

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

16 November 2010 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM

Interstate Stream Commission

Actions

- Stacey Kopitsch will email a request for EMP high intensity monitoring questions to the ScW, MPT, and HRW.
- Alison Hutson will write up proposed changes to silvery minnow spawning in hatcheries for discussion at the January 18, 2011 ScW meeting.
- Jericho Lewis will email descriptions of the phases in the USGS project to the ScW.
- Stacey Kopitsch, Jeanne Dye, and Rick Billings will revise the *Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM* Future Activity Summary.
- If the Mike Marcus Risk Management Study is allowed to be distributed, Alison Hutson will email the paper to the ScW.
- Stacey Kopitsch will make changes to the 2011 Work Plan and send to the ScW. Completed.
- Stacey Kopitsch will distribute a list of current ScW projects and their respective COTRs. Completed.

Decisions

- The October 19, 2010 ScW meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Upcoming ScW Meetings

- December 14, 2010: 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
 - Joint workgroup meeting with ScW/MPT/HRW
 - High Intensity Monitoring question modification
- January 18, 2011 9:AM to 11:30 PM
 - Proposed Changes to Hatchery Spawning Methods (Douglas Tave for Alison Hutson)
 - Population Estimation Peer Review (30-45 minutes)– discussion with peer review panel
 - PIT Tag Update (Jason Remshardt)
 - USGS Progress Summary

Meeting Summary

Introductions and Agenda Approval – Jeanne Dye brought the meeting to order and introductions were made around the table. Discussion on 2010 Accomplishments, 2011 Work Plan, and *Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM* Future Activity Summary were added to the agenda. The **Proposed Changes to Hatchery Spawning Methods** agenda item will be tabled for the January 2011 Science Workgroup (ScW) meeting.

Approve 10/19/10 ScW Meeting Minutes – The October 19, 2010 ScW meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Action Item Review – Meeting attendees reviewed the October 19, 2010 ScW meeting action item.

- **Alison Hutson will be contacting Jason Remshardt to see if temperatures are still a part of the RGSM Rescue/Salvage project.**

- Complete. Temperature and other water quality characteristics are recorded for the RGSM Rescue/Salvage project.
- **Stacey Kopitsch, Yvette Paroz, Anders Lundahl, and Alison Hutson will compile potential questions for the EMP high intensity monitoring joint ScW-MPT-HRW discussion scheduled for December.**
 - Ongoing. The official list of questions is still being compiled. Information on what the Consultation Team would like to see and questions from the *Increase understanding of RGSM life history and habitat needs* ScW Future Activity summary are being integrated. Once the questions for the EMP high intensity monitoring are completed Stacey Kopitsch will email the questions to the ScW, MPT, and HRW.
- **Anders Lundahl will confirm with Alison Hutson and Jeanne Dye that the MPT can make it to the December 14th ScW meeting.**
 - Complete.
- **Alison Hutson will write up proposed changes to silvery minnow spawning in hatcheries and send out to the ScW for comments.**
 - Ongoing. Alison will have this ready for discussion at the January 2011 ScW meeting.

USGS Progress Summary – Meeting attendees briefly discussed the need to verify if the USGS study is addressing issues that it was originally intended to address. The USGS study has completed its first phase, with phase two thought to start in spring of 2011. Though phase 2 has been funded there is the option to modify the study or pull back funding if it is determined that the study is not meeting original intentions. In order to better understand the work being done Jericho Lewis will circulate descriptions of the phases to the ScW. Some of the concerns with the project were the need for citations for reports showing that estrogenic compounds are in the river, and the need to use another species as an analogue as the project could increase silvery minnow mortality. The USGS Progress Summary will be further discussed at the January 2011 ScW meeting.

Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM Future Activity Summary – The Coordination Committee (CC) reviewed the summary at their November 10th meeting and requested that the ScW refocus the project. The intentions of this project were to have past water quality and temperature data compiled and evaluated. Some of the concerns voiced by the CC were that water quality has not been shown to be an issue and that there may be a duplication of efforts in compiling data when the Database Management System (DBMS) is established. Meeting attendee advocacy for the project included concerns that water quality has not been looked at in the context of the silvery minnow, compilation and evaluation of water quality data should happen sooner than the DBMS is expected to be completed and fully functional, and the need to identify gaps in data. Thoughts from meeting attendees were that the summary should be rewritten to focus more on evaluation of data to answer questions based on the collected data. Stacey Kopitsch, Jeanne Dye, and Rick Billings will revise the *Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM Future Activity Summary*. In order to move forward with water quality studies it needs to be ensured that there is not replication with the Mike Marcus Risk Management Study, which has recently been accepted for publication. If the study is allowed to be distributed, Alison Hutson will send the paper to the ScW.

2010 Accomplishments – A document listing ScW 2010 Accomplishments was reviewed by meeting attendees. The document was made based on the 2010 ScW Work Plan.

2011 Work Plan – Meeting attendees reviewed the 2011 Work Plan. Leads for tasks were identified and due dates were assigned. Meeting attendees also identified additional projects to be added or carried over from 2010. Stacey Kopitsch will make changes to the 2011 Work Plan and send to the ScW. The 2011

Work Plan will be reviewed by the CC at their January 12, 2011 meeting. Meeting attendees also discussed the need to stay up-to-date with the status and reports for ScW projects. Ideas to keep the workgroup informed about ScW projects were to assign specific work group members to projects or to have regular updates on projects. Stacey Kopitsch will distribute a list of current ScW projects and their respective COTRs. After viewing the list of current projects, ScW will discuss how to keep the work group updated at the January ScW meeting.

Fisheries Update – Meeting attendees were updated on the silvery minnow release from the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Rearing and Breeding Facility. On November 4, 20,000 minnow were released in Corrales and 80,000 were released in La Joya. The City of Albuquerque’s BioPark fell short of their target for 5000 brood stock this year, so egg collection efforts will be increased in 2011. Fish from the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium (Refugium) were also released in La Joya. No silvery minnow are currently in stock at the Refugium. In order for the Refugium to proceed with a permit amendment request to include spawning, both Phases 2 and 3 need to be approved. Fencing has been installed at the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Sanctuary (Sanctuary). There are issues with the Sanctuary facilities cracking and not being functional.

Age and Growth Study Update – The aging work is a little behind schedule and the contractor is expected to make an official request for an extension. The contractor is working on writing the methods portion of the report.

San Acacia Diversion Dam Fish Passage (SADD) Peer Review Update – The peer review panel recently reconvened in Albuquerque. They have reviewed a lot of the data and have been communicating with the data collectors. A draft report is expected at the end of February 2011.

Gear Evaluation – Comments on the Gear Evaluation presentation given by SWCA at the October ScW meeting should be sent to Stacey Kopitsch by mid December 2010. Stacey will pass any comments to Jeanne Dye.

Program update – The Executive Committee (EC) will be meeting November 18th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The CC has cancelled their November 24th regularly scheduled meeting and will be having an all day working LTP meeting on December 8th.

Next ScW Meeting December 14, 2010 from 9:00 am to 12:30 am at Interstate Stream Commission

- Joint ScW/MPT/HRW meeting.

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

16 November 2010 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM

Interstate Stream Commission

Meeting Notes – 11/16/10 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM ISC

Introductions and Agenda Approval: Jeanne Dye brought the meeting to order. The agenda was reviewed and approved with two additions: (1) ScW 2010 Accomplishments and 2011 work plan; and (2) FY11 proposed activity for refocus.

- The work group briefly discussed the December and January meetings. The December meeting will be a joint meeting with Monitoring Plan Team (MPT) and Habitat Restoration (HR); the meeting will start at 9:00am and is expected to go to 12:30pm. The hatchery discussions will be tabled until the January meeting. Agenda items also for January include: (1) population estimation peer review panel discussions (30 - 45 min); (2) Jason Remshardt to present on pit tag updates.
- There were many topics on hatchery spawning for stocks that are augmented at the last Genetics and Agriculture conference including what's current/new and the methods involved. Hatchery topics have been on the "back-burner" for a while but it seems that it is becoming more important now. It was shared that googling "Douglas Tave" and "breeding and brood stock management" will take you to a free book download that has good information on the hatchery topic.
- The work group discussed attempting RFP development in December. It was originally assumed that the work group would put together "skeleton" RFPs to be fleshed out later but it might be difficult because the direction from the CC is unclear (i.e., which projects should have scopes developed). Reclamation's contracting office would like to have the RFPs done by December. The work group could proceed on the monitoring scope since it has been approved by the CC.

Action: Alison Hutson will write up proposed changes to silvery minnow spawning in hatcheries for discussion at the January 18, 2011 ScW meeting.

Approve 10/19/10 ScW Meeting Minutes: The October 19, 2010 ScW meeting minutes were approved for finalization with no changes.

Action Item Review (see below)

- Alison Hutson will be contacting Jason Remshardt to see if temperatures are still a part of the RGSM Rescue/Salvage project. – *complete*;
 - Jason responded that they absolutely check temperature and other water quality factors during salvage efforts. .
- Stacey Kopitsch, Yvette Paroz, Anders Lundahl, and Alison Hutson will compile potential questions for the EMP high intensity monitoring joint ScW-MPT-HRW discussion scheduled for December. – *complete*;
 - The information provided by the consultation team – what they want to see, life history summary, potential questions, etc. – was sent out. The potential questions can be sorted through (via email) to develop an official list.

Action: Stacey Kopitsch will email a request for EMP high intensity monitoring questions to the ScW, MPT, and HRW.

- Anders Lundahl will confirm with Alison Hutson and Jeanne Dye that the MPT can make it to the December 14th ScW meeting. – *complete*;

- The MPT attendance was confirmed for December 14th – the meeting will probably be scheduled for 9:00am to 12:30pm.
- Alison Hutson will write up proposed changes to silvery minnow spawning in hatcheries and send out to the ScW for comments. – *in progress*;
 - The written changes will be ready and available for the January meeting.

USGS Progress Summary

- Meeting attendees briefly discussed the need to verify if the USGS study is addressing issues that it was originally intended to address. The USGS study has completed its first phase, with phase two thought to start in spring of 2011. Though phase 2 has been funded there is the option to modify the study or pull back funding if it is determined that the study is not meeting original intentions. This is the first report on this project.
- Concern was expressed that the USGS summary lacks proper citation for references to estrogenic compound locations (in the river). There is also concern with testing on the minnows – especially if there isn't a problem with these compounds in the river. If testing does need to happen, then an analog species should be used since there has been high mortality in the minnows. Joel Lusk may have additional information; he was contacted but hasn't responded yet.
 - In the past, the ScW work group has discussed how permits probably aren't needed for common carp (although if permits are needed, it should be easy). The work group had agreed that common carp might be a good inexpensive marker for a pilot study to determine if there is actually a problem and was a good idea to follow up.
- The USGS has the funding for Phase 2, but that doesn't mean the funding can't be pulled back if the work group determines it is not needed. The contractor can be asked to provide a justification for the Phase 2. A Phase 3 will depend on what the work group wants to do should there be agreement to proceed with Phase 2.
- This discussion will be continued at the January meeting.

Action: Jericho Lewis will email descriptions of the phases in the USGS project to the ScW.

Proposed Changes to Hatchery Spawning Methods

- This agenda item was tabled until the January meeting.

Program update

- *EC update:* The next EC meeting is scheduled for this Thursday, November 18th, from 9:00am to 1:00pm at Reclamation.
- *CC update:* The regular CC meeting, scheduled for November 24th, has been cancelled due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The next meeting will be all day on December 8th for an all day working Long-term Plan (LTP) meeting.

Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM Future Activity Summary: The CC reviewed the *Evaluate Water Quality in the MRG* summary at their November 10th meeting and requested that the ScW refocus the project. The intentions of this project were to have past water quality and temperature data compiled and evaluated. The CC would not approve it because there was not agreement on water quality being an issue. CC members also expressed concern about paying for a potential duplication of effort since all the data should be included in the Program's database, once established. The CC suggested that the work group refocus this summary.

- Attendees discussed the evaluation component to the project. The intent was to have the information compiled with an emphasis on evaluation of the "whole" to determine what

the data indicates and to get an idea of the status of the river. In order to clarify this intent for the CC, it was suggested that the language be reversed in the summary to focus on the evaluation portion: “evaluate and answer questions based on existing, collected data.”

Action: Stacey Kopitsch, Jeanne Dye, and Rick Billings will revise the *Evaluate water quality in the MRG in relation to the RGSM Future Activity Summary*.

- The risk management study (authored by Mike Marcus) has been accepted for publication after many months of “distilling it down.” It was cautioned that the proposal for the *Evaluate Water Quality in the MRG* needs to be clearly written to avoid repetition and go beyond the risk management study work – the next steps. The concern is that there are people who might take the results of the risk management study as the “final say.”
- The risk management study was funded by ISC and the review process apparently went unbelievably fast – it was submitted and accepted within a month.
- Even with the risk management study, there is ton of information and that information has not been looked at in context and there are still “holes” that could be identified.

Action: If the Mike Marcus Risk Management Study is allowed to be distributed, Alison Hutson will email the paper to the ScW.

- The database will probably be functional in about 2 years from now. Attendees discussed how the water quality data compilation needs to be done before then. There needs to be information available for the adaptive management and LTP. It would also be interesting to compare the highs and lows of temperatures at different flows. Water quality and the minnow have not been looked at jointly. The summary needs to be specific on evaluating water quality in the context of how to best manage and keep water quality sufficient for the minnow.
- There are also huge data gaps. There are studies that indicate the effects of “this” and “that” but what is the effect of both at the same time? For example, a pH study could indicate there is little or no effect on the fish, but pH might have an indirect effect by its effect on ammonia. Also, constituents may have different affects at different times of year.
- In order to figure out the basic water quality stuff, the starting point is to look at and evaluate what has already been done. This also will inform the need for any additional studies/research after the evaluation has been completed.

2010 ScW accomplishments: The 2010 ScW accomplishments were developed from the 2010 Workplan with the addition of a column to say what was completed. The work group went through the accomplishment list to fill in details and dates.

- The EMP was not reviewed by the ScW work group as a group. The work group was informed that the MPT “switched gears” and developed the scope of work instead of the actual plan. ScW did have opportunity to review the scope. The first year monitoring report will probably be done in FY11.
- All the future activity summaries have been done; but it is not known if any of the 2010 accomplished tasks will carry over to FY11 - maybe if the CC requests revisions.
- Attending joint CC/workgroup meetings will be an ongoing task.

FY11 Workplan: Using the FY10 Workplan as a template, the work group updated tasks for 2011. Any open tasks from 2010 will be carried over. Attendees assigned leads, dates, and expected deliverables as well as added identified tasks.

- *Review and evaluate high intensity monitoring* –
 - Rick Billings, who also participates on the MPT, was identified as the lead for this task.
- *Adaptive Management Plan review* – this task was added to the FY11 workplan. The ScW work group will need to be involved in reviewing and providing input at various stages of the adaptive management plan development.
- *Effectiveness Monitoring Plan* – the effectiveness monitoring plan is expected in December so the ScW review task would be expected in January.
 - It was discussed at the MPT meeting that the draft reports will be made available for review. The COTR provides the draft reports to Stacey who then forwards them. If there are any reports that are believed to be missing, please let Stacey know and she will follow up with the COTR.
 - Members expressed concern that the work groups can be disconnected from the final (approved) project. The work group drafts the scope of work but a TPEC reviews the bid and the contracting office does the negotiations. The work group is not involved and doesn't often even know what the final project schedule is. This makes it challenging for the work group to know when a report or update is due.
 - Other work groups have expressed the same concerns. Jericho Lewis, Reclamation's contracting officer, generally knows about awarded projects. There are a lot of COTRs but they don't necessarily report to Jericho. Reclamation is in the process of trying to get a quarterly update on all Program projects. There are also plans for an Excel spreadsheet that lists project, deliverables due, when expected, etc. There is also the potential for COTRs to attend work group meetings and provide updates on projects. ScW can also request a COTR come to a meeting if there is a need.
 - Attendees were reminded that there aren't the same opportunities to review reports when the project is a grant. Only quarterly reports are provided and then the final report. Occasionally a grantee might be willing to take in input but they do not have to.

Action: Stacey Kopitsch will distribute a list of current ScW projects and their respective COTRs. Completed.

- Attendees briefly discussed assigning a work group member as an "advocate" to each project. It would then be the responsibility of that person to stay knowledgeable about that project and report back to the work group with updates. The person could be in regular contact with the COTR. The work group agreed to continue this discussion in December or January after everyone has had a chance to review the project list.
- *Develop RFPs for 2012 projects* – development of the 2012 RFPs will be kept on the work plan even though the 2011 RFPs haven't been completed yet. The co-chairs will be assigned as the lead for this task.

- *LTP implementation workshop* – this task was carried over from 2010. The date will be left as to-be-determined and will be filled in later.
- *Prioritize future activities* - this is ongoing for the LTP. The work group has already suggested their prioritization for 2011 but there is the possibility that the work group will be asked to re-do. This will probably be an on-going task for adjusting priority activities each year for the LTP.
- *Attend Joint Meetings*
- *Review and Comment on draft LTP* – the draft LTP is currently expected to be available in March 2011. April 2011 will be added as the target date for task completion.
- Members also added (1) *Fish Passage* and (2) *Population Estimation Peer Review* tasks to the 2011 work plan with the deliverables being the ScW member review, meeting attendance, scope of work development, etc. The lead will be left as “ScW work group” instead of assigning a specific lead.

Action: Stacey Kopitsch will make changes to the 2011 Work Plan and send to the ScW.

- The work group reviewed the listed members on the 2011 work plan. It is unknown if there is any official member from the District. Andrew Monie is the primary representative for NM Department of Game and Fish and Mick Porter is the primary and Dana Price is the alternate for the Corps.

Fisheries Update: Minnow were released on November 4th - about 20,000 were taken to Corrales and FWS took ~8,000 minnow to La Joya. The release went fine.

- The minnow from the ISC refugium went to La Joya – there are no fish left in the refugium. Last spring there were females but there was no spawning. The refugium is empty and it is unknown where things will be next year.
- At the BioPark, a group of ~2,000 minnow was left for brood stock and ~1,000 were set aside for Kevin Buhl.
- The propagation work group’s targeted number for brood stock for the BioPark was 5,000; at 2,000, they are short of that number. Dexter is also short of their desired brood stock numbers. This year there will need to be a huge effort on egg collection. There is also a reevaluation being done on how eggs can be collected. Lack of personnel won’t be an issue – the biggest issue is vehicles. Apparently there are some vehicle leasing options. Agencies have volunteered use of fleet vehicles but agency employees have to be the drivers. It was suggested that Yvette Paroz be included on these conversations since she is a COTR for the BioPark projects.
- ISC is about to send out their most recent refugium report. If they are going to proceed with a spawning contract for next year, then fish need to be stocked in February.
 - Response to Phase 3 would need to be in before Thanksgiving in order to be in place by January. Phase 2 hasn’t been approved; ISC provided responses to the Phase 2 questions but haven’t received comments on their written responses yet. The process is moving forward, just slowly.
 - If the permit is not in place in time, we will miss another year. The permit will be rejected if Phase 3 is not approved; so the approval has to happen.

- The fence is up at the sanctuary. There are some construction issues with the facility - things are cracking and not functioning properly. There is a lot of sediment from the intake from the ditch. There are still lots of “bugs” to work out before the facility can be up and running. Unfortunately, there isn’t much guidance from the propagation group for their desire for the refugium or sanctuary. More guidance is needed on where the facilities are “going.”
 - Unfortunately, a lot of these conversations happen at the propagation meetings but that group is not a Program group. ScW should be Jericho’s contact on where/how the money is being used. They cost all about the same amount of money to operate yet they all produce differently.
 - So far, the ISC refugium has conducted studies and tests to verify that the facility can raise and produce fish. The studies were designed to be done over a 3 year period but were completed in 2 years; this means they are 1 year ahead of schedule. They don’t know how many they will raise next year. This will have to be negotiated with the propagation group and FWS. There is a desire for them to produce more than they have been and it isn’t expected to be difficult.
 - Since the Service considers the facility to be “novel” they want to proceed very carefully. They were surprised to learn that ISC had to do a sham study without fish. Unless the Service approves a faster track, it might be a year or two before it is ready. But the sanctuary might not hold as much fish as the refugium.
 - The information from the Age/Growth study is not available yet. The contractor’s subcontractor is doing the aging and they are little behind schedule. As soon as there is information, Jeanne will let the work group know. At last contact, they were still working on the methods and waiting on official extension.
- The fish passage reviewers reconvened. They went through a lot of the data and they have made several phone calls attempting to contact people, especially regarding genetics. It was a good and very productive meeting. The draft report is still expected by the end of February 2011.
- ScW has comments on the SWCA gear evaluation presentation. They requested feedback on the content of the presentation to assist them with refining the design. The next report will be done after the refined field study. Comments are requested to be submitted to the PMT liaison by mid-December.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2010 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm at Interstate Stream Commission Joint ScW/MPT/HR work group meeting

**Science Work Group
19 October 2010 Meeting Attendees**

| NAME | AFFILIATION | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jeanne Dye | Reclamation | 462-3564 | jdye@usbr.gov |
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| Rebecca Houtman | COA | 248-8514 | rhoutman@cabq.gov |
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