

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

December 14, 2010, 8:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Offices
Albuquerque, NM

Decisions

- Workgroup agreed that the SWCA project should continue for option year 2 with the same gears

Meeting Summary

- Call to order by Jeanne Dye, Science Co-Chair
- **ScW review of option year 2 for SWCA Gear Evaluation Study, and the contractor's recent presentation**
 - Need to make a decision by early January whether to fund a second option year for this study.
 - Workgroup discussed recommended changes by contractor for using electro-barges versus the back pack shockers.
 - Workgroup decided to not change methods in order to preserve data consistency, and because without knowing the full results of the first year of the study yet, it is not warranted to add additional gear types.
 - Workgroup discussed that it is difficult to determine the needs during a second year of the study given that the results and findings of the first year of the study are not yet fully available to the workgroup. The workgroup agreed that collection of additional data during a second year would have value and allow a comparison across these two years.
 - Concern over floodplain portion of the study due to anticipated dry winter and what that could mean for spring flows.
 - If floodplain is not inundated, other monitoring can still happen
 - Sampling emphasizes channel vs. floodplain
 - **Decision:** Without a quorum present, the workgroup has agreement that the SWCA project should continue with same gears
 - Moves on to the CC who will make a decision regarding funding
- **Alison Hutson's ISC Refugium Presentation (Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium, Status Report)**
 - Under ISC's current ESA permit, the facility conducted 3 phase trials for the indoor hatchery and 3 phases for the outdoor refugium
 - Phase I approved by FWS
 - Phase II pending approval
 - Phase III is finished and awaiting approval
 - Indoor refugium had 1 month trials with 96% survival in the A system, 98% survival in the B system, and 95% survival in the aquaria system

- Phase I in the outdoor refugium resulted in 99 % survival
- Phase II included assessing survival and growth. They did not see growth likely due to low water temps however, no reductions in size occurred.
- Harvested fish in December had 68.2% survival at harvest and 61.4% post-harvest overall for Phase II
- Phase III: Report was sent to FWS on November 23. 10,000 fish were stocked in June 2010 and harvested in October. A growth curve was completed during this trial, with significant growth in length and weight found. Fish were not fed during this trial but used natural food sources in the refugium.
- For next steps, the ISC has discussed the importance of incrementally ramping up the number of fish in the outdoor refugium (e.g., 20,000 then 30,000 etc), if permits allow. These fish would be grown out/reared like the Phase III trial, in order to better understand capacity and how many minnows can be supported without feeding.
- Alison discussed the need to examine spawning habits to study where fish spawn: over-bank or channel, and at which point does the environment become “unnatural”, by increasing production incrementally and using a hands-off approach to observe habits.
- The initial study design involves about 750 adults in one overbank area (shallow vegetated) and compare that to the concrete channel. PIT tags and readers would be used, as well as a DIDSON camera.
- Question raised: What are the possibilities of ISC acquiring a permit for study pending phase III results?
 - Experiment is designed for three years, but has been delayed a year.
 - Phase III is under review by FWS with a meeting proposed for January with ISC to discuss next steps
- For spawning experiments how will eggs be handled? Answer: Collected in refugium.

This meeting was followed by a Joint ScW/MPT/HRW meeting.

In Attendance:

| Name | Agency | Email |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
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