

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program
SAR WORK GROUP MEETING

June 23, 2011– 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. @ Reclamation

Actions

- Gina will compile the list of people/agencies to invite to the Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable discussions and send it to Tetra Tech to include with today's action item email for work group review.
- Gina Dello Russo will send the Floodplain Encroachment draft SOW to the SAR workgroup for review; the work group will have a one week comment period.
- Gina Dello Russo will provide the work group with an address for the BLM office.
- Terina Perez will continue to assist Robert Padilla in completing Reclamation's response for the Agency Response to Themes table.

Decision

- The May 26th, 2011 meeting minutes were approved with the removal of Gina Dello Russo from the attendance list and the addition of Matthew Bonner to the attendance list.

Requests

- The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Robert Padilla report to the work group regarding the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites.
- The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Yasmeen verify that MRGCD has no objections/changes to the MRGCD responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.

Meeting Summary

- The meeting was brought to order and the agenda was approved with the addition of an announcement from the non-federal Co-Chair. Page Pegram announced that due to her current work load she will need to resign as the San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group Co-Chair. Meeting attendees will discuss replacing Page at a future meeting when more work group members are in attendance.
- The May 26th, 2011 meeting minutes were approved with the removal of Gina Dello Russo from the attendance list and the addition of Matthew Bonner to the attendance list.
- Meeting attendees performed an action item review. All but several action items were completed or were able to be addressed during today's meeting.
 - Gina Dello Russo shared an initial list of people/agencies to invite to the Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable discussions. Attendees brainstormed additional people to invite and also volunteered to contact some of the agencies. Gina will compile the list of people/agencies to invite to the Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable discussions and send it to Tetra Tech to include with today's action item email for work group review.
 - The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Robert Padilla report to the work group regarding the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites.
 - The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Yasmeen verify that MRGCD has no objections/changes to the MRGCD responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.
- Attendees were notified that GenQuest has requested per diem for note takers traveling to Socorro to attend work group meetings. Jericho Lewis informed attendees that though the current task order does not address this issue the contract can be modified so that note takers will be paid mileage when attending meetings that are more than 15 miles away.
- An email from Ryan Gronewold was shared that updated meeting attendees that the Corps' has completed tasks 1-5 of the Floodplain Encroachment Study.

- Attendees briefly discussed the RFP process/schedule for the Floodplain Encroachment Study. As the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) has completed tasks 1-5 of the study the SOW will concentrate on tasks 6-8. Jericho advised the work group to develop the SOW with indication of which tasks the Corps has completed with concentration on the tasks the contract will focus on. Then once the report from the Corps on tasks 1-5 is received the SOW can then be competed and the contract will be in place once funding becomes available. The SAR work group has already developed a draft SOW for the study but may need to make additional edits. Gina Dello Russo will send the Floodplain Encroachment draft SOW to the SAR workgroup for review; the work group will have a one week comment period.
- Attendees were updated that the CC/PMT had been instructed by the EC to look at formation of an adaptive management work group and potential restructure of the work groups. The work groups were asked to review their Charter, objectives, and current schedule. As the work group has met several of their objectives and is scheduled to disband at the end of 2011 several attendees expressed openness to a reorganization of their effort. Though the work group understands that the Program might want to reorganize and disband the work group they also recognize that there are other ways to continue addressing important issues in the SAR; however many of the work group members were not present to indicate whether they had any strong feelings about disbanding. If the work group were to either disband or be subsumed into an existing or broader workgroup it's important to the members that their efforts continue to be addressed.
- Attendees reviewed their activity summaries to be included in the LTP. The Floodplain Encroachment Study continues to be the work groups number 1 priority and the group would have no further projects to put forward for this year should additional funds arise.
- Meeting attendees reviewed the SADD peer review recommendations and discussed potential strategies to address.
 - It was one opinion that Recommendations #1 and #2 (synthesize literature and determine what factors are imposing the major controlling constraints) should be covered as a part of the BA/BO process.
 - Recommendations #6 and #7 should probably be worked through a diverse group of participants. It was also further discussed that recommendation #7 should look at the complex issues in all reaches.
- Meeting attendees developed a tentative agenda for the Floodplain Land Use Roundtable on July 28th, 2011 from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office in Socorro. The roundtable will take the place of the work group's regularly scheduled meeting. Gina Dello Russo will provide the work group with an address for the BLM office. The tentative agenda for the Roundtable includes: (1) basic introductions; (2) general introduction of the topic: SAR work group background, basic species ecology, water management, flood risk management, river maintenance, and background of the project; (3) initial perspectives from stake holders; (4) possible presentation of initial results from the Corps; (5) discussion on alternatives for keeping structures out of the floodplains; (6) Questions posed to attendees; (7) closing/request for willingness to work together;

Next Meeting: Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable, July 28, 2011 from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm at the Bureau of Land Management Socorro office

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program SAR WORK GROUP MEETING

June 23, 2011– 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. @ Reclamation

Meeting Notes

Introductions and Agenda Approval

- The meeting was brought to order.
- The agenda was approved with the addition of an announcement from the non-federal Co-Chair.
 - Page Pegram announced that due to her current work load she will need to resign as the San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group Co-Chair. Meeting attendees will discuss replacing Page at a future meeting when more work group members are in attendance.

Approval of the 5/26/11 Meeting Minutes

- The May 26th, 2011 meeting minutes were approved with the removal of Gina Dello Russo from the attendance list and the addition of Matthew Bonner to the attendance list.

Update from the Corps on Flood Plain Encroachment Study

- An email from Ryan Gronewold was shared that updated meeting attendees that the Corps' has completed tasks 1-5 of the Floodplain Encroachment Study.

Action Item Review

- Meeting attendees performed an action item review. All but several action items were completed or were able to be addressed during today's meeting.
 - ✓ **Gina will organize a roundtable discussion on floodplain encroachment in Socorro.**
 - **Complete.**
 - The roundtable discussion is scheduled for July 28th from 12:30 to 3:30 pm at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office in Socorro. The roundtable will take the place of the work group's regularly scheduled meeting.
 - ✓ **Gina will draft a list of invitees for the floodplain encroachment roundtable discussion.**
 - **Complete.**
 - Gina shared the list that she has compiled and also shared which invitees she has contacted. . Attendees brainstormed additional people to invite and also volunteered to contact some of the agencies.
 - The list (*as compiled by Gina on 6/27*):

- MRGESCP:
 - PIO representative
 - Program Manager – Yvette McKenna
 - Others – All welcome
- Socorro County:
 - County Manager - Delilah Walsh (Gina contacted; will attend)
 - County Emergency Management Officer – Fred Hollis (Gina contacted; attendance will be dependent on fire season priorities)
 - County Floodplain Management Lead – Bear Ulbricht (Gina contacted; will attend)
- City of Socorro:
 - Mayor Ravi Baskar (Gina will contact)
 - City Clerk Pat Salome (Gina will contact)
- State of New Mexico:
 - State Forestry - Doug Boykin (Gina contacted; attendance will be dependent on fire season priorities)
 - State Land Office representative (Page Pegram will contact)
 - NMDGF - Mike Gustin (Gina will contact)
 - MRGCD – Yasmeen Najmi, Ray Gomez, others in board/organization (Yasmeen will contact)
 - SWCD – Nyleen Stowe, others in organization/board (Gina contacted)
 - ISC – Page Pegram, others who are interested
- Other local stakeholders:
 - Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust Cecilia McCord, Matt Mitchell (contacted by Gina; others invited if interested)
 - Realtors (Gina will contact several and ask them to spread the word)
 - Landowners (Gina will contact several and send out an announcement in the local newspaper inviting all)
- Federal Agencies:
 - USACE – Ryan Gronewold, Levee Project Manager (Ryan will contact)
 - BLM Realty (Gina will contact)
 - U.S. FWS Sevilletta and Bosque del Apache NWR; Regional Office Refuges staff (Gina will contact)
 - FEMA (George Dennis (FWS) will invite the appropriate representative)
 - U.S. FWS ES Office - George Dennis, others interested
 - BOR – Robert Padilla, realty representative – Susan Wood, others interested (Robert or Terina Perez will contact)

Action: Gina will compile the list of people/agencies to invite to the Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable discussions and send it to Tetra Tech to include with today's action item email for work group review.

- **Terina will assist Robert Padilla in completing BOR's responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.**
 - Ongoing.
 - Robert and Terina have met and were able to make progress on the agency responses. Terina will finish the table and send to others within BOR for approval before sending it the SAR work group.

- In response a question about the “Culture of farming rural field” section on the table it was explained that the section came about from feedback from the SAR workshop where it was voiced that maintaining the rural atmosphere and farming culture in Socorro valley was important.
- **Terina Perez will assist Robert Padilla in completing Reclamation’s response for the Agency Response to Theme’s table.**
 - In progress.
- **Terina Perez will talk with Robert Padilla about the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites.**
 - Not completed; Terina has contacted Robert but has not heard back from him.
 - It was explained that this action item came about because SAR work group members had suggested that the vulnerable levee sites be identified in the Floodplain Encroachment Study. It was explained that one reason why it is important to know where the vulnerable spots are located is because the levee could be susceptible to increased damage or failure (i.e., hit harder) in areas where overbank flow becomes restricted and is forced back toward the levee.

Request: The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Robert Padilla report to the work group regarding the specific locations of the vulnerable levee sites.

- **Terina Perez and Robert Padilla will discuss the RFP process/schedule.**
 - Jericho Lewis was able to join the meeting for a few minutes to answer a couple of the work group’s questions regarding the RFP process/schedule for the Floodplain Encroachment study and note taking support for meetings in Socorro (see below agenda item **Note taking support-Socorro meetings**).
 - Attendees explained that the Floodplain Encroachment activity is the work group’s #1 priority and the Corps had agreed to do tasks 1-5 of the 8 task project. The Corps has completed it’s portion of the project and the SAR work group would like to submit the SOW to be in the queue for funding this year.
 - Jericho asked if the Corps has produced a report for their portion of the project that can be shared with the contractor.
 - The report will be completed in a month.
 - The work group was advised to develop the SOW with indication of which tasks the Corps has completed and concentration on the tasks the contract will focus on. Then once the report from the Corps on tasks 1-5 is received the SOW can then be competed and the contract will be in place once funding becomes available.
 - The SAR work group has already developed a draft SOW for the study but may need to make additional edits.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will send the Floodplain Encroachment draft SOW to the SAR workgroup for review; the work group will have a one week comment period.

- ✓ **Terina Perez will send the SAR future activity summaries as read aheads for the next work group meeting.**
 - **Complete;** sent on June 15th.
- ✓ **Terina Perez will reserve a meeting room for the June SAR work group meeting.**
 - **Complete.**
- ✓ **Terina Perez will forward the most recent version of the SAR work group prioritized activities she receives from Yvette McKenna and Ali Saenz to the work group.**
 - **Complete;** sent to the work group on June 15th.
- **Gina Dello Russo is to follow up with Ryan Gronewold’s questions in regard to the SAR work group request regarding levee vulnerabilities.**

- The group's above conversation on why the levee vulnerabilities would be beneficial may address Ryan's questions.
- **Yasmeen will make sure that the authorities are clarified regarding the MRGCD responses to the Agency Response to Themes.**
 - Status unknown; Yasmeen was not in attendance for today's meeting.

Request: The SAR work group Co-Chairs requested that Yasmeen verify that MRGCD has no objections/changes to the MRGCD responses in the Agency Response to Themes table.

Note taking support – Socorro meetings

- Attendees were notified that GenQuest has requested per diem for note takers traveling to Socorro to attend work group meetings. Attendees asked Jericho if this would be possible as the work group would like note taking support at their July meeting in Socorro.
 - Jericho Lewis informed attendees that though the current task order does not address this issue the contract can be modified so that note takers will be paid mileage when attending meetings that are more than 15 miles away.

Review Charter, Work Plan, objectives the group has met, and the current schedule

- Attendees were updated that the CC/PMT had been instructed by the EC to look at formation of an adaptive management work group and potential restructure of the work groups. The work groups were asked to review their Charter, objectives, and current schedule.
 - It was also shared that the PMT is looking at the structure of other adaptive management and recovery programs. In Glen Canyon there is an adaptive management work group, a technical work group, a biological branch that includes USGS, and a couple of species and ad hoc work groups. It was shared that the current idea for an adaptive management work group will be comprised of the Co-Chairs from the technical work groups and those who have been involved in the adaptive management process.
 - As the work group has met several of their objectives and is scheduled to disband at the end of 2011 several attendees expressed openness to a reorganization of their efforts.
 - Concerns were voiced regarding the effectiveness of the work groups in their current structure.
 - The SAR work group was formed to review management in the SAR and there is no reason that this can't continue to happen as long as the work group members can still give input without being an ad hoc work group.
 - Though the work group understands that the Program might want to reorganize and disband the work group they also recognize that there are other ways to continue addressing important issues in the SAR; however many of the work group members were not present to indicate whether they had any strong feelings about disbanding. For some work group members the SAR work group is their only avenue for expression.
 - If the work group were to either disband or be subsumed into an existing or broader workgroup it's important to the members that their efforts continue to be addressed.
 - An idea from the work group was to create short summary papers with possible strategies for an adaptive management work group to continue to address the key issues that the work group was created to address.

Discussion of Floodplain Land Use Roundtable

- This portion of the meeting was a working session to develop a tentative agenda for the Roundtable discussions.
 - Basic introductions.
 - General introduction of the topic from the Program's perspective.

- The background of the SAR work group and the background of the floodplain analysis should also be provided.
 - It should also be acknowledged that discussion on floodplain land use seem to fit well with the FEMA effort to map the floodplain.
 - The introduction should also include information on the ecology of the species. Identification that the minnow and flycatcher need flooding and if there are structure in the flood plain then water managers are unable to flood.
 - Basic overviews of water management, flood risk management, and river maintenance should also be included.
 - The Corps may also be able to give a background of the Floodplain Encroachment Study.
- Open up the floor to get initial perspectives from stake holders and other entities.
- Possible presentation of initial results from the Floodplain Encroachment Study
 - Ryan may have visuals to help pull the issues into perspective. Gina can also show aerials of the 2005 flooding and bank line erosion that has occurred.
- Discussion on alternatives for keeping structures out of the floodplains
- Questions posed to attendees
- Closing
 - This would be a good point in the meeting to ask the attendees for willingness to work together to address the issue.
- Attendees volunteered to present portions of the background and introduction; Terina volunteered to present on the background of the SAR work group and Gina volunteered to present on the basic ecology of the species as well facilitate the discussions/presentations.

Activity Summaries and SADD Review

- The current activity summaries that the work group has are External Peer Reviews, Floodplain Encroachment, Implement Studies Strategies, and White Papers. No changes need to be made to the work group's activity summaries.
 - The Floodplain Encroachment Study continues to be the work groups number 1 priority and the group would have no further projects to put forward for this year should additional funds arise.
- Meeting attendees reviewed the SADD peer review recommendations and discussed potential strategies to address.
 - Recommendation #1 (synthesize literature)
 - It was commented that this recommendation could likely be done by a contractor with review by the Program.
 - Recommendation #2 (determine what factors are imposing the major controlling constraints)
 - It was believed that the rationale behind this recommendation is to have increased knowledge of the minnow and to identify the most critical constraints for the EC.
 - It was commented that Recommendations #1 and #2 should be a part of the BA/BO process.
 - It was also commented that it's not likely for there to be a clear consensus on what the needs are.
 - Recommendations #3 (develop a conceptual model for recovery), #4 (data/knowledge gap research projects) and #5 (impact of augmentation on minnow genetics)
 - These recommendations were not believed to be applicable to the SAR work group activities.
 - Recommendations #6 (field-oriented studies to determine what external and internal factors drive minnow movement) and #7 (habitat restoration plan)
 - It was said that Recommendations #6 and #7 would probably be best worked through a diverse group of participants

- A concern with #7 is the creation of a restoration plan for only one reach as this could further fragment the system.
 - It was shared that a system wide restoration plan has been discussed within the Habitat Restoration Work group (HRW). If the Program is going to be effective in the long run then the complex issues on all reaches should be addressed.
 - In the adaptive management process it will be important to consider the opportunities and constraints in each reach.
 - In adaptive management the goals, assumptions, and the expected response of management actions should be presented up front. There also has to be agreement on what would indicate success.
 - Most of the time abiotic responses are measured (elevation of a sand bar or the amount of sediment that moved) but it's also important to measure the assumptions of what the abiotic responses do to the biology.
 - The resilience and boundaries of what quality habitat is will also have to be measured. It will likely not be a fixed point but a range.
 - Adaptive management should also have flexibility in regards to habitat projects. Though the Los Lunas restoration site was built different from its original design it turned out to be high quality habitat for the minnow. If there were specifications that the habitat must conform to (a specific size or overbanking) then a lot of opportunities might be lost.

Next Meeting: Floodplain Encroachment Land Use Roundtable, July 28, 2011 from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm at the Bureau of Land Management Socorro office

**San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group
23 June 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Gina Dello Russo	FWS/Co-chair	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@fws.gov
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