

Executive Committee Meeting
July 15, 2010

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Executive Committee Meeting
July 15, 2010, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
5550 San Antonio Dr. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109**

	1. Introductions and Changes to the Proposed Agenda (Dave Sabo)	(5 minutes)
*	2. Approval of June 17 EC Meeting Summary	(10 minutes)
	3. Coordination Committee Report (Co-chairs)	(15 minutes)
*	a. Recommendation: Population Viability Assessment (PVA) Work Plan	
	b. Decision: Approve/Revise PVA Work Plan	
	c. San Acacia Fish Passage Peer Review Update	
	d. LTP Development Update and Schedule	
	4. Program Manager Update (Yvette McKenna)	(10 minutes)
	a. Workgroup Updates	
	5. USFWS Update (Lori Robertson)	(20 minutes)
	a. Biology Update	
	b. 10(j) Biologist Annual Work Plan	
	6. PVA Update (USFWS/MRGCD)	(15 minutes)
	7. PHVA/Hydrology Update (Reclamation)	(10 minutes)
	8. BA/BO ESA Consultation Update (Consultation Team)	(10 minutes)
	Break	
	9. Urban National Wildlife Refuge - Price's Dairy (Paul Tashjian, USFWS)	(45 minutes)
	10. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (Avra Morgan, Reclamation)	(45 minutes)
	11. Public Comment	(10 minutes)
	12. Announcements	(5 minutes)
	13. Next meeting: August 19, 2010	
	EC Closed Session Revised LTP Development	
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*	<i>Denotes read ahead material provided for this item</i>	

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Executive Committee Meeting
July 15th, 2010 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
NM Interstate Stream Commission
5555 San Antonio, Albuquerque, NM

Decisions

- The June 17th, 2010 EC meeting summary was approved for finalization with correction to the spelling of Col. Colloton's name in the attendance list.
- With a quorum present and no objections, the EC approved the revised PVA work plan.

Recommendations

- Dave Campbell (PVA chair), Phil Miller (PVA RAMAS modeler), Dan Goodman (PVA FORTRAN modeler), and representatives from the action agencies will meet on July 22nd to discuss the consultation process schedule and deadlines. This is an informational meeting only – any recommended changes in the deadlines or schedules as an outcome of this meeting will be elevated to the EC for official approval.

Actions

- Brian Millsap will coordinate with Yvette McKenna to arrange a presentation to the EC and CC on the leaf beetle/tamarisk issues and potential impacts on SWFL habitat.
- Tetra Tech will add Mark Brennan to the email distribution lists for the Habitat Restoration and monitoring work groups.
- Mark Brennan will provide Brian Millsap with his Statement of Work and/or position agreement.
- Yvette McKenna will collect the previous EC/CC discussions (from meeting notes) on the 10J/reintroduction biologist position for continued discussion and clarification on the roles and responsibilities of that position.

Next Meeting: August 30th, 2010 from 9:00am to 1:00pm tentatively at Reclamation

- Tentative Agenda Items: (1) discussion and clarification/guidance on the 10J/reintroduction position roles and responsibilities;
- Future Agenda Items: (1) discussion regarding the geographic and authority boundaries for the Program area and how those impact the recovery of the minnow in terms of self-sustaining populations; (2) discussion on the leaf beetle/tamarisk issues/salt cedar water usage and the potential impacts on SWFL habitat; (3) from the PVA modeling perspective, is ASIR participation critical to the PVA work group and if so, is there a way to provide the necessary funding?; and (4) discussions on Program involvement with the LCCs and possible assignment of representation.

July 15th 2010 Meeting Summary

- **Opening and Introductions:** Dave Sabo called the meeting to order and a quorum was confirmed. Introductions were made around the room.
- **Agenda Review and Approval:** The agenda was reviewed and approved with no changes or additions.

- **Approval of June 17th, 2010 EC Summary:** The June 17th, 2010 EC meeting summary was approved for finalization with correction to the spelling of Col. Colloton's name in the attendance list.
- **Coordination Committee (CC) Update:**
 - *PVA Work Plan Approval:* The CC reviewed the revised PVA work plan and recommends the EC approve the revised version. The only significant change to the work plan is the reordering of the tasks in chronological order.
 - Dave Campbell (PVA chair), Phil Miller (PVA RAMAS modeler), Dan Goodman (PVA FORTRAN modeler), and representatives from the action agencies will meet on July 22nd to discuss the consultation process schedule and deadlines. This is an informational meeting only – any recommended changes in the deadlines or schedules as an outcome of this meeting will be elevated to the EC for official approval.
 - With no objections, the EC approved the revised PVA work plan.
 - *San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) Fish Passage Peer Review Update:* The EC and CC met on July 1st 2010 in a special session to discuss the San Acacia Diversion Dam Fish Passage Peer Review task order and draft list of questions. After agreeing to limit the focus of this initial peer review to the sciences, the task order objective was reviewed and revised to “*Based on current data and information, is the requirement to implement fish passage at the San Acacia Diversion Dam for Rio Grande silvery minnow based on sound science?*” Other aspects of the proposed project can be peer reviewed in a phased (or stepped) approach should the science review indicate it is needed/appropriate. At this meeting, the EC agreed to a phased review approach. Irrigation operation expertise was added to the professional qualifications and experience list for the desired panel experts. The SADD fish passage peer review task order has been completed and submitted to contracting. In a related announcement, it was shared that the DEC review results have been approved for release and will be made available to the Program.
 - *LTP Development Update and Schedule:* The CC continues to revise the Long-term Plan (LTP) text as well as review and finalize the future activity summaries developed by the PMT and work groups. The future activity summary review is very time consuming as it is estimated there is between 100 and 200 future activity summaries. The CC expects to continuing meeting regularly on the LTP task; the next full working days have been scheduled for July 28th and August 4th
- **Program Manager (PM) Update:** Adaptive management proposals were received by July 1st. Jericho Lewis, contracting officer, was very pleased with the quality of the proposals. A TPEC (technical proposal evaluation committee) has been scheduled for all day on July 19th to evaluate the proposals. Mr. Lewis is very busy with the Habitat Restoration TPEC solicitation, SADD Fish Passage peer review task order, and adaptive management contracting. The PMT continues working on the LTP development with the CC and work groups. Terina Perez has accepted the Reclamation PMT position and will be starting next Monday. Susan Bittick (COE) has arranged for the PMT and CC to participate in a *Strengths Finder* course in July and August, respectively. The *Strengths Finder* course is training in group behavior and personality. Participants identify their top 5 strengths and how they interact in/as a group. It also helps to identify strengths that are needed in the group to make it as successful as possible. A second component to the *Strengths Finder* addresses

leadership. The HR work group is still looking for federal co-chair. Rick Billings and Monika Mann have been facilitating the group in the interim, but the position needs to be officially filled. The ScW work group will be looking for a new non-federal co-chair soon as well. The PIO co-chairs are willing to meet if/when needs arise.

- **USFWS Update:** Regarding the silvery minnow, drying has started and salvage is in process but no minnow have been salvaged yet. The Service had to revise the incidental take since it is based on consecutive days of flow. The revised incidental take number is now 127,697; the action agencies should have received notice of this revision in a letter. Four sets of comments were received on the 5-year review on the status of the listed species. There are no new flycatcher numbers or information to report from this breeding season. In a related issue, however, there are concerns about the potential future issues with the leaf beetles used to control tamarisk and the potential impact on flycatcher habitat. The immediate impacts are being noted on the Virgin River, but modeling indicates that the beetle could occupy the entire range of the flycatcher within the next 10 years and much of the current flycatcher breeding areas are in tamarisk. The beetles defoliate the tamarisk during the same time the flycatcher is breeding. There is currently no leaf beetle monitoring occurring in the Rio Grande basin but the rate of expansion is incredible.
 - There may be straight-forward management actions (for the flycatcher habitat) that could take place prior to an emergency situation.
 - In a presentation of his 2010 work plan, Mark Brennan shared that since April he has been completing his orientation as a new federal employee with the Service and integrating himself into the Program through involvement with the different work groups. Specifically, he has been assisting the ScW work group on the LTP activity descriptions relating to the 10J projects and making sure the correct information is covered. He has also been working to get established with other related groups (ex. Big Bend, FWS colleagues, etc). Starting now in mid-July, Mr. Brennan proposed to begin putting together a team to help gather information, knowledge, and data that is already available and put that information into a useable format to be able to take to the Program groups and recovery team for the next potential recovery effort. The determined data gaps and informational needs could be tasked to recovery team members to begin filling in. Mr. Brennan also proposed to work with the recovery team to develop a communication plan for internal and external communications. He will continue to stay involved with the ScW and CC as needed. The decisions about site selection will probably not be made this year. If determined early next year, then the actual reintroduction plans could begin in 2011. The site determination should include parameter ranking, best science available, and data input.
 - The CC discussed the 10J activities yesterday and it was evident that there needs to be a lot more discussion on the reintroduction projects regarding the responsibilities, commitments and partnering, and possible funding sources. There are currently 7 potential sites identified and many of those areas are out of the Program's jurisdiction hence the need for partnering with agencies and entities in those areas.
 - The EC discussed concern that the original intent of the 10J position was to focus on the Middle Rio Grande (MRG) since Program agencies have no authority in those other locations. The reintroduction efforts were to focus on suitable but currently unoccupied habitats in the MRG (such as the pueblos) since those are within the Program boundaries. Unfortunately, the biology and needs of the minnow may not conform to

the existing authorities. Executives discussed if reintroduction efforts should be chosen for likelihood of success and thus the need to find other likely partners should be considered.

- Recovery of the minnow requires establishment of 3 self-sustaining populations and if the LTP is going to emphasize recovery (recovery implementation program) instead of focusing on just avoiding jeopardy then there is a disconnect between agency authority and geographic needs that will need to be discussed.
 - Suggested options for consideration included: (1) address reintroduction in phases by exploring reintroduction within the MRG now and expand to other geographical areas if/as funding becomes available; and (2) list the Service as the lead agency. The Program could then have the option of acknowledging support for the efforts outside our jurisdiction even if not monetarily contributing toward it.
 - The EC requested the structure already used for the Big Bend releases be utilized in order to avoid duplication of effort (ex. communication plan).
- **PVA Update:** The EC was briefed on 2 PVA issues. The first issue is that ASIR believes they have no role in the work group to provide support to the modelers for post processing past data. The post processed data needs to be reviewed to ensure accuracy. ASIR doesn't have funding to participate as a contractor and they don't want to be at table as a member if it jeopardizes future opportunities; they are concerned that their participation will prevent them from bidding on future work (conflict of interest).
 - It was explained that ASIR could participate in the work group and assist with post processing data without disqualify them for future proposals. However, if the PVA group wanted to design a study and issue a scope of work, then ASIR could not participate in the development of the study and the scope of work.
 - A future agenda item is to determine, from the modeling perspective, if ASIR's participation in the PVA process is critical and if so, how could Program provide funding?
 - The second issue is with the scheduling of the consultation process. Dave Campbell (PVA chair), Phil Miller (PVA RAMAS modeler), Dan Goodman (PVA FORTRAN modeler), and representatives from the action agencies will meet on July 22nd to discuss the consultation process schedule and deadlines. This is an informational meeting only – any recommended changes in the deadlines or schedules as an outcome of this meeting will be elevated to the EC for official approval.
 - **PHVA/Hydrology Update:** The PHVA did not have a June meeting, but are scheduled to meet on August 10th. They will be discussing next steps and the needed resources for getting tasks done. In the hydrology update, it was shared that releases of supplemental water are being made to manage the recession with just over 6,000 ac-ft having been released so far and about 10 miles of river dry. We are currently out of Article VII but are expected to be back in Article VII by early August.
 - **BA/BO Consultation Update:** The consultation team has been focused on 2 specific topics. The first is the actual consultation strategy including: a) the first draft of the non-federal proposed covered actions and b) understanding the details of incorporating the non-federal actions into the consultation process for coverage. There is a lot of detailed discussion included in the non-federal coverage document especially on incidental take. The second

focus has been on the 3 main documents: Section 7 guidelines, consultation working strategy document being developed by the team, and the non-federal covered actions with expectations. The consultation team will be reviewing those documents at their next meeting in an attempt to reconcile any disagreements. Both the modeling efforts (PVA and PHVA) are looking for guidance on how/when the models will be fit into the consultation process. The team will be discussing strategies on alternatives and how the modeling tools could best be used to support the analyses.

- A list of key tasks for the consultation team process was handed out. The team wanted to convey to the EC that the expiration of the 2003 BiOp is quickly approaching. The main point of the handout was to convey that there are a lot of tasks that need to be completed by the end of 2012.
- The EC requested the language “compete PVA analyses” be changed to “conduct PVA analyses.”
- **Urban Wildlife National Refuge – Price’s Dairy:** The Service is proposing to acquire Price’s Dairy for a new urban wildlife refuge. Price’s Dairy is one of the last large agriculture areas left in Albuquerque. The Service is responding to the “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative which is focused on connecting urbanites to natural, outdoor activities. The dairy is about 579 acres (or about 1 square mile). It used to be a dairy and most recently was a hay operation in order to keep the water rights. The family is very interested in the conservation outcome for this property. The estimated cost is \$20 to \$23 million with \$8 to \$10 million just for the land and the remaining cost for the water rights. Included with the wildlife refuge would be an education center with indoor and outdoor class rooms, nature trails, outdoor activities, and co-locations of agencies within the building such as NMSU with farming practice demonstrations. The facilities are a separate, additional cost from the \$20 million dollar purchase; the center is estimated at \$7 million with startup costs of \$300,000 and annual O&M estimated at \$550,000. This refuge would be a unit of the Bosque del Apache (BDA).
 - The Service would like this project to be included in their 2012 budget, so the NEPA compliance would have to be completed within the next year or so and public outreach occurring by this fall.
 - Bernalillo County is very interested in partnering on this project and will be exploring a bond in the November election. The Service would have the underlying title interest with the county having an easement over that. The county wants to see the land conserved because it is an under-served part of Albuquerque that would otherwise go to development and the water rights moved. They are also interested in the open space opportunities and connections to the trails and bosque. The majority of the water rights would be owned by the Service.
 - Concerns raised included 1) the management issues of the BDA and the lack of funding and if it is a good idea to expand those responsibilities; and 2) how the new refuge would interact with the groundwater remediation that has to happen since the land is part of a Superfund site.
- **Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) Presentation:** Avra Morgan and Kevin Johnson presented on the secretarial initiative of LCCs.
 - LCCs are partnerships that bring together resource managers with the intent of getting the science needs of the particular region met. Each LCC covers a specific geographic area and ultimately there will be a seamless network of LCCs

across the US. The idea is that within a particular landscape, resources managers and other interested parties can coordinate and pool resources to get the science needs met. One impetus is to address climate change impacts through USGS data centers.

- LCCs can help facilitate the delivery of applied science needs through 1) coordination of efforts and information sharing and 2) fund projects to get applied science needs met. LCCs are being funded – as a participant the Program would be able to potentially tap into the funding resources to help address the specific MRG science needs.
- Reclamation and the Service are co-leads for the Southern Rockies and the Desert regions. The LCCs within Reclamation are part of the Water Smart Program (a.k.a. Water 2025, Water for America, etc).
- Reclamation views its role as host to bring together various resource entities, to facilitate identification of priorities, needs, and how to get those needs met. It will also facilitate the LCC structure to include a steering committee made up of the various partners involved, and at minimum, state and federal partners. Ideally pueblos, the public and private entities would also be involved.
- Both the Southern Rockies and Desert LCCs are in the process of identifying the interested partnerships, developing goal and objective statements, identifying needs, etc.
 - The LCCs are not trying to re-create already existing partnerships but may benefit participants by bringing together various entities that could help meet funding needs by tapping into other resources outside of the Program's limited geographic area.
 - The EC discussed the potential advantage in having a Program representative participate in the local LCCs, especially in light of today's discussion about the recovery of the minnow being outside the Program boundaries. It was suggested that a Program delegate, maybe a liaison from the science work group, participate in the local LCCs and act as the point of contact. The Program representative could be relatively passive but act as the transfer of information.
- **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- **Announcements:** It was announced that the Corps' Change of Command Ceremony is tomorrow starting at 9:00am with an award to Col. Colloton followed by the Change in Command from 10:00am to 11:00am. Everyone is invited.
- **Closed session:** The EC met in closed session to discuss the LTP schedule. Please contact an EC representative for details.

Next Meeting: August 30th, 2010 from 9:00am to 1:00pm, tentatively at Reclamation

**Executive Committee (EC) Meeting Attendees
July 15th, 2010 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Attendees:

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Dave Sabo	Dept. of the Interior	Federal co-chair, non-voting
Rolf Schmidt-Petersen	NM Interstate Stream Commission	ISC
Lisa Croft	Bureau of Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
LTC Kim Colloton	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Bob Jenks	NM Department of Game and Fish	NMDGF
Matt Schmader	City of Albuquerque	COA
Subhas Shah	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District	MRGCD
Frank Chaves	Pueblo of Sandia	Pueblo of Sandia
Ann Watson	Santo Domingo Tribe	Santo Domingo Tribe
Janet Jarratt	Assessment Payers Association Of the MRGCD	APA
Brian Millsap	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS
Hilary Brinegar	NM Department of Agriculture	NMDA
Steve Harris	NM Attorney General's Office	NMAGO
Bruce Thomson	University of NM	UNM
Rick Billings	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority	ABCWUA

Others

Yvette McKenna – PM	Bureau of Reclamation
Brent Rhees	Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Wilber	Bureau of Reclamation
Leann Towne	Bureau of Reclamation
Arva Morgan	Bureau of Reclamation/Denver
Leslie Meyers	Bureau of Reclamation/Phoenix
Monika Mann	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kris Schafer	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
LTC Jason Williams	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
LeAnn Summer	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Wally Murphy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Campbell	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Janet Bair	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Delfinia Montano	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mark Brennan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jeanne Wagner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Paul Tashjian	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kevin Johnson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Denver
Christopher Shaw	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Grace Haggerty	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Peter Wilkinson	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Page Pegram	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Brian Gleadle	NM Department of Game and Fish

Brooke Wyman
Terina Perez
Robert Hall
Stephanie Russo
Patricia Dominguez
Sarah Cobb
Reese Fullerton
Jenae Maestas
Marta Wood

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City of Albuquerque
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U.S. Representative Martin Heinrich's Office
Senator Bingaman's Office
Congressman Udall's Office
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