

Coordination Committee Meeting
August 3, 2011

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Coordination Committee Meeting
Aug 3, 2011 – 12:30-4:00 pm
Bureau of Reclamation
Rio Grande Conference Room**

Conference Call-in Line for August 3, 2011
Toll Free Number: 1-888-369-2192
Participant Passcode: 48320#
(1st Committee member or contractor to arrive, please dial in)

Draft Meeting Agenda

- Introductions and Agenda* Approval
- **Decision** – Approval of 07/12/11 CC meeting summary*
- Action Item and EC Directive Review (see below)
- Review revised FY11 funding planning spreadsheet*
- Review revised draft General Peer Review Procedures*
- Review workgroup responses to fish passage peer review recommendations*
- Discuss LTP status and path forward
- Discuss Streamlining ESA compliance for HR projects
- Discuss process for SOW development and review
- Discuss Service staffing assistance for upcoming consultation
- Discuss need for Service or Reclamation federal co-chair for HRW
- Discuss Strengths-based Leadership training schedule
- Significant Non-Decision Items to Brief EC

Next meeting – CC meeting – September 7, 2011 @ Reclamation from 12:30 – 4:00 pm

Upcoming meetings

EC meeting – August 18, 2011 @ Reclamation from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

****denotes read ahead***

July 12, 2011 Actions

- Comments and edits on the draft Adaptive Management work group Charter were due to Yvette McKenna by COB on Thursday, July 14th
- CC members will review the draft General Peer Review Procedures and send any edits or comments to Yvette McKenna by July 27th
- Jericho Lewis will draft text describing the peer review process for the CC to review for inclusion in the *Peer Review Process* document. *(Carried over from 6/1)*
 - *Incomplete. Jericho has not yet drafted the text; however that portion of the Peer Review Process document will not be needed until the CC reviews the more historically based document. Last updated 07/26/11*
- The March 29th and April 21st Executive Committee (EC) directives continue to be ongoing.

Directive from April 21 EC meeting:

- The EC requested that the CC develop a process to document the justifications for which peer review recommendations they suggest pursuing and explain why other peer review recommendations were not preferred. *On-going*

Directive from March 29 EC meeting:

- The EC directed the CC to continue the “synthesis of all existing data” discussions and brainstorm how to accomplish the actual synthesis work. It was recommended that these discussions take place simultaneously with the LTP development as the synthesis work may inform LTP priorities and activities. *On-going*

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Actions:

- Ali Saenz and Yvette McKenna will redistribute the NM contact information for spills and fish kills with the updated NM Department of Game and Fish phone numbers. – **Updated email was resent on 8/4/11.**
- The CC will review the revised draft General Peer Review Procedures and send comments and edits to Yvette McKenna by August 24th, 2011.
- Jericho Lewis will draft text describing the peer review process for the CC to review for inclusion in the *Peer Review Process* document. (*Carried over from 6/1. Jericho has not yet drafted the text; however that portion of the Peer Review Process document will not be needed until the CC reviews the more historically based document. Last updated 07/26/11*)

Decision:

- The July 12, 2011 CC meeting summary was approved with no changes.

Requests:

- The CC requests that the ScW take the lead on synthesis of data/literature and use the ISC's submittal for the 5-year minnow review and the existing LTP categories to develop a **plan** for the synthesis of literature/data.
- The CC requests that the ScW and HRW work to modify the ScW activity *Better understand fish movement (RGSM longitudinal movement)* to include research of minnow movement below San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) and other diversion structures during the critical low flow summer months.

Next CC Meeting: September 7th, 2011 at Reclamation from 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm.

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) Update on draft LTP; (2) Discuss need for Service or Reclamation federal co-chair to HRW; (3) FY12 Work Plan;

Meeting Summary

Introductions and Agenda Approval: Brooke Wyman brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with the change of agenda item "Discuss Service staffing Assistance" to "Discuss Service adjusting reintroduction biologist work load to

assist with the consultation”, in order to better reflect the subject of the discussion, and the addition of an agenda item on the FY12 Work Plan.

Attendees briefly discussed how their agencies are dealing with questions from the public regarding water quality in the Rio Grande due to fire retardants and ash washing into the system.

- Though the N.M. Department of Game and Fish tests the areas where a fish kill is reported usually by the time staff arrive at the area the contaminants have dissipated or the fish was found downstream of the actual contaminated area. It was shared that the most recent rain event washed ash that was high in ammonia into the river and because of the flash flood situation there was not enough time for the contaminants to dissipate and contaminants were able to be measured.
 - In response to a question about the size of species that were being affected it was shared that fish species in all size ranges are being affected.
- It was shared that the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District has not closed their gates but that the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) did shut their gates for sometime last week. ABCWUA has done testing at the Diversion Dam but it's not known which contaminants were tested for.
- Attendees were reminded that contact information for spills and fish kills in New Mexico have been distributed to the Program. Ali Saenz and Yvette McKenna will redistribute the contact information for spills and fish kills with the updated N.M. Department of Game and Fish phone numbers.

Decision – Approval of the 7/12/11 CC meeting summary: The July 12, 2011 Coordination Committee (CC) meeting summary was approved with no changes.

Action Item and EC Directive Review:

- **Comments and edits on the draft Adaptive Management work group Charter were due to Yvette McKenna by COB on Thursday, July 14th.**
 - Complete.
- **CC members will review the draft General Peer Review Procedures and send any edits or comments to Yvette McKenna by July 27th.**
 - Complete.
- **Jericho Lewis will draft text describing the peer review process for the CC to review for inclusion in the *Peer Review Process* document. (Carried over from 6/1)**
 - *Incomplete. Jericho has not yet drafted the text; however that portion of the Peer Review Process document will not be needed until the CC reviews the more historically based document. Last updated 07/26/11.*
- The March 29th and April 21st Executive Committee (EC) directives continue to be ongoing.

Review revised FY11 funding planning spreadsheet: Attendees reviewed the most up-to-date version of the FY11 funding planning spreadsheet which was provided as read ahead and reflects changes made at the last CC meeting including raising the *Sexing of Age and Growth Specimens* to a Criteria 2.

- Attendees were reminded that the San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group decided to *Develop White Papers on each agency/entity's current authorizations and strategies to address resource management issues in SAR* in-house so that the previously requested \$5,000 for that effort could be put towards their priority 1 recommendation for funding, *Floodplain Land Use Impacts Encroachment Study*. It was explained that the Corps was able to complete the first portion of the *Floodplain Land Use Impacts Encroachment Study* activity and that the Statement of Work (SOW) for this activity is complete and reflects upon the portion that was completed by the Corps.
- All the new SOWs for FY12 projects should be completed by mid-December.
- It was clarified that the proposed FY11 activities that were not funded and any new activities will all be reprioritized for FY12; a project will not be funded in FY12 just because it was on the spreadsheet for FY11.
- Jericho Lewis (Reclamation Contracting Officer) updated meeting attendees that the Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunity has closed and the 7 proposals that were received have been reviewed by a Technical Proposal Evaluation Committee (TPEC). The TPEC ranked the proposals in the order in which they will be funded. Feedback from members of the TPEC was that all the proposals were very good and that very little clarification will be needed. Attendees reviewed the projects' strengths; Jericho was asked to verify that the projects listed as exempt from net depletion requirements are exempt. It was noted that some of the proposals were for continuation of projects that were previously funded by the Program or for areas connecting other habitat restoration projects. There is potentially enough funding for the first 6 proposals to be funded in FY11 but only the top 3 will be funded until its verified that there is enough funding for all 6; the remaining proposals can be considered for FY12 funding. Meeting attendees agreed to wait to rank the Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunity proposals for FY12 funding until there is a fairly complete list of all the proposed FY12 activities.
 - It was shared that though no proposals were received for the San Acacia Reach area there was a group of private landowners that expressed interest in having habitat restoration work completed on their land. The group of private landowners was unable to submit their proposal in time but it's hoped that they will submit a proposal next year.
 - The Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (the Refuge) is interested in requesting Program funding for habitat restoration work on the refuge. The Refuge had wanted their project to be evaluated at the same time as the non-federal proposals for the Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunity but the Refuge was unable to submit a proposal in time for that to occur. Once the Refuge submits their proposal it will be reviewed by the Habitat Restoration Work group (HRW) and can be recommended to the CC for funding. Other projects on federal lands may be brought to the HRW and CC for consideration in the future.
 - Attendees discussed whether there was any way to focus restoration or encourage landowners in areas besides Albuquerque Reach (e.g. Isleta and San Acacia reaches) to submit proposals.
 - As the funding opportunities are open to all reaches, the only thing that can be done is to encourage landowners in those areas to submit proposals. Next year the funding opportunity will be opened earlier and for a longer period of time.

- Attendees were briefly updated that the *Surface water/Ground water Interaction project* contract to USGS was extended to allow for the continuation of data download, logger maintenance, and data cleanup; USGS will only be cleaning up the data and not analyzing it. This extension will give the Species Water Management (SWM) work group time to work on the SOW and allow for a Reclamation COTR to accompany USGS to identify the locations of the transects.

Review revised draft General Peer Review Procedures – The most up-to-date draft General Peer Review Procedures was provided as read ahead for today’s meeting. Attendees agreed that the draft document will need further review from the CC before it is sent to work group co-chairs for review. The CC will review the revised draft General Peer Review Procedures and send comments and edits to Yvette McKenna by August 24th, 2011.

Review workgroup responses to fish passage peer review recommendations – The CC reviewed all the responses received from HRW, SWM work group, SAR work group, and Science Work group (ScW) and further discussed some of the recommendations/responses.

- Recommendation #1 (synthesize literature): The ScW, SWM, and SAR work groups were generally in agreement that this would be a worthwhile effort but that the associated workload would be labor and time intensive and may require the use of a contractor or require joint effort from the work groups. Another recommendation from the work groups was that this effort not be undertaken until the Database Management System (DBMS) is available to be used as a starting point.
 - Attendees voiced agreement that data synthesis is a top priority as it will help to prioritize needed targeted studies and fill in data gaps to move the Program towards the Long Term Plan (LTP) and Recovery Plan goals; however, several CC members were in favor of also moving forward with an activity that was more directly related to fish passage in order to make progress in that area. Since the DBMS will not be completed until mid-2012, which would be too late for the data synthesis to inform the LTP and the Biological Opinion (BO), attendees agreed that the project should move forward before the DBMS is complete.
 - CC members discussed that the data synthesis might be more manageable if divided into chunks by LTP category. It was suggested that the Interstate Stream Commission’s (ISC) submittal for the 5-year minnow review also be utilized as it provides a compilation of data and literature for different minnow topics (e.g. life history, age of minnow). It was also suggested that the references from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Biological Assessments (BAs) also be utilized.
 - As the majority of the information will be about the species, the CC agreed that the ScW would be the most appropriate work group to lead this project (either to lead the actual data synthesis or to develop a SOW for contracted assistance) but

that the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) work group, as well as the other technical work groups, should also be involved.

- Attendees discussed that the goal of data synthesis would be to synthesize all the information that the Program has to identify the factors with detrimental effects to minnow and to produce a document that can be used to direct a variety of activities including the *San Acacia Diversion Dam Fish Passage* activity. The end product will be a synthesis report of the existing data (similar to the ISC submittal), by category, that evaluates all the available information and either presents a finding or explains that not enough information is available to make a determination.
- For Recommendation #1 (synthesize literature), the Science workgroup recommends not addressing this issue until the Program's database is available as a tool and starting point. Then **ScW recommends a joint effort between ScW, HR, and PVA to organize the concepts for review and to establish "categories" that could be synthesized in 1-5 page documents.** Attendees discussed that even with this "phased" approach each of the steps would be labor and time intensive. There is also a concern about finding volunteers willing to participate.
- With the exception of not addressing this issue until the Program's DBMS is available, the CC agreed with the ScW recommendation and the CC requests that the ScW take the lead on synthesis of data/literature and use the ISC's submittal for the 5-year minnow review and the existing LTP categories to **develop a plan for the synthesis of literature/data.** The CC would like ScW to review the existing information to determine if the synthesis could be done in-house, contracted out, or some combination of those efforts, depending on the amount of data/literature available in particular categories.
 - It was suggested that a CC member attend the next ScW meeting to provide clarification on the CC's request.
- Recommendation #4 (data/knowledge gap research projects): The ScW was able to identify several LTP activities that would address the majority of the data gaps that were identified in the peer review recommendation. Recommendations from the HRW were to investigate alternative fish passage structures and to research fish movement during the critical, low flow drying months.
 - There was general agreement from meeting attendees that more information on fish movement would be beneficial, not just to fish passage but to habitat restoration projects in general. Though it's known anecdotally that fish move upstream when there's drying it would be good to have supporting data. Attendees were in agreement that the ScW would be the best work group to lead a project on fish movement. The project that ScW had identified to address fish movement (*Better understand fish movement (RGSM longitudinal movement)*) could be modified to include research on fish movement during drying. The CC requests that the ScW and HRW work to modify the ScW activity *Better*

understand fish movement (RGSM longitudinal movement) to include research of minnow movement below SADD and other diversion structures during the critical, low flow summer months.

- The CC agreed that the HRW should take the lead on a project to investigate alternative fish passage structures. It was also suggested that prototype fish passage inlets be investigated to determine if a passage will be used by silvery minnow. Though fish do utilize the ABCWUA fish passage it's not known what factors influence the use of the passage. It was commented that Steve Davenport at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) might be a resource for getting projects on passage structures and fish movement in place.
- In regard to Recommendation #7 (habitat restoration plan) it was shared by a representative from the HRW that the work group has begun to internally work on a strategic plan for the whole river.

Discuss LTP Status and Path Forward:

- Attendees were updated that the LTP Past Activities have been compiled and are posted on the Program website; a couple of minor edits still need to be addressed. In response to the need to have a more efficient way to review the LTP Future Activities and make edits to activities, the Future Activity Summaries have now been linked to the Future Activities Table and the LTP Table of Contents thanks to Ali Saenz. The activity summaries can now be accessed by clicking on the activity titles and changes made to one document will be automatically populated to the other documents. The Priority 1 Future Activities are now included in the LTP Table of Contents but the Priority 2s and 3s have not yet been incorporated. The draft LTP is currently available on the Program website under Library, Revised LTP under password protection. The most recent draft text was last reviewed by the CC in June 2010 and clarifications were made at the September 2010 Retreat. Once the future activities and remaining LTP category narratives are included the document will be mostly complete.
- The CC discussed a path forward for the draft LTP. As a part of the timeline that the Service was tasked to create for the Program to become a recovery program, it is currently suggested that the draft LTP be available for Program/agency review by September 15th, 2011. In order for the draft LTP to be available to the Program around that timeframe, CC members agreed to review the draft LTP on their own time if it's provided as a September 7 CC read ahead so that it can be put forth at the October 2011 EC meeting.
- Janet Bair was introduced as the EC alternate for the Service.

Discuss Streamlining ESA Compliance for HR projects: A suggestion was made to develop a programmatic BA that would cover ESA compliance for habitat restoration projects for the Program. The programmatic BA would include all the techniques and locations that might be

considered by the Program with the goal of having coverage that could be applied over a period of time (e.g. 5-years, 10-years) in order to streamline the ESA compliance process; the BA would also be tied to habitat restoration performed by associated agencies. It was explained that a BA for this purpose would need to be tied to a federal action agency and could not be included with the water operations BA(s). The CC was in agreement that a programmatic BA that would streamline ESA compliance for habitat restoration projects would be beneficial, if Reclamation agreed to undertake the effort as the most likely federal action agency.

- It was explained that this is not the same as the *HR Design and Compliance Support* activity that was proposed by the HRW to hire a contractor to complete the design and compliance components of habitat restoration projects.

Discuss process for SOW development and review:

- Attendees discussed the need for a process for SOW development that would ensure that the work groups are able to review and agree to substantial changes made to SOWs before the SOWs are processed. It was discussed that there is also a need for increased communication regarding SOWs as there are times when the work groups do not know the status of a SOW. Though there are flow charts that describe the process for SOW development they are very detailed and will need to be reviewed by the Program Management Team (PMT) and CC to see if they need to be modified. It was discussed that if there times when the process cannot be followed then either the process may need to be modified or those stipulations need to be identified and communicated back to the work groups.
- Attendees briefly discussed prioritizing activities for FY12. In the past, the CC has reviewed the status of activities that are ongoing and if additional funding is available the workgroups are asked to propose additional activities. As it has been requested that FY12 SOWs be submitted to Reclamation by mid-December, it was suggested that the CC discuss the FY12 budget/work plan in September so that the work groups can propose and prioritize FY12 activities in October.

Discuss Service adjusting reintroduction biologist work load to assist with the consultation:

The CC was updated that Mark Brennan (reintroduction biologist) is awaiting government to government consultations with the Pueblos in Cochiti Reach and has begun working on more general reintroduction work. Because the Middle Rio Grande consultation is of a high need and Mark is at a “stand still” in the government to government consultations the Service is requesting that some of Mark’s time be used to assist with the consultation. With this adjustment Mark will still be working on more general reintroduction work to find the next best location for minnow reintroduction but it’s requested that 20% to 80% (depending on the complexity of the task he will be working on) of his time be used to assist with the consultation. Attendees were in agreement that the reintroduction biologist workload could be adjusted to assist with the

consultation but that efforts to investigate other sites for reintroduction should also continue move forward.

Discuss Strengths-based Leadership Training Schedule: Attendees were asked if there was an interest in participating in follow-up strengths-based leadership training and if they were interested in participating in a seminar on how to have more effective meetings. The CC was interested in the follow-up strengths-based leadership training and in getting more information about the length of the seminar for more effective meetings. The strengths-based leadership training will be tentatively scheduled for December 9th, 2011.

All unmet agenda items were tabled for the September 7th CC meeting.

**Coordination Committee Working Meeting
3 August 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	PRIMARY (P) ALTERNATE (A) OTHERS (O)	EMAIL ADDRESS
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