

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Coordination Committee Meeting
April 11, 2012 – 12:30 - 4:00 pm
Bureau of Reclamation
San Juan Conference Room**

Action:

- Edits and comments on the Additional Tasks for Collaborative Program Technical Workgroups to Transition to a Contemplated Middle Rio Grande Recovery Implementation Program in 2012 draft document and the 2012 Workgroup Work Plans are due to Yvette McKenna by Friday, April 13th, 2012.

Decisions:

- The March 7th, 2012 Coordination Committee (CC) meeting summary was approved with no changes.
- The CC approved funding for: the Santa Ana Rio Grande & Rio Jemez Biological & Habitat Survey in the amount of \$142,306 and the Monitor Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Genetics activity in the amount of \$185,000. The CC was unable to approve FY2012 funding for the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data activity as its priority was reduced and the FY2012 funding allotment is insufficient. The remainder of the budget (\$17,694) was placed in the Continue RGSM Population Estimation activity. The CC will further discuss the funding of the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data project after EC discussion at their meeting on April 20th, 2012.

Requests:

- The CC requests that the Science Workgroup develop a statement of work for a genetic monitoring and analysis program that would include cross-laboratory validation of a representative number of samples and would be as close to the current Monitor RGSM Genetics effort as possible (excluding publication activities) by May 31st, 2012. The level of effort is not to exceed the existing annual cost of the current activity (~\$185,000); the draft SOW will be provided to the CC for review. The Request for Proposals will be put out as a 1 year contract with 4 option years.

Next Meeting: May 2nd, 2012 from 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM at Reclamation

- Tentative agenda items include: 1) Discuss funding or in-house effort for the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data; 2) Review recommended updates/changes to CC Charter;

Meeting Summary

Introductions and Agenda Approval:

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. Ken Cunningham was introduced as the alternate Coordination Committee (CC) member for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
- The agenda was rearranged so that discussion and approval of the activities still under consideration would occur after approval of the March 7th, 2012 meeting summary.

Decision – Approval of the March 7th, 2012 meeting summary and review of action items:

- The March 7th, 2012 CC meeting summary was approved with no changes.
- Meeting attendees reviewed the March 7th, 2012 action items.

- **Jim Wilber will provide any information or comments Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has on environmental compliance associated with the Program to the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Program Document focus group.**
(Replaces action item: *Jim Wilber will draft a paragraph on NEPA compliance to be included under Section 5.0 Long-term Plan and Environmental Compliance; ongoing from 10/26/11*)
 - Complete.
- **Jim Wilber and Rick Billings will review the CC Charter and present any recommended changes or updates to the Charter at the April 2012 CC meeting; CC members can email any comments or recommended changes to Jim or Rick.**
 - Complete.
- **Grace Haggerty will send a draft peer review process to Yvette McKenna by March 8th, 2012 for use by the RIP Program Document focus group.** ✓
 - Complete.
- **Yvette McKenna and the EC Co-Chairs will send an email to the technical workgroups to keep them informed on the possible Program structural changes and RIP transition.**
 - A document listing additional tasks that the workgroups can begin to work on in FY12 is planned to be distributed to the work groups as a supplement to their FY12 Work Plans instead of as an email; the document will be discussed during today's meeting.

Decision – Discuss and approve funding or next steps for 3 activities under consideration: Monitor Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Genetics, Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data, and Continue RGSM Population Estimation:

- It was announced that an additional activity (Santa Ana Rio Grande and Rio Jemez Biological and Habitat Survey) has been added to the funding spreadsheet and will need to be considered for FY12 funding. Apologies were made that the activity was not brought to the CC's attention sooner.
- *Monitor RGSM Genetics -*
 - It was shared that the Science Workgroup (ScW) will be having a meeting to develop a draft statement of work (SOW) for an interim contract for the Monitor RGSM Genetics activity. The ScW was able to agree that at the bare minimum data collection should continue to occur without a gap. The ScW was unable to reach agreement on whether data analysis could be postponed for one year; however, they were in agreement that data analysis shouldn't be postponed for more than two years.
 - The current Monitor RGSM Genetics activity is funded through a grant that will end in September 2012. If the activity is continued it will need to be funded through a contract and a SOW will need to be developed. As part of the grant data collection occurs twice a year with samples from wild RGSM taken in February and samples from captive RGSM taken in November. In order to have the contract in place for sampling in November 2012, the activity will need to be funded with the FY12 budget and a statement of work (SOW) will be needed by May 31st, 2012; the 2012 wild RGSM samples have already been collected. If the activity is funded with FY13 funds a contract cannot be awarded until February of 2013 and there is the potential that the November sampling will be missed.

- Because the propagation facilities collect the samples that are sent to the contractors, one option to avoid a gap in data collection is to utilize a portion of the facilities' Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds to collect and preserve samples to be analyzed at a later time. It was verified that the preserved samples can be stored for several years and still be useable. Dexter also has the capability to perform the analysis.
- While some CC members expressed that they would be fine with a gap in the analysis as long as there was not a gap in data collection there was also strong objection to there being a gap in either the data collection or the analysis, based on the view that because the RGSM is short lived there is the potential to unintentionally cause a lot of damage in a short amount of time.
- A representative from the ScW verified that the ScW is capable of developing a SOW for the activity by May 31st, 2012. Some of the ScW would have liked to wait for a peer review before developing the SOW; however, as long as the SOW can be adjusted once the activity is informed by a peer review then the ScW is fine with developing a SOW.
 - The peer review of the genetics program has been put on hold until a standard peer review process is developed. A peer review of the genetics program still remains as one of the most important activities for the ScW.
 - Meeting attendees were updated that the RIP Program Document focus group, with assistance from Grace Haggerty, will develop a standard peer review process.
 - Meeting attendees discussed that it is always important to evaluate activities and programs (even activities/programs that are considered to be successful) to see if modifications can be made to make an activity or program stronger or more efficient. It is common for activities that are at the end of their contract cycle to be referred back to technical staff to see if any modifications should be made before it is reissued.
 - Though a peer review cannot occur before a SOW is needed there is the option for Program technical staff to do their own review of the genetics program to see if any modifications should be made to the Monitor RGSM Genetics activity in the interim until a peer review occurs.
 - There was hesitancy to make any changes to the processes used in the current grant as there has not been any basis or indication that changes should be made and if the peer review does indicate that changes should be made the ScW would have to develop yet another SOW. Also, given the varying opinions on the activity at the work group level, it was not known if the ScW could reach agreement on a SOW for a different process by May 31st. The ScW could develop a SOW similar to the current grant by May 31st.
 - One option to allow for making changes to the SOW after the peer review occurs is to issue a 1-year contract with 4 option years. This would allow flexibility for modifications to be made within the life of the contract without having to recompet the contract if a peer review indicates that the SOW should be modified.

- Wade Wilson, geneticist at Dexter, further explained the collection of captive samples and the analysis. Samples (clippings) from the captive RGSM are taken the day the fish are released into the river. The samples are then processed and information is reported at the end of the funding cycle as part of the annual report. The samples are preserved in the Museum of Southwestern Biology at the University of New Mexico.
- Since there is the potential for a new contractor to be awarded the contract, cross-laboratory validation will need to be included in the SOW to ensure that any differences that are found are in the genetics and not caused by a difference in procedure used by the laboratories.
 - It was explained that a cross-laboratory validation would require the new contractor to rerun analyses on a representative amount of RGSM samples from the Museum of Southwestern Biology to make sure that their allele calls (allele nomenclature) are the same as the calls made by the previous contractor.
 - Though a cross-laboratory validation will be an additional cost, the current grant includes publication costs which could be excluded in the contract.
 - It was asked if the scientific peer review conducted by scientific journals that the activity receives as a part of the grant would be able to inform the ScW if any changes should be made.
 - These type of scientific peer reviews may not be as sufficient as the Program would like; they may have specific questions about the activity that may not be within the scope of a peer review conducted by a scientific journal.
- Given the fact that there is not a peer review of the genetics program to provide guidance and given the concern for a potential gap that could do irreparable harm there was general agreement that the Program should at least maintain the consistency of the current Monitor RGSM Genetics activity.
 - The CC requests that the Science Workgroup develop a statement of work for a genetic monitoring and analysis program that would include cross-laboratory validation of a representative number of samples and would be as close to the current Monitor RGSM Genetics effort as possible (excluding publication activities) by May 31st, 2012. The level of effort is not to exceed the existing annual cost of the current activity (~\$185,000); the draft SOW will be provided to the CC for review.
- *Santa Ana Rio Grande and Rio Jemez Biological and Habitat Survey -*
 - It was explained that this activity is funded through a grant that was approved for 5 years of funding and the project is in the final year of the grant. Because the full amount was not available at the time the activity was approved the Program agreed to fund the activity incrementally over the 5-year period. Because the activity is funded through a grant the Program is not obligated continue to fund the activity for the full 5 years.
 - The activity benefits both the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SWFL) and the RGSM and has been making progress on an annual basis; regular updates and presentations are given to the Habitat Restoration Work group (HRW).
 - If the activity is not funded, then the activity could not be continued as it is too late to find alternate funds for this year; the project would not be picked back up

the following year. Additional funds beyond the 5-year grant would be needed to fully complete the activity so there is the potential that the project would not be completed regardless of whether the CC chooses to fund the activity or not. If the Program funds the project for the 5th year as originally planned, Santa Ana would have a full year to look for other funding sources.

- *Synthesis of RGSM Data/Literature –*
 - The CC was updated that the ScW has reviewed the draft Data Synthesis Plan and will be approving the proposed changes at their upcoming meeting on April 17th, 2012.
 - It was shared that the DBMS work group has requested to see the Data Synthesis Plan.
 - It was recommended that the Data Synthesis Plan not be distributed to the DBMS until the ScW has approved the proposed changes.
 - Attendees were reminded that the estimated cost of the activity was increased to include acquisition of 6 data sets from 1999 - 2008 that were requested for the Population Viability Analysis (PVA).
 - Because of the state of the budget it's not likely that the data acquisition could be completely funded in one year. The Reclamation Contracting Officer is negotiating with the contractors to fund the data acquisition incrementally with the stipulation that all 6 of the data sets are purchased. The EC will be discussing the addition of data acquisition to the activity at their meeting on April 20th, 2012.
 - It was pointed out that it is highly unlikely that the PVA modelers would be able to incorporate the new data into the PVA in time to inform the consultation or to meet the PVA contract deadline in June.
 - There was some agreement that, though the data synthesis is important and needs to be completed, given the budget and the importance of the other activities that are being considered the priority of the data synthesis has been reduced.
- *Continue RGSM Population Estimation-*
 - The activity is in the last year of the current contract and will need to go out for Request for Proposal (RFP) next year. There is the potential for this activity to be funded at a reduced level that would only include data collection. The deadline for reissuing the Population Estimation contract is April 30th, 2012.
 - For this activity, data is collected once a year to estimate the size of the population. The activity is not a requirement and prior to this activity no estimation was made. Each year of the activity is discreet.
 - Some CC members were in agreement that the activity could be skipped for a year as it may not be as urgent as the other activities being considered. There was also agreement that the level of effort for the activity could be reduced to only data collection if needed.
- The CC approved funding for: the Santa Ana Rio Grande & Rio Jemez Biological & Habitat Survey in the amount of \$142,306 and the Monitor Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Genetics activity in the amount of \$185,000. The CC was unable to approve FY2012 funding for

the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data activity as its priority was reduced and the FY2012 funding allotment is insufficient. The remainder of the budget (\$17,694) was placed in the Continue RGSM Population Estimation activity. The CC will further discuss the funding of the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data project after EC discussion at their meeting on April 20th, 2012.

Decision – Review and approve Work groups’ 2012 Work Plans: Yvette McKenna presented a document of additional activities that the work groups can work on during 2012. The document was developed as a way for the Program Manager and EC to provide guidance on the tasks that the workgroups can work on during this period of budget uncertainty and as the EC considers transition to a RIP. It’s planned for the document to be provided to the work groups as a supplement to their FY12 work plans. The workgroups will also be provided with the Middle Rio Grande Consultation/RIP Establishment Timeline that was distributed at the March 28th EC meeting. Edits and comments on the Additional Tasks for Collaborative Program Technical Workgroups to Transition to a Contemplated Middle Rio Grande Recovery Implementation Program in 2012 draft document and the 2012 Workgroup Work Plans are due to Yvette McKenna by Friday, April 13th, 2012.

Review recommended updates/changes to CC Charter: Because several CC members had to leave today’s meeting early a review of the updates/changes to the CC Charter was tabled for the next CC meeting.

Discuss input to draft meeting summaries: Attendees were reminded that the comment period on the meetings summaries is provided to avoid spending time on edits during meetings and it is the expectation that if an individual has reported out on a topic at a meeting that they will make edits to their section for clarification or to enhance understanding; edits that are for personal preference on wording or style that do not change the meaning of the summary do not need to be submitted.

Next Meeting: May 2nd, 2012 from 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM at Reclamation

- Tentative agenda items include: 1) Discuss funding or in-house effort for the Synthesis of Existing RGSM Literature/Data; 2) Review recommended updates/changes to CC Charter;

**Coordination Committee Meeting
11 April 2012 Meeting Attendees**

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