Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting
January 27, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM (Rio Chama Conference room)
Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

Actions

- Gina Dello Russo volunteered to interview/talk with the Land Use and Zoning Committee in Socorro County to explain the SAR workgroup's interests and find out where they are at on the zoning. Gina will also see if anyone from the committee would like to meet with the SAR work group.
- Robert Padilla will provide a Reclamation issue paper template to assist in structuring white papers.
- Gina will contact Terina Perez or George Dennis for specifics on the FEMA/floodplain presentation.
- Ryan Gronewold will find out which portions of the Floodplain Encroachment project the Corps will be able to accomplish and a rough timeline.
- Gina will send out the most recent draft SOW for Floodplain Encroachment so that meeting attendees can begin to work on modifications.
- Page Pegram will ask Terina to update the CC/Program Manager that Corps will be completing some of the objectives and that the SAR work group will be submitting an amended Floodplain Encroachment SOW for the remaining objectives; Page will also ask if there is a deadline for the SOW.
- Robert Padilla will complete the Reclamation responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.
- Robert Padilla will reserve a conference room at Reclamation for the February 24th SAR work group meeting.

Decision

Meeting Summary

- The meeting was brought to order and an agency update was added to the agenda.
- All December actions were completed.
- Meeting attendees discussed refining an outline for the draft white papers. It was believed that the draft white paper on Land use/Zoning would be the best place to start as it relates to the Floodplain Encroachment project and could provide background as to why floodplain encroachment is an issue and help peak interest.
    - Attendees discussed that zoning in Socorro County can prevent structures from being built in the floodplain but there will be issues with private property rights as zoning could take away development value from property. It's believed that the Land Use and Zoning Committee in Socorro County is interested in having at least partial zoning. Gina Dello Russo volunteered to interview/talk with the Land Use and Zoning Committee in Socorro County to explain the SAR workgroup's interests and find out where they are at on the zoning. Gina will also see if anyone from the committee would like to meet with the SAR work group.
    - Attendees brainstormed strategy for working on white papers. The proposed strategy is to begin by getting the key points down on paper and then the work group can work on structure. It was shared that Reclamation has a template that

they use for issue papers and it might be helpful for the workgroup to refer to it. Robert Padilla will provide a Reclamation issue paper template to assist in structuring white papers.

- Page Pegram volunteered to begin compiling key points on the Land use/Zoning white paper; Ryan and Robert volunteered to work on the Sediment Transport white paper though it is understood that they will not be able to fully commit to working on the white paper for several months; and Gina Dello Russo volunteered to work on the Habitat Restoration white paper.

- Meeting attendees were notified that the Socorro Floodplain (100 year flood) mapping was scheduled to be done by the end of last calendar year but it's not known if it has been completed and that the 2010 low intensity monitoring draft report/results are planned to be discussed at the February 9th CC meeting.
- Attendees then discussed the 2011 Floodplain Encroachment Project.
  - It's not known if the CC has discussed the work group's intent/support document for the Floodplain Encroachment project. Some concern was expressed that the lag time in current methods of communication makes things difficult in writing the SOW as the work group is not sure what should be done next.
  - George Dennis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aquatics Branch Chief, will be giving a short FEMA/floodplain presentation at the next CC meeting. Meeting attendees were unsure if the presentation is meant to address the encroachment issues or if it is meant to help inform the project. Gina will contact Terina Perez or George Dennis for specifics on the FEMA/floodplain presentation.
  - It was shared that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) has available funding to complete some portions of the Floodplain Encroachment project in-house. It's not known what portions of the project the Corps will be able to carry out but they will need to be related to the Corps.
    - Meeting attendees discussed portions of the project that the Corps might be able to carry out. It's important that the portions not only relate to the Corps but that they have a standalone product that will be useful even if the rest of the project is put on hold. Objectives 1-5 should be appropriate to the Corps but objectives 6 and 7 will require judgment in assessing impacts and it's believed that the project will have a stronger product if an independent entity completes these objectives; though if necessary the SAR work group could complete those objectives.
    - Ryan Gronewold will find out which portions of the Floodplain Encroachment project the Corps will be able to accomplish and a rough timeline.
  - Changes will be made to the Floodplain Encroachment SOW to clarify what will be produced by the Corps and that the product will be used for objectives 6 and 7. Gina will send out the most recent draft SOW for Floodplain Encroachment so that meeting attendees can begin to work on modifications.
  - Page Pegram will ask Terina to update the CC/Program Manager that Corps will be completing some of the objectives and that the SAR work group will be submitting an amended Floodplain Encroachment SOW for the remaining objectives; Page will also ask if there is a deadline for the SOW.
- Attendees reviewed the 2010 Workgroup Accomplishments and the 2011 Annual Work Plan for any changes. Cheryl Roland should be removed as alternate for Reclamation. Reviewing the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Rio Grande Silvery Minnow

Recovery Plans should be marked as completed as they had been reviewed in order to write activity summaries. The Agency Response to Themes table has not yet been completed and its status should be changed to "in progress"; Robert Padilla will complete the Reclamation responses in the table. A field trip was scheduled for May 26th but the work group would like to leave the Work Plan general in regard to field trips.

- Agency/General Updates
    - The Soil and Water Conservation District held a conference to address issues with Parrot Feather.
    - In September 2011 there will be a National River Restoration Conference in Albuquerque.
    - An American Water Resources Association conference in November 2011.
    - On March 15th the Denver Reclamation office will be giving a presentation to the Habitat Restoration work group on sediment modeling.
    - The Reclamation Long Term Maintenance Plan should be coming out in April.
    - There is a "tumbleweed" plug south of Ft. Craig that is clogging the low flow channel and causing the area to flood.
- The next SAR meeting is February 24th. Robert Padilla will reserve a conference room at Reclamation for the February 24th SAR work group meeting.

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Meeting Minutes

Introductions and Agenda Approval

- The meeting was brought to order and an agency update was added to the agenda.

Action Item Review

- **Ryan Gronewold will raise the SAR floodplain encroachment priority to Susan Bittick to determine if there is any way the Corps could assist in funding part of the project (especially since floodplain encroachment is a Corps concern).**
    - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) has some funding available to complete at least a portion of the work in-house. The Corps may not be able to do portions that are not relevant to the Corps.
    - The SAR workgroup will need to have a SOW ready for any remaining portions of the project that the Corps cannot do. An outline of what the Corps will do and a timeline would be helpful, though at this time it's not known exactly what the Corps will be able to do.
- **Gina Dello Russo will draft a floodplain encroachment project intent/support document and will forward to the work group for review and additional input. – *complete; email sent 12/03/10 at 8:00am***
    - Complete.

- Meeting attendees briefly reviewed the responses that were submitted. It's not known if the Coordination Committee (CC) has discussed the responses yet.
- It was shared that George Dennis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) Aquatics Branch Chief, will be giving a FEMA/Floodplain presentation at the next CC meeting. Meeting attendees were unsure if the presentation is meant to address the encroachment issues or if it is meant to help inform the project.

Action: Gina will contact Terina Perez or George Dennis for specifics on the FEMA/floodplain presentation.

- **Terina Perez will incorporate any recommended changes/modifications to the floodplain encroachment project support document and once completed, will forward to Yvette McKenna with a request for elevation for CC consideration**.
  - Complete.
- **SAR work group members will discuss the floodplain encroachment project with their respective CC and EC members to get the project on the "radar" for 2011 funding**.
  - Complete.
  - It was shared that the CC had requested that the State and Regional Water Plans be looked at to see if they address floodplain encroachment. It was found that the Regional plan does not address floodplain encroachment and the State Water Plan has a paragraph stating the state's position that there should not be significant development in the flood plain.
  - Some concern was expressed that the lag time in current methods of communication makes things difficult in writing the SOW as the work group is not sure what should be done next.
  - It was shared that in the middle valley local entities that administer flood control had taken initiative and will do an analysis to lower risks in terms of liability insurance. There is an incentive from a community aspect for having the analysis as having a map of the floodplain lowers liability.
    - It was discussed that FEMA does not regulate what can be built in the floodplain they just instruct that buildings must be built a certain height and that federally subsidized flood insurance must be purchased if building in the floodplain. FEMA is a part of the puzzle but it does not regulate.
  - Meeting attendees discussed portions of the Floodplain Encroachment Project that the Corps might be able to carry out. It's important that the portions not only relate to the Corps but that they have a standalone product that will be useful even if the rest of the project is put on hold.
    - Attendees reviewed the objectives of the project. The Corps may have already identified areas where floodplain encroachment has happened as part of the levee project. The Corps found that 6 houses are on the floodplain. Other structures and archeological sites should also be delineated.
      - Identifying the owners of the houses might be a sensitive topic. Though all federal information is public the Corps didn't identify

ownership they just identified the value of the houses. The properties could be referred to by their coordinates.

- Objectives 1-5 should be appropriate to the Corps but objectives 6 and 7 will require judgment in assessing impacts.
    - Objective 6 would be more of an evaluation or "what ifs", looking at different flows and different encroachment scenarios.
    - It was commented that Objectives 6 and 7 will be similar to a risk assessment with low, medium, or high risk designations and definitions of those designations.
    - This would be where the judgment comes in. For example, with ecosystem benefits, what would 3 inches of water sitting there be?
    - Stagnant water that doesn't have a return path to the river would probably have a higher impact than low flow that goes back to the channel. Stagnate water is not good for the fish, but it is all very subjective. It could be good for one species and bad for another. A matrix could be used.
    - The project will have a stronger product if an independent entity completes objectives 6 and 7; though if necessary the SAR work group could complete those objectives.
    - Some of the criteria have to be spelled out and then the accuracy of the matrices created by a consultant could be evaluated and side boards could be put on. The consultants could also reference if there is already an established procedure as there is probably some standard. Workgroup input had been put into the SOW so that changes could be made if it was felt that the side boards or metrics were not appropriate.

Action: Ryan Gronewold will find out which portions of the Floodplain Encroachment project the Corps will be able to accomplish and a rough timeline.

- Changes will be made to the Floodplain Encroachment SOW to clarify what will be produced by the Corps and that the product will be used for objectives 6 and 7.

Action: Gina will send out the most recent draft SOW for Floodplain Encroachment so that meeting attendees can begin to work on modifications.

Action: Page Pegram will ask Terina to update the CC/Program Manager that Corps will be completing some of the objectives and that the SAR work group will be submitting an amended Floodplain Encroachment SOW for the remaining objectives; Page will also ask if there is a deadline for the SOW.

- **Terina Perez will contact Ondrea Hummel to confirm if the draft 2010 low intensity monitoring report is ready/available for review/work group input**.
    - Complete. The draft report for the 2010 low intensity monitoring is still in process but it should be completed soon. The results will be presented at the February 9th CC meeting.
- **Terina Perez will schedule a conference room at Reclamation for the January 27th SAR work group meeting.**

- Complete.

Review Draft White Papers

- Meeting attendees discussed refining an outline for the draft white papers. It had been discussed at the last SAR work group meeting that the white papers would address 6 categories: (1) agricultural sustainability; (2) land use and zoning; (3) LFCC and Levee system; (4) sediment transport; (5) habitat restoration; and (6) adjudication and water rights. The workgroup had then listed out sections/questions to address within each whitepaper.
    - Attendees agreed that the white paper on Land use/Zoning would be the best place to start as it relates to the Floodplain Encroachment project and could provide background as to why floodplain encroachment is an issue and help peak interest.
    - Attendees brainstormed strategy for working on white papers. The proposed strategy is to begin by getting the key points down on paper and then the work group can work on structure. It was shared that Reclamation has a template that they use for issue papers and it might be helpful for the workgroup to refer to it.

Action: Robert Padilla will provide a Reclamation issue paper template to assist in structuring white papers.

- The white paper on zoning will need an explanation of zoning. There was confusion about how zoning interacts with FEMA and floodplain mapping.
    - The simple explanation was that FEMA produces maps that dictate if you are in a flood risk zone and they also make flood insurance rate maps.
    - An example was given that in Sierra County near an arroyo land was purchased for a dairy and though the land was not found to be in the FEMA flood risk zone there were pictures that showed that the land does get flooded. With there being no zoning in that area, there is nothing preventing a diary from being built in the floodplain.
    - For Socorro County floodplain mapping would mean that people in the flood plain would be required to get flood insurance and zoning would mean that there could be regulations against building certain structures in the flood plain.
    - It was commented that Socorro County may be inching towards at least partial zoning. Because the county does not have zoning it gets lots of requests for permits for medical and other waste sites.

Action: Gina Dello Russo volunteered to interview/talk with the Land Use and Zoning Committee in Socorro County to explain the SAR workgroup's interests and find out where they are at on the zoning. Gina will also see if anyone from the committee would like to meet with the SAR work group.

- Currently landowners can do what they want with their land so zoning will create issues with private property rights as zoning could take away development value from property.
    - Easement restoration has been successful with tax credits being given to land owners who donate acreage to be improved for purposes other than development.

- Yasmeen Najmi may be able to help in defining zoning for the white paper.

- Page Pegram volunteered to begin compiling key points on the Land use/Zoning white paper
- Ryan and Robert volunteered to work on the Sediment Transport white paper though it is understood that they will not be able to fully commit to working on the white paper for several months; and Gina Dello Russo volunteered to work on the Habitat Restoration white paper.
- Though agricultural sustainability was a concern that came out of the workshop and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the universities have agricultural standpoints there is concern that this issue may not be relevant to the Program. Attendees agreed that it would be best to wait to work on this white paper until its known how it will fit in.

Socorro Floodplain (100 yr flood) mapping update

- The Socorro Floodplain (100 year flood) mapping was scheduled to be done by the end of last calendar year but it's not known if it has been completed. This agenda item will be tabled for a future meeting.

Discussion of the 2010 low intensity monitoring draft report/results

- The 2010 low intensity monitoring draft report/results are planned to be discussed at the February 9th CC meeting.

Discussion of 2010 Workgroup Accomplishments and 2011 Annual Work plan

- Attendees reviewed the 2010 Workgroup Accomplishments and the 2011 Annual Work Plan for any changes.
    - Cheryl Roland should be removed as alternate for Reclamation. The position can be left as open until there is a replacement.
    - Reviewing the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery Plans should be marked as completed as they had been reviewed in order to write activity summaries.
    - The Agency Response to Themes table has not yet been completed and its status should be changed to "in progress".

Action: Robert Padilla will complete the Reclamation responses in the table.

- Meeting attendees discussed adding scheduled field trips to the 2011 Work Plan. A field trip was scheduled for May 26th but the work group would like to leave the Work Plan general in regard to field trips.
- Upcoming meetings are February 24th and March 24th.

Action: Robert Padilla will reserve a conference room at Reclamation for the February 24th SAR work group meeting.

Agency/General Updates

- The Soil and Water Conservation District held a conference to address issues with Parrot Feather.
- In September 2011 there will be a National River Restoration Conference in Albuquerque.
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- On March 15th the Denver Reclamation office will be giving a presentation to the Habitat Restoration work group on sediment modeling.
- The Reclamation Long Term Maintenance Plan should be coming out in April.
- There is a "tumbleweed" plug south of Ft. Craig that is clogging the low flow channel and causing the area to flood.

Program update – The following Program update was provided as part the meeting agenda

- EC update- Big bend/augmentation presentations, closed meeting to discuss budget
- CC update – *Feb 9th - FEMA floodplain presentation – George Dennis (USFWS Aquatics Branch Discuss HRW prioritization of reaches Review draft funding process flowchart (previously posted). MPT monitoring report 2010 and plans for 2011, high intensity scope-modified (larval habitat availability study)*
- DBMS update- all the data DBS needed is almost collected, maybe one or two items remain and the pilot is expected Spring 2011; training will occur concurrently

San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group
27 January 2011 Meeting Attendees

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