

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program**  
**San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting**  
October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 2:15 PM  
**Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation**

**Decisions:**

- The September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

**Actions:**

- Monica Sanchez will remind Ryan Gronewold of his action to write a description of the Corps's Floodplain Encroachment Project products for the SAR work group to use in the FY2012 Scope of Work (SOW's due December 16<sup>th</sup>).
- Ryan Gronewold will schedule with Gina Dello Russo and Robyn Harrison to ground-truth the floodplain obstructions of concern.
- Robert Padilla will meet with Jim Wilber and Terina Perez to discuss the future (continuation) of the SAR ad hoc work group.
- Robert Padilla will work with Terina Perez on the white paper review.
- Monica Sanchez will remind Page Pegram of her action to revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format.
- Gina Dello Russo will ask Socorro residence (local folks) for their positions on floodplain encroachment and will check if NRCS would be comfortable sharing their position for inclusion in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Gina Dello Russo will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the FWS paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Robyn Harrison will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the agriculture community paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Monica Sanchez and Ryan Gronewold will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the Corps paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Page Pegram will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the ISC paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Robert Padilla will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the Reclamation paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.
- Gina Dello Russo will ask George Dennis for his FEMA contact.
- Gina Dello Russo will talk to Bear and the County Commissioners for their positions/perspectives on floodplain land use (for inclusion in the white paper).
- All SAR members will read/revise the Floodplain Land Use white paper introduction, background, and history sections for the December 6<sup>th</sup> conference call meeting. (*Note: review of the recommendations and alternative sections is on hold until the Corps' Floodplain Project Product is available; expected early December*).
- Monica Sanchez will request Ryan Gronewold send an update on the Floodplain Encroachment Project products to the SAR work group via email.
- Work group members are asked to RSVP their attendance to the Work Group Appreciation Brunch to Ali Saenz (Program assistant; [asaenz@usbr.gov](mailto:asaenz@usbr.gov)).
- Gina Dello Russo will write up a justification on how the Floodplain Land Use Project supports the BO and recovery; it will be emailed to the Program Manager and work group members before the November 9<sup>th</sup> CC meeting.

**Ongoing/Continued Action Items:**

- 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. (*continued from 9/22/11*)
- Page Pegram will revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format. (*continued from 9/22/11*)
- 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. (*on hold from 9/22/11*)
- 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. (*continued from 9/22/11*)
- 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. (*continued from 9/22/11*)

### Meeting Summary:

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order. The agenda was approved with an addition of a CC Update and Potential SAR Scope of Work (both to be added to the Program update).
- The September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- The majority of the September action items were completed as assigned; however, 5 remain ongoing/in progress.
- In a working session, attendees reviewed the Draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper. Changes and edits were made to the document using tracked-changes. The work group thanked Terina for the fabulous job she did in completing the white paper. SAR members were assigned action items to continue review of the draft white paper – the intent is to have all sections near final state by early January. The recommendation and alternatives sections won't be reviewed until the Corps' floodplain project product is available. While the draft white paper is thorough and detailed, it was suggested that it be condensed where possible (especially the background section and some of the Positions of Interested Parties (ex. FEMA)) since the white paper should ideally only be a few pages in length.
- In the report of the Program's Open House/Technical Sessions it was shared that several hundred people participated in Saturday's events and activities. It was a very successful day. On Friday, 45 people attended one or more of the technical sessions. Gina's presentation was after lunch. The presentation expanded on the work shop presentation from the June roundtable. Gina introduced listeners to the San Acacia Reach and the unique features and issues encountered there. Listeners were introduced to the work group background/history and objectives. Gina explained the 6 resource management issues that were identified and targeted for white papers. The remainder of the talk focused on the floodplain encroachment potential issues and the work that the work group has accomplished.
- The update on the Corps' *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products and work group co-chair discussions were both postponed.
- In the Program update, it was shared that the EC will be meeting all day on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and half day on November 4<sup>th</sup> at the Corps. The agenda is focused on addressing the Program path (recovery implementation program). There is a Work Group Appreciation Brunch scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 11:30am at Reclamation. Attendance is limited to just primary and alternate agency representatives for the work groups. The HRW meeting is to directly follow. The deadline for all new FY12 scopes is December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The development of the 2010-2011 Program Report will start as the 2008-2009 Program Report wraps up. The expected completion date is summer 2012.

- In an update from the CC meeting yesterday, it was shared that the SAR floodplain project does not rank high on the potential funding list even though it is the work group's only priority. Members expressed frustration and disappointment that the work group, especially as an ad hoc work group, is not getting the Program support or funding that would allow for completion of tasks. The CC did suggest the work group consider alternate funding sources (ex. Water Smart). However, each member has other work to do and most are already involved in other Program groups. It was suggested the work group evaluate what can be accomplished and whether or not it makes sense to reduce meetings or consider disbanding due to lack of momentum.

**Next Meeting: December 6<sup>th</sup> Conference Call, from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM**

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) review of Corps' floodplain product; (2) continued Floodplain Land Use white paper review; (3) updates on Scope of Work (due by Dec 16<sup>th</sup>);
- January agenda items: (1) co-chair discussions; (2) evaluation of ability to accomplish SAR work group tasks (SAR Work Group Completion and Disbanding); (3) Program update: Nov EC meeting and CC Priority funded projects for 2012.

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**San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting**  
 October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM  
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## Meeting Notes

### Introductions and Agenda Approval

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order. The agenda was approved with an addition of a CC Update and Potential SAR Scope of Work (both to be added to the Program update).

### Approval of the September 22<sup>nd</sup>, SAR Meeting Notes

- The September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

### September Action Item/Requests Review

- ✓ Terina Perez will distribute the Program's Open House and Technical Session Schedule (October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>) to the work group mailing list. – *completed 09/27/11;*
- ✓ Terina Perez will send the vulnerable levee sites email from Robert Padilla to Tetra Tech to distribute to the work group. - *completed 9/23/11;*
- 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. – *ongoing;*

**Action:** Monica Sanchez will remind Ryan Gronewold of his action to write a description of the Corps's Floodplain Encroachment Project products for the SAR work group to use in the FY2012 Scope of Work;

**Action:** Ryan Gronewold will schedule with Gina Dello Russo and Robyn Harrison to ground-truth the floodplain obstructions of concern.

**Action:** Robert Padilla will meet with Jim Wilber and Terina Perez to discuss the future (continuation) of the SAR ad hoc work group.

**Action:** Robert Padilla will work with Terina Perez on the white paper review.

- Page Pegram will revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format. – *ongoing;*
  - Due to conflict in schedule, Page was unable to attend today's meeting.

**Action:** Monica Sanchez will remind Page Pegram of her action to 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. – *on hold; pending the receipt of the Agency Response to themes*

- ✓ Terina Perez will talk to Yvette McKenna about how "firm" the SAR disbanding deadline is and how the work group should proceed with unfinished tasks that may take an additional few months. – *completed 9/27/11;*
  - The work group has the flexibility to continue working passed the December deadline if needed and appropriate.

- ✓ 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. – *completed*
  - The Corps did not want to or could not take the socio-economic analysis portion of the floodplain land use 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. – *completed 9/27/11*;
  - Yvette McKenna said it would be helpful for the work group to provide a justification summary stating how the project could help to meet BiOp requirements or Recovery Plan criteria.

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will write up a justification on how the Floodplain Land Use Project supports the BO and recovery; it will be emailed to the Program Manager and work group members before the November 9<sup>th</sup> CC meeting.

- ✓ 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. – *completed*;
- ✓ Ryan Gronewold will supply screen captures or model images for use in the Technical Session presentation. – *completed*;
- ✓ 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? – *completed*;
- ✓ Terina Perez will confirm with Yvette McKenna that non-signatory participants are not eligible for the work group co-chair positions. - *completed 9/27/11*;
  - Yvette confirmed that non-signatory participants are not eligible to hold 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. – *ongoing*; *In progress... will review a couple of reports I expect to receive soon from a professor at UNM*
  - The FY12 Scope of Work deadline is December 16<sup>th</sup>. The SAR work group has only the one project - to build on the Corps' floodplain land use project and complete the final step (using the Corps' results) of determining encroachment trends (result of 10 homes, 50 homes, 100 homes, etc.) and run scenarios to see potential changes flow paths. The work group also added a socio-economic piece to the project. This project would then inform the recommendations and alternatives in the floodplain encroachment white paper.
  - In order to submit a scope by the December 16<sup>th</sup> deadline, the description paragraph(s) of the Corps' product and the discussion with UNM on what socio-economic analysis might look like including any tasks related to the socio-economic portion are needed as soon as possible.
  - It was shared that the local MRG Levee Task Force chartered UNM to research impacts in terms of flood insurance.
- 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. – *on going*;

- The floodplain maps for Socorro have been received by Socorro County. The maps have not been “locked in” yet so residents still have a chance to get the lower insurance rate.
- It is unknown if anyone can get a copy of those maps for reference; those interested were referred to Bear Albrecht.
- 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 7<sup>th</sup> (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/early December (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;

### **Floodplain Land Use white paper**

- In a working session, attendees reviewed the Draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper. Changes and edits were made to the document using tracked-changes. The intent was to systematically review the draft document making improvements as needed. The work group thanked Terina for the fabulous job she did in completing the white paper.
  - *Effective Parties List:*
    - It was suggested that all the federal agencies be listed together, instead of breaking them out into action agencies, land management agencies, etc.
    - Attendees added the following groups to the list: NRCS, MRGCD, NMDA, NMSF, SWCD.
  - *Primary Issues:*
    - Attendees discussed the bulleted list of issues and made clarification changes.
    - Attendees agreed to change the phrasing of the second bullet (regarding the pressure on levee system) to: *Increased pressure on levee system by channel and floodplain obstructions.*
    - Attendees discussed the potential liability issues from encroachment and any flooding. Not only are the involved agencies liable, but the private citizens and local community share in the responsibility. This is especially true when considering the safety issues and safety issues to human life in areas that are prone to flooding.
  - *Position of interested parties:*
    - It was suggested that a disclaimer be added to the top of the *Position of Interested Parties* section in order to clarify the sources of information and the compilation process.
    - It was also suggested that the position paragraphs could be distilled down or even listed in bulleted format.

- Attendees added the following agencies to the Interested Parties list: Bureau of Land Management (BLM); NRCS (maybe put under the landowner section?); New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT); New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF); Floodplain Land Owners; Armendaris; and the Railroad.
- *Miscellaneous:*
  - Attendees discussed that the draft white paper is thorough and detailed but it was suggested that it be condensed where possible (especially the background section and some of the Positions of Interested Parties (ex. FEMA)) since the white paper should ideally only be a few pages in length.
  - It was suggested the review of the recommendations and alternative sections be put on hold until the Corps' Floodplain Project Product is available (expected early December).

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will ask Socorro residence (local folks) for their positions on floodplain encroachment and will check if NRCS would be comfortable sharing their position for inclusion in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the FWS paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.

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**Action:** Robert Padilla will review, edit (as necessary/appropriate), and condense (if needed, into 2 or 3 paragraphs) the Reclamation paragraph(s) in the Floodplain Land Use white paper.

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will ask George Dennis for his FEMA contact.

**Action:** Gina Dello Russo will talk to Bear and the County Commissioners for their positions/perspectives on floodplain land use (for inclusion in the white paper).

**Action:** All SAR members will read/revise the Floodplain Land Use white paper introduction, background, and history sections for the December 6<sup>th</sup> conference call meeting. (*Note: review of the recommendations and alternative sections is on hold until the Corps' Floodplain Project Product is available; expected early December.*)

### **Report out on the Open House/Technical Session:**

- On Friday (Technical Sessions), 45 people attended one or more of the technical presentations. Gina's presentation was after lunch. The presentation expanded on the work shop presentation from the June roundtable. Gina introduced listeners to the San Acacia Reach and the unique features and issues encountered there. Listeners were introduced to the work group background/history and objectives. Gina explained the 6 resource management issues that were identified and targeted for white papers. The remainder of the talk focused on the floodplain encroachment potential issues and the work that the work group has accomplished.
  - There were several interesting questions in response to the SAR presentation. One person questioned if the San Acacia reach would/could ever realistically reach 10,000 cfs. And another question focused on the perspective that encroachment should be more of an issue in the northern reaches.
    - Gina responded to the questions by explaining that yes, the San Acacia reach could realistically reach 10,000 cfs and historically has even been as high as 40,000+cfs. In In Isleta and Albuquerque, 10,000 cfs flows can be accommodated by building up levees but in there is only one levee in San Acacia and there is no intention of ever

building a levee on the east side. Floodplain encroachment is less of issue in Isleta and Albuquerque due to land ownership. San Acacia has the greatest potential for floodplain encroachment.

- It was shared that several hundred people participated in Saturday's events and activities. It was a very successful day.

#### **Update on the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project products:**

- Ryan Gronewold was unable to attend today's meeting so the update on the Corps' floodplain encroachment project was postponed.

**Action:** Monica Sanchez will request Ryan Gronewold send an update on the Floodplain Encroachment Project products to the SAR work group via email.

#### **Co-chair Discussion:**

- It was suggested the co-chair discussion be tabled until after the New Year. The work group does not yet know how long they will continue to meet and there needs to be clarity on the 2012 work plan.

#### **Program Update**

- The EC will be meeting all day on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and half day on November 4<sup>th</sup> at the Corps. The agenda is focused on addressing the Program path (recovery implementation program).
- There is a Work Group Appreciation Brunch scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 11:30am at Reclamation. Attendance is limited to just primary and alternate agency representatives for the work groups.
  - The HRW meeting is to directly follow.
- The deadline for all new FY12 scopes is December 16th, 2011.
- The development of the 2010-2011 Program Report will start as the 2008-2009 Program Report wraps up. The expected completion date is summer 2012.
- An update on yesterday's CC meeting was shared.
  - The SAR project does not rank high on the funding list. Even with a justification on how the project supports BO requirements, it is assumed that the project will not be reprioritized.
  - Gina explained that she asked the CC how ad-hoc (short-term) work groups were supposed to make progress if Program support was lacking. The Floodplain Land Use project has been the work group's only project for the last 2 years. She also let the CC know that the work group was considering disbanding due to lack of progress. While one of the problems is the limited funding, the CC recommended the work group seek alternate funding sources to accomplish their work (Water Smart). It was interesting to note that no other work group received the suggestion to seek other funding.
  - The issues are important, but without decision-maker support and some funding available, it is nearly impossible to make forward momentum. This is especially true for the short-term, ad hoc work groups.
  - Members discussed being frustrated and discouraged because not funding the project impacts the quality of the white paper and means the work group really wasn't able to complete their objectives.

**Action:** Work group members are asked to RSVP their attendance to the Work Group Appreciation Brunch to Ali Saenz (Program assistant; [asaenz@usbr.gov](mailto:asaenz@usbr.gov)).

#### **Next Meeting: December 6<sup>th</sup> Conference Call, from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM**

- The regularly scheduled November meeting conflicts with the Thanksgiving Holiday. Since it is unlikely the work group will have to complete a scope of work for the Floodplain Land Use project, it was suggested the November/December meetings be replaced with a conference call in



early December. In the mean time, work group members will spend time reviewing the draft white paper (read/revise the introduction and agency perspectives; condense the background and history of the topic sections; and follow up with interested party positions).

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) review of Corps' floodplain product; (2) continued Floodplain Land Use white paper review; (3) updates on Scope of Work (due by Dec 16<sup>th</sup>);
- January agenda items: (1) co-chair discussions; (2) evaluation of ability to accomplish SAR work group tasks (SAR Work Group Completion and Disbanding); (3) Program update: Nov EC meeting and CC Priority funded projects for 2012.

**San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group  
27 October 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Gina Dello Russo (via phone)	FWS/Co-chair	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@fws.gov
Monica Sanchez	COE/PMT	505-342-3250	monica.r.sanchez@usace.army.mil
Robyn Harrisson (via phone)	Festival of the Cranes/landowner	575-517-0291	robynjharrison@gmail.com
Robert Padilla	Reclamation	505-462-3626	rpadilla@usbr.gov
Marta Wood	Tetra Tech	505-259-6098	marta.wood@tetrattech.com