

# Executive Committee Meeting

## *August 23, 2012*

### Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

Coordination Committee and Program Manager Update

Silvery Minnow Update



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species  
 Collaborative Program  
 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
 MEETING AGENDA  
 Thursday, August 23, 2012  
 9:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**LOCATION:** Bureau of Reclamation, 555 Broadway Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM

1. **INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED AGENDA\*** 5 minutes
2. **DECISION – APPROVAL OF JULY 20 EC MEETING SUMMARY\*** 10 minutes
3. **BOR UPDATE ON FINAL BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT** (*M. Hamman/  
J. Wilber*) 10 minutes
4. **SERVICE UPDATE ON RGSM** (*L. Robertson*) 10 minutes
5. **USACE UPDATE ON PROGRAM NAME** (*LTC Gant*) 10 minutes
6. **SUBCOMMITTEE DRAFT OUTLINE ON RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> PARTY MANAGEMENT  
INTERIM PLAN** (*S. Farris*) 45 minutes
7. **UPDATE ON CPUE WORKSHOP PREPARATION AND PLANNING** 15 minutes  
(*R. Billings/J. Remshardt*)
- BREAK** 15 minutes
8. **CC/PM REPORT TO EC** (*R. Billings/J. Wilber*) 20 minutes
  - A. **Expenditure of Funds Quarterly Report\***
  - B. **FY2013 Funding Projection**
  - C. **Recommendations on joint ScW and HR Statement to EC and CC** 30 minutes  
Co-Chairs\* (*A. Hutson/D. Price/R. Billings/G. Dello Russo/D. Galloway*)

**DECISION – EC supports Program workgroup assistance and input through the RIP transition.**

9. **WORKGROUP UPDATES**
  - A. **PVA models update\*** (*D. Gensler/D. Campbell*) 30 minutes
  - B. **SAR ad hoc workgroup** (*G. Dello Russo/J. Faler*) 30 minutes

10. **MEETING SUMMARY** (*R. Fullerton*)

11. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

12. **DECISION - NEXT SCHEDULED EC MEETING** September 20, 2012 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

*\*denotes read ahead*

**Members**

ABCWUA	APA	CABQ
ISC	Isleta Pueblo	NMAGO
NMDA	NMGF	MRGCD
Sandia Pueblo	Santa Ana Pueblo	Santo Domingo Tribe
UNM	USACE	USFWS
		Reclamation

**Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:**

- August 28<sup>th</sup> – DBMS training session (afternoon)
- August 29<sup>th</sup> – DBMS training session (morning)
- September 6<sup>th</sup> – DBMS training session (morning)
- September 30<sup>th</sup> – Dr. Miller's RAMAS PVA report and documentation due
- October 16<sup>th</sup> – Sediment Presentation (@ joint workgroup meeting)
- October 31-November 1-2 (tentative) – CPUE Workshop
- November 13<sup>th</sup> – Climate Change in MRG Presentation (@ joint workgroup meeting)
- November 16, 2012 - Service intends to issue draft BO to action agencies by this date if sufficient information is received by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**  
**9:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**Actions**

- The subcommittee for developing a draft RIP Management Interim Plan will distribute a draft RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan to the EC *as soon as possible*. Comments on the draft plan are due to the subcommittee by September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**Decisions**

- The July 20<sup>th</sup> EC meeting summary was approved with the following edit:
  - The proposed name for the RIP will be corrected to “Middle Rio Grande Collaborative Recovery Implementation Program” throughout the summary.
- The EC supports Program work group assistance and input through the RIP transition.

**Delegations**

- In order to address concerns regarding the low number of minnow recorded during monitoring efforts and the low number of juveniles found during salvage, Mike Hamman will take the lead on the formation of a subgroup made up of participants from water management agencies, the Service, Pueblo of Sandia, and the Secretary of the Coalition of Six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos, to look at non-water options for sustaining minnow to the next spawn.
- The RIP Program Document focus group was directed to report back to the EC on options for emphasizing the Program’s transition to a RIP while keeping the Program’s name as is.

**Next Meeting: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Reclamation**

- Tentative agenda items include: 1) Discuss draft 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan; 2) status update on adaptive management contract; 3)

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## **Meeting Summary**

**Introductions and review of proposed agenda:**

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) was saddened to report the death of Luke Montoya their Senior Contaminants Biologist. Luke was also the son of the Governor of Sandia Pueblo. The EC expressed their condolences to Luke’s family, the Service, and the Pueblo of Sandia.

- Brent Rhees brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- The agenda was approved with the addition of an adaptive management update as part of the Coordination Committee (CC)/Program Manager (PM) report. Attendees were also notified that the draft outline of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party interim plan would not be presented today as Steve Farris is unable to attend today's meeting due to illness; instead the EC will receive an update on the development of the plan.

**Decision-Approval of July 20 EC meeting summary:** The July 20<sup>th</sup> EC meeting summary was approved with the following edit:

- The proposed name for the RIP will be corrected to "Middle Rio Grande Collaborative Recovery Implementation Program" throughout the summary.

**Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) update on final Biological Assessment (BA):** The BOR BA was submitted to the Service on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The water management and river maintenance components of the BA include Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) impacts and conservation measures. BOR worked with Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) and the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) to develop a supplemental document that includes ISC's and OSE's actions and conservation measures; the supplemental document was provided to the Service around August 15<sup>th</sup>. BOR and Program agencies are working on negotiating the RIP Program Document, RIP Action Plan, and the Water Management Plan. The Water Management Plan is a subset of the RIP Action Plan.

**Service update on Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (minnow):** The silvery minnow update was distributed to meeting attendees.

- *Silvery Minnow Population Monitoring* – It was noted that since October 2011 minnow numbers have been low, with a bump in numbers in December 2011 due to stocking that occurred in November 2011. It was also noted that the number of minnows in Isleta are observed to be dropping. In July 2012, minnows were found at 10 of the 20 sites. It wasn't known how many of the 20 sites were dry. Information on the sites that were dry in June and July (correction to May and June) was distributed after the last EC meeting.
- *2012 River Drying and Silvery Minnow Salvage* – Thru August 20<sup>th</sup> there have been 48.7 unique dry river miles. A total of 4,081 minnow were salvaged between June 16<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that of the 4,081 minnow rescued, 98% were adult minnow.
- Concern was expressed that the minnow may be at a tipping point: minnow numbers are almost as low as ever recorded, the spawn was unsuccessful this year, and river drying is the most that has been seen in the last 8 years. There is concern that minnow densities could decline dramatically this year when most of the older fish die, leaving only a small number of juveniles.
  - Though other factors such as water chemistry can affect spawning it's believed that the spawn was dismal because the discharge that is needed to create the overbanking habitats was not received and there was not enough inflow for a deviation at Cochiti Dam.
  - Because younger fish are not being seen this means that the augmentation program is saving the wild population. Because the minnow population relies on captive propagation, genetics monitoring is crucial for the long term fitness of the Middle Rio Grande population.
  - The Service believes that management action is warranted in order to maximize survival to the next spawn and to facilitate a spawn next year.
- BOR is in Prior & Paramount (P&P) water operations now and is operating primarily to ensure that the Pueblos receive their water supply. There are still 19,000 acre-feet of minnow water for operational purposes. BOR will also be acquiring up to 12,000

- additional acre-feet under the water acquisitions program. It's expected that this will be enough water to meet flow targets for the rest of the season.
- There was a significant rain spike that went through the system a couple of days ago but it's not known if any minnows would spawn this late in the summer. Some attendees remembered viewing a presentation on October spawning of minnow; however, there is no readily known documentation of October spawning.
  - It was asked how much water is available for P&P purposes and how much water is available for the minnow as of today.
    - This information was not known; Mike Hamman will pass this information to the EC.
  - If there isn't additional rain there will likely be additional drying as there is only San Juan-Chama water in the system; however, it's not known how much additional drying there will be. In 2003 there was drying that occurred as late as September.
  - The Service requested that a group of water managers meet to discuss possible options for proceeding this fall and spring to try to improve the status of the minnow. The group should see if there can be a deviation next year to make sure that there are good spawning flows for the spring.
    - Attendees discussed the need for non-water options for sustaining the minnow through the fall and winter. A suggested option is to keep salvaged minnow in the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium or Dexter National Fish Hatchery.
      - Attendees were updated that the Minnow Sanctuary (Sanctuary) still needs additional work before it will be functional; two of the pumps are broken and the Sanctuary doesn't hold water. BOR will be considering whether a permanent liner is needed to seal the Sanctuary from the shallow water aquifer.
    - Mike Hamman will take the lead on the formation of a subgroup to look at both water and non-water options for sustaining minnow to the next spawn.
      - The group will include Reclamation, the Corps, the Service, ABCWUA, Bosque del Apache, MRGCD, ISC, Pueblo of Sandia, and the Secretary of the Coalition of Six MRG Basin Pueblos.
    - It was voiced that there are concerns with receiving P&P water and the enforcement of curtailing. It's important for water use policies to be enforceable.
    - It was also suggested that the group also look at how things were operated historically. The river used to get much dryer and the minnow still survived.
      - It was pointed out that though the river was drier in the past there were also fewer activities that demanded water.

**USACE update on Program name:** Attendees were reminded that there has been concern that changing the Program name might impact USACE's participation and funding capabilities. Further research into the issue has found that the Program's current name has a legal significance. Three public laws that are specific to USACE's ability to participate and provide funding for the Program specifically reference the Program's name. If the name does change the USACE's participation and funding could be severely limited.

- BOR has had similar concerns and BOR solicitors confirmed that changing the Program's name could limit BOR participation. Because the Program's name was designated by Congress, Congress would need to change the name. This would mean that the Program would need to make a formal request to Congress that the name be changed. One suggestion from the BOR solicitor was to use an alias; using an alias would not have any legal significance and would not impact authorities.
- The purpose of changing the Program's name was for a symbolic shift towards becoming a RIP. The concern with keeping the current name is the perception that there may not be an actual shift; changing the name would help the Program in making a mental shift

towards recovery. Including RIP in the name is significant to the Service and to the public in recognizing that the Program is working towards recovery.

- There was agreement from several EC members that the Program needs to be in compliance with the laws that specifically reference the Program's current name. There was also agreement from several EC members that the Program's actions will determine whether an actual shift to a RIP has occurred.
- In order to facilitate a mental shift towards recovery an alias could be included after the Program's name on all documents. The Program Document could also include a preface that explains the Program's transition to a RIP.
- Because being a RIP is significant to the public and the involved agencies in terms of what the goals are for the species and in serving as an Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance vehicle, it was suggested that the EC direct the Program Document focus group to consider how to best emphasize the Program's transition to a RIP. Options could include emphasizing the transition in the Program Document introduction or purposes. The EC agreed to direct the Program Document focus group to look at different options for emphasizing the Program's transition to a RIP and come back to the EC with options for emphasizing the transition while keeping the current name of the Program.

**Subcommittee draft outline on RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan:** Because Steve Farris was unable to attend today's meeting a draft outline was not available. Janet Jarratt and Mike Hamman updated meeting attendees on the subcommittee's progress in developing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan.

- The subcommittee has been working on defining the roles and responsibilities of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity. The 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity's primary responsibilities will include financial management, retaining the pay benefits for the Executive Director and staff, and providing liability insurance for the Executive Director and staff. Because the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity would need to adhere to federal rules and would be responsible for grant compliance it was determined that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity should have at least 5 years of experience providing similar employment and financial services. It's also important that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity have some connection to the Rio Grande area and have the ability to maintain an office in the Rio Grande area. Cost efficiency is also important; it's anticipated that costs for 3<sup>rd</sup> party management will be a little higher during the transition period. The subcommittee wants to release a request for quotation (RFQ) to see how many 3<sup>rd</sup> party entities in the area have the type of experience that the Program is looking for.
- The subcommittee has also been working on defining the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for everything that goes on within the Program and would be accountable to the EC. The Executive Director will be responsible for hiring staff and would need to provide the EC with an annual staffing plan. The Executive Director's staff could be made up of employees hired by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity or hired as separate contracts. The Executive Director would also be responsible for selecting the Science Coordinator (with input from the EC) and would be responsible for the administrative budget. The Executive Director will need to have at least 5 years of experience in employee management and will need to have an understanding of federal contracting. The EC will recruit and hire the Executive Director.
- The subcommittee also discussed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity may have facilities in place to house the Executive Director/staff and cover additional duties such as web page administration. The 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity would have the ability to bid on these tasks; however, Program entities could also use housing or other duties as cost share.

- The subcommittee has also discussed developing a mechanism for an “affirmative voting” process for key decisions in going forward in the RIP.
- It’s believed that recruiting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity could begin as early as the start of FY2013. The goal is to have an Executive Director and RIP in place before February 2013. It’s anticipated that there will be some transition period needed to bring the Executive Director up to speed. Because having everything in place by February 2013 is highly dependent on being able to find qualified individuals the subcommittee has discussed having a fallback management plan where the RIP would be temporarily managed by one of the federal agencies if needed.
- Though a draft outline was not provided for today’s meeting, EC members were asked to provide any initial feedback they might have so that the subcommittee can address any issues as soon as possible.
- The subcommittee for developing a draft RIP Management Interim Plan will distribute a draft RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan to the EC *as soon as possible*. Comments on the draft plan are due to the subcommittee by September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**Update on Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) workshop preparation and planning:** Rick Billings updated attendees on the CPUE workshop planning.

- The workshop will likely occur at the end of October or in November but a definite date for the workshop has not been decided on; the workshop needs to be planned around augmentation so that local minnow experts will be available. The date for the workshop should be finalized next week. The workshop planners are considering having the workshop at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- The workshop planners have come up with a list of 5 potential external experts to bring in to participate in the workshop; the workshop planners hope to be able to have 3 of the experts participate. Hard copies of the list were available for EC members and EC members were encouraged to visit the experts’ webpages to view their CVs. EC members can also request that an expert be added to the list.
- The objectives of the workshop haven’t changed significantly from the last EC meeting.
- The planning group is currently compiling papers and data for the workshop attendees to read in preparation for the workshop. The workshop planners have also started to develop a list of attendees. The planners have a conference call every Monday. Rich Valdez is developing a white paper to document how the planning group is putting the workshop together.

#### **CC/PM Report to the EC:**

- *Adaptive management update-* Susan Bittick (USACE) updated attendees that the proposal for the adaptive management contract has been received from the contractor. Because the costs were not in line with USACE projections the assumptions in the proposal are being reviewed and negotiations have not started. Susan Bittick will keep the EC updated on the adaptive management contract.
- *Expenditure of Funds Quarterly Report-* Jim Wilber explained that the report that was provided as a read ahead. The report gives a breakdown of expenditures by agency, by general funding category (salvage, habitat improvement), and by year. BOR wants to close out 2007, 2008, and 2009. BOR will be sending out letters notifying agencies if they have unexpended funds. The information in the document is current as of June 30<sup>th</sup> and may not reflect the most current numbers.
- *FY2013 Funding Projection-* The specific amount of BOR funds that will be allocated to the Program is not yet known but funding is expected to be less than what was received in FY2012. The Middle Rio Grande Project has been asked to reprioritize some of their



- work for fish and wildlife to help provide additional funding to the Program. BOR contracting has also looked at fund expenditures and will consider using unexpended funds for the Program in FY2013.
- USACE reported that approximately \$2,500,000 will be appropriated for the Program.
  - *Recommendations on joint Science Work group (ScW) and Habitat Restoration Work group (HRW) statement to the EC and CC-*
    - Dana Price, Alison Hutson, Gina Dello Russo, and Rick Billings (ScW and HRW Co-Chairs) explained that ScW and HRW members have expressed concern and uncertainty about how the current science will continue to move forward during and after the transition. There was also concern that there may be a loss of the knowledge and expertise held by the work groups during the transition and that the current disconnect within the Program will not be addressed during the restructure. For example, there are times when the work groups develop a scope of work for a project and don't hear about the project again until a final report is available. The work groups would like to help ensure that some of the gaps within the Program's current structure are closed in the transition to a RIP. Because work group members have a lot of knowledge about the river and Program, they want to be a resource for the EC, Executive Director, and Science Coordinator.
    - It was shared that the EC Co-Chairs released the RIP Program Document and Action Plan to the work groups for review. The ScW and HRW Co-Chairs shared that the work groups appreciate receiving those documents and will develop a deadline for commenting on the documents.
    - The CC Co-Chairs shared that the CC is supportive of the work group's involvement in the transition. Though the request to participate came from the ScW and HRW the CC recommends that all of the work groups be given the opportunity to be involved in the transition. Allowing the work groups to review the RIP documents will not slow down or delay approval of the documents or the RIP transition.
    - Attendees viewed a letter from Matt Schmader (City of Albuquerque EC representative) indicating that he is in support of the work groups' involvement in the transition.
    - EC members voiced that they also have concerns about preserving the work that has been done and ensuring that the current knowledge and wisdom is incorporated into the new structure. It was emphasized that the work groups are the best way to get on-the-ground knowledge of the river. The work groups have also served as a place for interested parties who do not have a seat at the table to contribute their knowledge and this should be carried forth into the new structure.
    - Representatives from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Plan subcommittee shared that they have thought about the structure of the RIP but have not worked out the details; it's planned for there to be a combination of biologists and teams that have been working diligently in the field. There is a need to structure the RIP to be as efficient as possible and to have more engagement and feedback loops to take advantage of the knowledge base for decision making. The interface between the work group Co-Chairs and the CC/EC is going to be critical in moving forward to the RIP.
  - BOR representatives were asked how BOR would be dealing with the contracts for FY2012 and during the transition.
    - It was explained that this year has been challenging in regard to contracting as there has been reorganization in the contracting office. A Southern Contracting

Office was formed and Jericho Lewis is now more of a supervisory Contracting Officer. BOR has also been adjusting to recommendations and new contracting procedures that have come down from the regional level. There is a September 26<sup>th</sup> deadline for having all the FY2012 funds obligated. There will be internal BOR meetings with Jericho and his contracting staff to discuss contracting priorities. All of the funds should be obligated by the September 26<sup>th</sup> deadline; however if the funds cannot be obligated by that time there are procedures to request for funds to continue over to 2013 for obligation. Agencies were encouraged to let BOR know if they have any specific concerns about funding as this will help with their internal prioritization.

**Decision-EC supports Program work group assistance and input through the RIP**

**transition:** All EC members were in support of Program work group assistance and input through the RIP transition.

**Work group updates:**

- *PVA models update –*
  - July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> PVA work group meeting
    - On the first day of the meeting, Dr. Miller answered questions about the “straw man” model presentation that he made at the June PVA meeting and Dr. Goodman gave a presentation on the “portability” of estimates of clumping in the statistical distribution of CPUE data. The PVA work group will be doing an internal review of Dr. Goodman’s report “RGSM 2010 Revised Recovery Criteria in Relation to Population Monitoring” and other documents that the work group may be developing. The PVA work group also discussed some QA/QC issues in the population monitoring data. The PVA work group is still concerned about data acquisition.
    - During the second day of the meeting, there was discussion on the hydrology sequences and the climate Impact Assessment General Circulation Model (GCM) runs. The GCM runs will not be completed in time to be used for the consultation. The PVA work group agreed that there was not enough hydrology information for the models to be useful at this time and that using the 5 10-year hydrology sequences would compromise the credibility of the analyses. The PVA work group agreed to develop and distribute a document with recommendations on the use of the PVA models to support Program decisions; the document was circulated as an EC read ahead. The recommendations contain clear and concise statements from the PVA work group on what can and cannot be done with the PVA models at this time and in the future.
  - On August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> there was a 2-day training session for the PVA models. The modelers spent a considerable amount of time discussing how the models were developed and explaining their limitations. Workshop participants were able to interact with the RAMAS and FORTRAN models while the modelers went around the room and explained to the participants what the “dials and switches” meant.
    - It was commented that it was very helpful to have a hands on session with the PVA models and learn what the models can and can’t be used for.
    - It was asked what the next step is in developing the connection between the PVAs and the hydrologic inputs.

- The PVA work group was provided with 5 10-year hydrologic sequences; however, in order to do long term PVA model runs longer hydrologic sequences are needed. The PVA work group has requested 500 to 1,000 50-year hydrologic sequences. The URGWOM team will be providing longer hydrologic sequences; however, because developing the sequences is labor intensive the sequences are not yet available. Though the models are not useful for the consultation the models can still be used to see how sensitive they are to various inputs.
- The PVA work group has reached consensus on the data that will be used to derive biological inputs but they have not yet agreed on the actual inputs that will be used.
  - The PVA work group will be developing a list of tasks that can hopefully be included in the action plan.
  - The RAMAS software will be available for free for 30 days on 10 agency computers. The Program will likely purchase a license for the software.
- *San Acacia Reach (SAR) ad hoc work group –*
  - It was shared that the SAR work group is also concerned that there will be a loss of institutional knowledge and a setback in progress towards solutions during the RIP transition.
  - Over the last two years the SAR work group has been working to clarify and develop solutions for issues that could impact endangered species and stakeholders in the SAR. The work group is in the process of developing white papers to provide background on the issues and supply recommendations. The recommendations are from a technical perspective and were intended to be a brainstorm of all possible solutions to solve data gaps before being filtered against policy and other factors. The white paper topics are: water rights and adjudication, low flow conveyance channel, sediment transportation, agricultural sustainability, and floodplain land use. The white papers are planned to be submitted to the EC prior to the transition to a RIP. The SAR work group consists of technical staff and interested stakeholders. SAR work group members don't assume to remain intact as an ad hoc work group after the transition; however, the work group wants to ensure that their products are presented to the EC before the work group disbands.
- Jennifer Faler shared that she has been meeting with the SAR work group to discuss the formation of a new group to focus on the SAR during the Biological Opinion (BO) process to find technical solutions that are feasible. The new SAR group is planned to have a policy group and a technical group. It's envisioned that the technical group would be an expansion of the current Program SAR ad hoc work group. It's important that the policy group be made up of stakeholders and agency personnel. The new group will start with a facilitated workshop held in the SAR where policy people, technical people, and stakeholders will identify options for possible solutions. A steering committee will be formed to kick-start the group and develop objectives, the steering committee would then become the policy group. The plan is to wrap things up by the end of September or mid-October so that input could be provided on the final conservation measures.
  - It was asked if there are any ideas on the table for the SAR that everyone seems to be agreeing on.
    - Most of the ideas involve providing habitat in the SAR or developing a way to allow the RGSM to move above San Acacia Diversion Dam.

- It was commented that there seems to be an understanding of the general goals in the reach and the issues that need to be addressed. It's hoped that there can be some understanding at the policy and technical levels of the basic river processes that need to be brought back into sync. What's not known is if there will be a willingness of entities to stay the course until the goals have been achieved. There will be gives and takes to get to long term sustainability of the ecological health of the reach.
- It was one opinion that agencies should come to the table with a fresh mindset when considering the options in the reach for sustaining habitat in the Middle Rio Grande. It was suggested that the technical and policy groups be one group as most technical people are aware of the policy implications of possible solutions.
- It was asked if the new SAR group would be ESA focused or if it would also look at water delivery and other issues in the reach.
  - The group will be ESA structured.
  - It was pointed out that ESA issues cannot be resolved unless the other issues in the reach are considered. The other issues may even be a part of the solutions.

**Meeting summary:** Reese Fullerton (facilitator) reiterated the highlights from today's meeting.

- Today's agenda and the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting summary were approved
- The EC agreed to the formation of a small group to discuss alternate water management options. Mike Hamman will take the lead on this effort; the Pueblo Coalition Secretary will participate in the group.
- The Program Document focus group will make recommendations for emphasizing the Program's transition to a RIP that would not include a name change.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> party Management Plan subcommittee will distribute a draft plan to the EC as soon as possible. Comments on the draft will be due to the subcommittee by September 10<sup>th</sup>. The EC will discuss the draft plan at the September EC meeting and make a decision on the plan at the October EC meeting.
- Meeting attendees were updated that negotiations for the adaptive management contract have not yet begun; there will be a status update at the September EC meeting.
- The EC supports Program work group assistance and input through the RIP transition.

**Public comment:** There was no public comment.

**Next Meeting: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Reclamation**

- Tentative agenda items include: 1) Discuss draft 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim Plan; 2) status update on adaptive management contract; 3)

**Executive Committee Meeting Attendees  
July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Rolf Schmidt-Peterson (A)	NM Interstate Stream Commission	ISC
Brent Rhees	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Federal co-chair
Janet Bair (A)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Service
Anne Moore (A)	NM Attorney General's Office	NMAGO
Subhas Shah (P)	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District	MRGCD
Mike Hamman (P)	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	BOR
Janet Jarratt (P)	Assessment Payers of the MRGCD	APA of the
MRGCD		
Rick Billings (A)	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority	ABCWUA
LTC Gant (P)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Ken Cunningham (P)	NM Department of Game and Fish	NMDGF
Frank Chaves (P)	Pueblo of Sandia	Sandia

*Others*

Ali Saenz	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Jennifer Faler	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mary Carlson	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Liz Holmes	NM Department of Agriculture Grace
Haggerty	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Alison Hutson	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Deb Freeman	for NM Interstate Stream Commission
Beth Pitrolo	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kris Schafer (A)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Susan Bittick	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Danielle Galloway	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
William DeRagon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michelle Mann	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Julie Alcon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dana Price	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Rick Carpenter	City of Santa Fe/BBD
Jonathan Garcia	Santo Domingo Tribe
Gina Dello Russo	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Lori Robertson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stacey Kopitsch	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brooke Wyman	MRGCD
David Gensler (A)	MRGCD
Patrick Redmond	for MRGCD
Jessica Tracy	Sandia Pueblo
Libby Washburn	Senator Bingaman's Office
Patricia Dominguez	Congressman Heinrich's Office
John Fleck	Albuquerque Journal
Reese Fullerton	GenQuest (Facilitator)
Christine Sanchez	Tetra Tech (Note Taker)

**Coordination Committee and Program Manager Update  
Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program  
Executive Committee Meeting  
August 23, 2012**

**Coordination Committee**

Co-Chairs: Rick Billings and Jim Wilber

June 6 Meeting

The CC met on June 6 and recommended that revising the External Peer Review document should be captured as an action in the RIP Action Plan. With the incorporation of the changes discussed (and any non-significant changes received by June 13), the CC recommended the EC approve the interim External Peer Review document.

July 11 Meeting

At the July 11 meeting, the CC decided to revert the CC meeting starting time back to 1:00 pm (from 12:30) since the workload has lightened. The CC also bid farewell to Brian Gleadle, NM Department of Game and Fish, who retired. Brian was recognized for his participation in and contribution to the Collaborative Program for the last 6 years. The CC thanked him for his commitment and dedication to the collaborative process – he will be greatly missed.

The CC also received updates on and discussed the June 21 EC meeting, the Program document progress, the RIP Action Plan progress, and upcoming Program workshops and trainings.

August 1 Meeting

At the August 1 meeting, CC members were encouraged to confirm their agency is up-to-date on the Cost Share Reporting and to elevate the request internally if needed. **Cost share reports through FY2011 (September 30, 2011) and previous years are due to Yvette McKenna by August 31, 2012.**

CC members were encouraged to communicate to their EC representatives the expectation that technical staff input into the RIP Program Document and RIP Action Plan should be facilitated internally through the agency consolidated comment period(s). With the reminder that all agencies and staff members have the responsibility to work up through their EC representatives and agency consolidated comment periods, **the CC endorsed the workgroups' statement of concern** (dated August 1, 2012 and provided as read ahead 8.C. for today's EC meeting). The CC believes that the workgroups could provide a unique and collaborative technical perspective and should have an opportunity to provide feedback on and participate in the Program's transition to a RIP, to the extent practical. To that end, the CC would like to have all the related information (Draft RIP Program Document, Draft RIP Action Plan, Draft RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Interim plan when available) provided to the work groups as soon as possible to initiate an informal review. It is acknowledged that the key focus and most significant input would be on the RIP Action Plan. Upon approval from the EC, the workgroups' comments could subsequently be submitted formally. If the EC Co-Chairs confirm their interest in work group feedback on the draft RIP documents, **the CC will request that the work groups begin to review the draft RIP documents (Draft RIP Program Document, Draft RIP Action Plan) as soon as possible.** Ideally, individual members will begin their review upon receipt with group discussions to be held during the August work group meetings. On August 20, an email was sent to the Program workgroup members with the draft RIP documents requesting that the workgroups provide consolidated comments through their co-chairs to the EC for their consideration, on or around their September meeting timeframes. The next CC meeting is September 5 from 1:00-4:00 pm at Reclamation.

## Program Management Team

The PMT is understaffed by two positions (the non-federal and the Reclamation PMT members). The PMT continues to support the Program and keep the workgroups updated on the status of the contemplated transition of the Collaborative Program to a RIP. The PMT will begin work on the FY2010 and FY2011 biennial Program report to include information on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) funds and activities and a list of Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) by project.

Jericho Lewis, Contract Supervisor for the Contracts South Team, continues to assist with Albuquerque Area Office and Collaborative Program acquisitions and financial assistance agreements. Diana Herrera continues to work on: Program cost share updates, expenditure reports, water leasing obligations, and FY2012, FY2013, and FY2014 Program budgets. Chip Martin, Edward McCorkindale, Reese Fullerton, and Lisa Freitas, GenQuest, and Christine Sanchez and Marta Wood, Tetra Tech, continue to assist the Program with meeting support and summaries.

## Habitat Restoration Workgroup

Co-chairs: Rick Billings, Gina Dello Russo and Danielle Galloway; PMT Liaison: Michelle Mann

At their July 17 meeting, the HRW was updated that the Tamarisk **beetle** may be in Cochiti, and there have been confirmed sightings of the beetle on Sandia Pueblo near Highway 313. The *Coniotus* (Tamarisk weevil) has been confirmed along Galisteo and has also been seen in the upper reach around the Bosque.

In general, the number of Southwestern willow **flycatcher** is down from last year. The flycatchers seem to be moving around more this year as compared to last year and there are twice as many nests in the Belen reach and half as many nests in Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. Escondida went from 8 unpaired males last year to 11 unpaired males this year but also has 4 pairs with nests. San Marcial has a decline in pairs, pairs with nests, and unpaired males as compared to last year. Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) has fewer nests and more unpaired males this year as compared to last year.

There were 181 Yellow-billed **cuckoo** sightings, which is an increase from last year's 108 sightings. The cuckoo is supposed to be listed as endangered in 2013.

Meeting attendees discussed using certain criteria to evaluate restored habitat to develop a **rapid assessment tool** to "grade" the current state of the habitat in the river system, to help evaluate proposals for restoration projects, and to evaluate improvements by projects.

When discussing the possibility of implementing a **3<sup>rd</sup> party managed RIP**, HRW members voiced concern with the costs associated. There was also concern about who would be tasked with reviewing/implementing the results of reports and studies as there is the possibility of this aspect being lost during the transition. Another concern was that after the 5-year period the grant would need to be advertised again and go through a procurement process. A statement that the ScW drafted to voice their concerns was shared with meeting attendees. Meeting attendees agreed that the statement was a good reflection of their concerns and would like to submit the statement jointly with the ScW.

The Refuge and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Regional Office are trying to set up a workshop to develop a **Decision Support System (DSS) that is specific to the Rio Grande system** to evaluate possible impacts to the Refuge's resources. The workshop would bring in experts that have worked to develop DSSs in other areas of the west. A tool to look at the factors that impact natural resources on the Rio Grande would also be useful to other agencies. Anyone interested in participating or organizing the DSS workshop should contact Gina Dello Russo.

On August 21, the HRW continued discussing delineating criteria to evaluate restored habitat and looked at next steps to streamline criteria. Development of a rapid assessment tool for evaluating habitat and how to use the San Acacia Reach (SAR) map in evaluating habitat was also discussed. Joint workgroup meetings between ScW and

HRW will occur in September (Mapping & Site Assessment), October (Sediment), and November (Climate Change). A Program update was given regarding upcoming EC decision items and CC feedback to the HRW and ScW statement of concern. The next HRW meeting is currently scheduled for September 18 at NM Interstate Stream Commission (ISC).

### Science Workgroup

Co-chairs: Dana Price and Alison Hutson; PMT Liaison: Stacey Kopitsch

The ScW held a regularly scheduled meeting on July 17. Dana Price (USACE) has been elected as the federal co-chair for the workgroup, and Alison Hutson (ISC) has agreed to remain as non-federal co-chair until her term is up (end of 2012). The Museum of Southwestern Biology's inventory of silvery minnow specimens was discussed and the workgroup has requested a catalog listing of all archived RGSM samples so that the workgroup can have better knowledge of what is currently in the collection and if there is a need to increase the archived sample size for possible future uses. A tracking spreadsheet of all current Collaborative Program projects was also distributed, so that the ScW can have a better understanding of when draft and final reports are due, and when the best times would be to schedule presentations on the various ScW projects.

The ScW co-chairs, in collaboration with the HRW co-chairs, also drafted a letter to the CC and EC co-chairs expressing their concerns over the potential loss of institutional knowledge within the workgroups during the Program's transition to a RIP.

It was also shared that **larval Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) have been found in the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium (Refugium)**. This was unexpected as no eggs were found during searches, and it's believed that the RGSM spawned in response to the first flood performed at the Refugium. It's believed that the RGSM spawned in the ponds as they were not observed spawning in the overbank, and larval fish have been found in 3 of the 5 ponds.



Los Lunas Refugium August sample documented mean length at 59.4 mm and mean weight at 2.14 g



Mark Brennan gave a presentation titled “RGSM Site Analysis: Determination of best river reach to implement next RGSM NEP reintroduction” to update the ScW on 10(j) efforts. The objective of the work that Mark has been doing is to determine the feasibility of conducting a second section 10(j) non-essential experimental population (NEP) reintroduction of RGSM in an unpopulated reach of the Rio Grande or Pecos River within the historic range of the species. **The Pecos River below Sumner Dam and the Rio Grande below Amistad were found to be good candidate reaches for reintroduction**, with fairly equal overall values from this technical analysis. The next steps are to propose the two reaches for NEP in National Environmental Policy Act scoping, respond to public/stakeholder input, choose one of these two reaches based upon any new information and scoping responses, and write a rule for this next section 10(j) NEP reintroduction.

The ScW met again on August 21 for their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. A presentation from SWCA was provided on the Fish Community Monitoring and Sampling Methodology Evaluation project (Gear Evaluation study). Brooke Wyman (MRGCD) has volunteered to take the position of non-federal co-chair in January if no other nominations are received before then. Also discussed was the need for the workgroup to draft a planning and objectives document to outline why ScW recommended projects are important and the risks of not funding them. The next ScW meeting will be held on September 18, 2012 at ISC.

### **Species Water Management Workgroup**

Co-chair: Chris Banet; PMT Liaison: Michelle Mann

The SWM workgroup met on August 1. During this meeting, a report out on the RIP transition and CC guidance was given. Furthermore, a field trip to Price’s Dairy is tentatively planned for October 10. A Program and agency update was given and workgroup role in RIP transition was also discussed. The next SWM meeting is currently scheduled for October 10 at Price’s Dairy.

### **Monitoring Plan Team ad hoc Workgroup**

Co-Chair: Ondrea Hummel; PMT Liaison: Stacey Kopitsch

The MPT has not held a regular meeting since March 20, 2012, however a schedule is currently being put together to start vegetation, hydrology, and geomorphology sampling for the low-intensity effectiveness monitoring pilot program. It is anticipated that monitoring will begin in September. Volunteers to assist with this monitoring are being requested, and those interested should contact Ondrea Hummel, USACE.

Ondrea Hummel and Sarah Beck were able to catch a “high flow” event on August 17 when all of the high flow channels and terraces observed got good and wet!



MRG Restoration Site 4C Terrace



Rio Grande Nature Center Channel (looking north)





Route 66 Gonzales Backwater

### **San Acacia Reach ad hoc Workgroup**

Co-chairs: Yasmeen Najmi and Gina Dello Russo; PMT Liaison: Michelle Mann

The SAR workgroup met on July 19 where meeting attendees reviewed and discussed the draft white papers on low flow conveyance channel, sediment transport, and adjudication/water rights. A final presentation of the white papers will be given to the EC at a future date. An update on the proposed formation of a SAR-like group to assist in consultations was given to the workgroup members. The next SAR meeting is scheduled for August 23 at Reclamation, after the co-chair briefs the EC.

### **Population Viability Analysis (PVA)/Biology ad hoc Workgroup**

Co-chairs: Dave Gensler and Dave Campbell; PMT Liaison: Stacey Kopitsch

The PVA workgroup last met on July 23 and 24, 2012. The workgroup discussed Phil Miller's report to Reclamation on the RAMAS model, which describes the structure of the modeling platform and the specific types of PVA model input and some of the data that are available to parameterize. The workgroup provided feedback on this report, with comments to be incorporated and redistributed to the workgroup. Dan Goodman gave a presentation on the portability of estimates of clumping in the statistical distribution of CPUE data. An updated version of his "RGSM 2010 Revised Recovery Criteria in Relation to Population Monitoring" report will be distributed to the PVA workgroup. An update on the PVA workgroup's hydrology data request (five 10-year paleo derived sequences and GCM model runs) from the PHVA workgroup was also provided. The workgroup also drafted a document to the EC on "PVA Workgroup Recommendations on Use of PVA Modeling to Support

Program Decisions.” *(This document is provided as read ahead 9.A. for today’s EC meeting.)* The next PVA workgroup meeting has not yet been scheduled.

On August 15, Dr. Phil Miller provided a document related to RAMAS-based PVA model use by the Service in ESA consultation.

Organized by Yvette Paroz, the COR for the RAMAS-based model, Reclamation hosted a training session for the PVA models on August 16 and 17. The August 16 session consisted of presentations from both modelers and was open to all interested parties up to the space available. The August 17 session was a hands-on session with the models and was geared towards Program participants intending to work directly with the models. Attendees included primary and alternate participants from the Service, NM Dept of Game and Fish, USACE, Reclamation, ISC, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and the City of Albuquerque.

#### **Population Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA)/Hydrology ad hoc Workgroup**

Co-chairs: Amy Louise and Dagmar Llewellyn; PMT Liaison: Stacey Kopitsch

Amy Louise, USACE, and Dagmar Llewellyn, Reclamation, are the newly appointed Federal Co-chairs for the PHVA ad hoc workgroup. On June 11, 2012 the workgroup was requested by the PVA workgroup to provide 5 150-year sequences from the Climate Impact Assessment General Circulation Model (GCM) model for both no action and proposed action hydrology scenarios. PHVA will schedule their next meeting as needed via email.

#### **Database Management System ad hoc Workgroup**

Co-chairs: Liz Zeiler and Mark Doles; PMT Liaison: Michelle Mann

The DBMS workgroup had a joint workgroup meeting with Public Information and Outreach (PIO) and PMT on June 27 at Reclamation where the upcoming DBMS Training was discussed. DBMS Training Session dates and times were finalized as well as the registration method. Website migration and overlap with the current website were also discussed. A Program update was given. **DBMS training dates are set for August 28 (12:00-4:00 pm), August 29 (8:00 am-12:00 pm), and September 6 (8:00 am-12:00 pm). Sessions are limited to 20 participants each. Please sign up as soon as possible to guarantee a session that fits into your schedule at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TG6STB7>.** The next DBMS meeting is to be determined.

#### **Public Information and Outreach Workgroup**

Co-chairs: Julie Maas and Mary Carlson; PMT Liaison: Ali Saenz

The PIO workgroup is discussing the possibility of an “Improved and Restored Habitat Celebration” after the EC has made an official/formal decision regarding the transition to a RIP. The PIO workgroup is also discussing the possibility of participating in the “Rio Grande Days” event in March 2013 with the Rio Grande Restoration. The PIO workgroup awaits direction from the EC to draft a Collaborative Program news release announcing the transition to a RIP so that it is in the file and ready. The PIO and PMT workgroups will be participating in the **Santa Ana Environmental Fair on August 25** and the **Sandia Pueblo Earth Day event on August 31**.

#### **Website Updates**

<b>Document Title/Description</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Location posted</b>
2011 Salvage Report Final	7/1/2012	Committees & Work Groups » ScW - Science Work Group » Projects
2003 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Study Results: Selected Sites Along the Rio Grande from HWY 60 to Elephant Butte Reservoir	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » HR - Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents » HR Documents for Review » Habitat Analysis Reports

2001 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Study Results: Selected Sites Along the Rio Grande from Velarde, NM to the Headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » HR - Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents » HR Documents for Review » Habitat Analysis Reports
2002 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Study Results: Selected Sites Along the Rio Grande from Velarde, NM to the Headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » HR - Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents » HR Documents for Review » Habitat Analysis Reports
2010 Value Engineering, 22 February 2010. Isleta Phase II Restoration, Report Final	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » HR - Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents » HR Documents for Review » Habitat Analysis Reports
2009 Middle Rio Grande Isleta Reach Phase II Riverine Habitat Restoration Project, Draft Biological Assessment	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » HR - Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents » HR Documents for Review » Habitat Analysis Reports
2009_PVA Datasets - RGSM_Pop_Mon_PVAgoodman_bystation_20090908_071812 (& query by Haul & Station)	8/3/2012	Committees & Work Groups » PVA - Population Viability Analysis » Work Group Documents » Data Sets
Water Headlines from EPA: A Function-Based Framework for Stream Assessment and Restoration Projects	8/3/2012	Library>>Reference Documents
2012 Goodman presentation: PVA training 8/16/12	8/20/2012	Library » Presentations
<b>News Article/Press Release</b>	<b>Date Published/Posted</b>	<b>Location Posted</b>
Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium Spawns Fish Naturally	6/14/2012	Newsroom » News Releases
Flycatcher Critical Habitat	7/1/2012	Newsroom » News Releases
Environmental Flows in New Mexico - Utton Center's Environmental Flows Bulletin (link)	8/7/2012	Newsroom>>Articles
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher video	8/1/2012	Newsroom>>Videos

## Silvery minnow update for EC meeting, August 23, 2012

### Silvery Minnow Population Monitoring<sup>1</sup>

Sample Date	Presence at sites	CPUE (ind/100 m <sup>2</sup> ) All Reaches	Angostura	Isleta	San Acacia	% VIE marked
October 2011	8 of 20 sites	1.3	0.3	0.9	2.0	
December 2011	15 of 20 sites	4.1	0.3	5.1	5.6	
February 2012	14 of 20 sites	1.9	0	2.1	2.8	44%
April 2012	12 of 20 sites	0.7	0.4	0.6	1.0	na
May 2012	12 of 20 sites	1.1	0.1	0.6	2.0	na
June 2012	9 of 20 sites	0.3	0.1	<0.1	0.5	50%
July 2012	10 of 20 sites	0.3	0.2	0.09	0.4	0%

### 2012 River Drying and Silvery Minnow Salvage<sup>2</sup>

- Update thru August 20, 2012: A total of 48.7 unique miles were salvaged. 31.6 miles in the San Acacia Reach between near Escondida (RM 105.8) and the south boundary of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (RM 74.2) and 17.1 unique miles in the Isleta Reach.
- A total of 4,081 silvery minnow >30 mm were salvaged between June 16 and August 20, 2012 and released alive. Of these, 2,502 were in the San Acacia reach and 1,579 in the Isleta reach. In addition, 304 were identified as incidental take. Another 298 either died during transport, were too small or sick to salvage, or were found dead during secondary drying events.
- 37.5% of the silvery minnow have been VIE marked, indicating they were released from the hatcheries last fall.
- 98% of all silvery minnow observed have been adults.

The data are of concern to the Service – we may be at a tipping point. Why?

- Silvery minnow numbers are almost as low as ever recorded
- The spawn was very unsuccessful this year – 98% adults:2% young-of-year
- River drying is the most we've seen in the last 8 years

What do the data mean:

- The augmentation program is preventing a more severe decline of the MRG silvery minnow population.

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<sup>1</sup> Conducted by American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers, LLC

<sup>2</sup> Conducted by the New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office with assistance from City of Albuquerque, Corps of Engineers, and other volunteers



- Because we rely on captive propagation/rearing, the genetics management program is crucial to long-term fitness of the MRG population.
- Densities could decline dramatically this year when most Age 1 fish die and we have a dismal Age 0 cohort.
- Management action is warranted. We need to maximize survival between now and the 2012 spawn and we need to facilitate a 2012 spawn. Both are important but the spawn is the most important.

