM

MEETING MINUTES

Introductions and Agenda Approval

- Jeanne Dye called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Andrew Monie (NMDGF) will be replacing Nic Zymonas and will, in time, become NMDGF's primary representative on the science work group.
- The agenda was approved with no changes.

Approval of 12/15/09 meeting notes

Decision: The December 15th, 2009 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

- Members briefly discussed the next propagation meeting. A date had been proposed but is subject to change due to participant's availability and the location had not been determined. Science members would like to have the meeting held in February instead of waiting until March.

Action: Terina Perez will contact Connie this week regarding the scheduling (date and location) of the next propagation group meeting; science work group members would like to have the meeting held in February instead of waiting until March.

Action Item Review

- ScW members will review the Spawning Monitoring in the *Main Channel* scope and return comments to Jeanne Dye by Thursday, December 17, 2009. As the scope was a hard copy distributed at the meeting; ScW can either scan and email them, or email Jeanne their comments with clear references to page number and specific paragraphs. – *ongoing*;
 - Attendees briefly reviewed the main channel draft during the meeting. On Pg. 2, a slight change was made to include coordination with Reclamation, FWS, and the BioPark for collection assistance (COA is the primary for collection).
 - It was clarified that all references to "collection" have been taken out of the scope since the focus is actually on monitoring. Egg collection is included under COA's comprehensive contract. There is only one objective included in the scope now.
 - Members discussed and clarified that the mention of "the eggs were not as genetically diverse" was based on the genetic report that said the sample examined had a lower diversity compared to wild fish and fish spawned in facilities.
 - Members suggest that if the contract is to be issued for multiple years, it was suggested that specific date references be changed to more generic monthly references (such as mid-April to mid June) with language specifying that subsequent years are to be determined. This change would allow the contractor some flexibility in cases where spring runoff might start earlier. It was also suggested that the language of "location of sites" be changed to "monitoring locations."
 - **Question:** On top of Pg. 2, the draft scope states that additional samples may be needed for genetic studies – is this to do with the UNM study?
 - **Response:** No, there is no interaction between the UNM study and this scope.
 - The genetic monitoring is ongoing, every year.

- In the general, contractor may be requested to provide eggs for other Program needs even though there is to be no collection specified in this monitoring scope.
- Monitoring can involve collecting over a short time period. There is a difference in the collection purpose and methods. ASIR collects but does not retain eggs.
- It was suggested that some mechanism be provided in the draft scope that would allow for the contractor to be able to retain some eggs if and as necessary. Suggested language was “the contractor may be requested to retain samples for additional Program studies.”
- Any additional suggested changes are to be provided to Jeanne Dye as soon as possible so the scope can be finalized to be put out for RFP. It will probably be issued for 1 based year with up to 2 option years for a total of 3 years.
- ✓ Jeanne Dye will talk to Jericho Lewis regarding ScW input on questions for peer review on the genetics study. – *complete*;
 - The work group wanted to know if they would have input into the questions directed at a peer review. Yes, just as in the process for the San Acacia (SA) A&R peer review, the questions were formulated with the work group.
- ✓ Jason Remshardt will find out how many fish are available for PIT tagging during 2010 and future years. He will also develop a cost estimate for PIT tagging during 2010. – *complete*;
 - In a response email, Jason explained that he checked with the hatcheries was informed that they don’t have the number or size of fish necessary to do tagging now. Tagging could be considered for next year. He had not developed a cost estimate yet but there is still approximately \$5,000 of PIT tags available.
 - It was estimated that only about 500 fish were sizeable enough to tag, but it would take a couple thousand fish to make it cost effective (from a staffing and time perspective) to do..
- Rick Billings will get gate and flow settings at the Albuquerque Drinking Water RGSM Bypass beginning in June 2009 to Jason Remshardt for use in the PIT tag study. – *status unknown*;
- ✓ Jeanne Dye will locate the DRAFT SOW from the Analysis and Evaluation of Spawning Data report from last year for discussion at the focused group meeting – *complete*;
 - The report was not located. However, there wasn’t much of a scope and only a simple, generic objective. It was developed as a “compile all the data” task but there was uncertainty on what questions to ask and there was not time enough to develop the scope more. The Program’s database management system (DBMS) will address the data compilation into one repository; it was suggested that the work group wait until the DBMS is populated in order to use the included analysis tools. It might be a matter of collecting the data (which is still scattered) and inputting into the DBMS.
 - The work group requested an estimate of when the DBMS will be populated with data and information in order for the work group to determine if this would be a feasible project to aim for this fiscal year or wait.
 - The work group also briefly discussed the need to provide future contractors with a formally standardized data format.

Action: Jeanne Dye will follow up on the estimated time for the Program’s database management system (DBMS) to be up and running and populated in order for the Science work group to determine if the Analysis and Evaluation of Spawning Data project would be feasible for this fiscal year.

- ✓ Jeanne Dye will contact Jason Remshardt regarding the release of VIE and PIT tag data to SWCA for the Fish Community Monitoring and Fish Sampling Methodology Evaluation. – *complete*;
 - The work group was under the impression that there was to be a report or document on this evaluation available before Christmas 2009. There is a preliminary report and Reclamation has provided comments. The presentation of data is being revised based on Reclamation's comments. The draft has not been sent out to other Program groups yet. The revised version is expected this month.
 - In a response email, Jason explained that he envisions a database with query options that could be used to check/analyze recaptured PIT tagged fish data. He stated that the entire VIE database (which is most of the data we have) is already available on the Program's and Goodman's website. For the PIT tag database, he responded that if the work group has any suggested analysis recommendations for his work, he would love to hear those.

Spawning in canals update

- The spawning in canals scope was discussed at the CC where Isleta raised the point that there really aren't eggs in the two canals. In the past, there were a moderate number of eggs entrained in the canals, but due to MRGCD's operational constraints and changes the egg entrainment in the canals is apparently decreasing based on presence/absence monitoring. While it appears that the changes are effective, it is ultimately up to the action agency to discuss with the Service if criteria have been met.
 - The differences between RPMs and RPAs was briefly discussed. RPAs (reasonable and prudent alternatives) alleviate jeopardy while RPMs (reasonable and prudent measures) are requirements for decreasing "unallowed" take.
 - The work group discussed whether there would be sufficient evidence with presence/absence monitoring only to indicate with certainty that the entrainment has been adequately reduced.
 - It was suggested as a first step that the work group start with reviewing the SWCA egg monitoring in canal data (either from reports and/or actual spreadsheet data) and then determine what questions need to be answered. If the data that exists is not sufficiently robust to answer the questions, the work group should design a study to gather the necessary data to answer the questions.
 - All the data from SWCA should have been provided to Reclamation as Program deliverables; Reclamation should have the data available.

Action: Jericho Lewis will look into providing the SWCA egg monitoring in canal data (from 2002 to 2007).

Recommendations on Deliverables for Peer Review

- The work group discussed recommendations for deliverables/reports for peer review.
- It was suggested that the peer review should be implemented in the scope/contracting/proposal stage in order to select the project with the most rigorous or extensive products.
- There was discussion on whether or not peer review should occur during the during the first few years of a project in order to allow ample time for subsequent years work to be improved or waiting until a project is already more mature. It was stated that the Program participants (i.e., work group members) should be catching the projects/reports that are not meeting the requirements early on.
 - For ongoing and multi-year projects, one peer review should be sufficient to make the contractor aware of the standards that are expected and any potential errors; done early enough in the life of the project should translate into improved quality for the outlying years.

- The genetics study was suggested as mature enough to benefit from peer review but it was cautioned that the genetic studies published in prestigious journals have already been peer reviewed according to the journal's publication policies. It was countered that there are instances where journal review is not as extensive as one might think. Some members believe the genetic work has progressed enough to warrant another review.
- **Question:** Will the peer reviewers be looking to see if the reports are reflective of the original scopes?
 - **Response:** No, since the scope of work is not made available to them. However, they will be informed of the purpose of the study and the Program's intended use of the results. Part of the process is to determine if the study/report met those conditions.
 - The work groups will be able to guide the peer reviewers on what to look at (such as: where the objectives set forth for this study met?)
 - Members were reminded that the peer review is not for management decisions.
 - Members expressed concern with the possible "cherry picking" of reports to be reviewed.
- Attendees then brainstormed the following suggestions:
 - Sampling Methodology Report – for peer review in 2011;
 - Age and Growth – for peer review in 2011;
 - Spawning on floodplain/main channel Hypothesis Testing – for peer review in 2012 or 2013;
- The Contracting Officer explained that an ID/IQ at the DOI level has been put in place in accordance with the peer review principles of the Service; the Service has guidelines on how to proceed with peer review of scientific reports. This ID/IQ is available for use for Reclamation and the Corps as well. It was competed and there is a list of participating expert reviewers from all over the country. The Program is not able to select the reviewers but will get to see their background information.
 - It was shared that the SA A&R peer review cost approximately \$25,000 for 5 reviewers, the peer review report, and a peer review report presentation.

Update on fish availability for PIT tagging

- *Please see the discussion on the PIT tag availability under the action item review (above).*

SA A&R Peer Review Update

- The SA A&R peer review has been completed with a final report that is not open for comment. The PMT is reviewing the peer review report now and discussing how to disseminate the final report to Program participants (there are concerns that the SA A&R report is already final and had been internally reviewed by the Program).
 - The SA A&R is an analysis and recommendations completed back in 2004 which is also a final document. While the Habitat Restoration (HR) work group was the lead on the project, there are many sections that do involve science and the majority of comments received were directed at the science behind the recommendations behind the report.
 - It was used as an example in determining how the peer review process works or could work for the Program. Ultimately, however, the peer review process should be implemented for potentially controversial products/deliverables/projects.
 - All new science projects from last year have a 60 to 90 day review period that would allow for an external peer review should the group decide to recommend.

- There will be a formal presentation from the peer review panel tentatively scheduled for February 24th (waiting on an availability confirmation from the review panel).

Work Plan

- In a working session, attendees reviewed the 2009 work plan and provided suggested updates and changes for 2010.
- The work group discussed reviewing the Long-Term Plan (LTP) for direction and future activities/projects. The work group would like to make sure there isn't a duplication of effort with individual agency work.
- The work group also discussed being involved in (1) reviewing the effective monitoring plan (EMP) itself and (2) reviewing the first year EMP report.
 - The EMP should be made available to all interested work groups. The ID/IQ is expected to be out in the next week; lead point of contact will be Mick Porter.
- To meet the 2010 deadlines of developing projects and activities for 2011, the work group discussed starting to consider 2011 projects as early as next month.
 - Members requested a list of anticipated scopes be provided at the next meeting. The list should include information on what contracts are expiring soon and any ongoing projects.
 - It was shared that PMT intends to develop a schedule for all work groups that provides "heads up" on when deliverables or reports are due; this will hopefully help members schedule and track projects.

Action: Jeanne Dye will send a list of ScW projects with the final contracting year for the work group to see where in process all the projects are. .

Action: Jeanne Dye will update the ScW 2010 work plan with suggested changes and will distributed the to ScW membership for final review and input. She will also distribute the work group membership list for agencies to update their official primary and alternate representation.

Program update

- *EC update*
 - During the December Executive Committee (EC) meeting, Tom Pitts presented a brief review of presentation on Chapter 7 of the Draft LTP that was given to the CC the day before. The time frame he is currently contracted under (for final LTP due by the end of April) is probably not going to happen. Once the final LPT has been adopted by the Program, he recommended an LTP implementation workshop. No further details on the proposed workshop are available at this time although Tom should be providing clarification and tentative draft workshop outline this week.
 - Reclamation will be considering negotiating changes on Tom's contract since it is not an effective process with revised drafts provided 1 week before he meets back to back with the CC and EC. It is expected that the final due date for the LTP will be delayed to June. Other changes in the contract may include additional meetings to accommodate more non-federal meetings and incorporation of the implementation workshop.
 - There is a non-federal meeting with Tom Pitts this afternoon. The EC will be meeting on January 21st, 2010.
- *CC update*
 - The Coordination Committee (CC) will be discussing the LTP with Tom Pitts on January 20th, 2010. There have been some discussions on how to populate the activities in the LTP with concerns on basing the LTP on the draft recovery plan.

- The CC also heard the SWM concerns with the Climate Change Input to URGWOM scope process and the requested changes to the Albuquerque Reach A&R contract. The CC approved the funding request for the Isleta Phase II HR project.
- The Population Viability Analysis Biology work group (PVA) will be meeting all day on January 26th and hold a day on January 27th; the Population and Habitat Viability Analysis Hydrology (PHVA) work group will also be meeting on January 26th with a joint session between the 2 groups scheduled for 10:00am to 11:00am.
 - Reese Fullerton will be facilitating the 2-day PVA meeting.

Announcements

- The Service is close to selecting/hiring a PMT member and ScW liaison but specifics cannot be announced yet.
- Update: there were no issues with the recovery plan, so expect it to be finalized soon within the next few weeks.

Next ScW Meeting: February 16th, 2010 from 9:00am to 11:30am at COE; Terina Perez will lead

- Tentative Agenda Items: (1) work group suggestions for Jason Remshardt's analysis work of VIE/PIT tag data; (2) review of ScW project list to prioritize ongoing projects for peer review; and (3) review of a list of ScW projects that are new, ongoing, or expiring to begin considering 2011 projects.
- Read aheads expected: (1) list of ScW projects with indication on those that are ongoing and where they are in the contracting cycle (first year, final year, etc.);

Science Work group 19 January 2009 Meeting Attendees

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