

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program  
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting**

24 June – 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Albuquerque - Reclamation

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Decisions**

- The May action items were reviewed; the majority of actions were completed as assigned. The actions with unknown status will be followed up.

**Actions**

- Tetra Tech will confirm that Robyn Harrison's email has been updated to [robynjharrison@gmail.com](mailto:robynjharrison@gmail.com) for SAR work group communications and will make sure Yasmeen Najmi's email hasn't been accidentally removed from the email list.
- Tetra Tech will distribute the May 27<sup>th</sup> SAR meeting notes to attendees for any final comments or corrections. If no feedback is received by COB on Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the notes will be finalized as is.
- Gina Dello Russo will search her archives for any Save Our Bosque Task Force and San Acacia South documents that might need to be included in the database references.
- Robert Padilla will provide the "Top Down ESA" (?) report/documentation from Reclamation for inclusion in the database references.
- If found, Gina Dello Russo will draft a short write up summarizing the contents of the San Acacia South documents.
- Tetra Tech will search the Program archives for any San Acacia South and Bookclub documents.
- Tetra Tech will send out an reminder email to SAR members asking for any known documents from the San Acacia South group (active around 2001 or 2002).
- Tetra Tech will confirm with Steve Harris that his assigned action from the May 27<sup>th</sup> SAR meeting (*he was to contact Mark Doles with a list of documents that were suggested to be added to the Program database*) was completed.
- SAR work group members are tasked with completing their respective Agency Response to Themes by the next SAR meeting, scheduled for July 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Tetra Tech will check if the initial *Facilitate Establishment of new, large SWFL populations in areas where none exist* future activity summary has been drafted or not.
- Tetra Tech will forward PVA June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda to Gina Dello Russo.
- Tetra Tech will remove "draft" water mark and reference to "draft" and "review" from the 05-27-10 Work Group Objectives and then finalize the document with the 05-27-10 date.
- Page Pegram will distribute the old WAM's White Paper on the SA Reach to work group members.

**Meeting Summary**

- Gina Dello Russo called the meeting to order and the agenda was approved with no changes.

- The May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting notes were approved for finalization pending no additional changes are submitted from attendees of that meeting.
- The May action items were reviewed; the majority of actions were completed as assigned. The actions with unknown status will be followed up.
- Attendees discussed the Agency Response to Themes Table in relationship to the Agency White papers. The response to themes was (1) meant to be a tool to identify areas of common interest among the agencies for use when coordinating efforts to address issues/concerns and (2) to keep the energy of the San Acacia work shop moving forward and to not lose the voice of the workshop attendees. The value of the Agency White Papers is to “flesh” out actual details on agency projects and activities in the reach. It is an opportunity to gather information. One advantage to having the issues and responsibilities articulated in a document is that local individuals can see the issues and understand that it may not be up to specific agencies to correct a particular issue but up to the local government. The White Paper documents can help to focus people on who could or could not be an advocate for that issue. There is an external public relations piece but also internal use to the White Papers.
- Attendees then reviewed the draft template for Agency Information White papers that was developed at the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. The group reviewed the generated list of potential agencies for white papers development and added several entities. The current list with tentative assigned person responsible is: ISC (P. Pegram), FWS (G. Dello Russo), BOR (R. Padilla), COE, MRGCD (Y. Najmi), UNM, Forestry, SOFBTF, BDA (G. Dello Russo), NM Tech (S. Harris), NMSU (S. Harris), ESA Collaborative Program, Socorro Soil and Water Conservation, NRCS, RG Agricultural land trust, County of Socorro (Y. Najmi), NMDGF, BLM, Friends of the Bosque, and Socorro Chamber of Commerce. No pueblos or tribes have been included at this time.
- The work group discussed the potential field trip and agreed that the month of July would not be the best time to schedule a field trip as it is too hot and the water levels are lower. Since Gina will be unavailable next month, attendees discussed delaying the trip until October 28<sup>th</sup>. The trip will be scheduled for the full day. Tentatively included in the trip are the Tiffany area and levee projects and the SA diversion.
- The work group also agreed to delay a raft trip until spring of next year (April, depending).
- In the Program update, it was shared that the Coordination Committee (CC) continues to work on the Long-term Plan (LTP) text and reviewing the future activity summaries that have been developed by the work groups. An initial “complete” draft LTP was expected by the end of June, but it is not known if that schedule will hold. The work group briefly discussed the *SWFL Territories Outside of Elephant Butte* project and the need for project implementation and planning to be directed by the HR work group but the SAR group could be included strategizing.

**NEXT SAR MEETING JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> from 12:30pm to 3:30pm at Reclamation** (*note that the meeting location has been switched from Socorro to Albuquerque*)

- A tentative agenda items: (1) review of completed Agency Response to Themes Table,

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**MEETING NOTES**

**Introductions and Agenda Approval**

- Gina Dello Russo called the meeting to order and the agenda was approved with no changes.

**Approval of 05/27/10 SAR Meeting Minutes**

- Attendees approved the finalization of the May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting notes pending additional changes submitted from meeting attendees. It was clarified that the April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting notes were approved.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will distribute the May 27<sup>th</sup> SAR meeting notes to attendees for any final comments or corrections. If no feedback is received by COB on Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the notes will be finalized as is.

**Action Item Review**

- ✓ Gina Dello Russo will verify through email to the work group if she has any changes to the April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010 meeting notes. – *complete*.
- ✓ Page Pegram will email the SAR work group's POC assignments/suggestions to Amy Louise. . – *complete*; It was asked if the end of June is the deadline for the database.
- At the last San Acacia Reach (SAR) meeting the work group reviewed the table of data to be included in the Program database and assigned point of contacts. It was asked if the Program's San Acacia workshop notes and results were included. It was said that anything already on the Program website should automatically be included in the new database population. Save Our Bosque Task Force (SOBTF) - Gina will find the SOBTF documents for posting to the website for inclusion in the Program database. Ancillary reports and cultural resources from Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) should also be included but the point of contact (POC) on those particular projects or plans is not known. The work group discussed the inclusion of the Top Down/Bottom Up ESA from Reclamation, Robert will make sure the report is available and included. It was also thought that documents from the old San Acacia group should be included.

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will search her archives for any Save Our Bosque Task Force and San Acacia South documents that might need to be included in the database references.

**Action:** Robert Padilla will provide the "Top Down ESA" report/documentation from Reclamation for inclusion in the database references.

- Revisit the past efforts (SOBTF or San Acacia South group that looked at the "hot" topics for the reach, the Rail Road bridge was the main topic at that time)
- Reclamation had meetings with the Corps to discuss the history of the river activities and questions on ownership of the river channel; there are a lot of

history documents dated back to the 1920s with the formation of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD).

- The work group would like to add “historical documents” (not necessarily tied to current projects). MRGCD’s record manager may be able to help facilitate - Annabel Gallegos; SOBTF – Gina will be the POC. San Acacia South – Gina will be the POC and will look for any documentation she has; if she finds documentation she will write up a short summary; Tetra Tech will search the archive for San Acacia South and Bookclub; Tetra Tech will send a reminder to members to search for any San Acacia South documentation.

**Action:** If found, Gina Dello Russo will draft a short write up summarizing the contents of the San Acacia South documents.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will search the Program archives for any San Acacia South and Bookclub documents.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will send out a reminder email to SAR members asking for any known documents from the San Acacia South group (active around 2001 or 2002).

- ✓ Amy Louse will convey the work group’s POC assignments/suggestions to the DBMS or Mark Doles. - *complete*
- Steve Harris will contact Mark Doles with the list of documents that were suggested to be added to the Program database.
  - Steve had a lot of documents to add to the database; Tetra Tech will check with Steve to confirm if this action was completed.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will confirm with Steve Harris that his assigned action from the May 27<sup>th</sup> SAR meeting (*he was to contact Mark Doles with a list of documents that were suggested to be added to the Program database*) was completed.

- SAR work group members will fill in the template for their assigned agency. – *on-going*.
  - There was no date set, just on-going with a start date only.
  - There was concern about whether the template was to replace the Response to Themes table. The template resulted from the work group wanting to move forward and the next item on the objectives list are the White Papers so the work group brainstormed topics. The Response to Themes was not abandoned. Members work load seem to be the main reason for delay in completion. There was concern that hesitancy is the result of agencies not wanting to put responses in writing.
- ✓ Page Pegram will email Yasmeen Najmi to tell her she has tentatively been assigned to fill in the template for MRGCD. – *complete*;
- ✓ Dominique Zuni will convey assigned action items and tasks to Gina Dello Russo. – *complete*;
- ✓ Page Pegram will convey assigned action items and tasks to Amy Louise. – *complete*;
- ✓ Robert Padilla will reserve a room at Reclamation for the next SAR meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010. – *complete*;

#### Agency Response to themes update

- Attendees discussed the White Papers; the Agency Response to Themes was meant to be a tool to identify places of common interest among the agencies and thus when addressing the issue or topic have the agency support for acting on that issue/concern. This was an attempt to keep the work going with the initial work shop response and not lose the voice of the workshop attendees and to explore where those working in the valley stand on the identified issues/concerns.
- Valuable in terms of White Papers to flush out actual details on the projects and activities in the reach. Those efforts or future focuses can be fed back into the table to see how they address the themes/concerns and the long-term picture. It is an opportunity to gather information.
- There is some reluctance to put some information in writing. The historic information is more valuable – past history has proven value from the perspective of providing guidance for the future. There is also the challenge to provide an answer to some of the questions (agencies may have a neutral stand at this point instead of a yes or no). Agency positions can be that they don't want to take a stance one way or another considering it might not be within their authority. In an example of floodplain encroachment, no agency has come out and really taken a stand that encroachment has adverse affects. The agencies have not spelled what the negative impacts of encroachment are from their perspective (the impacts on their area of responsibilities and how it affects agencies ability to do their job). One advantage to having the issues and responsibilities articulated in the document is that local individuals can see the issues and understand that it may not be up to specific agencies to correct but it may be up to local government. The document may help focus on who could or could not be an advocate for that issue.
  - The work group discussed what might happen process-wise if a large amount of water was needed to be sent down the river. In 1993 the Corps cut back on flows due to 1 individual's house flooding. Emergency levees were also built to protect that property. There are emergency management and local emergency authorities in place to address flooding, "act of God", situations. Zoning, set backs, or voluntary are the only ways to balance the provision of government subsidized flood insurance. This gets to a more comprehensive education effort regarding issues, land ownership, etc. to get a wide public understanding.
  - An established program could help address the type of folks who are targeting the east side (Bosquecito, Escondida, etc.) because they can afford to and want to be away from city life. Flood mapping can help to show the historic flood areas. Part of the problem is that by the time buyers understand the potential hazards, they have already purchased the land and have plans for it.
    - It would help to educate the builders and developers, realtors, local government, communities, etc. The Chamber of Commerce and zoning could have access to the issues with building on the river and incentive programs.
    - It would be beneficial to issue outreach focused on specific topics. This could be taken to the County, Chamber of Commerce, and vocal land owners interested in advocating; this could be through an education package.

- There are direct affects to people from the building of high roads (can cause flooding to neighbors). There are also issues with arroyo wash and the building of individual berms to direct the water – resulting in flooding neighbors. There can also be the seepage of groundwater coming up and causing flooding issues.

**Action:** SAR work group members are tasked with completing their respective Agency Response to Themes by the next SAR meeting, scheduled for July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **Draft Template for Agency Information White paper**

- Attendees reviewed the draft Template or Outline for the Agency Information white papers developed at the 5/27 meeting. Identified categories included: (1) Agency/Entity; (2) Mission; (3) Authority; (4) Agency/Group History in SA Reach; and (5) Projects/Studies/Resource Management Plans (RMPs) including any (a) Current, (b) Planned (3-5yrs), and (c) Completed activities. Attendees identified a 6<sup>th</sup> category of Areas of Interest to be added to the template to capture any agency specific interests; this category could be used as a “quick reference” section to determine appropriate agency involvement in addressing specific concerns or issues.
  - *Agency/entity:* a list was generated and persons assigned;
    - The work group discussed the separation of certain agency portions from the larger agency whole (ex. The Ecological Services (FWS) versus Refuges (FWS), ISC versus OSE, etc).
    - Attendees then reviewed the generated list of potential agencies to target for the white papers: ISC (Page), FWS (Gina), BOR (Robert), COE, MRGCD, UNM, Forestry, SOFBTF, BDA (Gina), NM Tech (Steve), NMSU (Steve), ESA Collaborative Program, Socorro Soil and Water Conservation, NRCS, RG Agricultural land trust, County of Socorro (Yasmeen), NMDGF, BLM, Friends of the Bosque, Socorro Chamber of Commerce,
      - No pueblos or tribes included at this time.
    - White Papers should be limited to 3 pages or less.
    - In the future, the White Papers could be more focused on the issues and how the SAR work group felt about the issues. These could be kept under 1 page in length.
    - One value of the White Papers includes knowing who needs to be incorporated or involved in addressing specific issues. There is an external public relations piece but also internal use.
    - Old WAMS' White Paper on the SA reach (can be accessed on the website);

**Action:** Page Pegram will distribute the old WAM's White Paper on the SA Reach to work group members.

- *Agency/Group History in SA Reach:* this is a vague category that may need clarification or defining.

#### **Work Group Field Trip**

- The work group discussed the potential field trip and agreed that the month of July would not be the best time to schedule a field trip as it is too hot and the water levels

are lower. Since Gina will be unavailable next month, attendees discussed delaying the trip until October 28<sup>th</sup>. The trip will be scheduled for the full day. Tentatively included in the trip are the Tiffany area and levee projects and the San Acacia diversion.

- The work group also agreed to delay a raft trip until spring of next year (possibly April).

### Program updates

- *CC update:* The Coordination Committee (CC) is very focused on the development of the revised Long Term Plan (LTP). The CC met yesterday and recommended the Program not provide peer review questions for the San Acacia Fish Passage review but to instead make the question development part of the task order for the contractor.
- *LTP update:* The LTP is still in progress, the CC continues to work on the text and work groups continue to develop activity summaries; an initial “complete” draft was expected by the end of June, but it is not known if that schedule will hold. The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SWFL) territories outside of EB have been bounced between Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) and SAR. This may have to be a SAR issue with collaboration from HRW. There is concern that SAR is a short-term group and the issue is longer term. Project implementation and planning needs to be directed by the HRW group; SAR could propose a future task summary that discusses possible strategies as developed in conjunction with HRW. For now, *Facilitate establishment of new, large, populations in areas where none exist*, currently is assigned to HRW. Tetra Tech will check if this future activity summary has been written or not.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will check if the initial *Facilitate Establishment of new, large SWFL populations in areas where none exist* future activity summary has been drafted or not.

- *RM 83 project:* The CC approved the funding of expanding the area down to RM 77 and the improved habitat analysis for the current/initial area. There is concern that an ecological response evaluation would be needed on the expanded area before any work could be chosen.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will remove “draft” water mark and reference to “draft” and “review” from the 05-27-10 Work Group Objectives and then finalize the document with the 05-27-10 date.

**Action:** Tetra Tech will forward PVA June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda to Gina Dello Russo.

### Next Meeting/Regular Meeting

- July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Gina will be unavailable; the meeting will be held at Reclamation.
  - Tentative agenda item: review of completed Agency Response to Themes Table.
- August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting: tentative for Socorro, 12:30pm to 3:30pm

San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group  
24 JUNE 2010 Meeting Attendees

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Gina Dello Russo	FWS/Co-chair	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@FWS.gov
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