

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) Meeting
18 October 2011, Tuesday
12:45-3:30 pm at Interstate Stream Commission**

Meeting Summary

Actions

- ✓ Tetra Tech will forward Michael Scialdone and Maceo Martinet's contact information to Ali Saenz for inclusion to the HRW email contract list. – *complete*;
- Terina Perez will work with Ali Saenz to send out the Technical Session Presentation schedule with presenter's names.
- Robert Padilla will confirm that a conference call line has been set up so that people can call into the Brown Bag technical presentations; he will email the specific call in numbers and instructions to HR members.
- ✓ Ondrea Hummel and Robert Padilla will review the System-wide Analysis and ID/IQ Compliance activities summaries (respectively) and provide comments/suggestions by COB tomorrow. – *complete*;
- Grace Haggerty will check with Chris S. to determine options to decrease the predicted spread of depletions between OSE & ET toolbox.
- Jill Wick will draft the HR Construction Priority 1 activity summary to include Improving Lateral Connectivity in all reaches.

Decisions

- The September 20th, 2011 HRW meeting notes were approved with no changes

Requests

- The HRW LTP activity summary for HR monitoring (page 22) is incorrect: the description is for the streamlined compliance. This needs to be corrected. HRW should have an activity summary for (1) streamlined compliance; (2) monitoring (that includes first year monitoring, compliance monitoring, and 10-year monitoring); and (3) system-wide adaptive management.

HRW Meeting Summary

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes.
- The September 20th, 2011 HRW meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- In the September action items review, one action was confirmed as completed and the status of the other remains unknown.
- Attendees then briefly discussed the interaction and relationship between HRW and the PVA. There is much potential for the PVA models to inform HR work and vice versa. The plan is to meet in a joint session with the PVA during their next meeting. Members were encouraged to think about potential discussion topics (ex. how PVA can help with site selection and/or evaluations) in preparation for the tentative December 12th and 13th meeting. HR members requested the joint session be scheduled for the afternoon of December 12th.
- Rick Billings provided a brief update on his Habitat Restoration Presentation that will be given at the Program's Technical Sessions at 1:15pm on Friday, October 21st. The purpose of the presentation is to review the history of habitat restoration in the Program and trends over time.
- In the Program update, attendees were reminded of the Program's 10th Anniversary Open House on Friday, October 21st and Saturday, October 22nd at the Rio Grande Nature Center. The PMT is hosting a Joint Workgroup Brunch/Appreciation Meeting on November 15th at Reclamation; only primary and alternate agency work group members should attend. The executives will be

meeting all day on November 3rd and half day on November 4th at the US Army Corps of Engineers. This is an open meeting; work group members may want to discuss possible attendance with their EC representatives. The deadline for all new FY12 scopes is December 16th, 2011.

- Attendees then reviewed the restoration and project maps. They discussed existing projects, project updates, known flycatcher territories, and potential activities that could be pursued by the work group. The FY11 HRW priority projects generally focused on both species within 3 or 4 reaches, all north of Isleta. One project that was not addressed in FY11 was “near flycatcher territory” restoration projects. The work group also has a continuing priority for connectivity within all reaches. The streamlined compliance and system-wide analysis also remain high priorities for the work group. After discussion, the agreed upon FY12 Priorities were: (1) ID/IQ Design & Compliance – Priority 1; (2) System-wide Analysis – Priority 1; (3) HR Planning: Cochiti – Priority 3 (place holder until communications with pueblo indicates possibility of momentum); (4) HR Construction: Lateral Connectivity for All Reaches – Priority 1; (5) Refugial Planning and Construction in All Reaches – Priority 1; and (6) Maintenance of Existing Restoration Projects – Priority 1.

Next Meeting: November 15th, 2011 from 12:30pm to 3:30pm at ISC (*unless otherwise scheduled, the HRW meeting will directly follow the Joint Work Group Appreciation Brunch/Meeting that same morning*)

- Tentative Agenda Items Include: (1) Pueblo of Sandia presentation on Riverine Project; (2) Develop initial questions/scenarios to present to PVA (December 12th); (3) Updates on FY12 activities – summaries? Scopes?;
- January Tentative Agenda Items: (1) Nathan Schroder - Grant Update;
- Future Meeting: (1) Chi Bui’s (Reclamation) Thesis Presentation;

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
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18 October 2011, Tuesday
12:30-3:30 pm at Interstate Stream Commission**

Meeting Notes

Introductions/Agenda Approval

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was reviewed and approved with no changes.

Action: Tetra Tech will forward Michael Scialdone and Maceo Martinet's contact information to Ali Saenz for inclusion to the HRW email contract list.

Announcements:

- The City of Albuquerque has not been diverting for 6 weeks now. Flows are low and the city is experimenting with lowering/raising the dams. Diversions are expected to resume around November 4th or 5th.
- The Pueblo of Sandia requested time on the November agenda to present updates on their Riverine Project. It is assumed they will need 30 minutes for presenting and 15 minutes for any questions and answers.
- The Bosque del Apache hosted a planting project last week. This work was funded through a Service program entitled "invasives with volunteers." Approximately 60 volunteers of all ages participated. Over 600 plants of 15 different species were planted. The Refuge would like to make this an annual project, but it depends on funding availabilities.
- Attendees were reminded that the pilot database can still be accessed through October 28th. Everyone is encouraged to explore the pilot database and submit numerous survey responses.
- Reclamation introduced Chi Bui, a new hydrologic engineer. The work group welcomed her and requested at some point she give her thesis presentation.
- Tomorrow (10/19/11) and Thursday (10/20/11) from 11:45am to 12:30pm, Reclamation is hosting 2 brown bag technical presentations from Colorado State University. The first is researching conclusions on physical modeling and the second is an overview and conclusions of channel geometry discharge and sediment in 4 reaches from San Acacia to Elephant Butte.

Action: Robert Padilla will confirm that a conference call line has been set up so that people can call into the Brown Bag technical presentations; he will email the specific call in numbers and instructions to HR members.

Approval of September 20th, 2011 meeting notes

- The September 20th, 2011 HRW meeting notes were approved with no changes.

September Action Item Review

- ✓ Gina Dello Russo will provide the note taker with some specific language regarding the resolution of responses to Recommendation #7 for inclusion in the September 20th HR meeting notes. – *complete*;
 - The short update was included in the revised draft September notes on page 7. It is assumed that the content will be discussed more in the FY12 priority discussions.
- Jericho Lewis will ask the RM83 contractor(s) for clarification on what "qualitative" means and what the qualitative analysis will entail. He will also request information on what data the contractor has available and is using. – *unknown*;
 - Gina Dello Russo shared that she contacted Walt Kuhn but has not received a response yet.

Joint HRW/PVA Habitat workshop agenda development (R. Billings)

- Rick Billings and Anders Lundahl have been working with the PVA to discuss how to integrate habitat restoration and the models. There is much potential for the PVA models to inform HR work and vice versa. The plan is to meet in a joint session with the PVA during their next meeting. Members were encouraged to think about potential discussion topics (ex. how PVA can help with site selection and/or evaluations) in preparation for the tentative December 12th and 13th meeting. HR members requested the joint session be scheduled for the afternoon of December 12th.
- The RAMAS contract has been “fixed”; Dr. Miller is now available to participate and complete the RAMAS model.
- In response to a question, it was shared that for now it is not beyond the PVA work group to assist the HRW. The discussions will cover how HRW can use the PVA as a tool. According to the modelers, the PVA can run scenarios of habitat with certain flow to see population responses.

Review of DBMS data templates (request from PVA work group; R. Billings)

- The Program is pursuing standardizing all data so that it is compatible with the database management system (DBMS). Raw data is going to be included so that anyone can use it or analyze it. The work groups are being asked to review the database templates to ensure that all the necessary components have been included.
- This discussion may need to be done with the MPT. It could also inform the continuing data synthesis work and the database maintenance (annual updates).

Update on Rick’s HR Presentation for Open House

- The purpose of the presentation is to review the history of habitat restoration in the Program and trends over time including what works well, what hasn’t, strategic planning, policy, cost, etc. The non-water solutions are going to become more and more important, especially in light of the new BA/BO.
- In September, Reclamation hosted an internal workshop with their policy folks and commissioner. The take home message was that habitat restoration or river restoration is going to be high priority within Reclamation. The materials from this workshop can be accessed through UNM’s Utton Center website.
- The Evolution of Habitat Restoration presentation that will be given at the Program’s Technical Sessions at 1:15pm on Friday, October 21st.

Action: Terina Perez will work with Ali Saenz to send out the Technical Session Presentation schedule with presenter’s names.

Program Update

- The Program’s 10th Anniversary Open House on Friday, October 21st and Saturday, October 22nd at the Rio Grande Nature Center.
- The PMT is hosting a Joint Workgroup Brunch/Appreciation Meeting on November 15th at Reclamation; only primary and alternate agency work group members should attend.
- The executives will be meeting all day on November 3rd and half day on November 4th at the US Army Corps of Engineers. This is an open meeting; work group members may want to discuss possible attendance with their EC representatives.
- Update on FY11 Contracts: There were 4 HR projects funded: (1) NM State Land Office at \$299,000; (2) ISC/Rio Rancho Project (2.5 years) at \$457,000; (3) Ohkay Owingeh at \$263,000; and (4) Santa Ana at \$296,000. All projects were able to be funded except the RGSM Sexing Study for a total of \$1.35 million awarded with FY11 funds.
- The deadline for all new FY12 scopes is December 16th, 2011.
 - The CC will be meeting for an all-day session on October 26th CC meeting. They will be discussing projects and the Long-term Plan (LTP).

- HRW needs a summary for monitoring and maintenance of completed work. The 3 years of required project monitoring is assumed to already be included in the specific project activity summaries.
 - The HRW LTP activity summary for HR monitoring (page 22) is incorrect: the description is for the streamlined compliance. This needs to be corrected. HRW should have an activity summary for (1) streamlined compliance; (2) monitoring (that includes first year monitoring, compliance monitoring, and 10-year monitoring); and (3) system-wide adaptive management.
- The development of the 2010-2011 Program Report will start as the 2008-2009 Program Report wraps up.
- The ID/IQ for Design and Compliance is expiring soon. A new activity summary could be written and completed if the work group feels it necessary. This would have to be provided to Monica Mann (PMT liaison) no later than close of business tomorrow (10/19/11) in order to be available as a read ahead for the October 26th CC meeting.
 - Another option is that it might be possible to write in some habitat design into the contract with Tetra Tech, which hasn't been fully utilized.
 - A previous activity summary and scope already exist. After discussion, HRW members agreed that no changes to the current summary or existing scope are needed.

HRW FY12 Priority 1, 2, and 3 projects

- The FY11 HRW priority projects generally focused on both species within 3 or 4 reaches, all north of Isleta. Attendees then reviewed the restoration and project maps. They discussed existing projects, project updates, known flycatcher territories, and potential activities that could be pursued by the work group.
 - One project that was not addressed in FY11 was “near flycatcher territory” restoration projects. The work group also has a continuing priority for connectivity within all reaches. The streamlined compliance and system-wide analysis also remain high priorities for the work group.
 - **Question:** In terms of the ID/IQ, does that get restoration started on the system-wide analysis to some degree?
 - **Response:** It can get us started, but it takes money to actually initiate. The Corps Program funding will pay for a sample map of ~40 miles (i.e., a subreach); this would include the map, vegetation, geomorphology, H&H, etc.
 - (1) *ID/IQ Design and Compliance:* The work group will need to prioritize where the ~40 mile sample/pilot mapping should be done. The results of this pilot project could then be used to inform and update the ID/IQ with other planning or alternatives. The wetland compliance monitoring (which was done last week) and then initial round of ~40 miles of mapping together cost the Corps approximately \$170,000.
 - Both the system-wide analysis and compliance are continued priorities for the work group.
 - (2) *System-Wide Analysis:*
 - The purpose of the 40-mile pilot map is to develop the process as tool in the system-wide analysis. The contractors will not be asked to analyze the data but to develop an interactive GIS map with layers and compiled information and data.
 - San Acacia and Isleta have had a lot of research and studies done so there is information but it is scattered. On the other hand, Albuquerque has the data available to make the pilot as useful as possible. Vegetation models, HECRAS modeling, FLO2D modeling, etc. are all available for Isleta. The Isleta Reach is

long so a 40-mile section will have to be selected - in southern half? Northern half?

- The work group will have to consider selecting a reach where there is limited information and therefore limited tools or run the pilot where there is more data but it is scattered.
- Doing the pilot project in an area that doesn't have as much information could inform data gaps. However, if the purpose of the pilot work is to identify how to improve the process for the next steps then a reach with actual data would be most useful.
- After discussion and voting, members decided to have the pilot mapping work done in the San Acacia Reach.

Action: Ondrea Hummel and Robert Padilla will review the System-wide Analysis and ID/IQ Compliance activities summaries (respectively) and provide comments/suggestions by COB tomorrow..

- (3) *HR Planning - Cochiti:*
 - HR planning work in the Cochiti reach has been on the waiting list for years. In an update, it was shared that Mark Brennan has made efforts to communicate with pueblo but has been unsuccessful in gaining audience with any governors or council members. He has met with some of the resource staff but they are not in a position to make decisions.
 - With the expectation that nothing is likely to happen until 2012 at the earliest, the work group agreed it was not worth the time and energy to develop this activity at this time. However, this work will be kept on the priority list as a place holder since it is a project that the work group would like to accomplish at some point.
- (4) *HR Construction, Monitoring, Maintenance:*
 - (a) *Connectivity:* Connectivity is an important issue, for all reaches. A description of the hypothesis of how surface water connectivity is very important for both the flycatcher and minnow.
 - Connectivity is very difficult due to levees, setbacks, and depletions issues. The best “bang for the buck” would be to do a long river stretch. And to make sure that the Corps and Reclamation projects are related or connected in order to develop the “string of pearls.”
 - Depletions is an issue – the bigger the project, the potentially bigger the depletions. Connectivity occurs at certain times of year (not year round) but the evaluation of depletions is based only on the bare minimum.
 - Concern was raised that there is a big difference (spread) between the Office of the State Engineer's (OSE) equation calculation and the ET toolbox estimates for open water evaporation (ex. something like OSE 50% but ET toolbox was 25%) There needs to be a consistent method/standardization of quantification of depletions.
 - This might be task for SWM or PHVA; or the work group could raise the issue to the CC to recommend relooking at the depletions issue.
 - Regardless of actual calculations, ISC is working hard to get water into the strategic water reserve for things like depletions offsets. ISC is working with relinquishment water, strategic water reserve, etc. and hoping other water can be found as well. Put together, the portfolio that can be used for these projects can keep increasing.

- This could be part of the system-wide analysis – identify the tier of low “hanging fruit” that doesn’t add a lot of depletions and then identify those projects that will require more interaction with depletions offset options.

Action: Grace Haggerty will check with Chris S. to determine options to decrease the predicted spread of depletions between OSE & ET toolbox.

- *(b) Near Existing Flycatcher Habitat:* When developing flycatcher projects, the work group was encouraged to consider the work Santa Ana has been doing with the metrics for quality flycatcher habitat. The habitat structure and soil moisture measurements could inform a series of projects to evaluate the quality of habitat over time (applied research) combined with site fidelity.
- *(c) Enlarging/Expanding Existing Project Sites:* Connecting or enlarging some of the existing HR sites might be a useful project(s) to reinforce success. There are opportunities with some sites to enlarge or rehab with the purpose of strengthening the diversity component.
 - One thing to consider for HR projects is to identify the areas of private land ownership as potential opportunities – to find and target projects that private landowners might respond to. Hesitation was expressed about expending time/energy toward work that no one is likely to respond to. Similarly, concern was expressed that Reclamation can’t just specify locations and sole source to the owner but the work has to be issued in a competitive bid. If on federal lands, HR projects could be accomplished through an ID/IQ process. There is the need to think strategically about targeting restoration projects. Privately owned areas would probably require focused outreach efforts to get responses to an RFP. Similarly, MRGCD owns most of the land in the Isleta Reach so very few responses to an RFP would be expected.
 - In an example, it was share that New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) was interested in a project but it was not funded because there was a lack of protection for the improvements. NMT responded in a written letter that they would maintain the fences, etc. but that letter was not enough. That project was even straight out of the A&R. It was suggested that before the Program approach land owners, Jericho Lewis and the CC be asked to clarify the needed criteria and assurances that would be required.
 - Attendees then discussed the possibility of using the ID/IQ process to work directly with land owners and avoid the contracting process.
 - It was also suggested that Jericho Lewis be asked for suggestions or options to engage agencies and encourage involvement especially with land ownership.
- *(d) San Acacia Reach:*
 - The Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge (BdA or Refuge) has requested project assistance from Reclamation. Reclamation has to confirm if they have staff power/capacity to meet the request. If yes, then an interagency agreement will be utilized. However, the project design will still be reviewed by the Program. If Reclamation is unable to assist, then the Refuge will issue a contract for the construction.

- The design the Program sees will probably be very general since the Refuge doesn't have the expertise to do the modeling, engineering, etc. But the purpose is to respect the Program process to the extent possible.
 - In the last RFP process, there were no responses in the San Acacia reach. This may be due to the fact that most of the land on west side is MRGCD land.
 - There is still potential for an NMT project. It is a 4 or 5 mile stretch of river that could use a habitat restoration plan and A&R.
 - There is also the Hilton Ranch area. It is a narrow part of the floodplain, but a lone male flycatcher has been observed in the area.
 - For both the NMT and Hilton Ranch projects, there needs to be a clear understanding of what would be required in terms of restoration protection.
 - There has been talk about expanding the habitat in the existing territories around the Elephant Butte Reservoir pool area.
 - Farmers have complained that they can't clear the east side of SADD since it has now been classified as suitable flycatcher habitat. Maybe the work group should explore project opportunities to "swap out areas."
 - There is concern with doing restoration work in areas of degradation. However, there would actually be an opportunity to move the river to the west with limited impacts to the riparian areas because of that degradation.
- (e) *Isleta Reach:*
 - There is potential project opportunity in the flycatcher habitat that burnt on NMDGF property.
 - There are opportunities with native vegetation restorations.
 - Projects could be focused near the outfalls and wasteways.
 - The Sevilleta has expressed interested in project designs similar to what has been done in Isleta.
 - There are several projects that could benefit from maintenance. However, contract and grants usually included some level of maintenance and monitoring. It might be easier to do contract modifications instead of issuing separate RFPs. The proponents of the project would need to do an evaluation and report back to the Program on needs in order to pursue funding. This could be done through both the ID/IQ process and/or RFP process, depending.
- (f) *Albuquerque Reach:*
 - For planning in the reach, need to work with/involve Rio Rancho, City of Alb Open space planning – M. Schmader; etc.
- (g) *Pueblo Reach:*
 - Floodplain connectivity is very important in the Pueblo reach as well.
 - Connectivity is critical for return flow to the river. Overbank flow goes one way but it can't always get back into the river (ponds, evaporates, etc.).

- There may be projects in the South Valley area. But the large Corps project is likely to scare people, but maybe work could be proposed in 2 years.
- (5) *Refugial pools*:
 - Perennial pools planning and construction in all reaches for dry periods. This begins to explore the “string of pearls.”
- FY12 Priorities Summary:
 - (1) ID/IQ Design & Compliance – Priority 1;
 - (2) System-wide Analysis – Priority 1;
 - (3) HR Planning: Cochiti – Priority 3 (place holder until communications with pueblo indicates possibility of momentum);
 - (4) HR Construction: Lateral Connectivity for All Reaches – Priority 1;
 - (5) Refugial Planning and Construction in All Reaches – Priority 1; and
 - (6) Maintenance of Existing Restoration Projects – Priority 1.

Action: Jill Wick will draft the HR Construction Priority 1 activity summary to include Improving Lateral Connectivity in all reaches.

Next Meeting: November 15th, 2011 from 12:30pm to 3:30pm at ISC (*unless otherwise scheduled, the HRW meeting will directly follow the Joint Work Group Appreciation Brunch/Meeting that same morning*)

- Tentative Agenda Items Include: (1) Pueblo of Sandia presentation on Riverine Project; (2) Develop initial questions/scenarios to present to PVA (December 12th); (3) Updates on FY12 activities – summaries? Scopes?;
- January Tentative Agenda Items: (1) Nathan Schroder - Grant Update;
- Future Meeting: (1) Chi Bui’s (Reclamation) Thesis Presentation;

**Habitat Restoration Work Group Meeting
October 18th, 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Rick Billings	HR Chair	ABCWUA	796-2527	rbillings@abcwua.org
Ondrea Hummel	HR Member	COE	342-3375	ondrea.c.hummel@usace.army.mil
Mark Brennan	HR Member	FWS	761-4756	mark_brennan@fws.gov
Michael Scialdone		Pueblo of Sandia	771-5046	mscialdone@sandiapueblo.nsn.us
Gina Dello Russo	HR Member	FWS	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@fws.gov
Terina Perez	PMT Member	Reclamation	462-3614	tlperez@usbr.gov
Chi Bui		Reclamation	462-3610	cbui@usbr.gov
Maseo Martinet		FWS	761-4752	Maceo_martinet@fws.gov
Robert Padilla	HR Member	Reclamation	462-3626	rpadilla@usbr.gov
Jill Wick	HR Member	NMDGF	476-8091	jill.wick@state.nm.us
Grace Haggerty		ISC	383-4042	grace.haggerty@state.nm.us
Marta Wood	Admin support	Tetra Tech, EMI	259-6098	marta.wood@tetrattech.com