

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting
February 24th, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM (Rio Chama Conference room)
Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

MEETING SUMMARY

Actions

- Gina Dello Russo will invite Delilah Walsh (Socorro County Manager) to participate in the SAR work group's meetings in Socorro and to get feedback/updates on the floodplain mapping and floodplain land use.
- Terina Perez will work with Gina Dello Russo to facilitate a tentative "roundtable" discussion on the floodplain encroachment topic with interested parties (Jerry – Reclamation; George Dennis – FWS; Delilah Walsh – Socorro County; Steve Harris' Green Group; etc.) for the March 24th, 2011 SAR work group meeting.
- By Friday March 11th, Gina Dello Russo will write a first draft white paper on the floodplain encroachment as a read ahead for the March 24th meeting "roundtable" discussion; the draft white paper will be distributed to work group members for review, editing, and input.
- Terina Perez will check with Yvette McKenna on the internal work group use of a draft white paper for informational purposes for the March 24th meeting.
- Terina Perez will assist Robert Padilla in completing Reclamation's responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.
- Tetra Tech will forward Reclamation's existing Agency Response to Themes to Terina Perez.
- Gina Dello Russo will create a draft Land Use/Floodplain Encroachment White Paper and will distribute the draft white paper to the work group for input and review prior to the March 24th meeting.
- Tetra Tech will resend the draft Land Use/Zoning example white paper based on the old WAM discussion papers.
- Gina Dello Russo will draft a SOW for the Program's portion (Tasks 6, 7, and 8) of the Floodplain Encroachment Project and will distribute the draft SOW to work group members for review and input.
- Gina Dello Russo will follow up with Ryan Gronewold on the SAR work group's request to include specific reference to evaluating levee vulnerabilities in the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project.
- Terina Perez will talk with Robert Padilla about the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites.
- Terina Perez will review the February 9th CC notes for any pertinent information pertaining to the 2010 low intensity monitoring that should be relayed to the SAR work group (or for inclusion in the SAR work group notes).
- Terina Perez will determine if the March 29th PVA meeting is open to all interested work group participants.
- Terina Perez will find out when the Adaptive Management technical session notes will be made available to work group members.
- Terina Perez and Robert Padilla will discuss the RFP process/schedule.
- Robert Padilla will forward the URGWOM predicted hydrographs for 2011.
- Terina Perez will attempt to reserve a seat for Steve Harris on the Reclamation Law attendance list.
- Prior to the March meeting, Gina Dello Russo and Page Pegram will brainstorm a potential "invitation list" for the April float trip.

Decisions

- The December 2nd, 2010 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.

- The January 27th, 2011 meeting notes were approved with the clarification regarding the “tumbleweed” plug south of Ft. Craig (pgs. 3 and 8).

Announcements

- Reclamation will be giving a presentation on sediment modeling at the March 15th, 2011 Habitat Restoration (HR) work group. The presentation will include review of 2000-2010 for the San Antonio South reach and forecasting (in terms of channel response and future conditions of that reach) for 2010-2019.
- HRW expects to have a Tamarisk (salt cedar) Beetle presentation at the March 15th HR work group meeting.

Requests

- The SAR work group requested that the Corps add “...especially those places where the channel geometry makes the levee vulnerable” to the “in the natural flow path...” sentence of Objective 1; and “current levee alignment” to the 3rd bullet.

Meeting Summary

- The meeting was brought to order and the agenda was approved with the addition of items under the Program updates. The December 2nd, 2010 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes. The January 27th, 2011 meeting notes were approved with the clarification regarding the “tumbleweed” plug south of Ft. Craig (pgs. 3 and 8). All but one action item was completed.
 - In the action item review, it was shared that the Socorro County Land Use and Zoning Committee has been disbanded. Instead, the Socorro County Manager – Delilah Walsh – will be invited to participate in the SAR work group.
 - For clarification purposes, attendees reiterated the intent of the Floodplain Encroachment project. The purpose of this project is to attempt to determine if floodplain encroachment presents or could present an issue for the Program. If there is no issue identified scientifically, then no more effort needs to be expended. The work group and Program’s role is strictly to inform, voice concerns, and advocate. But before the Program can advocate, it has to be informed on the possible extent and impacts of future encroachment. It has nothing to do with buying land or being involved in the zoning. Socorro County and FEMA would be the responsible parties who could act on the results of the study.
 - It was shared that while there is technically no deadline for the Floodplain Encroachment SOW, it would be advantageous to have it ready by March 4th as that is when Reclamation will be notified whether or not the budgets will remain under Continuing Resolution.
- SAR members then briefly reviewed the example issue paper provided by Reclamation. In general, members like the format but modified the headings to be:
 - (1) Briefing For; (2) Topic; (3) Background/ Primary Issues; (4) Affected parties list; (5) Current status/efforts underway; (6) Position of interested parties; (7) Recommendations; (8) Prepared by; and (9) map diagram of the pertinent area with important features labeled.
 - Tentatively, work group members were assigned the following:
 - LFCC/Levee system – Steve Harris;
 - AG sustainability – Yasmeen Najmi and Robyn Harrison;
 - Education & Outreach – will be included as a heading under all the other individual white papers;

- Sediment Transport - Ryan Gronewold and Robert Padilla;
 - Habitat Restoration – Gina Dello Russo;
 - Water rights/adjudication – Page Pegram? and Terina Perez?
 - Land Use/Zoning – Gina Dello Russo and Page Pegram
- The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will be able to complete the first 5 tasks of the 2011 Floodplain Encroachment Project. These tasks are the analysis and modeling portion of the project. It has been requested that the Corps attempt to complete these tasks by July in order to allow the work group time to implement Tasks 6, 7, and 8 (evaluation tasks) through a contractor and still have the entire project completed by the end of the year.
 - In an update on the Socorro Floodplain (100-year flood) mapping update, the background on George Dennis' presentation to the CC was provided. In a lawsuit, FEMA was ordered to consult with the Service on their nation-wide floodplain mapping because of endangered species impacts from possible recommendations. George Dennis is the Service's representative on this consultation effort. George's perspective is that with so little encroachment now and since the future is not known, it could be foolish to not be proactive and approach the communities now. George has expressed interest in participating with the SAR work group.
 - Attendees briefly discussed the movement of the salt cedar beetle through the southern portions of Colorado and northern portions of New Mexico. The beetle is in the San Juan basin and is expected to be in the MRG within the next few years. The subtropical variety is in the Big Bend region and could be expected to travel up the Rio Grande. The Tamarisk Coalition is trying to establish criteria that would enable managers to be proactive by creating islands of native habitat in advance of the beetle's arrival. The Coalition has expressed interested in being involved with the Program.
 - In the Program update, it was shared that the LTP will not be ready for Reclamation's BA submittal. A final LTP isn't expected until September or October. The SWM work group is contemplating reducing or expiring the USGS groundwater/surface water interaction project. There appears to be data needs for URGWOM so the project may continue at a reduced effort. A joint PVA/PHVA meeting will be scheduled for the end of April. The PVA is scheduled to meet on March 29th for the model debuts. The EC has scheduled their March meeting on the same day to allow EC members to attend the PVA model debuts. There will be 2 BAs submitted – the Corps' BA is expected soon but Reclamation's BA probably won't be ready until September or October.
 - In a reach update, it was shared that for the first time since the 1970s, an ice dam formed on the Rio Grande in San Acacia (at Brown Arroyo). It diverted the entire river onto the Rhodes Property. There was a significant water fowl response observed with the flooding.
 - Attendees discussed a possible "float trip" in place of the April regular meeting. It was agreed that participation will be by invitation only. The work group will target April 29th for a river trip to float from Escondita to the south boundary.

Next Meeting: March 24th 2011 at Reclamation

- Tentative agenda items: (1) Roundtable discussions on the floodplain encroachment issue with all interested parties (flood control representative, levee project representative, George Dennis, etc.); (2) discuss details of the April 29th Float Trip and confirm the list of invited attendees;
- April 29th Float Trip
- May 2011 SAR meeting to be held in Socorro

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program**San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting**February 24th, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

MEETING NOTES**Agenda Approval**

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order and the agenda was approved with the addition of items under the Program updates.

Approval of the 12/02/10 and 01/27/11 Meeting Notes

- The December 2nd, 2010 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes. The January 27th, 2011 meeting notes were approved with the clarification regarding the “tumbleweed” plug south of Ft. Craig.
 - It was shared that Reclamation and ISC are discussing the possibility of installing a fence for tumbleweed control.
 - It was shared that Reclamation’s Denver Office will be giving a presentation on the sediment models at the March Habitat Restoration (HR) work group meeting. The presentation will cover the historic 2000-2010 period for the San Antonio south reach and 2010-2019 forecasting in terms of channel response and future conditions of that reach.

Action Item Review

- ✓ 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. – *complete*;
 - The Socorro County Land Use and Zoning Committee was disbanded. Instead, Gina will follow up with the Socorro County Manager, Delilah Walsh. Delilah will be invited and encouraged to meet with the SAR work group (especially when the meetings are in Socorro).
 - At one point in time, there was a county planning/zoning committee with a county planner but it failed miserably. Now, there is not even a committee.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will invite Delilah Walsh (Socorro County Manager) to participate in the SAR work group’s meetings in Socorro and to get feedback/updates on the zoning.

- ✓ Robert Padilla will provide a Reclamation issue paper template to assist in structuring white papers. – *complete; this will be discussed later in today’s meeting*
- ✓ Gina will contact Terina Perez or George Dennis for specifics on the FEMA/floodplain presentation. – *complete*;
 - Gina has a copy of the presentation notes as well as her notes from her discussions with George Dennis. Unfortunately, George was unable to attend today’s SAR meeting but he will try to attend the March meeting.
 - It was suggested that it would be beneficial to get all “key” individuals together at some point to talk about floodplain encroachment, the floodplain encroachment project, flood control, levee project, etc. This “roundtable” discussion was tentatively scheduled for the March 24th agenda.
 - Attendees reviewed the intent of the floodplain encroachment project. The Program is not “land users” or “zoners” – we are technical representatives. We don’t have the ability to designate the land use but the land use *could* impact

areas within the Program boundaries. The intent is to determine if floodplain encroachment is an issue for the Program and if so, how much. If it is determined to not an issue, then no more needs to be done (from the Program's perspective).

- George Dennis' presentation to the CC indicated that encroachment is expected to be an issue. There are concerns related to encroachment. The "administering" issue is up to the county, not the Program. The Program is simply an advocate with the role to provide information and let the county know of the concerns and that it matters to the Program (and individual agencies). It is not about buying land or implementing building restrictions. However, before the Program can speak to the issue, we have to be scientifically informed on the extent of future impacts – especially as a recovery program. Implementing change is up to FEMA and the county. The Program can only make informed recommendations. Somehow, advocating for the gathering of information has been taken as advocating for a leadership role in zoning in Socorro County. SAR is advocating for the science on where we stand and how of much of an issue it is for the Program.
- Socorro County is not part of the FEMA program at this time (Socorro City is, but not the county) and so was excluded from George's work. George has only looked on the impacts in Bernalillo County and graciously took time to briefly look at Socorro County. From an ESA point of view, he thought encroachment could be an issue. The new flood maps should bring the county to the point of considering zoning and flooding issues.
- Even though George's presentation supported the work group's perspective on encroachment, there are still scope confusions. The scope will be rewritten based on the tasks that the Corps is able to contribute.

Action: Terina Perez will work with Gina Dello Russo to facilitate a tentative "roundtable" discussion on the floodplain encroachment topic with interested parties (Jerry – Reclamation; George Dennis – FWS; Delilah Walsh – Socorro County; Steve Harris' Green Group; etc.) for the March 24th, 2011 SAR work group meeting.

Action: By Friday March 11th, Gina Dello Russ will write a first draft white paper on the floodplain encouragement as a read ahead for the March 24th meeting "roundtable" discussion; the draft white paper will be distributed to work group members for review, editing, and input.

Action: Terina Perez will check with Yvette McKenna on the internal work group use of a draft white paper for informational purposes for the March 24th meeting.

- ✓ Ryan Gronewold will find out which portions of the Floodplain Encroachment project the Corps will be able to accomplish and a rough timeline. – *complete; that project is on the agenda for discussion today;*
- ✓ Gina will send out the most recent draft SOW for Floodplain Encroachment so that meeting attendees can begin to work on modifications. – *complete;*
 - Several agencies have submitted comments. The SOW will be discussed further today. Attendees briefly discussed the possibility of adding to the SOW if that would assist George in advocating to FEMA and Socorro County.
- ✓ 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. – *complete;*

- There is basically no deadline since there is no money available for funding right now. However, SAR members were encouraged to have the SOW ready as soon as possible since the government will find out on March 4th if the budget will remain under Continuing Resolution (CR) for the remainder of the year or not. Better if done sooner. March 4th will find out if under CR or not. It would be advantageous to have the project SOW ready by that time, if possible.
- Robert Padilla will complete the Reclamation responses in the Agency Response to Themes table. – *not completed yet;*
 - For all agencies that are okay with responses being in provided in writing, the Response to Themes Table will be distributed *internally (ONLY)* to the work group by the next meeting.

Action: Terina Perez will assist Robert Padilla in completing Reclamation's responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.

Action: Tetra Tech will forward Reclamation's existing Agency Response to Themes to Terina Perez.

- ✓ Robert Padilla will reserve a conference room at Reclamation for the February 24th SAR work group meeting. – *complete;*

Review Draft White Paper and Reclamation Template

- Reclamation provided 2 example templates to SAR members (via email). One is strictly an issue paper template. In the December meeting, SAR members used the suggested actions from the 2009 SAR workshop to identify 6 topics that should be addressed in the white papers.
- Attendees reviewed the issue paper template and added/clarified a few of the headings. The template was discussed in terms of the Floodplain Encroachment project (see italicized text for specifics). Briefing for, purpose of paper, change status to background; current efforts underway in the reach, position of work group in terms of recommendations; who prepared by.
 - Title: *SAR Work group white paper*
 - Briefing for: *Collaborative Program and other others stakeholders*
 - While these white papers are for the Program, there is also a public piece that needs to be considered. To be the most effective, the work group has to think beyond the Program in order to reach those who can act on the recommendations. This includes the benefit of informing all agencies/entities with authorities and projects about what everyone else is doing (for coordination purposes).
 - Example stakeholders included FEMA, Socorro Country, etc.
 - Topic: *Floodplain Encroachment*
 - Background/ Primary Issues:
 - Affected Parties List:
 - Current Status/Efforts Underway: *levee project, FEMA mapping*
 - Position of Interested Parties: *Socorro County, FEMA, individual agencies, State Engineer, agricultural community, etc.*
 - Recommendations:

- If there are identified issues (ex. habitat connectivity, etc.) then the work group may be able to provide suggestions. This section could be used to supply any analyses, studies or recommend a series of meetings for discussions and other outreach events and materials, etc. Each recommendation should include the necessary decisions, rationale, justifications, etc.
- Prepared by: *SAR ad hoc work group of the MRG ES Collaborative Program*
- Visual Map:
 - Attendees discussed including a small map/diagram of the specific area and labeling the map with appropriate/important features.
- Work group members then made tentative assignments for creating the draft white papers.
 - LFCC/Levee system – Steve Harris;
 - AG sustainability – Yasmeen Najmi and Robyn Harrison;
 - Education & Outreach – will be included as a heading under all the other individual white papers;
 - Sediment Transport - Ryan Gronewald and Robert Padilla;
 - Habitat Restoration – Gina Dello Russo;
 - Water rights/adjudication – Page Pegram? and Terina Perez?
 - Land Use/Zoning – Gina Dello Russo and Page Pegram

Action: Gina Dello Russo will create a draft Land Use/Floodplain Encroachment White Paper and will distribute the draft white paper to the work group for input and review prior to the March 24th meeting.

2011 Floodplain Encroachment Project

- The work group was provided an update that the Corps will be able to cover Tasks 1 through 5 of the Floodplain Encroachment project. These are the analysis and modeling task in the SOW. *Please refer to the tasks details listed below.* The Corps originally assumed the tasks would be completed by the end of fiscal year in September, but it has been requested they complete these tasks by July in order to allow for the remainder of the SOW tasks (Tasks 6, 7, 8 which are the evaluation tasks) to be activated in FY11 through a contractor.
 - *Task 1: Within 15 days of award, the contractor will present the Program with a draft implementation schedule for review and comment.*
 - *Task 2: Perform a literature search of relevant reports within the study reach.*
 - *Task 3: Identify areas where floodplain encroachment intersects with existing floodplain mapping. Floodplain encroachment includes structures, roadways, localized flood proofing, drainage locations (arroyos) and structures (drain returns), and any other man made features (ex. archaeological sites) that could alter the natural flow path of the Rio Grande through the study reach. Delineate existing land ownership and land use in the study reach. This shall be performed using aerial photography, county records, and GIS technology.*
 - *Task 4: Using existing hydraulic models and historic aerial photography and GIS data sets of historic overbanking provided by the Program (including most recent FEMA floodplain maps, government hydraulic model runs, aerial photography mapping of inundated areas), the contractor shall identify areas within the study reach that are likely to produce overbank flows at Rio Grande discharges of 2,000 thru 10,000 cubic feet per*

second (cfs) with intervals of 1,000 cfs. Also identify those areas within the 100 year and 500 year flood boundaries.

- Task 5: Using GIS technology and existing topographic mapping, the contractor shall identify the most likely flow paths of water within the overbank for Rio Grande discharges of 2000 thru 10,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) with intervals of 1,000 cfs. Also identify those areas within the 100 year and 500 year flood boundaries.
- Task 6: Identify current flood risk and water management flexibility and benefits, and ecosystem benefits that are a result of this management including overbank flows. Flood risk management will include (at a minimum) limited impacts to permanent structures and buildings, levees, and roadways and the ability for arroyo and main stem flows to pass through the study reach without major restrictions to flow paths. Water management benefits will include (at a minimum) water delivery efficiency, limits to increased evaporation and evapotranspiration, unimpeded return of overbank flows to the main channel. Ecosystem benefits will include (at a minimum) endangered species habitat availability and quality, available vegetation establishment acres, extent of wildlife corridor, and groundwater/surface water connectivity. The contractor shall use these as metrics in the evaluation of floodplain protection scenarios.
- Task 7: Using GIS technology and existing topographic mapping, the contractor shall identify areas within the study reach where future floodplain encroachment could alter the existing overbank flow paths for Rio Grande discharges of 2,000 thru 10,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) (with intervals of 1,000 cfs), and within the 100 year and 500 year flood boundaries. This task will describe possible water management restrictions and ecosystem impacts under potential encroachment based on three alternatives for future land use within the floodplain. This will include a worst case encroachment scenario (dense housing and infrastructure development similar to local city ordinances), encroachment due to moderate infrastructure and building development due to land use trends for the county or state, and maintenance of the current level of encroachment. The contractor will evaluate the impacts to water management and ecosystem benefits due to these alternatives. This will also include an analysis of the existing and potential floodplain protection scenarios to benefit water management flexibility and the ecosystem.
- Task 8: The Contractor will meet with the San Acacia Reach Workgroup a minimum of three times during project implementation. A meeting will be held between the workgroup and contractor to discuss the contractor's approach and a draft list of impacts, benefits, scenarios to be included in the completion of Tasks 1-6. A second meeting will be held when Task 6, future alterations to flow paths, water management, and ecosystem benefits, as well as floodplain protection scenarios, has been drafted. This will provide for workgroup input into the final product in draft form. This will also provide an opportunity for independent peer reviewer's input if this process is deemed appropriate and beneficial to the Collaborative Program. The contractor would then address workgroup and peer review (if incorporated) suggestions into the final document. A final meeting will provide workgroup and other Program participants with a final document presentation. Documentation of these meetings will be included in appendices to the final report.
- The Corps should try to incorporate any pertinent Reclamation data, river maintenance data, etc. under Task 3. Attendees discussed the identified levee vulnerabilities (due to channel geometry) that were identified in the River Maintenance EIS. It was suggested that the "current levee alignment" and particularly sites where the channel geometry is inadequate to contain the river be specifically mentioned in the analysis.
 - The SAR work group requested that the Corps add "...especially those places where the channel geometry makes the levee vulnerable" to the "in the natural flow path..." sentence of Objective 1; and "current levee alignment" to the 3rd bullet.

- Attendees discussed the importance of discussing the findings and alternatives of the floodplain encroachment study (once completed). Identified key people to include in the discussions were the Corps levee project manager, Socorro County manager, George Dennis, etc. After this group review of the study results, then the work group should take the results and recommendations/alternatives to the CC/EC. Part of the work group objectives was to offer solutions and alternatives before the group disbands.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will draft a SOW for the Program's portion (Tasks 6, 7, and 8) of the Floodplain Encroachment Project and will distribute the draft SOW to work group members for review and input.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will follow up with Ryan Gronewald on the SAR work group's request to include specific reference to levee vulnerabilities in the Floodplain Encroachment Project.

Action: Terina Perez will talk with Robert Padilla about the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites are.

Socorro Floodplain (100 yr flood) mapping update

- In an update on the Socorro Floodplain (100-year flood) mapping update, the background on George Dennis' presentation to the CC was provided. George Dennis is the Service's representative on this consultation effort.
 - In a lawsuit, the courts determined that FEMA did have discretionary actions to consult on even though FEMA contended they did not. This resulted in FEMA being ordered to consult with the Service on their nation-wide floodplain mapping and recommendations because of the potential environmental and endangered species' impacts that might result from the possible recommendations. George Dennis from the Service was assigned to be the consultant on the FEMA floodplain mapping work.
 - George looked at 11,000 policies (ex. flood insurance, etc.) in the state. He specifically honed in on the Middle Rio Grande (MRG). Twelve communities were included but the pueblos and Socorro County were gaps. George also looked at water depletion and storm water with the premise of looking at things that might limit/restrict the floodplain.
 - Socorro County was not included in the evaluation, but Bernalillo County was.
 - From his work, George determined that in the future he wanted to take a more proactive approach and together with FEMA talk directly with the communities.
 - There are flycatcher issues especially considering the potential disturbance in critical habitat. The flood insurance issues near nesting sites were included in the evaluation. It was requested that FEMA review/consider these situations (ex. if surveys indicate nesting sites but someone wants permission to build this would require a FEMA review). FEMA would have the ability to put a community on suspension or cancel policies if it is determined there is a violation. This might be an incentive for communities to consider the floodplain encroachment if it could mean risking the coverage for federal supplemented insurance.
 - George recommended that the MRG communities implement good flood ordinances. He offered to provide an example of good flood ordinance (such as Albuquerque) to Socorro County. A good flood ordinance can get "points" to reduce the cost of flood insurance. In the future, George expressed interest in

working with the SAR work group (and FEMA) to approach Socorro County in a “holistic” approach.

- In a conversation between Gina and George, he thought that a floodplain encroachment study was a very good idea. His perspective was that with so little encroachment now and since the future is not known, it could be foolish to not be proactive and approach the communities now. This proactive approach might help to avoid future consultation issues and provide a win/win situation (for FEMA, the communities, etc.) in advance. He also really likes the conservation easements program that was developed in Socorro as provides benefits to all including the land owner. George was willing to help SAR approach the county when his analysis was done (which should be about a year from now).
 - The floodplain maps should be completed (and available) sometime this year. However, the Corps’ 50 year floodplain maps with aerial photographs (that were done for the levee project) were of very high quality. These maps could be used for the encroachment project now; especially considering that there isn’t much change between the 50 year and 100 year floods. The water will inch up due to the eastside topography but it won’t be significantly higher.
 - In a side note, it was shared that the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District continues to fund salt cedar clearing efforts. Also, the Bosque del Apache and the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District will be applying for a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. If awarded, this funding would go towards another 500 to 600 acres of cleared private lands near Bosquecito. There is a group of about 6 land owners who have expressed interest in conservation easements.

Tamarisk Beetle Update

- Attendees briefly discussed the Tamarisk Coalition Symposium. It is remarkable how the salt cedar beetle has moved through Colorado and northern NM – it is now in the San Juan basin. Similarly, the creek beetle is already in Largo Canyon which is a shared watershed with the Deloris. It is very possible that the creek beetle could travel up the Puerco and be in the MRG basin soon. The populations of the subtropical variety, located in Big Bend, are really thriving and may also come up the Rio Grande. The projection is that these beetles will be in the Rio Grande system within a couple of years.
 - Impacts to the flycatcher are expected since flycatchers are nesting in salt cedar. Due to site fidelity, the birds will need habitat established close by to relocate to.
 - The Tamarisk Coalition is trying to establish criteria that would enable managers to be proactive by creating islands of native habitat in advance of the beetle’s arrival. The Coalition has expressed interest in being involved with the Program.
 - It was pointed out that having available native vegetation is only one piece – the species actually has to use it, too.
 - There should be a salt cedar beetle presentation given to the HRW at their March 15th meeting.

Discussion of the 2010 low intensity monitoring draft report/results

- The 2010 low intensity monitoring draft report/results were presented and discussed at the February 9th CC meeting.

- The presentation included background on what was monitored, how the sites were selected, etc.
- It is still unknown if the monitoring will be extended to the San Acacia Reach.

Action: Terina Perez will review the February 9th CC notes for any pertinent information pertaining to the 2010 low intensity monitoring that should be relayed to the SAR work group (or for inclusion in the SAR work group notes).

Program Updates

- *LTP* – the new expected target date for the draft LTP has been pushed back to September or October; but the goal remains for completion to be done this year. Unfortunately, the BAs will be submitted prior to the completion of the LTP.
- *SWM* – it was shared the SWM work group is exploring options for the USGS groundwater/surface water interaction project. There have been issues with timely deliverables, costs, and meeting the original project objectives. The work group is discussing whether or not to continue the project at a reduced effort or expire it completely. SWM is making sure if the data is still needed or necessarily and how the data is being used, etc.
- *PHVA* – a facilitated PHVA/PVA joint work group meeting is being planned in April.
- *PVA* – The next PVA meeting is scheduled for all day March 29th. The tentative agenda includes the PVA models debut with preliminary results for at least one of the models and discussions on the last adaptive management working sessions. The EC has rescheduled there March meeting to the 29th to coincide with the PVA meeting to allow for executive participation in the models debut portion of the meeting.
- *Adaptive management* – technical representatives from all the work groups meet with the adaptive management plan contract on February 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The current focus is to identify critical scientific uncertainties. The list of uncertainties will eventually be categorized into “nice to know” and “need to know.” The next adaptive management sessions are scheduled for April 5th -7th; the format will be the same with the first 2 days being the technical session and the 3rd day being a half-day open session. There is a workshop scheduled for May 18th and 19th (which coincides with the May EC meeting on the 19th) to allow for executive participation.
- *Annual work plans and accomplishments* – one change for the SAR work plan and charter is to remove Cheryl Rolland from the membership list, but this change did not occur in time to be approved for this year. Participation in the adaptive management technical sessions and workshops and participation in the Program’s Open House activities and Symposium will be added to the 2011 work plan.
- *HRW* – as previously announced, there will be a salt cedar beetle presentation and sediment model presentation at the March 15th meeting.
- *DBMS* – the pilot database should be functioning and available soon (this spring). All the information and data has been collected so they are in the calibration stage. There will be training offered prior to the release.
- *FY11 Budget and RFP process* – the government is still operating under CR until March 4th the budget changes will be announced (i.e., CR for the remainder of the year or not). It is expected that there will be a SOW for HR Construction on non-federal lands provided there is funding available. This project does include San Acacia for the existing flycatcher nesting areas due to site fidelity.

- In San Acacia, the HR recommended projects include work near existing flycatcher territories, minnow refugia projects above Bosequcito (backwaters) and degradation projects.
- The HR Construction SOW does not exclude other projects, but references the reach A&Rs and attempts to get more specific about the *types* of projects that would be beneficial to the species in those particular reaches. Before, the construction RFP used to just request proposals instead of honing in on what the work group(s) would like to see on the ground for effectiveness.
- *PMT* – it was announced that there have been several changes in PMT assignments. Terina will no longer be participating in HRW but will cover SAR, SWM, and PHVA. Stacey will be covering ScW and MPT.
- *BA/BO update* – there will be 2 BAs submitted to the Service - one from the Corps and the other from Reclamation. The Corps' BA is expected soon; a copy will be provided to the Program when it is officially delivered to the Service. Reclamation's BA is expected to be submitted October 1st. The Service is still committed to a single BO (even though there are 2 BAs) for water operations in the MRG. Because neither BA will be front-loaded, a jeopardy determination is expected. This means negotiations for the RPAs and RPMs will have to take place. Also, there was a policy decision (between Reclamation's and the Service's regional offices) that the 2003 BO will be the baseline for the new BA. It is recognized that the 2003 water operation requirements are not sustainable but this policy decision was made to provide comfort to both agencies until the adaptive management plan was in place and implemented.

Action: Terina Perez will determine if the March 29th PVA meeting is open to all interested work group participants.

Action: Terina Perez will find out when the Adaptive Management technical session notes will be made available to work group members.

Action: Terina Perez and Robert Padilla will discuss the RFP process/schedule.

Reach Update(s)

- In a San Acacia Reach update, it was shared that for the first time since the 1970s, an ice dam formed on the Rio Grande in San Acacia (at Brown Arroyo). It diverted the entire river onto the Rhodes Property. There was a significant water fowl response observed with the flooding.
- Apparently, Reclamation's Socorro office received multiple complaints from landowners even though the only property affected was the Rhodes' property.
 - Attendees discussed if any monitoring of the flooding would be done. There is interest in determining if any of the natural levee berm was cut or if any trees were lost. ISC still has the transect in that location, so the data loggers should have captured the data.
- The Save Our Bosque Task Force (SOBTF) is planning a retreat for sometime this next summer. The intent is to have capacity building and future steps discussions with stakeholders and community members. The details are not yet known.

Float Trip

- The SAR work group has been discussing a potential "float trip" in the San Acacia reach from Escondida to the south boundary. There is still interest, so attendees discussed possible scheduling of this event.

- It seems that this reach either has high water conditions or no water at all!
- There might be a good runoff in April; but the landmark events are predicted to be 3 weeks early this year.
 - For SAR purposes, it would be better to not go during a Cochiti Deviation since there would probably many people in/on the river for monitoring purposes.
 - 1,200+ cfs is an optimum flow as the dynamics (such as islands merging and submerging) can be observed. Any higher flow and the channel can be hard to find.
- To target optimum flows and considering Easter Weekend (April 22nd, 23rd, and 24th), there was general agreement to target Friday, April 29th. This trip will be by invitation only since there will be limited space. The work group agreed to limit participants to a maximum of 20; there are 11 official SAR members). One slot will be reserved for the Socorro County Manager. Attendees discussed having some presentations/talks that morning prior to floating the river.
- There was general agreement to charge a \$15 dollar reservation fee that will be applied to reimbursing Steve Harris for equipment and travel.
- The May meeting will take place in Socorro to accommodate those who attended the float trip and allow for follow up with any questions, issues, etc.

Action: Robert Padilla will forward the URGWOM predicted hydrographs for 2011.

Action: Terina Perez will attempt to reserve a seat for Steve Harris on the Reclamation Law attendance list.

Action: Prior to the March meeting, Gina Dello Russo and Page Pegram will brainstorm a potential "invitation list" for the April float trip.

Miscellaneous

- "A Legal Hydrograph – Rio Grande Project" is a study of authorities and Reclamation law and application from the beginning (pre-Rio Grande adjudication). Please contact Steve Harris or Chris Gorbach for bibliography.

Next Meeting: March 24th 2011 at Reclamation

- Tentative agenda items: (1) Roundtable discussions on the floodplain encroachment issue with all interested parties (flood control representative, levee project representative, George Dennis, etc.); (2) discuss details of the April 29th Float Trip and confirm the list of invited attendees;
- April 29th Float Trip
- May 2011 SAR meeting to be held in Socorro

**San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group
24 February 2011 Meeting Attendees**

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