

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting
December 6th, 2011 – 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

Decisions:

- The October 27th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

Actions:

- Ryan Gronewold will provide Gina Dello Russo with a description of the Corps' Floodplain Project/Product (for use in the SAR FY12 scope of work) by tomorrow (12/07/11).
- Gina Dello Russo will update the Floodplain Encroachment Scope of Work with the Corps project description and provide to Ryan for review by Friday (12/09/11).
- Ryan Gronewold will review the draft Scope of Work edited by Gina and provide comments/revisions back to Gina by Monday (12/12/11).
- Gina Dello Russo will submit the revised FY12 Floodplain Encroachment Scope of Work to Yvette McKenna on Monday (12/12/11). In the email, Gina will include a cost estimate correction for the project (\$30,000 not \$55,000).
- Robert Padilla will talk to Jim Wilber about (1) correcting the Floodplain Encroachment Project cost estimate (\$30,000 not \$55,000); (2) the 2003 BO reference in support/justification for the project; (3) what are the potential changes with the Program restructuring and becoming a RIP and where does the SAR work group fit in.
- Ryan Gronewold will PDF the floodplain maps and will distribute both the maps and the shape files to SAR members for reference purposes.
- Ryan Gronewold, Page Pegram, and potentially Robert Padilla offered to help Gina Dello Russo with a day-trip ground-truthing event sometime between December 21st and the New Year.
- SAR members were asked to look at the list of issues that the work group was going to address/discuss and recommend which topics to focus on next, should the work group continue.
- SAR members will consider what the realistic potential is for actually addressing the remaining SAR goals and objectives.
- Terina Perez will electronically distribute the Program Update once it becomes available.
- Terina Perez will update the 2011 Work Group accomplishments.
- SAR members will review their respective agency perspective narratives in the Draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper. Comments and revisions should be emailed to Gina Dello Russo and copied to Marta Wood and Terina Perez.
- Robert Padilla and Terina Perez will review and complete the Reclamation Response to Themes.
- Page Pegram will send the link to the Socorro FEMA maps posted on the internet to SAR members.

Ongoing/Continued Action Items:

- Robert Padilla will meet with Jim Wilber and Terina Perez to discuss the future (continuation) of the SAR ad hoc work group. (*continued from 10/27/11*)
- 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. (*continued from 10/27/11*)
- 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. (*continued from 10/27/11*)
- Gina Dello Russo will ask George Dennis for his FEMA contact. (*continued from 10/27/11*)
- 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). (*continued from 10/27/11*)

- All SAR members will read/revise the Floodplain Land Use white paper introduction, background, and history sections for the December 6th 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*). (continued from 10/27/11)

Meeting Summary:

- Gina Dello Russo brought the meeting to order. The agenda was approved with no changes.
- The October 27th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- Most of the agenda items were discussed during the action item review. The majority of action items were completed as assigned but several actions relating to the review of the Floodplain Land Use White Paper are ongoing.
- The CC requested SAR develop the scope of work for the Floodplain Land Use project since it just missed being funded and is next in line should any additional funding become available. After discussion, attendees agreed that the draft scope that already exists could be easily updated/edited. Members agreed to not include a socio-economic portion in the scope but to potentially address socio-economics in the agency perspective narratives of the Floodplain Land Use White Paper.
- The Floodplain Land Use White Paper continues to be reviewed and edited. In October, work group members were assigned the tasks of reviewing their specific agency perspectives. These tasks are ongoing. The Floodplain Land Use White Paper will be updated based on the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment project products once completed. An executive summary might be added if the White Paper is too lengthy.
- In an update on the Corps' *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products, it was shared that the shape files were sent out for comments. Once comments are received, the feature shape files and floodplain shape files will be combined into the final package. The Corps will provide a written description of the project and products that will be included in the Floodplain Land Use Scope of Work.
- The Agency Response to Themes table is close to completion. ISC provided an electronic copy of their perspectives. Once Reclamation's responses have been received, the table will be formatted. Please remember that this is a draft document for internal SAR use only – it is not to be distributed outside of the work group.
- In a quick review, the work group looked over the SAR 2011 Work Plan. The majority of tasks were completed. The SAR 2011 Accomplishments will be generated based on the completed work. The SAR 2012 Work Plan will need to be developed early in the New Year, but was put on hold at this time until the work group knows more about their path for the future (i.e., whether or not to disband or continue at a reduced level, etc.).
- Members discussed the next steps for the SAR work group. Members expressed uncertainty in determining the future of the work group because the Program itself is undergoing many changes (ex. new BAs, new BO, becoming a RIP, restructuring, etc.). Many members felt the work group has value and has been fruitful over the last 2 years. There were concerns about meeting for the sake of meeting and not being able to be efficient (for many reasons). Several options were suggested on how to proceed including meeting at a reduced effort until the Floodplain Land Use White Paper has been completed and the work group knows whether or not the FY12 Floodplain Encroachment Project will be funded. Members agreed to review the remaining SAR goals and objectives to better determine what the work group might be able to accomplish and if the group continued, what the priorities might be.

Next Meeting: January 26th, 2011 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) co-chair discussions; (2) evaluation of ability to accomplish SAR work group tasks (SAR Work Group Completion and Disbanding); (3) 2012 Work Plan and interim steps; (4) prepare EC/CC presentation on accomplishments & path forward; (5) Program

update: Nov EC meeting and CC Priority funded projects for 2012; (6) recovery actions and how SA reach fits into recovery efforts;

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
San Acacia Ad Hoc Work Group Meeting
 December 6th, 2011 – 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM
 Albuquerque – Bureau of Reclamation

Meeting Notes

Introductions and Agenda Approval

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

Announcements

- It was announced that Terina Perez has taken a promotion within Reclamation and will no longer be part of the PMT. Reclamation is exploring filling the PMT position, but in the interim the SAR work group can contact Monika Sanchez or Michelle Mann (both with COE) as temporary PMT liaisons. Gary Dean (Reclamation) has also expressed a willingness to attend Program meetings and assist in the interim.

Approval of the October 27th, SAR Meeting Notes

- The October 27th, 2011 San Acacia Reach (SAR) work group meeting notes were approved with no changes.

October Action Item/Requests Review

- ✓ 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 16th). – *complete*;
 - Ryan's action to write a description of the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project products is ongoing. It will be delivered to Gina Dello Russo by Wednesday, December 7th for inclusion in the FY12 Floodplain Encroachment SOW.
- ✓ Ryan Gronewold will schedule with Gina Dello Russo and Robyn Harrison to ground-truth the floodplain obstructions of concern. – *complete*;
 - A very detailed shape file with 1,500 different features (ex. jetty jacks, berms, roadways, houses, etc.) was sent to Gina. However, Gina has not had the opportunity to look at the file yet.
 - Gina will have to go into the field for any features she cannot confirm. She may be able to accomplish some of the work over the Christmas holiday.

Action: Ryan Gronewold will PDF the floodplain maps and will distribute both the maps and the shape files to SAR members for reference purposes.

Action: Ryan Gronewold, Page Pegram, and potentially Robert Padilla offered to help Gina Dello Russo with a day-trip ground-truthing event sometime between December 21st and the New Year.

- Robert Padilla will meet with Jim Wilber and Terina Perez to discuss the future (continuation) of the SAR ad hoc work group. – *ongoing*;
 - In his meeting with Jim, Robert will address: (1) corrections to the Floodplain Encroachment Project cost estimate which should be \$30,000 instead of \$55,000; and (2) identify that the floodplain encroachment concerns are in specifically mentioned in the 2003 BO under Conservation Recommendation #24 on page 111 (or page 110 depending on the version).
 - While there is not a “base operating expense” for the SAR work group meetings, because the work group is an official Program ad hoc group, the Program provides support with PMT representation and note taking.

- Robert Padilla will work with Terina Perez on the white paper review. – *ongoing*;
 - Members should provide their comments/edits/revisions to Gina (and copy Marta). Gina will take the lead on incorporating any changes. Robyn provided edits to the agriculture community paragraph(s).
- ✓ Monica Sanchez will remind Page Pegram of her action to revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format. – *complete*;
 - An electronic version was sent to Gina and copied to Marta about a month ago. Please note that this version did not contain all the updated agency versions but the ISC information is accurate. The ISC information will need to be combined with the most recent version of the other agency responses.

Action: Robert Padilla and Terina Perez will review and complete the Reclamation Response to Themes.

- 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. – *ongoing*;
 - Gina shared that she has a meeting with NRSC scheduled for next Thursday.
- ✓ 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. – *complete*;
- ✓ 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. – *complete*;
- 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. – *ongoing*;
- 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. – *ongoing*;
- 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. – *ongoing*;
 - Robert will complete this task by Friday, December 9th.
- Gina Dello Russo will ask George Dennis for his FEMA contact. – *ongoing*;
- 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). – *ongoing*;
 - Gina shared that she has been working on this action but has found it hard to pin-point the most appropriate contact. She will continue to try to find the right group of people to supply/write a statement.
- All SAR members will read/revise the Floodplain Land Use white paper introduction, background, and history sections for the December 6th 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*). – *ongoing*;
- ✓ Monica Sanchez will request Ryan Gronewold send an update on the Floodplain Encroachment Project products to the SAR work group via email. – *complete*;

- ✓ Work group members are asked to RSVP their attendance to the Work Group Appreciation Brunch to Ali Saenz (Program assistant; asaenz@usbr.gov). – *complete*;
- ✓ 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 9th CC meeting. – *complete*;
 - Gina attended the CC meeting as a delegate for SAR.

Ongoing Actions

- ✓ 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*) – *discussed in today's meeting*;
- ✓ Page Pegram will revisit getting the ISC Response to Themes provided in electronic format. (*continued from 9/22/11*) – *completed; discussed in today's meeting*;
- 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*) – *discussed in today's meeting*;
- ✓ 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*) *Have made a few attempts to contact a natural economist at UNM (no response to date) and I will try again before the meeting.* – *discussed in today's meeting*;
- ✓ 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*) – *complete*;
 - Gina left Bill a message explaining the work group's perspective.
 - The FEMA Socorro maps are out in draft form but not finalized.

Action: Page Pegram will send the link to the Socorro FEMA maps posted on the internet to SAR members.

FY12 Floodplain Encroachment Scope of Work

- At their last meeting, the CC requested SAR complete a scope of work for the Floodplain Encroachment study. This project is the next in line for funding and there is a strong likelihood it could be funded should any additional money become available (ex. deobligated funds).
- The Corps is completing Tasks 1-4, but Tasks 5-8 are what the group is seeking to contract out. Tasks 5, 6, and 7 address the evaluation of past trends, looking at future scenarios, and evaluating the possible impacts to flood routing.
- The draft scope already written does not contain the socio-economic piece. The socio-economic evaluation was suggested based on discussions with FEMA. However, it does not have to be included.
 - Janie Chermak (UNM economics professor) recommended that the socio-economic piece could be addressed by adding a socio-economic component to each stakeholder paragraph.
 - The socio-economic evaluation was envisioned to be a measure of trends in development pressure. How many new houses have been built in the floodplain in the past 5 years? What would be the results if the development pressure increased by 10%? 15%? This

evaluation could inform decision makers about whether or not there is an issue now or if there could be an issue in the future. Where are people building? What might be the changes in terms of flood routing that would have to be considered?

- The previous scope was not written with the socio-economic impacts of allowing or not allowing development in the floodplain. Instead, the draft scope focuses on hiring a planner or developer or real estate expert to look into past trends in development and predict future scenarios. What will the future impacts be if the development rate stays the same? Increases by 5%? Increases by 30%? The contractor would also project how much floodplain lands would be developed as a result; and would predict when it might become a more pressing issue than it is today.
 - As suggested by Ms. Chermak, maybe a narrative from the different stakeholders regarding their socio-economic perspectives on (1) limitations to development versus (2) allowing development could be included in the text of the white paper. What would limitation to the development on the floodplain mean in terms of economic impacts (ex. taxes or revenue)?
 - Concern was expressed about how far the Program would want to delve into socio-economic impacts to the county.
 - Attendees agreed that the socio-economic portion would not be included in the FY12 scope of work, but could be addressed in the Floodplain Land Use White Paper.
- Floodplain encroachment is addressed in the 2003 BO as Conservation Recommendation #24 on page 111 (or page 110, depending on version): *Develop and implement a plan to limit encroachment of permanent dwellings into the 10,000 cfs floodplain.*
 - Restriction of the floodplain is not under the “charge” of any of the federal agencies. And it is not within the Program’s authority to condemn or buy lands. However, if encroachment could impact one or more of the Program goals then the Program (1) needs to be made aware of the issues/impacts and then (2) the Program could advise/advocate to others (who do have authority such as county managers) on the impacts of the development.
- Originally, the work group estimated \$80,000 to \$85,000 for the full project (Tasks 1-8). However, when the Corps took on a portion of the work (Tasks 1-4) the requested funds from the Program were decreased to \$30,000. Unfortunately, the CC has maintained a cost estimate of \$55,000 even though there have been multiple attempts to correct (lower) that estimate.
- Attendees agreed that the previous scope of work can be edited to update the tasks and met the Dec 16th deadline.
 - Ryan Gronewold will provide a written description of the Corps’ floodplain project to be included as background in the scope of work.
 - There will probably need to be iterative communications between the contractor and the Corps to go through scenarios to determine the potential impacts and flooding routing. However, it was agreed that Task 4 will accomplish the interactive communications so additional required meetings with the Corps will not need to be added at this time.

Action: Ryan Gronewold will provide Gina Dello Russo with a description of the Corps’ Floodplain Project/Product (for use in the SAR FY12 scope of work) by tomorrow (12/07/11).

Action: Gina Dello Russo will update the Floodplain Encroachment Scope of Work with the Corps project description and provide to Ryan for review by Friday (12/09/11).

Action: Ryan Gronewold will review the draft Scope of Work edited by Gina and provide comments/revisions back to Gina by Monday (12/12/11).

Action: Gina Dello Russo will submit the revised FY12 Floodplain Encroachment Scope of Work to Yvette McKenna on Monday (12/12/11). In the email, Gina will include a cost estimate correction for the project (\$30,000 not \$55,000).

Action: Robert Padilla will talk to Jim Wilber about correcting the Floodplain Encroachment Project cost estimate (\$30,000 not \$55,000); he will also provide the 2003 BO reference in support/justification for the project.

Discuss draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper- incorporate revisions from workgroup members (assignment made in October)

- Terina was again thanked for her impressive completion of the Floodplain Land Use White Paper draft. Even though the text is lengthy, members agreed that it is better to have more detail instead of not enough. It is usually easier to shorten text!
- Members discussed that if the document remains long, it might be appropriate to include an Executive Summary once the draft is completed.
- The SAR work group will continue to revise and edit the draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper into the New Year. There are several sections that will be informed by the results of the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment project which is not completed yet.

Action: SAR members will review their respective agency perspective narratives in the Draft Floodplain Land Use White Paper. Comments and revisions should be emailed to Gina Dello Russo and copied to Marta Wood and Terina Perez.

Update on the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project products

- In an update on the Corps' *Floodplain Encroachment Project* products, it was shared that the shape files were sent out for comments. Once comments are received, the feature shape files and floodplain shape files will be combined into the final package. The Corps will provide a written description of the project and products that will be included in the Floodplain Land Use Scope of Work.

Agency Response to Themes

- The Agency Response to Themes table is close to completion. ISC provided an electronic copy of their perspectives. Once Reclamation's responses have been received, the table will be formatted. Please remember that this is a draft document for internal SAR use only – it is not to be distributed outside of the work group.

2011 Workgroup Accomplishments and Annual Work Plan

- In a brief review, the work group looked over the 2011 work plan and discussed which tasks were accomplished. The 2012 Annual Work Plan development relates to the decisions of the group to continue and if so, at what level of effort (work load).
- At this time, the work group is postponing disbanding –at least for a few months – in order to learn if the FY12 Floodplain Project scope will get funded. In the meantime, the work group will continue with the Floodplain Land Use White Paper revisions and completion of the Corps' Floodplain Encroachment Project.

Action: Terina Perez will update the 2011 Work Group accomplishments.

Discussion of Next Steps for the workgroup

- For a while now (since late summer), the Program has been discussing possible restructuring. It is unknown what this could mean in terms of work groups being combined or disbanded. The SAR work group has had several conversations about whether or not to continue as a work group. Only 1 (of 6) tasks is near completion – is this enough? Does the work group need to continue to complete the other 6 topics?
- Members shared their thoughts on continuing the work group.
 - Most members expressed a willingness to continue attending the meetings as long as the meetings remained productive. There is benefit to the “give and take” discussions. However, the group does not know what products they might be producing.

- Members don't want to meet for the sake of meeting – but it seems that there are not enough people regularly engaged which means that much time is spent “spinning wheels.”
- Between the new BO and all the tentative Program changes (RIP, restructuring, etc.), frustration was expressed that the Program doesn't know where it is going and this makes it difficult for the work groups to understand what changes may or may not be coming. It was suggested that the work group wait until the Program has a clearer idea of its path forward before any major decisions are made.
- The work group has only addressed 1 of the 6 identified topics that workshop participants identified as important to evaluate. While probably “too lofty”, there are still work group goals and objectives that have not been accomplished.
- The workshop and roundtable discussions were very well received. And even though it can be problematic for members to stay on top of things, there have been good outcomes from this effort.
- Some members expressed their impression that the work group had already agreed to disband early in the year once the Floodplain Encroachment project was completed. The work in the San Acacia Reach could be continued through individual agency representatives (to stress San Acacia Reach issues whenever appropriate).
- Suggested options included:
 - 1) Hold off on major decisions until the Program provides more guidance in terms of restructuring;
 - 2) Wait until the Floodplain Encroachment work is completed and then evaluate the need to continue;
 - 3) Meet less often and use conference calls when appropriate to reduce the work load in the interim;
 - 4) Once the Corps' product is completed, present the accomplishments of the work group to the CC/EC and explain that the official 2-year term is up and get feedback on continuing or not;
 - 5) Address San Acacia Reach issues through individual agency representatives;
 - SA issues are very important in terms of the big picture – but the SAR work group might not be the most appropriate way to address the issues. If the agencies feel that SA reach issues are important enough to look at from technical perspective, they can be addressed outside of the Program.
 - However, the SAR work group provides a specific forum that keeps the focus on the San Acacia Reach, which tends to get lost in the shuffle with the other groups. It also provides a single place to address the issues instead of folks having to attend all the work groups to make sure SA was being addressed in each.
 - 6) Delegate or “pass on” the remaining issues/topics to the other work groups;
 - This is one way to make sure the important topics are at least elevated to other groups if the SAR work group disbands.

Action: SAR members were asked to look at the list of issues that the work group was going to address/discuss and recommend which topics to focus on next, should the work group continue.

Action: SAR members will consider what the realistic potential is for actually addressing the remaining SAR goals and objectives.

- The Floodplain Land Use White Paper completion might be delayed if the FY12 Floodplain Encroachment scope of work gets funded. If the FY12 project is not funded, the group might agree to finish the white paper based on the Corps' product only.

- Hopefully, the work group will know by March 2012 if the Floodplain Encroachment Project will be funded.
- It might be appropriate to have agency representatives (in addition to work group members) review the white paper before it is submitted to the CC.
- Simultaneously, work group members should determine which, if any, of the additional topics/issues could be addressed by the work group. Deadlines for white paper reviews could be set and conference call meetings could be arranged to touch base.
- Ideally, it would be nice to have the all the floodplain encroachment work completed by mid-year 2012.

Program Update:

Action: Terina Perez will electronically distribute the Program Update once it becomes available.

Next Meeting: January 26th, 2011 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) co-chair discussions; (2) evaluation of ability to accomplish SAR work group tasks (SAR Work Group Completion and Disbanding); (3) 2012 Work Plan and interim steps; (4) prepare EC/CC presentation on accomplishments & path forward; (5) Program update: Nov EC meeting and CC Priority funded projects for 2012; (6) recovery actions and how SA reach fits into recovery efforts;

**San Acacia Reach Ad Hoc Work group
06 December 2011 Meeting Attendees**

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Gina Dello Russo (via phone)	FWS/Co-chair	575-835-1828	gina_dellorusso@fws.gov
Page Pegram	ISC	505-383-4051	page.pegram@state.nm.us
Terina Perez	Reclamation/PMT	505-462-3614	tlperez@usbr.gov
Ryan Gronewold	COE	505-342-3340	ryan.gronewold@usace.army.mil
Robyn Harrison (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