Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Science Workgroup (ScW) Meeting

17 January 2012 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM **FWS - Osuna**

Decisions

- The December 6th, 2011 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.
- ScW work group members agreed to follow the Albuquerque Public School schedule during inclement weather situations a 2 hour delay or cancellation of school means that a work group meeting that day would also be canceled/rescheduled.

Actions

- Yvette Paroz will follow up with ASIR to confirm a presentation to the ScW work group in either February or March.
- Yvette Paroz will follow up with Gary Dean to confirm a presentation from Kevin Buhl to the ScW work group in February.
- Jen Bachus will forward any Dexter emails/communication regarding the possible fecundity study work to Yvette Paroz.
- Yvette Paroz will follow up with Dexter on their availability/feasibility to complete a fecundity study.
- Mick Porter will request D. B. Stephens (DBMS contractor) provide copies of their data templates/formats.
- Jen Bachus will draft suggested language to address how the Data Synthesis Plan can inform the PVA models and AM; the statement will be distributed to the ScW work group for review/comment.
- Stacey Kopitsch will update the draft Data Synthesis Plan and table with the changes the work group made during the 01/17/12 ScW meeting (including adding a footnote or changing the threats title to reference the Recovery Plan).
- Stacey Kopitsch will add page numbers to the draft Data Synthesis Plan
- Alison Hutson will ask Dexter (Theresa) for any National Wildlife Fish health information they can provide.
- All changes/revisions to the draft Data Synthesis Plan will be completed and submitted to Stacey Koptisch by January 24th, in order to be provided as a read ahead for the February 1st, 2012 CC meeting.
- Jen Bachus will distribute the Albuquerque Journal article on the Secretary of the Interior assigning a group to address the recreational and community issues not currently addressed in the Collaborative Program.

Meeting Summary

- Jen Bachus brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes and the December 6th, 2011 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.
- Attendees then reviewed the December 6th, 2011 Action Items. All actions were completed as assigned.
- Attendees discussed the confusion experienced for the December 2011 meeting. In order to
 prevent this in the future, participants agreed to follow the Albuquerque Public School schedule.
 If the Albuquerque Schools are delayed or cancelled, a ScW meeting that day would also be
 canceled/rescheduled.

- Updates on future projects and SOW assignments were then discussed. The Water Quality and Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Spawning Monitoring scopes were completed and submitted to Reclamation. A subgroup continues to address the RGSM Life History and RGSM Longitudinal Movement scopes of work. There is another potential project, RGSM Population Viability Analysis (PVA) modeling, that is "on the radar" for this summer. The intent was to have a place holder for additional work that could be done to support long-term use of the PVA or in response to the initial PVA modeling results. This project could be used to update or maintain the models.
 - The ScW work group then discussed the PVA feedback on the RGSM Fecundity study. The PVA work group is under a short-term deadline with the RAMAS PVA model being due in June 2012. From that perspective, the PVA did not think a fecundity study would be completed in time to be able to provide useable information. However, the ScW work group expressed wanting to make sure this project wasn't just "forgotten" or dismissed.
 - The fecundity study is small; the funding is available; and it has been on the "to do" list for a while now. Many studies, possibly including the fecundity study, can take years to determine the relationships before one could even speak to if it would be useful to the PVA models or not.
 - O The original objectives of the study were to look at the differences in fecundity due to age, due to size, etc.; and the differences between hormone induced and environmentally cued spawning; etc.
 - The possibility of having Dexter Fish Hatchery complete this study through an Interagency Agreement (IA) was then briefly discussed.
 - Attendees concluded by discussing if there is a need to increase the museum sample size
 in order to have those specimens available for multiple projects. It was requested this be a
 topic for discussion at a future Science workgroup meeting.
- The ScW work group then reviewed the revised draft Data Synthesis Plan. In a working session, attendees reviewed the tracked changes and discussed other suggested changes, including (but not limited to):
 - o How to define "recruitment." After discussion, attendees agreed to strike "recruitment" and add a bullet for juvenile production;
 - Not changing language that was taken directly from the Long-Term Plan (LTP) sections or Recovery Plan;
 - The applicability to PVA or Adaptive Management (AM) was not an explicit part of the assignment but a general statement explaining how the Data Synthesis Plan can inform PVA and AM will be included;
 - The work group then reviewed the table in the draft Data Synthesis Plan and discussed the tracked changes. The work group made several minor changes in a brief working session
 - The work group did not accept several tracked changes because the additional language modified language taken directly from the recovery plan.
- In the Program update, it was shared that the next EC meeting is this Thursday (January 19th) from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the FWS Osuna office. The key agenda items include (1) updates from the 2 EC focus groups on the progress of the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Action Plan and Program Document and (2) discussion on the Secretary of the Interior's initiative.
 - The CC met on January 4th, 2012 and agreed to postpone continued work on the LTP until the RIP Action Plan and Program Document (guidance and governance document) are in draft form and more fully populated.
 - The CC is scheduled to meet again on February 1st. The agenda includes (1) review of the Peer Review Process Document, (2) final review and possible

- approval of the 2012 Work Plans and 2011 Work Group accomplishment documents.
- o There will be a joint co-chair meeting on January 25th, 2012, to facilitate communication between work groups that have overlapping or related projects.
- O Attendees discussed having regular joint-sessions between HR and SCW (i.e., a monthly standing session) at each monthly meeting. No decision or suggestion was made at this time by ScW. There are also concerns about adding on any additional meeting commitments.

Next Meeting: February 21st, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM at ISC.

- Potential agenda items include: (1) K. Buhl presentation; (2) ASIR presentation (Feb or March); (3) Update on remaining FY12 SOWs; (4) joint session with HR?;
- March Tentative Agenda Items: (1) Discussion on increasing the museum sample size (preservation of the October collection) including the objectives, benefits, status of current collection, etc.; (2) ASIR presentation on Population Monitoring and Population Estimation;

Upcoming Meetings

- Genetics Peer Review Panel meeting with ScW tentatively February 1st from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at Reclamation.
- Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review presentation the afternoon session of the EC on February 16th at Reclamation.

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Science Workgroup (ScW) Meeting

17 January 2012 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM **FWS - Osuna**

Meeting Notes

Introductions and Agenda Approval

- Jen Bachus brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- The agenda was approved with no changes.

Approve the December 6th, 2011 ScW Meeting Minutes

• The December 6th, 2011 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.

December 6th, 2011 Action Item Review

- Alison Hutson will send the longitudinal study SOW to Stacey Kopitsch to distribute to the volunteers who will be working on the RGSM Longitudinal Movement SOW. *completed*;
- Stacey Kopitsch will email the ScW to request volunteers to work on the RGSM Longitudinal Movement SOW. Completed Stacey will also notify the CC that it will not be possible for the ScW to meet the December 16th, 2011 deadline for the RGSM Longitudinal Movement SOW. – completed;
- Stacey Kopitsch will email the ScW to see who would like to review the draft Data Synthesis
 Plan in order to avoid compromising any agencies who might want to bid on the synthesis work.

 completed;
- Stacey Kopitsch will make the suggested changes to the 2012 Work Plan and distribute the 2011 Annual Accomplishments, the 2012 Work Plan, and the ScW Charter to the ScW for review; comments are due to Stacey Kopitsch by COB December 20th, 2011. *completed*;
 - The CC began reviewing the 2011 work group accomplishments and 2012 work plans at their last meeting. They are continuing their review via email. No significant changes or edits are expected.
- Tetra Tech will verify that Rebecca Houtman is still included on the ScW mailing list as she was not included on the last couple of emails distributed to the workgroup. *completed*;
- Alison Hutson will make sure the ISC conference room is reserved for calendar year 2012. completed;
 - A meeting room at ISC has been reserved for the ScW work group for the entire year. However, ISC meetings take precedence so there is the possibility of having to relocate if there is a conflicting ISC meeting. The FWS offered its conference rooms as a back-up option.
- Yvette Paroz will discuss contractor interactions with the work group with Jericho Lewis to determine how to incorporate several presentations and updates to the work group as contractual requirements. (Ongoing from 10/13/11) completed;
 - o There should be no issues with incorporating presentations and work group updates to new or modified contracts.

- There is no conflict for volunteer presentation situations; however, anything related to contracting (such as option years or requests for modifications in funding or time) has to go through the contracting office.
 - It is beneficial for both the work group and the contractors to have regular presentations and updates. Contractors are encouraged to take the work group feedback to make the reports better and in-line with what the work group is looking for.
- o In a related note, it was shared that Kevin Buhl would like to present to ScW, possibly in February. He was directed to make the arrangement through Reclamation.
- o ASIR also expressed interest in presenting to ScW in February or March.

Action: Yvette Paroz will follow up with ASIR to confirm a presentation to the ScW work group in either February or March.

Jen Bachus volunteered to use the CC notes to create a bulleted list of recommended sections that
will be included in each synthesis category statement of work and will distribute the list to work
group members for feedback/comment—completed; – part of Data Synthesis Plan reviewed by
ScW volunteers.

Announcements

- Vanessa Martinez, from the Service's regional office, will be "swapping" places with Stacey Kopitsch for a 30-day detail. Vanessa will attend the February Program meetings, including ScW. Any PMT related issues/questions should be directed to her during this time frame. A reminder email with her contact information will be sent to the work group.
- Brian Gleadle, NMDGF, will be retiring this summer (June or July). NMDGF has begun reassigning representatives to the Program groups. Their primary representative for ScW will be Kirk Patten and the alternate for ScW will be John Caldwell. Their CC and EC representatives will be changing as well.
- The Genetics Peer Review Panel would like to meet with ScW tentatively February 1st from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at Reclamation.
- The Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review draft report should be released this week for Program review and comment. There will be a presentation on the population monitoring and population estimation peer review in an afternoon session of the EC on February 16th at Reclamation.

Discussion on the process for rescheduling meetings

- Due to inclement weather conditions, the work group experienced confusion around the December 2011 meeting. While this isn't a regular occurrence, it was suggested that the work group discuss a process for future weather-related situations.
 - Several agencies (ex. ISC) follow the public school schedules if there is a delay, work is delayed accordingly. If school is cancelled, then there is no work that day.
 - Attendees discussed that a 2-hour delay would be even more complicated to try to coordinate. It was suggested that if the Albuquerque Public Schools are on a 2 hour delay, then a ScW meeting would be rescheduled.

Decision: ScW work group members agreed to follow the Albuquerque Public School schedule during inclement weather situations – a 2 hour delay or cancellation of school means that a work group meeting that day would also be canceled/rescheduled.

Updates on Future Projects/SOW Assignments:

• Water Quality – The Water Quality SOW was generated and submitted to Reclamation.

- RGSM Life History A ScW subgroup met in December and early January to work on this scope. Their next meeting is next Tuesday, January 24th from 10:00am to 12:00pm at FWS Osuna. This is a big project and there have been a lot of good discussions on what has already been done and what are the best next steps forward. The PVA comments/feedback on this project is also being taken into account.
- RGSM Spawning Monitoring The RGSM Spawning Monitoring SOW was completed on time and submitted to Reclamation.
- RGSM Fecundity The PVA work group discussed the fecundity study at their December 2011 meeting; unfortunately, there have been some misunderstandings on just how that discussion went. The PVA co-chairs subsequently provided clarification.
 - Dr. Miller (PVA modeler) has a contractual deadline of June 2012 to submit a functional PVA model. This is a short-term, rapidly approaching deadline and the PVA work group did not think that there was enough time for the fecundity study to be implemented and sufficiently inform the PVA models. However, the decision to move forward with the fecundity study remains with ScW.
 - o Ultimately, ScW is trying to direct research in a positive way that will eventually help "fill in" data needs, including for the PVA models.
 - o Justification for completing the fecundity in FY12 includes: (1) the study is small and can be completed this year; (2) there is funding available to do this work; and (3) it has been on the "to do" list for a while now. ScW members expressed wanting to make sure the fecundity study isn't just forgotten or dropped because the PVA won't be able to use the information in this model iteration.
 - o The PVA work group has been repeatedly encouraged to attend ScW meetings in an effort to facilitate communication and data needs so that ScW can better assist in "filling in" the data gaps, addressing/answering assumptions, addressing/answering sensitivity analyses, etc.
 - o It was pointed out that many studies, possibly including the fecundity study, can take multiple years to determine the relationships before one could even speak to if it would be useful to the PVA models or not. If the information will eventually be useful to the PVA models, it is better to initiate the study now and not wait.
 - The original objectives of the study were to look at the differences in fecundity due to age, due to size, etc.; and the differences between hormone induced and environmentally cued spawning; etc.
 - o Attendees then discussed how completing the study in the river (with wild population) would be very challenging. Using the hatchery populations would be easier but it is acknowledged that hatchery fish tend to have higher egg numbers (due to their general bigger size).
 - o If done properly, the hatchery fish research could inform what the wild population does in the river.
 - It was cautioned that the study would have to account for the differences between hormonally induced fish versus spawning due to environmental cues. There needs to be sufficient information to translate to the wild population in the river.
 - It was also suggested that any fish collected as part of this study could be aged post-study.
 - Attendees then discussed the possibilities of using an Interagency Agreement (IA) with Dexter Fish Hatchery to complete the fecundity study. A SOW would still be needed but it wouldn't be put out for competitive bid.

- o It was mentioned that several years ago, when this project was first discussed, Dexter said they were interested in doing the work.
- Concern was expressed that sample size seems to be a continuing issue (ex. genetics studies) that affects the acceptance of study results/outcomes.
 - o It would be reasonable to assume that sample sizes are going to be small with any study of the RGSM this is a small, endangered species.
 - o In response, it was suggested that the ScW work group start looking at the community fish monitoring and shifting back to preserving all the October samples. This might be one way to build a "supply" and begin to address some of the sample size concerns (which are likely to apply to all RGSM studies). The specimens could then be made available for multiple uses.
 - It would be great to come to some Program-wide agreement on accepting the relative answers provided by studies with smaller sample sizes instead of discounting everything due to "more samples needed" or having to do large, lengthy projects for 10 years (funding, time issues).
 - At some point in the future, the PVA model(s) outputs/results could inform the sensitivity with the "theoretical" fish age classes/size and the effects of their presence. Need the Program spend all this money looking for fish that might be 0.001% of the population?

Action: Jen Bachus will forward any Dexter emails/communication regarding the possible fecundity study work to Yvette Paroz.

Action: Yvette Paroz will follow up with Dexter on their availability/feasibility to complete a fecundity study.

- RGSM Longitudinal Movement There is a previous SOW and activity summary for this project; these were distributed to the work group last week. There is a small sub-group meeting to discuss this activity directly following today's ScW meeting.
 - Attendees discussed the possibility of incorporating the PIT tag monitoring into this
 project. The PIT Tag study at the drinking water diversion is completed (or expired).
 Use of the tags would be an easy tool that could be utilized in conjunction with the
 longitudinal movement study.
 - The periphyton study was focused on looking at river drying but the majority of drying occurs down south. This activity was modified from the San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) Fish Passage Peer Review which recommended including a drying component. In other words, explore the longitudinal movement of fish in relationship to drying and the reestablishment after rewetting. The originally drying study was nixed because there is no guarantee the river would dry (location and duration of drying all unknown). The cost would have been too large and it was too difficult to determine how to make the project successful.
 - o It was pointed out that only 1 year in the last 10 has actually had no drying, but the duration, extent, and location of the drying is very hard to predict.
 - o There is also the issue of clearly specifying how drying would be (should be) compared for different reaches. For example, how would a section of river that dried for a day be compared to a different section that dried for 5 days? There is also the complication (interrelationship) with the periphyton: there might be drastically different food availability as the successional colonies "turn over" with drying/rewetting events.
 - o However, there is benefit to understanding the baseline of periphyton availability and studies already conducted:

- There is existing food study information/data from SWCA, Becky Bixby, and the Monitoring Plan Team (MPT) ad hoc work group.
- The ScW work group will need to determine a reasonable amount to spend on this project.
- RGSM PVA Modeling This is a placeholder activity potentially for this summer. After the PVA models have produced initial results/outputs, then ScW might be tasked to write an SOW to support long-term use of the PVA models, or updating or maintain the models. It has been recognized that annual updates to the model would be beneficial.
 - However, until the functional models are provided and initial results available it will be hard to flesh out what this project might entail. Also, the database will be online by this point and it can be used to inform the data updates.
 - For Dr. Miller, the RAMAS contract is short-term with the functional model due by June 31st, 2012 and all reports and documentation due in September 2012. It would make sense for people to be able to use the model before putting out another SOW.
 - o The PVA work group is still addressing the current "consensus dataset" (i.e., the agreed upon data that will be used in this iteration of the models). They are also still determining a consensus dataset process to be used for inclusion of future data
 - o As it relates to the database, the Program will need to make sure that all future data is collected and provided in the right format(s) to make it as easy as possible to use. There are standard templates that the database contractor has and those can become part of the standard contracting data formats for all new contracts.

Action: Mick Porter will request D. B. Stephens (DBMS contractor) provide copies of their data templates/formats.

Update on the Data Synthesis Plan

- Copies of the revised draft Data Synthesis Plan were handed out to work group members. The suggested changes were tracked but most of them were editorial/word smithing. There were some suggested changes to the categories.
- The purpose of the data synthesis is to determine what information/data the Program already has and identify the missing data that needs to be addressed.
- Attendees then reviewed the suggested changes in a working session.
 - o There was discussion on how to define "recruitment" in order to avoid confusion with the intended terminology. There are several options including reproduction, or survivorship to the fall, or passing genes on to the next generation.
 - Survival at all life stages is important but it comes back to understanding where the fish are/might be lost – are they not reproducing? Is there survival issues?
 Fall/summer/winter mortality?
 - It was suggested that recruitment be changed to "survival at all life stages" which would include a given year as well as across years.
 - Another suggestion was to replace the term "recruitment" with "juvenile production."
 - It was agreed that recruitment would be struck and a new bullet would be added for "juvenile production."
 - Management: Attendees discussed the suggestion to replace "management" with
 "monitoring." There was some concern that the "management" piece was originally
 intended to convey the need for future or ongoing maintenance of sites. The management

language on this category was taken directly from the LTP (section 7.1 – physical habitat and management).

 There is a need to address the quality and quantity (within a feedback loop) of habitat and if/when more habitat is needed.

o Water management:

■ It was suggested that "management" be changed to "operations" – what habitat is available based on water operations.

• *Population management:*

- It was suggested that this category title be changed to "population augmentation and salvage."
- There was a comment about the lack of a direct tie to the PVA or AM. Members pointed out that the linkage between the data synthesis to the PVA models or AM was not an explicit part of this assignment. The purpose is to see what work has already been done and that can inform the PVA or AM on possible paths forward and data needs to pursue.
 - Participants discussed including a general statement that addresses how the data synthesis could inform the PVA and AM.
 - In regards to the PVA, this data synthesis effort provides information on what data we already have and what is missing or needed.
 - In regards to AM, this synthesis will inform the evaluation of different pieces of the Program as well as informing how AM could address the identified needed (missing) data.
- o Work group then reviewed the table and discussed the tracked changes. The work group made several minor changes in a brief working session.
 - The work group did not accept several tracked changes because the additional language modified the actual language from the recovery plan. The work group wanted to make sure not to change language from the recovery plan.

Action: Jen Bachus will draft suggested language to address how the Data Synthesis Plan can inform the PVA models and AM; the statement will be distributed to the ScW work group for review/comment.

Action: Stacey Kopitsch will update the draft Data Synthesis Plan and table with the changes the work group made during the 01/17/12 ScW meeting (including adding a footnote or changing the threats title to reference the Recovery Plan).

Action: Stacey Kopitsch will add page numbers to the draft Data Synthesis Plan

Action: Alison Hutson will ask Dexter (Theresa) for any National Wildlife Fish health information they can provide.

Action: All changes/revisions to the draft Data Synthesis Plan will be completed and submitted to Stacey Koptisch by January 24th, in order to be provided as a read ahead for the February 1st, 2012 CC meeting.

Program Update

- Executive Committee (EC) Update
 - o The next EC meeting is this Thursday (January 19th) from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the FWS Osuna office.
 - o The key agenda items include (1) updates from the 2 EC focus groups on the progress of the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Action Plan and Program Document and (2) discussion on the Secretary of the Interior's initiative.
- Coordination Committee (CC) Update

- o The CC met on January 4th, 2012 and agreed to postpone continued work on the LTP until the RIP Action Plan and Program Document (guidance and governance document) are in draft form and more fully populated.
 - At their November 2011 meeting, the EC decided to move forward pursuing becoming a RIP. Part of that processes involves developing these 2 documents. The Program Document is the guidance document that will essentially replace the by-laws and provides the details on the governance of the Program.
 - The CC is scheduled to meet again on February 1st. The agenda includes (1) review of the Peer Review Process Document, (2) final review and possible approval of the 2012 Work Plans and 2011 Work Group accomplishment documents.
 - It was clarified that the Peer Review Process document has been revised from a historical "what has been done" to describing future process.

Miscellaneous Updates

- There have been no additional Program discussions or activity in reabsorbing or discontinuing some of the current ad hoc work groups.
- The work group co-chairs will begin meeting regularly to facilitate communication and coordinate efforts. The first meeting is scheduled for January 25th. This is especially important for work groups that have overlapping or related projects.
 - Attendees discussed the benefits have viewing each work group's FY12 scopes
 of work to see the general "plan forward" and to better identify any issues,
 missing data, concerns, options, etc.
 - Attendees also discussed having regular joint-sessions between HR and SCW (i.e., a monthly standing session) at each monthly meeting. However, no decision or suggestion was made at this time by ScW. Concerns were expressed about adding on any additional meeting commitments.
- The Program Management Team (PMT) is short staffed so the work groups have been asked to consider/discuss the frequency of their meetings and to not meet just for the sake of meeting.
- There are rumors that the Secretary of the Interior "deputized" several individuals to form a group to address concerns that the Collaborative Program is not addressing recreational or community issues and to "revamp" the Program itself. There was an Albuquerque Journal article that did mention something to this effect.

Action: Jen Bachus will distribute the Albuquerque Journal article on the Secretary of the Interior assigning a group to address the recreational and community issues not currently addressed in the Collaborative Program.

Next Meeting: February 21st, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM at ISC.

- Potential agenda items include: (1) K. Buhl presentation; (2) ASIR presentation (Feb or March); (3) Update on remaining FY12 SOWs; (4) joint session with HR?;
- March Tentative Agenda Items: (1) Discussion on increasing the museum sample size (preservation of the October collection) including the objectives, benefits, status of current collection, etc.; (2) ASIR presentation on Population Monitoring and Population Estimation;

Upcoming Meetings

- Genetics Peer Review Panel meeting with ScW tentatively February 1st from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at Reclamation.
- Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review presentation the afternoon session of the EC on February 16th at Reclamation.

Science Work Group January 17th, 2012 Meeting Attendees

| | NAME | AFFILIATION | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS | Primary, Alternate, Other |
|---|-------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Stacey Kopitsch | FWS | 761-4737 | stacey_kopitsch@FWS.gov | A - PMT |
| 2 | Alison Hutson | ISC | 841-5201 | alison.hutson@state.nm.us | P – Co-chair |
| 3 | Dana Price | USACE | 342-3378 | dana.m.price@usace.army.mil | A |
| 4 | Jen Bachus | FWS | 761-4714 | jennifer_bachus@fws.gov | P – Co-chair |
| 5 | Michael Porter | USACE | 342-3264 | michael.d.porter@usace.army.mil | P |
| 6 | Rebecca Houtman | COA | 248-8514 | rhoutman@cabq.gov | P |
| 7 | Yvette Paroz | Reclamation | 462-3581 | yparoz@usbr.gov | Р |
| 8 | Vannessa Martinez | FWS | 248-6665 | vanessa_martinez@fws.gov | О |
| 9 | Marta Wood | Tetra Tech | 259-6098 | marta.wood@tetratech.com | O – note taker |