

## **Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Species Water Management Standing Workgroup (SWM)**

01 June 2011 Meeting

**8:30 AM @ the Atrisco Site**

### **Actions**

- Matt Martinez will use the old USGS MOU to draft a new agreement for Ed Kandl and Reclamation to sign accepting responsibility for the transect project wells.
- Matt Martinez will provide Ed Kandl with a copy of the old USGS “well responsibility” agreement/MOU.
- Matt Martinez offered to assist Ed in obtaining the necessary keys to access the transect wells.
- Terina Perez will work with SWM members to compare the SWM work plan and the expected field trips (i.e., City, MRGCD, and Atrisco) to make sure the priorities are listed appropriately.
- Matt Martinez will work with Ed Kandl to determine where the data loggers are located within or near the ditches and will help facilitate making the ditch workers aware of their existence (to help avoid regular destruction).
- Cyndie Abeyta will contact Dale Rankin to see if he would be interested in volunteering his time to accompany Ed Kandl to the well site locations.
- Page Pegram will provide Ed Kandl with copies of ISC’s SOP for the data loggers.

### **Ongoing Actions**

- After Reclamation’s Draft BA has been completed and made available, then Terina Perez will help Dagmar Llewellyn and Ed Kandl write an activity summary for hydrologic monitoring at habitat restoration sites. (*Ongoing from 3/2*)
- Cyndie Abeyta will create references in her document on the history of the USGS GW/SW Interaction project for documents concerning the project and will put all information on a disc for distribution to SWM members. (*From 3/2*)
- Matt Martinez will confer with his supervisors on the recommended changes to the depletions issue in the SWM charter and inform the workgroup of MRGCD’s position. (*Ongoing from 4/14*)

### **Meeting Summary**

- Chris Banet brought the meeting order. The agenda was approved with postponement of the SWM Charter discussion.
- Both the April 14th and May 4th 2011 meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- Meeting attendees reviewed the May action items; all but 3 action items were completed as assigned. The ongoing and incomplete actions items will be added to the June action items.
- Attendees then discussed transition of the USGS transect project to Ed Kandl. The SOW that summarized the work that Ed agreed to continue was distributed yesterday. However, after discussions with the USGS it appears that there is more work than was originally expected. Ed was informed that it took the USGS staff 3 to 4 weeks to complete a cycle. The equipment runs on AA batteries that require replacing every 3 months; the equipment is prone to maintenance issues and requires regular upkeep. There is also concern that the USGS won’t have the time or funding to accompany Ed to the field to show him the location of all the wells.

- In the agency update, it was shared that MRGCD Board Elections are currently underway. There are 3 positions open.
- Under the Program Update, attendees briefly discussed the conversation the EC had regarding the possible consolidation or dissolution of work groups. The EC is exploring ways to restructure the Program to make it as efficient as possible especially considering the budget/funding issues.
- Grace Haggerty began the field trip portion of the meeting by providing a brief background explanation of the need for restoration and project work in the Albuquerque area. She led attendees through the bosque paths and explained (pointed out) river features, ISC projects, and the Corps' Route 66 project. Attendees walked the ~1/4 mile to the edge of the Atrisco Habitat Project site, where Grace provided the project history and purpose. It was explained that ISC expects to complete some seepage studies this year. This year is expected to be very dry and the Atrisco site might actual be used in some capacity to help the minnow this summer.

**Next SWM Meeting: July 6<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 12:00pm at BIA**

- Tentative Agenda Items include: (1) SWM Charter Discussion; (2) Updates on the transfer of the USGS transect project to Ed; (3) discussion of potential MRGCD and WUA field trips

## Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Species Water Management Standing Workgroup (SWM)

01 June 2011 Meeting

**8:30 AM @ the Atrisco Site**

### Meeting Minutes

#### Introductions & Announcements

- After a brief discussion on whether or not to conduct the regular business before or after the field trip, it was agreed to address the work group business first. Chris Banet brought the meeting order and welcomed everyone.

#### Agenda Approval

- The agenda was approved with the postponing of the SWM Charter discussion. Attendees did not want to rush the discussion especially due to the recent talks of consolidating or dissolving of work groups. This would also allow for more regular members to provide input.

#### Approval of the April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting notes

- The April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 SWM meeting notes were approved with no changes.

#### Approval of the May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Meeting Notes

- The May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 SWM meeting notes were approved with no changes.

#### May 4<sup>th</sup> Action Item Review

- ✓ Terina Perez will scan and/or otherwise email Chris Banet with a copy of the USGS groundwater/surface water interaction report for his review. – *complete*;
  - This was the first USGS report. There is still a second report that is expected.
- Cyndie Abeyta will create references in her document on the history of the USGS GW/SW Interaction project for documents concerning the project and will put all information on a disc for distribution to SWM members. (*From 3/2*) – *ongoing*;
  - No progress has been made but Cyndie expects to be able to work on this action this month.
- Terina Perez will help Dagmar Llewellyn and Ed Kandl write an activity summary for hydrologic monitoring at habitat restoration sites. (*Ongoing from 3/2*) – *on hold*;
  - This action is to be postponed until after Reclamation's Draft BA has been completed and made available.
- ✓ Matt Martinez will compile all of his available information on the USGS MOU for the GW/SW Interaction project onto a disc and provide to Terina Perez. (*Ongoing from 4/14*) – *complete*;
- ✓ Once Terina Perez receives the USGS MOU compiled information from Matt Martinez, she will work with Ali Saenz (Program administrative assistant) to post the information to the Program website for the SWM work group to access. (*Ongoing from 4/14*) – *complete*;
  - On 5/9/11, Terina forwarded an update email with access information to the work group.

- Matt Martinez will confer with his supervisors on the recommended changes to the depletions issue in the SWM charter and inform the workgroup of MRGCD's position. *(Ongoing from 4/14) – ongoing;*
  - This action will be completed prior to the July discussion on the SWM charter. The issue is that SWM members want to be sensitive about the wording regarding depletions and want to be sensitive to agency perspectives.
- ✓ Page Pegram will review the groundwater/surface water monitoring scope and revise the options as appropriate to “pare down” the document to a basic level for Ed Kandl to sign. *– complete;*
  - The revised scope was sent out yesterday.
- ✓ Page Pegram will provide Ed Kandl with a copy of the data logger software disc, ISC SOPs, and anything else ISC has related to the operation and collection of data. *– complete;*
  - Page has been working toward providing all the necessary information and Ed has been busy on his own contacting the USGS and learning as much as he can about the project.
- ✓ Terina Perez will follow up with Jericho Lewis on the return of the data logger communication cable from USGS and will seek clarification on the software package that might have been purchased with the loggers. *– complete;*
- ✓ Matt Martinez will talk to the appropriate permitting staff at MRGCD about the USGS permits. *(Ongoing from 4/14) – complete;*
  - Basically, the work group will need to draft a statement for Ed and Reclamation to sign that declares they will assume responsibility for the wells and thus relieves the USGS of their responsibility.
  - Some of the wells are located behind gates – there are both City and MRGCD locks (7590 and ATJ or levee locks). Ed will also need directions to the locations of each well.

**Action:** Matt Martinez will use the USGS MOU to draft a new agreement for Ed Kandl and Reclamation to sign accepting responsibility for the well.

**Action:** Matt Martinez will provide Ed Kandl with a copy of the old USGS “well responsibility” agreement/MOU.

**Action:** Matt Martinez offered to assist Ed in obtaining the necessary keys to access the transect wells.

- ✓ Using the comment template provided last week, SWM work group members will review the USGS report and provide any comments to Terina Perez by Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup> and no later than Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. *– complete;*
  - The time was extended to May 9<sup>th</sup> and only 2 sets of comments were received. Those comments have been submitted to Jericho Lewis in the contracting office.
- ✓ Terina Perez will email a June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting/field trip reminder to SWM members. The reminder will include instructions and directions to the site. *– complete;*
- ✓ Chris Banet, Terina Perez, and Christine Sanchez will coordinate on the June SWM agenda. *– complete;*
- ✓ When possible, Terina Perez will continue to provide the Program updates as a read ahead. *– complete;*

- ✓ Page Pegram will contact Cyndie Abeyta to determine who is the current point of contact for the USGS contract in order to confirm the type/brand of USGS equipment. – *complete;*
  - Ed has also taken initiative to learn as much as he can about this work; he has been and intends to remain in contact with the USGS.

### **SWM Charter Discussion**

- The SWM charter discussion was postponed until the July meeting to accommodate the field trip; this would also allow members to call in to participate in this discussion.

### **USGS Groundwater/Surface Water Interaction Report Review**

- The USGS Groundwater/Surface Water Interaction Report Review has been completed. This is the first of two reports and it will be finalized even though the contract is up – there is enough money remaining to complete the finalization.
- The draft scope of work (SOW) that summarized the tasks/work that Ed Kandl was going to take over (to continue the project internally) was distributed yesterday.
  - Originally, the work group was under the impression that a lot of the tasks/work would be simple data maintenance but according to the USGS staff, the work actually takes a 3 to 4 cycle. The transducers are apparently constantly breaking and need maintenance. The equipment operates on AA batteries – they only last for about 6 months and constantly need replacing. In fact, the batteries were scheduled for replacement in March but never were; this means that all the data from April until now is probably lost.
  - The USGS staff also made it sound like MRGCD was constantly ripping equipment out. Matt explained that this could be occurring in some situations, but if the susceptible areas could be identified and marked, then the MRGCD staff could be made aware of their location to help avoid any damage or dislodging.
  - There is also a contracting issue and it is unknown if there is enough money left in the contract for USGS staff to accompany Ed out in the field to show him sites and locations.
    - Attendees discussed the fact that there are 200+ sensors. Since the work group had previously discussed decreasing that amount anyway, it was suggested that when they die to just let them remain offline.
    - It was also suggested that Page Pegram could accompany Ed to the sensor locations as well (since she is very knowledgeable about this project and the equipment).
    - It was also suggested that the “good” sensors could be relocated into a single transect as the others die.
  - Jeff Worthington, the USGS staff, was going to talk to their supervisors to determine funding and possible timing to take Ed into the field. Dale Renken has retired but he may be willing to volunteer a day to show Ed the site locations.
- In the meantime, Ed will continue to communicate with USGS while the work group continues to work out the particulars of the SOW and address any workload details that arise.
  - As written, the original USGS SOW calls for visual inspection of every well every month; this task in and of itself would require a lot of time if continued.
  - The discussion to decrease the amount of wells was revised; Ed originally thought he could attend to all the wells but there may be a need to cut back to just half.

- Once Ed and the work group more fully understand the work load and once Ed has had a chance to visit the field sites, the SOW could be revised appropriately.
- One suggestion to help address the work load was to have multiple people with laptops go on the same day to accomplish the work faster.
- The work group discussed the need to get an exact inventory of the equipment – how many data loggers of what kind? It would also wise to have a good Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) developed for this project. ISC has an SOP for the insitu and Solinst transducers that could be adapted.

**Action:** Matt Martinez will work with Ed Kandl to determine where the data loggers are located within or near the ditches and will help facilitate making the ditch workers aware of their existence (to help avoid regular destruction).

**Action:** Cyndie Abeyta will contact Dale Rankin to see if he would be interested in volunteering his time to accompany Ed Kandl to the well site locations.

**Action:** Page Pegram will provide Ed Kandl with copies of ISC's SOP for the data loggers.

### Agency Updates

- MRGCD Board Elections are currently taking place. There are 3 open positions but it is unknown when the polls close.

### Program Update

- Attendees briefly discussed the conversation the EC had regarding the possible consolidation or dissolution of work groups.
  - At their last EC meeting, the executives talked about consolidating or dissolving some of the work groups. The issue is how to address the budget decreases and staff "overload" by decreasing the amount of work groups.
  - There are a lot of expectations to be involved, especially for non-federal agencies, but there is neither the time nor funding to be able to participate in 9 work groups. The Program is looking to be more efficient with resources; and refocus the priorities and energy.
  - It is assumed that this "restructuring" probably won't be a fast process. There could be opportunities to combine groups (ex. a biology/hydrology group that would include some of the SWM work).
  - Attendees discussed SWM's history and how WAM was created for the purpose of developing the strategic water plan and associated reports. WAM also generated their White Papers. But maybe SWM has "out lived" its purpose considering a lot of the water decisions are outside the purview of the work group.
  - One area that needs more attention is depletions. Maybe SWM or a combined hydrology work group could look at water use and where water should go for different needs of the species and depletions.

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- Tentative Agenda Items include: (1) SWM Charter Discussion; (2) Updates on the transfer of the USGS transect project to Ed; (3) discussion of potential MRGCD and WUA field trips

<b>Species Water Management Work Group 01 June 2011 Meeting Attendees</b>					
<b>Name</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	<b>PRIMARY, ALTERNATE, OTHER</b>
Page Pegram	SWM Member	ISC	383-4041	page.pegram@state.nm.us	P
Terina Perez	PMT Member	Reclamation	462-3614	tlperez@usbr.gov	O
Matt Martinez	SWM Member	MRGCD	247-0234	mmartinez@mrgcd.us	P
Curtis McFadden	SWM Member	USACE	342-3351	curtis.m.mcfadden@usace.army.mil	P
Ed Kandl	---	Reclamation	462-3586	ekandl@usbr.gov	O
Cyndie Abeyta	SWM Member	FWS	761-4738	cyndie_abeyta@fws.gov	P
John Cawley	SWM Member	BIA	563-3405	john.cawley@bia.gov	A
Chris Banet	SWM Member Co-Chair	BIA	563-3403	chris.banet@BIA.gov	P
Marta Wood	Admin Support	Tetra Tech	259-6098	marta.wood@tetrattech.com	O

## Atrisco Field Trip May 4<sup>th</sup> 2011

Grace Haggerty led the SWM work group on a tour of the Atrisco Restoration Site. She opened with background information including other projects in the area.

While the Albuquerque area tends to say wetted, there is a real need for quality habitat. ISC, the Army Corps, UNM, FWS, and COA as well as others have been actively resorting habitat and exploring restoration techniques for several years now.

Following the bosque paths, attendees walked the ~1/4 mile to the edge of the Atrisco Habitat Project site, where Grace provided the project history and purpose. In the 1940s, MRGCD built a diversion channel to water fields at the Atrisco land grant and farming community. Before this channel was built, the farmers relied on the much smaller acequias. Originally, this feature was only an irrigation structure. It is reported that after construction when the gates were opened, the entire channel (and it's a big channel!) was completely sanded up within a day. A siphon was then constructed under the river and water is pumped from the east side from the Albuquerque Main. Eventually the radial gate, the concrete channel, and the return flow channel were all abandoned.

There is an old abandoned radial gate at the end of the site. This gate structure is actually considered a historic landmark – even the dangerous catwalk and metal. ISC would have had to restore it all to “just-as-built” so ISC opted to not bother.

ISC noticed that river water tended to back up into this area; however it was completely overgrown with salt cedar, Russian olives, etc. At about 3500 cfs water actually flows through – there was some connection already but ISC thought it would be worthwhile to open it up and make it a backwater area. This was a pilot project refugial idea as it was conceived before the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium and the Minnow Sanctuary. ISC thought this location could be ideal to help provide refugial habitat during dry periods.

Construction was started in 2009 after completion of the permitting process. Amy Louise was the Project Manager. The City of Albuquerque (COA) cleared the trees and brush. HECRAS modeling for the site was actually off by several inches and so in 2010 the expected inundation wasn't realized. (Note: the reasons the HECRAS predictions were off is probably due to the fact that it is a fixed bed modeling for flows and inundation and in reality the channel degrades with flows and sediment settles. Part of the issue depends on when the surveys for the model are done.) The site holds about 3 acres when filled.

ISC also installed a control langemann gate and 2 other control structures (small culvert gates; one at the very entrance of the river where the channel comes in). There are a lot of willows on the upstream area. ISC wanted to slow down the flows for the minnow use.

*Continuing work:* There are ground water wells in this area so ISC is monitoring groundwater to determine what the responses are. The channel was lined with bentonite to help hold water but seepage tests have not been run yet. If the seepage tests indicate the need, ISC will probably work in more bentonite. The groundwater pumps enable the channel to be filled with water even if there is no water in the river. 29.87 ac-ft of water rights were transferred from Los Lunas to help address the deletions issues.



The site is getting a lot of cottonwood seedlings. When the site was first built, COA oversaw the clearing. However, the area is once again becoming overwhelmed with vegetation. ISC would probably be open to others harvesting the seedlings. If interested, please coordinate the harvesting with COA and ISC.

If we don't get a big flow soon, ISC is preparing to open the Atrisco area. Some dredging may need to be done.

In closing, it was shared that these types of projects are needed to help determine how to optimize the use of water in the middle valley for species enhancement and species recovery. It is still to be seen how much the Atrisco site gets used. If used in a passive manner, then permitting will not be needed. But if fish will be brought in and held (active), the permitting will be needed.