

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program  
Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) Meeting  
17 May 2011, Tuesday  
12:30-3:30 p.m.**

**Interstate Stream Commission**

***Action Items***

San Acacia Fish Passage Peer Review Recommendations

- Peter Wilkinson will write up recommendations concerning the San Acacia Diversion Dam Fish Passage Peer Review for developing a comprehensive strategic plan.

Bosque Farms Entrapment Alleviation Discussion

- Susan will work on having a large discussion on involving people in a project for levee reconstruction using a cost sharing approach.

Other Action Items

- Rick will ask Santa Ana for a presentation progress report and will secure a financial report for the whole project.
- Rick will have all grant recipients provide a report at a time convenient to the recipients to find out what has been accomplished and thereby help HRW develop projects downstream.

***Meeting Summary***

1. Introductions made and agenda approved with one change.
2. Announcements – The group discussed the problems with low flows in the river.
3. Minutes of March and April were accepted as changed.
4. Action Items were reviewed.
5. Bosque Farms Entrapment – discussion on strategies used in dealing with entrapment.
6. Santa Ana Grant – ask for program report and financial report.
7. Fish Passage Peer Review Recommendations - Peter agreed with Rick's help to write up a response to the recommendations – a comprehensive strategic plan for HR.
8. Physical Model Update – no consensus was reached.
9. New Model/Monitoring – not considered.

***Meeting Notes***

1. *Introductions/Agenda Approval*

- Rick will check with Jericho on allowing the note taker to record the meetings.
- Those present introduced themselves.

- Bosque Farms Entrapment would be delayed until Susan Bittick arrived. There were no other changes to the agenda.

## 2. *Announcements*

- The Workgroup talked about the low river flow. It might be as high as 1500 cfs but more probably 700-800.
- The group needed to figure out where the spawning habitat was within which reach and whether they wanted to look at including low or drought year in-stream spawning environments just for discussion at this point.
- Does the group want to engage and target for next year's monitoring and maybe tie that back into a modeling effort out of the PVA leading them into adaptive management and possibly into some other restoration. That's way too comprehensive but that is where I feel it needs to go.
- What is the frequency or availability of low flow habitat? Is there low flow habitat that could support spawning activity?
- What type of management is there? Do we sit here and watch it or how do we deal with it?
- If there is validity in what the Corps has in trying to get a description of how habitat groups function for a range of flows in various reaches it would be a good management tool. The group should find out where and in what reaches they are spawning and then go out and monitor that.
- Mickey suggested getting away from the focus of spawning habitat and look more to how to make better in-channel habitat. There was overlap there with things like food availability and other things. That type of discussion would be more productive.

## 3. *Approve both March and April month's meeting minutes*

- The minutes for March and April were accepted with the changes that had already been made.

## 4. *Action Item Review for both March and April*

The Co-Chair went through the action items from March and April.

### General Items

- Ondrea Hummel will send out MPT monitoring schedule to workgroup - **completed.**
- March meeting minutes will be approved at the May meeting - **approved.**
- Rick will send out physical model to workgroup for comment - **sent.**
- Adaptive management workshop with EC will be on May 19 - **in progress.**
- Open house and joint workgroup is scheduled for Oct 7-8 at Tingley Beach area.
- Next CC meeting will be an all-day meeting focusing on LTP on May 4<sup>th</sup> - **meeting held.**

### Tamarisk Leaf beetle Presentation

- Gina announced a meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup> all day with representatives from each agency to focus on the flycatcher area and would send an email to everyone about it - **sent.**

## SRH-2D Modeling Presentation

- Invite Mark Stone to participate in the Population Analysis Group - **in process.**

## San Acacia A&amp;R Peer Review (Read ahead)

- Gina will give a short presentation at some time and highlight what the workgroup wants to take out of it for the next step.
- Gina agreed to have it sent out as a read ahead and on next month's agenda to set dates for it - **in process.**

## Wetland Compliance Monitoring

- Get approval on monitoring plan for a couple of sites **in process.**
- Streamline the approach for monitoring all sites under one contract and publish an RFQ.
- Ondrea asked for volunteers to work on this monitoring.

## HR Construction Ranking Criteria

- Ondrea will email the criteria and highlight changes in the proposal. Feedback needed by the end of the week – **email was sent.**

5. *Bosque Farms Entrapment Alleviation Discussion*

This item was delayed until later in the meeting.

6. *Santa Ana Grant \*Attachment*

- The budget has hours for staff in monitoring but not specifically on data analysis or field work.
- This is the fourth of five years of monitoring so the assumption is to continue current monitoring with the same number of hours but monitoring is not a line item in the budget.
- How do these quarterly monitoring reports get posted? The answer was probably in the grant proposal.
- The decision on the request for supporting data should be made by EC or CC.
- The fact that HRW had seen none of the reports should be pointed out to CC. The Group was concerned with how the workgroups would get the feedback. But if the Program Manager said it was okay as is, they would not worry about it.
- Anders questioned how they would gain any expertise without knowing what works and what doesn't work.
- Some pueblos have done field trips and things change from year to year, especially when more funding is requested.
- They might spend five years collecting data and analyze it at the end and make a presentation on it.
- The Group felt the contractors should make annual reports on progress. They should be asked to make an annual presentation on progress. At present, the only progress reports had been done at the site visits.

- ACTION ITEM: Co-Chair will ask CC to approve a request for all grant recipients to make a presentation/report on their progress before the end of the fiscal year (before their budget request).
- The Group needs a spreadsheet dealing with finances – how long it has been funded, how much has been expended and what balances remains.
- ACTION ITEM: The Co-Chair will secure a financial report for the whole project.
- Because there was not a requirement in the grant about making presentations, this is considered a request that the grant recipient could refuse.

##### 5. *Bosque Farms Entrapment Alleviation Discussion*

- Mickey reported that three of the four sites were eliminated and listed the four sites as Fort Craig, Belen, Los Lunas and 152. The primary purpose was minnow rescue in floodplain areas.
- The Fort Craig site was removed because of channel degradation. The original sites were approved by HRW in 2007
- The 152 site was removed before his time and didn't know why.
- The Belen site was removed because of the low cost/benefit ratio and concerns with channel integrity.
- In 2008, the site was added at Bosque del Apache – the depressions were against the levee and lower than the diverter channel so it was removed. The levee integrity might be compromised and they tried to get the water back into the river and eventually solved the problem by flushing everything downstream. So it came off the list.
- Even though the service backed off, the Bosque Farm site is high – turning them back to river channel. They made a contribution to it.
- There is a reduced level of effort in just trying to get the fish habitat reconnected to the river.
- Ryan presented. He apologized for not being present in February to explain the engineering. From the comments, he didn't think it was a good job of explanation.
- He showed the site at Bosque Farms where they would do vegetation and construction – at south the boundary of Isleta Pueblo.
- All of the hatched area outside there was left with standing water and minnows wanting out. The lowest point was at the upstream end.
- He showed the relative depths of channel with overbanks.
- After draining, they started flows into the channel at 4500 cfs.
- When building an inlet structure, if low areas are a big concern, why not take material to fill the holes?
- Ryan said that could be an option but the cost of hauling it might be high and they could lose the habitat area.
- He explained these are all very passive places and not well engineered. There was not a very detailed survey of the area. At this location, the overbank elevation downstream is pretty close to the 4500 cfs level. Backwater is a valid concern. He didn't think it would fill in but it would not take much to clear it if it did fill in.
- The velocity has a self-cleaning property. They needed to allow for overbank cutting.
- Ryan explained that they were not excavating in the area but just cutting channels.
- Susan said the cost of the project was \$171,000.
- There were four constructive sites and no alternatives.

- The project was to foster greater connectivity by alleviating the unconnected portions and thus create a better habitat and make sure the minnows were not getting stuck there.
- The workgroup discussed the best procedures to use to alleviate closed separations from the river channel.
- Question: In the levee monitoring, is there construction? Answer: yes, it is reconstruction of levees and not looking at any levee setback.
- Question: Is there a BA/BO and if there is a BO, is it expanding the floodway close to the berm? Can the floodway come closer with greater stability? Answer: It might be something to explore as the project goes forward.
- Co-Chair said they will have a large discussion on that and determine how HR is a part of that.

7. *CC Request from Workgroups on the San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) Fish Passage Peer Review recommendations \*Attachment*

- Co-Chair – we want to take the recommendations into the LTP to get maximum use of the recommendations. The only way is to take each one and see if they can be reconfigured instead of setting up separate projects. Our greatest need - best thing to do is to look at the recommendations.
- CC had some confusion on this and what Science was asked to do.
- As he read through the read ahead, some members felt the response should be that this was for Science instead of HR.
- The Workgroup considered what response they should give. After some discussion, the group decided it was not this workgroups responsibility.
- The recommendations come in the process of the peer review team but the workgroup should do something with these recommendations.
- The group felt there was not a lot of guidance here.
- We don't have an oversight committee to evaluate. What to evaluate against?
- Peter noted they had no established process for review. Before review we need a hypothesis and address it.
- The group didn't even have a list of projects for the program.
- The group wanted to ask CC what they wanted.
- Sarah said it is the internal structure of setting up these hypotheses and using information for feedback. It is a problem of process.
- Question: Do we know enough of the species or do we need to investigate that further?
- The group discussed structure and process for what might be done differently.
- You are either for fish passage or you are against it.
- The group decided that recommendations #2 and #7 were the ones they should respond to. Those were things HR was already doing.
- The group had been struggling with movement and direction for a long time.
- Although there was money wrapped up in this, there are significant limitations on it.
- What is the sampling method? What does it do? The best synthesis of all the information is not going to get us to the point where our sampling protocols are going to tell us anything more than it tells us right now.
- There is a construct now that picks up the statistics, which is why we have population monitoring and population estimating.

- We could look at adaptive management instead of a comprehensive strategic restoration plan for a reach. (In response to recommendation #7). When you add a reach, – there is enough complexity to talk about it.
- The group would want to specify locations and how to integrate that back to water management. It points to the need for a river-wide conceptual model.
- With a comprehensive model we can see what is possible.
- We can tell the CC that the principle we will try to apply is something to show this is the way we see the river.
- ACTION ITEM: Peter agreed with Rick's help to write up a response to the recommendations – a comprehensive strategic plan for HR.

8. *Physical Model Update of Development and summary of comments \*Attachment*

- Anders presented this item. The next step is to put in the categories and all the management techniques we have had and analyze the cost/benefits of them.
- Mark Stone had a handle on it and could work with Harvey Miller on it. Some members asked if they knew it was accurate.
- At some point the Group needs to develop habitat indices.
- The Group did not come to any consensus on this item.

9. *Adding new maintenance/monitoring phase to HR work*

- a. What is the group doing that it should continue doing?
- b. What is the group doing that it should improve in some way?
- c. What is the group not doing that it should begin doing?
- d. What is the group doing that it should stop doing?

**Potential Future Agenda Items**

1. San Acacia A&R Peer Review Discussion of next steps (Gina)
2. Discussion on Recommendation #7 and possible approval.

**May's FYI Items**

1. Possible joint ScW and HRW presentation by AMAFCA on Albuquerque's Stormwater program May 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am (Bring your lunch)
2. Adaptive Management Planning Workshop May 18<sup>th</sup> and May 19<sup>th</sup>
3. EC Meeting May 19<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM at Reclamation
4. PVA full day meeting May 24<sup>th</sup>

**Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) Meeting Attendees**  
**May 17, 2011 12:30 to 3:30 pm**

Name	Agency	Email Address
Mark Brennan	FWS	<a href="mailto:Mark_brennan@fws.gov">Mark_brennan@fws.gov</a>
Rick Billings	ABCWUA	<a href="mailto:rbillings@abcwua.org">rbillings@abcwua.org</a>
Peter Wilkinson	NMISC	<a href="mailto:Peter.wilkinson@state.nm.us">Peter.wilkinson@state.nm.us</a>
Colin Lee	Santo Domingo	<a href="mailto:clee@sdutilities.com">clee@sdutilities.com</a>
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