

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

21 February 2012 Meeting – 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

**ISC**

**Decisions**

- The January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.

**Actions**

- Yvette Paroz will check with Reclamation about providing/assigning a primary ScW member and who could volunteer for the federal co-chair position.
- Mick Porter will check with Justin Reale to determine if he would be able to draft the prioritization process language for inclusion in the draft data synthesis plan.
- Jen Bachus will email the most current version of the draft data synthesis plan (with all tracked changes to date included) to ScW members.
- Jen Bachus will email T. Turner's and M. Osbourne's genetics publication (article) from the Evolutionary Applications journal to ScW members.
- Yvette Paroz will work on creating a document module on the ScW password-protected webpage to house all ScW project report review comments and contractor responses.
- Volunteers for the federal and non-federal Science co-chair positions for the upcoming year should let Alison Hutson and Jen Bachus know by the March Science meeting.
- Douglas Tave and Jen Bachus will talk to Theresa (from Dexter) at the next Propagation meeting.

**Meeting Summary**

- Alison Hutson brought the meeting to order. The agenda was approved with the addition of a discussion on the Federal Co-Chair Position. The January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.
- Attendees then reviewed the January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 action items. All actions were completed as assigned.
- It was announced that the Captive Propagation & Genetics working group meets twice a year. Their next meeting is scheduled for March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00am at the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium.
- Attendees then discussed the need for new federal and non-federal co-chairs. Alison Hutson has completed 2 consecutive terms as the non-federal co-chair. Jen Bachus has completed her year and is unable to volunteer for a second year. Participants discussed the lack of regular agency representation in the ScW work group – only 4 or 5 agencies out of 16 signatories regularly participate. It was then suggested that the work group postpone any changes at this time as more details of the potential Program RIP should be made available within the next month or so. The EC has discussed restructuring and discontinuing/combining work groups. It was then suggested that this will take some time, perhaps next fiscal year even and there is still a need for volunteers to be the federal and non-federal co-chairs. Volunteers should let Alison and Jen know by the March Science meeting.
- Jen Bachus updated the work group on the CC's most recent feedback on the draft data synthesis plan. The CC approved the draft ScW RGSM Data Synthesis Plan pending the inclusion of: (1) language addressing how the synthesis can/will integrate with the database management system (DBMS); (2) discussion explaining the basis for the work group's prioritization of the categories

for the synthesis; and (3) to correct language to clarify that the SOW was completed and submitted to Reclamation for processing, but that the project itself was not in process.

- The first and third edits have been added as tracked changes and were provided as a hard-copy handout for members to review. These will be discussed at the March Science meeting.
- The second edit is from the last CC meeting where some CC members suspected that some ScW members had used methods other than consensus in developing the recommended prioritization. Specifically, the particular CC member(s) was concerned with the Water Quality data synthesis as the top priority and the CC as a whole requested that language be added on how the prioritizations were conducted by Science.
  - For the purposes of the notes, ScW members revisited the justifications behind the decision to recommend Water Quality data synthesis as the first task.
    - (1) the water quality data synthesis work was mostly done; the SOW had been completed already; it would be the easiest topic to address;
    - (2) because it should be relatively “quick and easy”, there would not be a large amount of funding or time needed. This is in-line with the decreasing budgets.
    - (3) also because it should be relatively “quick and easy”, the water quality data synthesis would provide the experience that could be used to modify/revise/refine the synthesis plan or scopes of work for the other categories. The other categories are larger and expected to take more time and money.
    - (4) the water quality data synthesis would satisfy a requirement in the 2003 BiOp. And...
    - (5) it would show action toward the EC directive to synthesize existing data in response to the San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) Fish Passage Peer Review recommendations.
- Vanessa Martinez (PMT) used the past meeting notes (from August 2011 to January 2012) to compile all the discussions related to the prioritization that were held by Science in its meetings. This was provided in hard copy to meeting participants. A volunteer was requested to review those notes and draft language summarizing the prioritization process before the March 17th, 2012 ScW meeting. The language should include specific references to the actual meeting date(s) and page number(s) of those discussions. Mick Porter offered to check if Justin Reale was available to do this task.
- It was explained that at the last CC meeting, the CC approved the Data Synthesis Plan once these 3 edits were added in. The goal is to have these edits in tracked changes for Science to review and discuss at the March Science meeting, and send back to the CC once that is completed.
- Since the CC has not released a revised/approved FY12 Program budget, attendees agreed to postpone any additional work on the ScW 2012 scopes of work for the time being. It is understood that unless additional funds are found, no new ScW projects will be funded in 2012.
- Yvette Paroz then updated members on the Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review. The review panel was scheduled to present and discuss their draft report after the regular EC session on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. However, during the regular EC session, certain agencies expressed their opinion that the entire peer review process was “faulty.” Apparently there was confusion about the scope of the review and misunderstandings about the intent. Some agencies thought the review was going to be a “whole program review” including revisiting the original data and analyses for the population monitoring and population estimation programs.

This resulted in the EC cancelling the peer review panel presentation/discussion in order to discuss reviewing and revising the entire Program Peer Review policies, process, and procedures.

- ScW attendees recommended that the genetics peer review be put “on hold” until the EC/CC has clarified/revised the review process and procedures.
- Attendees then discussed the review of project reports (annual/semi-annual reports). It was agreed that work group reviewers should be able to see how their comments/questions are addressed in the draft reports.
  - Yvette Paroz will continue to attach the review comments to the final reports for documentation and paper trail purposes. She will also look into creating a module on the ScW password-protected webpage to house all review comments and responses. Please note that this will be for current and future reviews only.
- In the Program update, it was shared that the next EC meeting is scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 to 3:00. The key agenda items will tentatively include (1) review of the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Action Plan and Program Document and (2) continued discussion on the Program’s Peer Review Policies and Procedures. The CC met on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and discussed the decrease in budget and reworked the 2012 funding spreadsheet. They are expected to meet on March 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss consensus on the budget changes.

**Next Meeting: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM at ISC.**

- Potential agenda items include: (1) ASIR presentation on Population Monitoring and Population Estimation programs; (2) K. Buhl presentation; (3) elections for co-chair positions; (4) review/approve changes to draft data synthesis plan; (5) update from CC if any ScW projects to be funded in 2012.
- Future agenda topics: (1) joint session with HR; (2) discussion on increasing the museum sample size (preservation of the October collection) including the objectives, benefits, status of current collection, etc.;

**Upcoming Meetings**

- Captive Propagation & Genetics working group: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00am at the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium
- CC: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, from 12:30pm to 4:30pm at Reclamation
- EC: March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00am to 3:00pm 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

- Alison Hutson brought the meeting to order. The agenda was approved with the addition of a discussion on the ScW Federal Co-Chair position.

### Approve the January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 ScW Meeting Minutes

- The January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting notes were approved for finalization with no changes.

### January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Action Item Review

- ✓ Yvette Paroz will follow up with ASIR to confirm a presentation to the ScW work group in either February or March. – *completed;*
  - ASIR and Kevin Buhl will both be tentatively presenting at the March ScW meeting.
- ✓ Yvette Paroz will follow up with Gary Dean to confirm a presentation from Kevin Buhl to the ScW work group in February. – *completed;*
- ✓ Jen Bachus will forward any Dexter emails/communication regarding the possible fecundity study work to Yvette Paroz. – *completed;*
- ✓ Yvette Paroz will follow up with Dexter on their availability/feasibility to complete a fecundity study. – *completed;*
  - The CC has continued to discuss the expected reductions in the FY12 budget; unfortunately, it appears that no new ScW projects will be funded this year at this time. However, there is the possibility of additional funds through deobligations.
  - ScW members agreed to stop working on the new project scopes of work at this time until a notice of funding is received from the CC/EC.
  - Should the fecundity study be funded this year, some members suggested scheduling a meeting with the Dexter Facility staff prior to project initiation. There are several ways to approach a fecundity study so members would like to make sure everyone is “on the same page” with all the details having been discussed in advance.
- ✓ Mick Porter will request D. B. Stephens (DBMS contractor) provide copies of their data templates/formats. – *completed;*
  - The templates are currently being used and developed by the DBMS contractor. Mick has been in contact with D.B. Stephens and will continue to coordinate the receipt of the templates.
- ✓ 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. – *completed;*

- ✓ 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). – *completed;*
- ✓ Stacey Kopitsch will add page numbers to the draft Data Synthesis Plan – *completed;*
- ✓ Alison Hutson will ask Dexter (Theresa) for any National Wildlife Fish health information they can provide. – *completed;*
  - The Dexter facility is not currently doing any work in the Middle Rio Grande (MRG). However, there was no response if they were interested in future work.
  - The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) did a fish health study several years ago – but this study was not explicitly focused on the minnow.
  - Dexter does a “check-up” rotation around the state but it is unknown if the MRG is on that rotation schedule.

**Action:** Douglas Tave and Jen Bachus will talk to Theresa (from Dexter) at the next Propagation meeting.

- ✓ All changes/revisions to the draft Data Synthesis Plan will be completed and submitted to Stacey Koptisch by January 24<sup>th</sup>, in order to be provided as a read ahead for the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 CC meeting. – *completed;*
- ✓ 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. – *completed;*

### Announcements

- The Captive Propagation & Genetics working group meets twice a year; their next meeting is scheduled for March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00at at the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium.

### Federal Co-Chair Position

- Alison Hutson has completed 2 consecutive terms as the non-federal co-chair. Jen Bachus has completed her year and is unable to volunteer for a second year.
- Participants discussed the ScW work load – most of the CC requests for the work groups are tasked to ScW. But ScW is a small group and there is a lack of regular agency representation – only 4 or 5 agencies out of 16 signatories regularly participate. This means that the current members already do all the work.
- It was then suggested that the work group postpone any changes at this time as more details of the potential Program RIP should be made available within the next month or so. The EC has discussed restructuring and discontinuing/combining work groups.
  - However, concern was expressed that the restructuring change(s) will not be initiated soon. Since the changes are expected to take some time (perhaps next fiscal year even), it was then suggested that there is still a need for volunteers to be the federal and non-federal co-chairs.
  - Volunteers should let Alison and Jen know by the March Science meeting.

**Action:** Yvette Paroz will check with Reclamation about providing/assigning a primary ScW member who could volunteer for the federal co-chair position.

### Update on the Data Synthesis Plan

- Jen Bachus updated the work group on the CC’s most recent feedback on the draft data synthesis plan.

- The CC approved the draft ScW RGSM Data Synthesis Plan pending the inclusion of: (1) language addressing how the synthesis can/will integrate with the database management system (DBMS); (2) discussion explaining the basis for the work group's prioritization of the categories for the synthesis; and (3) to correct language to clarify that the SOW was completed and submitted to Reclamation for processing, but that the project itself was not in process.
  - The first and third edits have been added as tracked changes and were provided as a hard-copy handout for members to review. These will be discussed at the March Science meeting.
    - Some ScW members expressed their perspective and frustration that the ScW work group originally discussed/recommended the DBMS as a great tool to help address the data synthesis tasks over a year ago. But only now is the CC providing directives regarding the integration of the DBMS and data synthesis.
  - The second edit is from the last CC meeting where some CC members suspected that some ScW members had used methods other than consensus in developing the recommended prioritization. Specifically, the particular CC member(s) was concerned with the Water Quality data synthesis as the top priority and the CC as a whole requested that language be added on how the prioritizations were conducted by Science.
    - Some members expressed "surprise" at some of the CC member's response to the draft data synthesis plan – which is still clearly labeled draft. ScW has asked the CC at least twice for guidance. Nothing in this version should be a surprise - water quality has been on the list since the beginning; it has never been taken off.
    - Attendees agreed that the ScW work group has ample discussions on issues/topics and everyone is able to contribute. No one feels coerced with any of the decisions; concerns and issues are "worked through" so that everyone walks away in agreement on how to proceed and in support of the group's decisions.
    - Vanessa Martinez (PMT) used the past meeting notes (from August 2011 to January 2012) to compile all the discussions related to the prioritization that were held by Science in its meetings. This was provided in hard copy to meeting participants. A volunteer was requested to review those notes and draft language summarizing the prioritization process before the March 17th, 2012 ScW meeting. The language should include specific references to the actual meeting date(s) and page number(s) of those discussions.
      - Clearly, from the volume of discussion excerpts collected, ScW has talked a lot about the data synthesis task, categories, and prioritization.
      - Some members were optimistic that since it is unlikely the data synthesis work will get funded this year, once these requests have been addressed the work group will be able to "close" this task as completed. However, other members were concerned that the CC will come back and ask for it to be something else. The concern included frustration that ScW has been asking for guidance/direction since last August but the task is "still on the table."
      - The water quality statement of work was approved; the CC has not requested revisiting that.

- Since he was involved in the water quality scope development and is focused on water quality in his thesis work, Mick Porter offered to see if Justin Reale would be able to develop the explanatory paragraph.
- For the purposes of the notes, ScW members revisited the justifications behind the decision to recommend Water Quality data synthesis as the first task.
  - (1) the water quality data synthesis work was mostly done; the SOW had been completed already; it would be the easiest topic to address;
  - (2) because it should be relatively “quick and easy”, there would not be a large amount of funding or time needed. This is in-line with the decreasing budgets.
  - (3) also because it should be relatively “quick and easy”, the water quality data synthesis would provide the experience that could be used to modify/revise/refine the synthesis plan or scopes of work for the other categories. The other categories are larger and expected to take more time and money.
  - (4) the water quality data synthesis would satisfy a requirement in the 2003 BiOp. And...
  - (5) it would show action toward the EC directive to synthesize existing data in response to the San Acacia Diversion Dam (SADD) Fish Passage Peer Review recommendations.

**Action:** Mick Porter will check with Justin Reale to determine if he would be able to draft the prioritization process paragraph for inclusion in the draft data synthesis plan.

**Action:** Jen Bachus will email the most current version of the draft data synthesis plan (with all tracked changes included) to ScW members.

#### **Update on remaining FY12 SOWs**

- Since the CC has not released a revised/approved FY12 Program budget, attendees agreed to postpone any additional work on the ScW 2012 scopes of work for the time being. It is understood that unless additional funds are found, no new ScW projects will be funded in 2012.
- Yvette Paroz provided the work group with project updates:
  - The Population Monitoring draft report was posted for review (available 2 weeks ago);
  - The Population Estimation 2011 report is expected soon (early March);
  - The Genetics report was also posted; the Turner/Osbourne genetics article was published in Evolutionary Applications journal.
  - The City of Albuquerque’s BioPark report was posted;
  - ISC’s report was also posted;
  - The Augmentation Monitoring draft reports for 2010 and 2011 are both just recently available;
  - The Salvage report is not yet out; the egg monitoring scope was expanded to include actual reports in addition to the web postings.

**Action:** Jen Bachus will email the T. Turner’s and M. Osbourne’s genetics publication (article) from the Evolutionary Applications journal to ScW members.

#### **Update/discussion on Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review Panel Presentation**

- Yvette Paroz then updated members on the Population Monitoring and Population Estimation Peer Review. The review panel was scheduled to present and discuss their draft report after the regular EC session on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. However, during the regular EC session that morning, certain agencies expressed their opinion that the entire peer review process was “faulty.” Apparently there was confusion about the scope of the review and misunderstandings about the intent. Some agencies thought the review was going to be a “whole program review” including revisiting the original data and analyses for the population monitoring and population estimation programs. This resulted in the EC cancelling the peer review panel presentation/discussion in order to discuss reviewing and revising the entire Program Peer Review policies, process, and procedures.
  - The intent was to have more ScW input with the draft report, but unfortunately, that had not been coordinated/completed prior to the release of the draft report. At the EC, certain agencies expressed their opinion that the entire process was “tainted” since ScW didn’t meet with the panel. However, the report is in draft form so this could have been an opportunity for ScW and others to contribute. The draft was not strong, but it was only a draft. This was the Program’s opportunity to get more substance and more questions answered.
  - Those agencies at the EC effectively “shut down” the entire project. The draft report will be considered “non-existent” (for Program purposes; not for contracting purposes). As the COTR for this project, Yvette will discuss how to proceed with Jericho Lewis (Contracting Officer for Reclamation).
- The EC then met in a closed session in place of the Population Monitoring and Population Estimation presentation to discuss revising the entire peer review policies, processes and procedures.
  - An expert on peer reviews shared that there is no such thing as a “standard peer review process.” Peer reviews can be approached in a number of ways depending on the intent/issues/focus and questions being asked.
  - ScW members discussed the development of the Population Monitoring peer review questions and how the intent was to avoid “tainting” the process by asking leading questions and introducing the “politics” to the panel prior to the review. Thus, the questions were specifically developed to be technical and objectively stated.
- ScW attendees recommended that the genetics peer review be put “on hold” until the EC/CC has clarified/revised the review process and procedures.
  - In the future, ScW will need to make sure that the purpose of the review is clearly defined: peer or program review?
  - Some members also suggested that the revised peer review process be clear on how disagreements with a review panel’s findings are handled.
  - Attendees then discussed the review of project reports (annual/semi-annual reports). Some members expressed the opinion that the Program is weak on reviewing project reports and documents. Comments and feedback is provided to the COTR but the work groups don’t see how those are addressed.
    - It was agreed that work group reviewers should be able to see how their comments/questions are addressed in the draft reports.
    - Yvette Paroz has started attaching the comments/feedback to the final documents for a paper trail. If the COTR judges the comments to be out of the scope of work, that is also documented.
    - It was recommended that the work group’s secure web pages could be used for tracking the report comment process.



- There should be a process on how to proceed in any possible situation where work group comments/concerns are not addressed adequately. This affects the quality of reports.

**Action:** Yvette Paroz will work on creating a document module on the ScW password-protected webpage to house all ScW project report review comments and contractor responses.

### Program Update

- *Executive Committee (EC) Update*
  - The EC met last Thursday (February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012) from 9:00am to 4:30pm at Reclamation. The March meeting is scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 to 3:00.
  - The key agenda items include (1) review of the 2 EC focus groups on the progress of the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Action Plan and Program Document and (2) continued discussion on the Program's Peer Review Policies and Procedures.
- *Coordination Committee (CC) Update*
  - The CC met on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and discussed the decrease in budget and reworking the 2012 funding spreadsheet. They are expected to meet in March to discuss consensus on the budget changes.
- *Miscellaneous Updates*
  - Attendees briefly discussed the potential changes to Program structure including the redistribution of work groups. The hope is that consolidating work groups (reducing the number of work groups) will result in more effective communication and coordination as well as a reduced work load for members.

### Next Meeting: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM at ISC.

- Potential agenda items include: (1) ASIR presentation on Population Monitoring and Population Estimation programs; (2) K. Buhl presentation; (3) election for co-chair positions; (4) review/approve changes to draft data synthesis plan; (5) update from CC if any ScW projects to be funded in 2012.
- Future tentative agenda topics: (1) joint session with HR; (2) discussion on increasing the museum sample size (preservation of the October collection) including the objectives, benefits, status of current collection, etc.;

### Upcoming Meetings

- Captive Propagation & Genetics working group: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00at at the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium
- CC: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, from 12:30pm to 4:30pm at Reclamation
- EC: March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00pm to 3:00pm at Reclamation

**Science Work Group  
February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 Meeting Attendees**

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	<b>Primary, Alternate, Other</b>
1	Vanessa Martinez	FWS	248-6665	vanessa_martinez@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	Yvette Paroz	Reclamation	462-3581	yparoz@usbr.gov	P
7	Rick Billing	ABCWUA	796-2527	rbillings@abcwua.org	P
8	Peter Wilkinson	ISC	827-5801	peter.wilkinson@state.nm.us	O
9	Brooke Wyman	MRGCD	247-0234	brooke@mrgcd.us	A
10	Douglas Tave	ISC	841-5202	douglas.tave@state.nm.us	A
11	Marta Wood	Tetra Tech	259-6098	marta.wood@tetrattech.com	O – note taker