

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting
September 22nd, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

Actions:

- ✓ Terina Perez will distribute the Program's Open House and Technical Session Schedule (October 21st and 22nd) to the work group mailing list. – *completed 09/22/11*
- Terina Perez will send the vulnerable levee sites email from Robert Padilla to Tetra Tech to distribute to the work group.
- Ryan Gronewold will write a description of the Corps's Floodplain Encroachment Project products for the SAR work group to use in the FY2012 Scope of Work; the description should include enough detail that a contractor will understand the work to be bid on.
- Page Pegram will revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format.
- Once provided, Terina Perez will combine the different Agency Response to Themes into a single document and will add a disclaimer about intended use; the Floodplain Land Use topic will be completed as soon as possible in order to inform the White Paper and the full document will be completed by the end of the calendar year.
- Terina Perez will talk to Yvette McKenna about "firm" the SAR disbanding deadline is and how the work group should proceed with unfinished tasks that may take an additional few months.
- Ryan Gronewold will informally explore the opportunity for the Corps's economists to complete the socio-economic analysis of potential floodplain land use as part of the Floodplain Encroachment Project.
- Terina Perez will check with Yvette McKenna about the likelihood of the Program funding the SAR FY2012 scope of work and the ability to put out an RFP as soon as possible in October.
- Gina Dello Russo will let Ryan Gronewold know specifically what type of screen capture or model images she would like to have for the Technical Session presentation.
- Ryan Gronewold will supply screen captures or model images for use in the Technical Session presentation.
- Terina Perez will talk to Yvette McKenna about how to encourage attendees to stay through lunch for the SAR presentation - how to make the lunch process easier? Or make sure there is a designated networking time so people don't use the lunch hour for that?
- Terina Perez will confirm with Yvette McKenna that non-signatory participants are not eligible for the work group co-chair positions.
- Terina Perez will follow up with some potential leads on guidance (clarification on potential wording for a scope of work) for developing the socio-economic analysis piece of the SAR floodplain project.
- Gina Dello Russo will follow up with Bill Borthwick to make sure he understands the work group's perspective on the FEMA maps and how the work group will proceed without attending the CAPSSSE meeting.

Decisions:

- The August 25th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

Meeting Summary:

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes.
- The August 25th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- All August action items were completed as assigned. It was clarified that the SAR work group would like to have FEMA at the table and participating in discussions on the possible impacts of

- floodplain land use. Since there is controversy over the FEMA maps, it was determined that attending the CAPSSSE meeting and bringing up the completion of the maps would not be appropriate. Instead, the work group would rather support George Dennis and his continuing work with FEMA on the ESA issues.
- Ryan Gronewold then gave a status update on the Corps' *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products. The Corps has identified a lot of the features (ditches, levees, berms, the floodplains, some hydraulics, and where the flow paths are) in the floodway but the information has not been reviewed internally by the Corps yet. Ryan will be doing Quality Control (QC) in the beginning of October.
 - Once the Corps has completed a QC review, the draft product will be provided to work group members to review and provide feedback or any corrections (consistency, old channels that might be ephemeral, etc.) that might be identified. A deadline for comments/responses will be set. The Corps should have a final product available by the end of November 2011.
 - Participants briefly discussed the FY12 Scope of Work and the revisions to include a socio-economic analysis of potential land use impacts. This task would be added to the FY2012 scope and would not affect the Corps' current work/project. Basically, the scope is intended to complete all the project tasks that the Corps was unable to take on. In order to secure Program funding, it is recommended that the revised scope be provided to the CC as soon as possible in October. If the Program chooses not to fund this task, there may be opportunity for the Corps to address the work.
 - The socio-economic analysis is to consider any impacts from floodplain land use and/or restrictions. What would be the possible impacts or benefits to the community (cultural, economic, perspectives)? How might the county tax rules changes? Opportunities for eco-tourism? Or open space? Or quality of life? Or negative impacts to business – if limiting population growth? Are there any socio-economic benefits to protecting the floodplain?
 - The work group then discussed the status of the Floodplain Land Use White Paper. Terina Perez has taken the lead on filling out any remaining gaps/sections. The roundtable rough draft notes were used to fill in agency positions but this section could use additional input. It is expected that a first draft Floodplain Land Use white paper could be available by or around October 7th. Once the draft is available, it will be sent to work group members who attended the roundtable for further review. Once a work group review has been completed, the next step will be to identify any additional stakeholders that could benefit from outreach (ex. county commissioners).
 - Attendees then discussed the Agency Response to Themes table. It was agreed that Reclamation should provide the responses that they currently have. It was acknowledge that the process has been challenging for many of the agencies and there is a high level of concern about putting positions in writing. While the process has been informative, it is hoped that the perspectives can help inform the discussion and maybe even possible solutions.
 - Attendees then discussed the upcoming deadline for the work group to officially disband. Members expressed concern about making sure the historical knowledge is not lost. It was suggested that the group write a short summary of the issues that were not fully addressed. The summary could include any progress that was made, initial and final thoughts, and maybe recommendations for next steps.
 - Gina Dello Russo shared a general outline for the SAR technical presentation at the Program's Open House on October 21st. The current content includes: (1) San Acacia Reach background information (the same information that was presented in at the roundtable discussion); (2) floodplain land use issues specifically including visuals on the Corps' modeling for the floodplain land use; (3) bullet points and highlights from the roundtable discussion; (4) updates on the white paper and work group products; and (5) next steps including finishing the floodplain project in FY12.
 - SAR work group timeline:

- Written Description of *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products for use in the FY12 SOW – due early October (Ryan);
- Complete Revised FY2012 SOW – early October;
- Corps' QC review of *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products – due early October (Ryan);
- SAR work group review of *Floodplain Encroachment Project* draft product – due mid-October (work group members);
- First Draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper – due around October 7th (Terina);
- Compiled Agency Response to Themes: Floodplain Land Use topic – due early October (Terina);
- Corps' final *Floodplain Encroachment Project* product - due by end of November (Ryan);
- Completed Agency Response to Themes: entire document – due by December (Terina)
- Final Floodplain Land Use White Paper – expected January or February (2012) when the contractor has completed work;

Next Meeting: October 27th, 2011 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM at Reclamation(?)

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) review and discussion of first draft Floodplain Land Use white paper; (2) discuss reschedule Nov meeting (conflicts w/ Thanksgiving); (3) report out on the Open House/Technical Session;

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Meeting Notes

Introductions and Agenda Approval

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes.

Approval of the August 25th, SAR Meeting Notes

- The August 25th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

August Action Item/Requests Review

- ✓ Robert Padilla will find out the exact river miles for the vulnerable levee sites. – *complete*;
 - Robert provided the information in a email (sent September 1st, 2011). All locations below MRGCD lands and below any permanent housing structures with the exception of the Hunter's on the west side in San Marcial. The Hunter's is located on the historic floodplain although it is pretty far off the river channel now.

Action: Terina Perez will send the vulnerable levee sites email from Robert Padilla to Tetra Tech to distribute to the work group.

- ✓ Terina Perez will ask Yvette if the SAR work group's request to participate in the CAPSSSE meeting can be added to the September 7th CC meeting agenda. – *complete*;
 - In a brief history of this action, it was shared that one of the floodplain manager's comments in the Floodplain Land Use Roundhouse was to ask if the work group could help encourage FEMA to finish their maps. However, there are others, in the Socorro area, who do not want the maps completed as this will affect the insurance rates. The SAR work group's goal is to have FEMA at the table discussing possible impacts with the floodplain. The work group's perspectives are on species, habitat, ecosystem issues, etc. and not map completion. Also, there was no official EC approval for engaging FEMA on this topic. To that end, the work group will continue supporting George Dennis's work on ESA issues with FEMA. After there is an established relationship with FEMA, then the work group can express and discuss the floodplain concerns.
 - The Corps has developed some maps that the work group could use if needed.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will follow up with Bill Borthwick to make sure he understands the work group's perceptive on the FEMA maps and how the work group will proceed without attending the meeting.

- ✓ Gina Dello Russo will develop a short explanation describing the meeting and why it would be beneficial for SAR work group members to attend. – *complete*;
 - Please see the above explanation and discussion.
- ✓ Terina will find out if there will be any PMT related issues with the ScW, HRW, and EC meetings being scheduled on the same day. – *complete*;
 - There were no identified issues or conflicts.

Presentation of the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project products

- A status update was provided instead of an actual presentation.
 - There has not been much progress in the last few months. The Corps has identified a lot of the features (ditches, levees, berms, the floodplains, some hydraulics, and where the flow paths are) in the floodway but the information has not been reviewed internally by the Corps yet. The Corps has assigned a technical writer with GIS experience to help Ryan Gronewold with the Quality Control (QC) review.
 - The next steps will be to QC and then package all of the information in a way that future contractors would be able to use.
- Once the Corps has completed a QC review, the draft product will be provided to work group members to review and provide feedback or any corrections (consistency, old channels that might be ephemeral, etc.) that might be identified. A deadline for comments/responses will be set.
- It was clarified that the socio-economic piece of the project was to be included in a revised scope of work (SOW) for 2012; this is to have no affect (no changes) to the Corps's work. It was explained that the purpose of the FY12 project was to address any tasks/activities that remain. The socio-economic piece was desired because the work group wants a full picture of floodplain land use - determine impacts or socio-economic benefits to protecting the floodplain will help inform next steps and recommendations.
 - Attendees then discussed scheduling and priorities. Concern was expressed that the Corps's final product would not be ready in time to correspond to the 2012 project. The Corps intends to begin the QC process in early October; members were assured that the final product would be available no later than the end of November.
 - The intent is to get the revised SOW to the CC as early as possible in October – in order to secure funding. The project could be awarded to a contractor even if the final product was not available as long as a sufficient description was provided (so contractors would know how to bid).
 - The contractor doesn't need to get notice to proceed until the final product is available.
 - If the Corps provides a written description of their product, the work group can move forward with the SOW process.
 - If the Program doesn't fund the FY12 project, it was suggested that maybe the Corps would consider trying to finish the work. Additional tasks haven't been previously discussed with the Corps's team, but they do have economists on staff. However, it was cautioned that the economists have an existing work load and are extremely busy.
 - The socio-economic analysis is to consider any impacts from floodplain land use and/or restrictions. What would be the possible impacts or benefits to the community (cultural, economic, perspectives)? How might the county tax rules changes? Opportunities for eco-tourism? Or open space? Or quality of life? Or negative impacts to business – if limiting population growth? Are there any socio-economic benefits to protecting the floodplain?

Action: Ryan Gronewold will write a description of the Corps's Floodplain Encroachment Project products for the SAR work group to use in the FY2012 Scope of Work; the description should include enough detail that a contractor will understand the work to be bid on.

Action: Ryan Gronewold will informally explore the opportunity for the Corps's economists to complete the socio-economic analysis of potential floodplain land use as part of the Floodplain Encroachment Project.

Action: Terina Perez will follow up with some potential leads on guidance (clarification on potential wording for a scope of work) for developing the socio-economic analysis piece of the SAR floodplain project.

Action: Terina Perez will check with Yvette McKenna about the likelihood of the Program funding the SAR FY2012 scope of work and the ability to put out an RFP as soon as possible in October.

Floodplain Land Use white paper

- Terina Perez, PMT liaison, has taken the lead on filling out any remaining gaps/sections. The roundtable rough draft notes were used to fill in agency positions but this section could use additional input. The first draft is close to completion, but Terina requested assistance on determining agency positions and perspectives.
 - Members who attended the Roundhouse will try to provide any additional input on “who said what”.
- It is expected that a first draft Floodplain Land Use white paper could be available by or around October 7th (and no later than the next SAR meeting). Once done, the first draft will be sent to the work group members who attended the Roundhouse.
- Once the white paper draft is available, the work group can identify additional stakeholders to reach out to (ex. county commissioners).
- Attendees were reminded that the document would have to go through the EC before it could be considered an official Program white paper.

Agency Response to Themes

- Reclamation has some responses captured but it is not thorough. The work group was asked how to proceed with finalizing the Agency Response to Themes document.
 - Given that some of the other agency responses were short and general, the work group agreed that Reclamation should just provide what they have.
 - It was acknowledge that the process has been challenging for many of the agencies and there is a high level of concern about putting positions in writing. Each agency struggled with getting definitive answers for each point.
 - The intent of the document was to identify talking points and highlight how agencies inter-related (compared to the usual formal, legal opinion).
 - While the process has been informative, it is hoped that the perspectives can help inform the discussion and maybe even possible solutions, starting with the floodplain encroachment/land use topic.
 - The exercise was very beneficial in experiencing just how hard it is to get official perspectives on issues. And this didn't even take into account those outside the Program such as the County, mayor, cities, etc.).
 - The work group reconfirmed that the Agency Response to Themes is an internal work group document, for internal use only.

Action: Page Pegram will revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format.

Action: Once provided, Terina Perez will combine the different Agency Response to Themes into a single document and will add a disclaimer about intended use; the Floodplain Land Use topic will be completed as soon as possible in order to inform the White Paper and the full document will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

SAR Work Group Completion and Disbanding

- Attendees then discussed the upcoming deadline for the work group to officially disband. Members expressed concern about making sure the historical knowledge is not lost.
 - It was suggested that the group write a short summary of the issues that were not fully addressed. The summary could include any progress that was made, initial and final thoughts, and maybe recommendations for next steps. This would be one way to document the ideas and progress made before the group disbands.
 - It is assumed that if extra time is needed for proper completion, then the work group should be able to continue to meet.

Action: Terina Perez will talk to Yvette McKenna about “firm” the SAR disbanding deadline is and how the work group should proceed with unfinished tasks that may take an additional few months.

Open House – SAR Technical Presentation

- The Program is hosting a 10th Anniversary Open House and Technical Sessions this October. The Technical Sessions are on Friday, October 21st. The presentation topics were recommended by the work groups. Saturday
- Gina Dello Russo will be presenting on *SAR Issues & Recent Results* during a working lunch session from 11:30am to 12:30pm.
 - Gina shared the tentative presentation outline:
 - (1) San Acacia Reach background information (the same information that was presented in at the roundtable discussion);
 - (2) floodplain land use issues specifically including visuals on the Corps’ modeling for the floodplain land use;
 - (3) bullet points and highlights from the roundtable discussion;
 - (4) updates on the white paper and work group products; and
 - (5) next steps including finishing the floodplain project in FY12
 - Gina would like to include screen capture samples of what the Corps’s model is producing.
- Attendees discussed the current scheduling of the SAR presentation over a working lunch.
 - Although Gina was fine with the timing, it was suggested that the agenda specify a networking time so that participants will understand that lunch is not that time. It was also suggested that maybe the presentation be slightly shorter than the 45 minutes so to encourage attendance but still allow some time to eat.
 - This is a short-term work group that is set to disband soon; if people are interested in the updates or topic, this is their opportunity.

Action: Gina Dello Russo will let Ryan Gronewold know specifically what type of screen capture or model images she would like to have for the Technical Session presentation.

Action: Ryan Gronewold will supply screen captures or model images for use in the Technical Session presentation.

Action: Terina Perez will talk to Yvette McKenna about how to encourage attendees to stay through lunch for the SAR presentation - how to make the lunch process easier? Or make sure there is a designated networking time so people don’t use the lunch hour for that?

Co-chair Discussion/SAR work group timeframe

- Basically, a non-signatory participant cannot hold a co-chair position.
- The “ideal” situation is to have one federal and one non-federal co-chair. However, the work group charters do not include that specific language which allows the work groups the opportunity to select chairs regardless of agency affiliation.
 - The SAR is a small work group so the choices are limited.

Action: Terina Perez will confirm with Yvette McKenna that non-signatory participants are not eligible for the work group co-chair positions.

Program Update

- A Program update was provided as read ahead.
- There is a PMT work group appreciation brunch tentatively scheduled for November 15th.
- The EC cancelled their October meeting to order to attend the Technical Sessions on October 21st. The EC will then meet on November 3rd and 4th. The CC is scheduled to have a regular meeting on October 5th and a full-day working meeting focusing on the LTP on October 26th..

Next Meeting: October 27th, 2011 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM at Reclamation (?)

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) review and discussion of first draft Floodplain Land Use white paper; (2) discuss reschedule Nov meeting (conflicts w/ Thanksgiving); (3) report out on the Open House/Technical Session;

**San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group
22 September 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Gina Dello Russo (via phone)	FWS/Co-chair	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@fws.gov
Terina Perez	Reclamation/PMT	505-462-3614	tlperez@usbr.gov
Robyn Harrisson (via phone)	Festival of the Cranes/landowner	575-517-0291	robynjharrison@gmail.com
Ryan Gronewold	COE	505-342-3340	ryan.gronewold@usace.army.mil
Page Pegram	ISC	505-383-4051	page.peggram@state.nm.us
Marta Wood	Tetra Tech	505-259-6098	marta.wood@tetrattech.com