

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) Meeting
19 June 2012, Tuesday
12:30-3:30 pm at ISC**

Actions

- Michelle Mann will distribute the most recent versions of the Adaptive Management SOW and the delineating criteria to evaluate restored habitat to the HRW.
- HRW members will review the flycatcher portions of the criteria in preparation for the June HRW meeting; comments on the criteria should be sent to Danielle Galloway for compilation.
- Robert Padilla will ask Yvette Paroz or Hector Garcia for the data from the project that looked for potential refugial habitat for RGSM to include in the reach mapping. (*Ongoing 4/17/12*)
- Jason Casuga will find out if the shapefiles from Reclamation's flycatcher suitability monitoring can be provided to the Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) (*Ongoing 12/13/11*).

Decisions

- The May 15th HRW meeting notes were approved with no changes.

Meeting Notes

Introductions/Agenda Approval

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- The agenda was approved with the correction that the next HRW meeting will be on July 17th, 2012.
- Meeting attendees discussed reducing the number of HRW meetings. There was agreement from attendees that the work group's work load was light enough to begin meeting every other month. Because there were members who were not in attendance for today's meeting attendees agreed to meet in July and continue the discussion. Also, because the June Science Work group (ScW) meeting was cancelled and there are several people who attend both meetings the work group agreed that it would be best to synchronize their meetings with ScW meetings.

Announcements

- Meeting attendees were given an update on the Diorahbda beetle (beetle) field training hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) that was completed at the end of May.
 - During the training participants were able to view the beetle in different life stages (egg, larvae, adult). There was a high number of Tamarisk weevils present

at the time of the training so the participants were able to view the weevil also. During the training agencies marked areas on a map that they knew they would be monitoring for various reasons (i.e. flycatcher monitoring) and would be able to also monitor for presence or absence of the beetle.

- The effects of the beetle have not yet been analyzed and there is a mix of perspectives on whether the effects of the beetle will be good or bad and whether the beetle will have an effect on the flycatcher.
- There is not a good understanding of the mortality rate of Salt Cedar from the effects of the beetle but it's believed to be low as it takes several defoliation cycles before the Salt Cedar die. There are areas where the Salt Cedar has been stressed to the point where native vegetation has had the opportunity to take over.

Approve May 15th, 2012 HR meeting minutes

- The May 15th HRW meeting notes were approved with no changes.

Action Item Review

- **HRW members will review the flycatcher portions of the criteria in preparation for the June HRW meeting; comments on the criteria should be sent to Danielle Galloway for compilation.**
 - This action item will be carried forward to the July HRW meeting as not all of the work group members had time to review the criteria.
- **Robert Padilla will ask Yvette Paroz or Hector Garcia for the data from the project that looked for potential refugial habitat for RGSM to include in the reach mapping. (Ongoing 4/17/12)**
 - This action item will remain ongoing as the status of the action item is not known.
- **Jason Casuga will find out if the shapefiles from Reclamation's flycatcher suitability monitoring can be provided to the Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) (Ongoing 12/13/11).**
 - This action item will remain ongoing as the status of the action item is not known.

Discuss delineating criteria to evaluate restored habitat, look to next steps to streamline criteria (rapid assessment, develop matrix, evaluate constructed projects)

- Attendees were updated that comments on the delineating criteria have been received. Meeting attendees agreed to carry this discussion over to the July HRW meeting to allow more time for review.
- Meeting attendees were updated on the Adaptive Management Scope of Work (SOW):
 - Comments were received on the SOW and the Executive Committee (EC) approved the SOW at their May 29th meeting. The SOW is ready but the Corps is still working on incorporating comments to Appendix C. The Corps will be meeting with the contractor on Friday.

Action: Michelle Mann will distribute the most recent versions of the Adaptive Management SOW and the delineating criteria to evaluate restored habitat to the HRW.

Program Update

- The Corps would like to make a presentation on the Meso-habitat Study they have been working on with USGS to the Science Workgroup and HRW in September 2012. The presentation will include preliminary results. USGS would like this presentation to take place because due to cuts in travel funding they may not be able to make a final presentation.
- The Database Management System training is tentatively planned for September. There will be at least two days for training.
- The EC will be meeting on June 21st. The meeting will include presentations on the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) Program Document and Action Plan. The EC is scheduled to endorse the RIP documents at their July meeting.
- The draft External Peer Review Process is in the comment period. So far comments have been received from the Corps, Interstate Stream Commission, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Some of the comments were extensive and might require further discussion at the EC meeting.
- Meeting attendees discussed the RIP documents and possible RIP transition.
 - Concern was raised that the RIP documents are still missing key pieces as decisions on RIP management and the sufficient progress metrics have not yet been made.
 - There was also concern that though Program agencies continue to confirm that they are supportive of the idea of a RIP they are still hesitant to commit. However, this is understandable as there will be a lot at stake in the transition.
 - Attendees were updated that the EC will be making a decision on having a workshop to discuss the use of Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE). The workshop planning group has been tasked to provide the EC with the proposed objectives, what is expected as output, and an agenda for the workshop. The planning group would like to receive input from the Service before the plans for the workshop are reviewed by the EC.
 - It was explained that the purpose of the workshop is for scientists and technical experts to have facilitated discussions on CPUE (the methods used, the information it provides, alternative methods) to provide recommendations and input to assist the EC in making a decision on the sufficient progress metrics. Because of the controversy surrounding CPUE it's believed that it will take more than one workshop to resolve the sufficient progress metrics issues. The workshop will include participation from an outside panel; it's not known who the outside experts are who will be invited to participate because the workshop hasn't been authorized by the EC yet.

- One of the plans that the planning group developed was to have the workshop be a 3-day workshop. During the first day the EC members would provide input to the scientists, and then over the next two days the scientists would have technical discussions.
 - Because of some of the setbacks in planning it's not known if the workshop can be completed within the allocated funding or within the timeframe that it was originally planned for (around August or September).
- Concern was expressed that the deadline for the Reclamation Biological Assessment (BA) is rapidly approaching.
 - If the RIP is not ready there is the potential that the Biological Opinion (BO) timeline can be extended. However, extending the timeline could also have legal repercussions.
 - It was one opinion that it would be better for the RIP to be well developed rather than hastily put together to meet the current timeline. However, there was some concern that extending the deadline would lead to decisions continually being put off for a later date.
 - The Corps has already submitted their BA to the Service. If the current BO timeline is extended it wasn't known if the Corps would be issued their own BO. The Service had said that one BO would be issued to both Reclamation and the Corps; however it's believed that the Service has a timeframe in which they must issue a BO or make a response after the Corps has submitted BA. The Corps did receive a letter from the Service with comments and suggestions for their BA.

Next Meeting: July 17th, 2012 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM at ISC

- Tentative agenda items: 1) Reduce HRW to every other month ; 2) Discuss delineating criteria to evaluate restored habitat, look to next steps to streamline criteria (rapid assessment, develop matrix, evaluate constructed projects); 3)

Habitat Restoration Work Group Meeting
June 19th, 2012 Meeting Attendees

NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	P/A/O
Rick Billings	HR Member Co-Chair	ABCWUA	796-2527	rbillings@abcwua.org	P
Danielle Galloway	HR Member Co-Chair	USACE	342-3661	danielle.a.galloway@usace.army.mil	P
Liz Zeiler	HR Member	ISC	827-6189	Elizabeth.seiler@state.nm.us	A
Eveli Abeyta	HR Member	Santo Domingo Pueblo	465-0055	eabeyta@sdutilities.com	P
Kenneth Lovato		Santo Domingo Pueblo	465-0055	klovato@sdutilities.com	O
Michelle Mann	PMT Member	USACE	342-3426	michelle.n.mann@usace.army.mil	O
Brooke Wyman	HR Member	MRGCD	247-0234	brooke@mrgcd.us	A
Christine Sanchez	Admin support	Tetra Tech	881-3283	christine.sanchez@tetrattech.com	O