

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

November Actions

- Ondrea Hummel will update the *Design and Environmental Compliance Support for HR Projects* and *Habitat Restoration Implementation SOWs* for CC review.
- Monica Sanchez will check with Grace Haggerty (ISC) to see if the HRW meetings can still be held at ISC.
- Monika Sanchez will verify that Chi Bui is still able to present at the December HRW meeting.

Ongoing Actions

- 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 (*Ongoing from 10/18*).
- Grace Haggerty will check with Chris S. to determine options to decrease the predicted spread of depletions between OSE & ET toolbox (*Ongoing from 10/18*).

Decision

- The October 18th, 2011 HRW meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Meeting Summary

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with 2 changes: (1) the “Pueblo of Sandia presentation on the Riverine Project” was moved to the beginning of the agenda; and (2) the “COTR Interaction with work groups” will be tabled for the next HRW meeting.
- Michael Scialdone from Pueblo of Sandia (POS) gave a presentation on the Pueblo of Sandia-Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Riverine Habitat Restoration Project. Attendees were reminded that the original contract was initiated in 2007 with the main focus being to monitor various habitat restoration techniques including vegetation treatments to mobilize sediment. Attendees were updated that BOR agreed to a 5-year extension of the contract to utilize left over funds for additional maintenance and enhancement of the constructed features and adjacent areas with the condition that the proposed work be presented to the HRW. The proposed work would focus on continued removal of non-natives on the embayments and terraces and planting natives. The work would also include mapping and vegetation/fauna surveys. POS has been meeting with BOR regarding compliance; compliance should be completed at the end of summer 2012. On-the-ground work will likely start in fall 2012.
- The October 18th, 2011 HRW meeting minutes were approved with no changes.
- Meeting attendees performed an action item review. All October action items were completed with the exception of 2 items.

- Anders Lundahl was acknowledged for all the effort and time that he has put into being an active member of the HRW work group; Anders has been reassigned to other work at Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) and for the time being will no longer be participating in the HRW.
- Meeting attendees were notified that the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) work group will be meeting on December 12th (full day) and December 13th (half day). Rick has met with the PVA modelers to try to determine if the models will be useful for habitat restoration. Rick is developing questions for the PVA modelers for discussion on the afternoon of December 12th; if anyone has any habitat restoration questions for the modelers they can email their questions to Rick. Meeting attendees were encouraged to attend the PVA work group meeting to learn more about the PVA and the PVA models.
- Meeting attendees discussed the CC recommendation for the HRW to complete scopes of work (SOW) for the *Design and Environmental Compliance Support for HR Projects* and *Habitat Restoration Implementation* projects by the December 16th, 2011 SOW deadline. The SOWs for these activities are mostly complete and will just need some minor updating. Ondrea Hummel will update the *Design and Environmental Compliance Support for HR Projects* and *Habitat Restoration Implementation* SOWs for CC review.
- In a Program update, meeting attendees were informed that Monica Sanchez (PMT Liaison) will be working on the 2011 Accomplishments and the 2012 Work Plan for approval at the next HRW meeting. Work group members were also informed that the PMT would like the work groups to consider reducing their monthly meetings to bi-monthly if possible in order to assist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in transitioning the Program to a Recovery Implementation Program (RIP), as this will take up the majority of FWS staff time. Because the December HRW meeting agenda is already pretty full the work group decided to meet in December and at that meeting discuss whether the work group should reduce the number of meetings.
- Meeting attendees agreed to move the December HRW meeting to December 13th, 2011. Monica Sanchez will check with Grace Haggerty (ISC) to see if the HRW meetings can still be held at ISC.

Next Meeting: December 13th, 2011 from 12:30 to 3:30 (location to be determined)

- Tentative agenda items to include: (1) Review/approve 2011 Accomplishments and 2012 Work Plan; (2) discussion on the frequency of future HRW meetings; (3) Presentation on Climate Change (Chi Bui); (4) discussion on the November 15th, 2011 Joint Work group meeting; (5) Any products from COE contractor to review; (6) Report out on December PVA meeting (Rick); (7) COTR Interaction with work groups
- Monika Sanchez will verify that Chi Bui is still able to present at the December HRW meeting.

Upcoming meetings:

- November 30th, 2011 – CC meeting
- December 8th, 2011 – EC meeting
- December 9th, 2011 – CC meeting
- January 4th, 2012 – CC meeting

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Meeting Notes

Introductions/Agenda Approval

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- The agenda was approved with 2 changes: (1) the “Pueblo of Sandia presentation on the Riverine Project” was moved to the beginning of the agenda; and (2) the “COTR Interaction with work groups” will be tabled for the next HRW meeting.

Pueblo of Sandia presentation on Riverine Project

- Michael Scialdone from Pueblo of Sandia (POS) gave a presentation on the Pueblo of Sandia-Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Riverine Habitat Restoration Project. *For additional details please see actual presentation materials.*
 - Attendees were reminded that the original contract was initiated in 2007 with the main focus being to monitor various habitat restoration techniques including vegetation treatments to mobilize sediment. In all, 45.6 acres were impacted.
 - The original grant was for close to \$1 M but a cost savings in compliance and construction left about \$300,000 remaining in the grant. POS approached BOR for permission to utilize the remaining funds for maintenance and enhancement of constructed features and adjacent areas. BOR agreed to a 5-year extension of the contract to utilize left over funds with the condition that the proposed work is presented to the HRW.
 - The areas of the proposed work would include the original project area, which is at the south end of the POS around the AMAFCA channel, and would also include a 500-ft buffer around the project area.
 - The proposed work would focus on continued removal of non-natives; there are resprouts of non-natives on the embayments that were cleared and tumbleweeds have grown on the terrace. The proposed work would also focus on planting natives – the natives that will be planted will be determined as the project moves forward. The work would also include wet land mapping, to understand how the system is evolving, and vegetation, avian, and “herp” monitoring/surveys.
 - Currently POS is working with Hector Garcia from BOR to see what compliance is needed to move forward with the additional work. The original project areas were covered by NEPA documents. The POS has also gone through their own comprehensive process to see if there are any cultural resources in the floodplain. Compliance is expected to be completed by summer of 2012 and on-the-ground work is planned to start in fall 2012.
 - The focus for potential work in the northern most project areas would focus on non-native removal and native planting on barren and sandy areas. It might also include maintenance of a backwater channel created in Bosque Restoration Phase I that native vegetation did not take hold to.

- Maintenance of the backwater channel and non-native removal on the islands would only be completed if needed and if it would not create potential compliance barriers.
- It was shared that backwaters are usually only maintained if the water cannot flow through; in those situations a shovel or back hoe is usually used to keep the water flowing.
- To deal with tumbleweed and kosha infestations POS may be utilizing a tilling method that was shared with them by Ondrea Hummel. The idea of the method is to till the seeds down as both types of seeds have a low tolerance for being covered by soil.
 - It was shared that there are test plots for the tilling method in Isleta and Santa Ana Pueblos. Tilling was done in February and March but the results are not yet available.
- One benefit to waiting until fall 2012 to start on-the-ground work is that there will be time to see whether the non-natives will survive a winter of being submerged. The tumbleweeds could also create places for minnow to hide.
- Potential work in the middle area would include non-native removal, planting natives in barren areas, and maintenance or reworking of a 1-acre forewater created in Bosque Restoration Phase I. There is also the potential for removal of jetty-jacks that are no longer needed and removal of non-native islands.
 - There was some concern because a forewater is supposed to have a low current to create a pool, but at certain flows, there was a current flowing all the way through the forewater. However, at the current water level the water is pretty stagnate; POS will be monitoring to see what happens during spring flows before they decide if reworking is needed.
 - Because water levels did not get high enough this year to mobilize the sand islands that were cleared they are again covered with vegetation. This may be a problematic area with compliance as machinery will need to cross the river; however, clearing the islands may not be necessary as the regrowth consists of a lot of natives.
- Potential work in the southern-most area of the original project near the AMAFCA channel would include non-native removal, planting, and seeding the sandy areas around an embayment created in Bosque Restoration Phase I.
- It was shared that cranes and other water fowl have been seen using the project areas.
- Questions/Discussion
 - *Question:* Will compliance be done by POS or will BOR be handling compliance? *Response:* Hector seemed confident that the majority of the compliance would be covered. POS recently completed a Programmatic BA that covers the entire Bosque in the project area and that covers the majority of the restoration methods that would be used.
 - It was commented that it will be good for POS to work off of what is already covered under compliance.
 - It was commented that it is a good idea to wait to begin on-the-ground work until after the spring runoff- this provide opportunity to evaluate how the project areas

- have reacted to runoff as the flows may pull up the non-natives or the natives will out compete them and parts of the maintenance may no longer be needed.
- Work group members advised against re-clearing the non-native islands as past projects to mobilize islands did not receive much better results even at higher flows and it might be more advantageous to work in other areas.
 - The work group requested that POS update the work group in spring of 2012 if the spring flows have caused any significant changes.

Announcements

- There were no announcements.

Approve October 18th, 2011 HR meeting minutes

Decision: The October 18th, 2011 HRW meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

October Action Item Review

- **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.**
 - Complete.
- **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.**
 - The status of this action item is not known; meeting attendees did not receive an email about the Brown Bag technical presentation.
- **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.**
 - The status of this action item is not known.
- **Jill Wick will draft the HR Construction Priority 1 activity summary to include Improving Lateral Connectivity in all reaches.**
 - Complete.
- Anders Lundahl was acknowledged for all the effort and time that he has put into being an active member of the HRW work group; Anders has been reassigned to other work at Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) and for the time being will no longer be participating in the HRW.

Develop initial questions/scenarios to present to Population Viability Analysis (PVA)

- Meeting attendees were notified that the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) work group will be meeting on December 12th (full day) and December 13th (half day).
- Rick Billings has discussed with the modelers how the PVA models could help the HRW develop habitat restoration (HR) projects. Initial feedback from the modelers is that the models will be useful for planning HR projects as long as enough information is available.
- Rick is putting together questions or issues that he would like to further discuss with the PVA modelers on the afternoon of December 12th. If anyone has any HR questions for the modelers they can email their questions to Rick.
- Meeting attendees were also encouraged to attend the PVA work group meeting to learn more about the PVA and the PVA models.

Updates on FY12 activities

- Meeting attendees discussed the Coordination Committee (CC) recommendation for the HRW to complete scopes of work (SOW) for the *Design and Environmental Compliance Support for HR Projects* and *Habitat Restoration Implementation* projects by the December 16th, 2011 SOW deadline.
 - The SOWs for these activities are mostly complete and will just need some minor updating.
 - Meeting attendees agreed to include the work group's priorities for the HR construction for each reach in the *Habitat Restoration Implementation* project.

Action: Ondrea Hummel will update the *Design and Environmental Compliance Support for HR Projects* and *Habitat Restoration Implementation* SOWs for CC review.

Program Update

- In a Program update, meeting attendees were informed that Monica Sanchez (PMT Liaison) will be working on the 2011 Accomplishments and the 2012 Work Plan for approval at the next HRW meeting. The CC will be reviewing the work group 2011 Accomplishments and 2012 Work Plans at the January 2012 CC meeting.
 - Work group members were also informed that the PMT would like the work groups to consider reducing their monthly meetings to bi-monthly if possible in order to assist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in transitioning the Program to a Recovery Implementation Program (RIP), as this will take up the majority of FWS staff time.
 - Meeting attendees were updated that subgroups of the Executive Committee (EC) are working on Program Documents and other action items to facilitate the transition. There will likely be some streamlining of the work group structure but there will likely be some form of a habitat group as habitat restoration is one of the few ways to manage the river.
 - Because the December HRW meeting agenda is already pretty full the work group decided to meet in December and at that meeting discuss whether the work group should reduce the number of meetings.
 - Meeting attendees agreed to move the December HRW meeting to December 13th, 2011.
- Action:** Monica Sanchez will check with Grace Haggerty (ISC) to see if the HRW meetings can still be held at ISC.

Next Meeting: December 13th, 2011 from 12:30 to 3:30 (location to be determined)

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Action: Monika Sanchez will verify that Chi Bui is still able to present at the December HRW meeting.

**Habitat Restoration Work Group Meeting
November 15th, 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
Nathan Holste		Reclamation	462-3627	nholste@usbr.gov
Michael Scialdone	HR Member	Pueblo of Sandia	771-5046	mscialdone@sandiapueblo.nsn.us
C. Armijo		Pueblo of Sandia	771-5066	carmijo@sandiapueblo.nsn.us
Monika Sanchez	PMT Member	COE	342-3250	monika.sanchez@usace.army.mil
Christine Sanchez	Admin support	Tetra Tech, EMI	881-3283	christine.sanchez@tetrattech.com