

Executive Committee Meeting

March 28, 2013

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

Coordination Committee and Program Manager Update

Pueblo of Santa Ana: Rio Grande and Rio Jemez Biological and Habitat Survey [presentation]



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species
Collaborative Program
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, March 28, 2013
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 February 21, 2013 EC MEETING SUMMARY*** 10 minutes
- 3. CC REPORT OUT ON COMPLETED EC ACTIONS (CC Co-chairs)[#]** 10 minutes
- 4. FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES** 45 minutes
 - A. US Army Corps of Engineers (*LTC A. Gant*)
 - B. Bureau of Reclamation (*M. Hamman*)
 - C. US Fish and Wildlife Service (*M. Shaughnessy*)
 - D. Collaborative Program Projects (*R. Graham*)
- 5. BIOLOGICAL OPINION SCHEDULE/CONSULTATION UPDATE** 30 minutes
 - A. Biological Assessment submittals (*BOR/USACE/FWS-BdANWR*)
 - B. Reclamation's Draft Milestones Schedule (*BOR*)
- BREAK** 15 minutes
- 6. RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM DOCUMENTS AND ACTIVITIES** 45 minutes
 - A. Cochiti Update (*USACE*)
 - B. Hydrology Forecast (*BOR*)
 - C. Service's Draft Conservation Objective for the Minnow white paper (*FWS*)
 - D. Minnow Action Team preliminary recommendation(s) (*MAT*)
 - E. Program Document (*J.Faler*)
 - F. Revised RIP Action Plan Update (*G. Haggerty*)
- 7. Program Execution (*R. Graham*)[#]** 15 Minutes
 - A. Non-Federal Cost Share Reporting for FY2012
 - B. CC/PM Report
- 8. MEETING SUMMARY**
- 9. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 10. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 11. *DECISION* - NEXT SCHEDULED EC MEETING April 18, 2013, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm**
- 12. CLOSED SESSION**

**denotes read ahead*

#denotes standing agenda item

Members

ABCWUA
ISC
NMDA
Sandia Pueblo
UNM

APA
Isleta Pueblo
NMGF
Santa Ana Pueblo
USACE

CABQ
NMAGO
MRGCD
Santo Domingo Tribe
USFWS
Reclamation

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Actions

- Non-federal agencies (that haven't already done so) are requested to provide their cost share reporting for FY2012 to Rhea Graham before the April 11th EC meeting read ahead deadline.
- EC members are encouraged to review the language of the RIP goals (in the draft RIP documents) to make sure they reflect an appropriate emphasis on "recovery."
- Agencies and entities are encouraged to provide project updates and information sharing as part of the Program Manager's Update to the EC. Please let Rhea Graham know if you would like to present on a project. *Update: Interim PM has already received commitments for presentations on results of Program grants for the May and July EC meetings.*

Decisions

- The February 21st, 2013 EC meeting summary was approved for finalization with the following changes:
 - On page 4 under the first paragraph of the *RGSM Conservation Objective* section, the phrase "perfect world" will be replaced with "optimal conditions."
 - The first subbullet of the *RGSM Conservation Objective* section will be edited to clarify "*This is based on the preliminary analysis of best available science and data of what the minnow would need...*"
 - The 5th Action Item will be corrected to state "...*suggestions on the necessary attachments or appendices to the RIP Program Document that might be needed near term...*"

Next Meeting: April 18th, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Reclamation

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) Final Draft RIP Program Document and Presentation; (2) Review and/or Update of Minnow Action Team Draft Plan; (3) FY2013 work group work plans and FY2012 work group accomplishments;
- Tentative May Agenda Items: (1) Review/Approval (?) of Revised Long-term Plan; (2) Final Draft RIP Action Plan and Presentation;
- Tentative June Agenda Items: (1) Review/Approval (?) of Draft Water Management Documents; (2) Review of Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement;
- Tentative July Agenda Items: (1) Endorsement of all RIP Documents so Reclamation Biological Assessment can be revised to include the RIP: Program Document, Action Plan, Revised By-laws, Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement and any remaining elements;
- Future Agenda Items: (1) Updated 10(j) population schedule and report out on FWS Regional Office approval to proceed; (2) Updates/continued discussion on the acquisition of past mesohabitat data;

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:

- April 3rd – CC meeting
- April 9th – RIP Program Document Meeting
- April 9th – 10th – Forecast models run to inform decisions on spawning/recruitment flows
- April 11th – All EC meeting read aheads due: Final Draft RIP Program Document,
- April 18th – EC meeting.
- May 9th – All EC meeting read aheads due: Revised LTP, Revised Final Draft RIP Action Plan
- May 16th – EC meeting

- June 13th – All EC meeting read aheads due: Draft Water Management Elements, Final Draft Cooperative Agreement
- June 2013 – CPUE workshop
- June 2013 – FY2014 projects and budget due to Reclamation
- July 11th – All EC meeting read aheads due: Final RIP Program Document, Final RIP Action Plan, Presentation of By-law edits
- July 18th – EC meeting

Meeting Summary

Introductions and review agenda: Brent Rhees brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with a change to Agenda Item #6 to be more encompassing with by adding "...and Other Activities." Additionally, in order facilitate discussion flow, the subbullets Items 6C and D will be switched.

Decision – Approval of the February 21st, 2013 EC meeting summary: The February 21st, 2013 Executive Committee (EC) meeting summary was approved for finalization with the following changes:

- On page 4 under the first paragraph of the *RGSM Conservation Objective* section, the phrase "perfect world" will be replaced with "optimal conditions."
- The first subbullet of the *RGSM Conservation Objective* section will be edited to clarify "*This is based on the preliminary analysis of best available science and data of what the minnow would need...*"
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CC report out on completed EC actions: The CC met early in March. They discussed the status update on the models and approved vetting the contracting. The Interim Program Manager committed to a detailed review of projects for FY14. The cost share for FY12 is still being updated. The next CC meeting is scheduled for April 3rd.

- It was shared that shared that the PVA scheduling and contacting of the co-chairs might be delayed due to Dave Campbell's unavailability at this time.

Federal Agency Updates

- *US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps):* It appears that the sequestration and potential furlough(s) will not largely affect the Albuquerque Office since most the funding is from a different appropriation bill (Water and Energy instead of Defense). Hopefully, the impacts will be minimal. As far as Program funding, due to the Continuing Resolution, it is uncertain what funding the Corps will get. The Program work and projects were put in the work plan proposals. The Corps is "cautiously optimistic" that everything will not be significantly affected.
- *Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation):* Reclamation is also funded through the Water and Energy side of appropriations. A hiring freeze has been enacted which will be the biggest impact for in terms of Program support - all open positions are on hold. There will also be a 5% decrease across the board but the Albuquerque Office is still waiting on guidance on the submitted spending plan and how the impacts might be distributed. Continuing Resolution was signed yesterday, meaning that 2013 would likely be completed at the 2012 budget amount (before the 5% decrease); but the specific details have yet to be worked out and are pending guidance The Program had approximately \$1.6 million for 2012. The current Program target, developed with the CC, is around \$1.89 million. There may be some additional funding "found" but Reclamation is also "cautiously optimistic" that the Program's budget will not be significantly impacted.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) issued a [letter with effective date of February 22, 2013](#), for the Notice of Formal Consultation, which means that the 2003 Biological Opinion (BO) will continue to provide coverage for the spring and summer activities until the new BO is issued. The operation season is being based on the 2003 BO; however, there could be flexibilities in the attempt to get recruitment and spawning flow and declining limb.
- Reclamation is diligently working on the Water Management Elements for the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP) documents. Reclamation also worked on a detailed schedule that outlines how the Program can get from where we are now to the execution of the RIP document by the EC, signing of the Cooperative Agreement and ultimately a new BO.
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service):* Similarly, the Service is still waiting on the final budget numbers and it is still unknown how the Middle Rio Grande (MRG) portion will be affected. The Service is also under a hiring freeze. The sequestration and furloughs are likely to affect the future years more than now. The Service is continuing to work with the action agencies to progress the consultation. The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) has a new manager, Kevin Cobble.
- *Interim Program Manager:* The Egg Monitoring project was competitively bid and awarded to ASIR. Many of the Program contracts require justification as to why they can't be "performance based" which is the default throughout the government. Justification is required on projects that are prescriptive in nature and the detail required is substantial. The Interagency Agreement to the Service for the RGSM Sanctuary O&M will be expiring and thus terminated this fiscal year due to the sequestration. There will be no note taking for April and maybe even May. This is a cost share opportunity for non-federal partners.
 - It was clarified that under the authorizing legislation, there is not a cost share with regards to administration costs.
 - A member raised a concern with the Minnow Catch Rate contract and explained the understanding that the EC had voted "no confidence" and provided direction that they were not comfortable with pursuing it as such in the future.
 - It was clarified that this was topic was discussed in a closed session due to the nature of the displeasure and contracting. There were questions and concerns regarding the receipt of deliverables. However, closed session discussions are not recorded so decisions or highlights have not been captured in the meeting summaries.
 - It was suggested that the EC determine how to address capturing the decisions made in closed session in the meeting notes. There needs to be a formal way to capture key actions, discussion highlights, and any decisions in the meeting summaries.
 - The bylaws state that the purpose of the closed session shall be noted in the meeting summary.
- *Santa Ana Update:* At the request of the Interim Program Manager, presentations on Program-funded projects will be included in this agenda item. The Pueblo of Santa Ana presented an update on their Rio Grande and Rio Jemez Biological and Habitat Survey (Grant #R08AP40819) effort and preliminary results.
 - This project is in the 5th year of the grant and is nearing completion. The grant was issued in early 2008. Minnow monitoring and flycatcher planning began in 2009. The flycatcher monitoring began in 2010.
 - Santa Ana Pueblo manages approximately 5,040 acres of riparian ecosystem: 6 miles of Rio Grande and 12 miles of Rio Jemez.

- There have been several significant occurrences over the last few years that have impacted monitoring for the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (minnow) and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (flycatcher):
 - 2010 – presence of tamarisk beetle discovered. Within one month, every single salt cedar had been “hit.”
 - 2011 – cottonwood die off
 - 2011 – fire scar runoff from the Los Conchos fire;
 - 2012 and 2013 – low runoff years.
- Project Benefits:
 - Pueblo staff permitted for threatened and endangered species monitoring: 2 for minnow, 4 for flycatcher
 - Provided protocol and training for Santa Ana.
 - Drives the Pueblo’s adaptive management decisions.
 - Provides a means by which Santa Ana and the Service can work together.
 - Provided data for the Service’s consultation regarding restoration activities, easily over \$1 million in total project work.
 - Hazardous Fuels Treatment
 - BOR west bankline stabilization
 - BOR GRF east bankline stabilization
 - BOR River Maintenance Program RM205.8
 - Gas pipeline company west bankline stabilization
 - Collaborative Program bar 3 modification
- Minnow Project:
 - Fish community survey at 14 locations:
 - Seine em’ and count em’
 - Minnow SL
 - Habitat info –depth, flow, channel location, etc.
 - Water quality –YSI
 - River cross-sections
 - Egg survey
 - Macroinvertebrate survey
 - Pebble counts
 - Rapid bioassessment
 - Site descriptions
- Data Use – Trend Tracking
 - The data collected is used for: richness and biodiversity indexes; comparisons of percentage of minnow to flow in Santa Ana; and how those relate to Angostura.
 - The data can also be used to analyze the effects of restoration on the species. What changed in the river channel? How did it affect fish habitat? How did it affect the fish community?
 - geomorphology – channel elevation, thalweg location
 - habitat – features, substrate, depth, flow
 - biometrics – richness, diversity, cpue, dominance
- Restoration “Frustration”
 - Too often, restoration as a practice has “fantasy” targets that are impossible to achieve considering all the human impacts. Instead of aiming for an unrealistic or unsustainable restoration goal, changes to the project site should be related to the system through a control site(s).

- Restoration is often very broadly and vaguely defined – from bankline lower to salt cedar removal. “Restoration credit” could be achieved by proving that “something happened” in the river in response to a restoration activity. Look at the project sites as related to the reference sites (monitoring sites). The same thing could be done with the biometrics – the statistical “before and after” analysis to determine if a project site changed in reference to the other sites.
- Habitat Restoration for the Flycatcher
 - The flycatcher has been greatly impacted by loss and modification of habitat that ultimately led to the species being listed as an Endangered Species.
 - Based on 6 years of survey data, habitat areas were classified as “high use” or “non-use” for comparison purposes. Vegetation structure, vegetation composition, temperature, relative humidity, and soil moisture were all measured. Restoration activities are classified as either active or passive for comparison purposes.
 - For example, “passive” refers to efforts focused on returning the river as the mechanism for restoring the habitat. Passive restoration still requires a lot of work and mechanical involvement. An example of “active” restoration includes backwaters.
- Preliminary Findings
 - *Temperature:* Flycatchers require a cooler microclimate for nesting, so temperature is important. Using collection probes to monitor the temperatures, it has been determined that active backwater sites have higher temperatures and greater temperature ranges.
 - *Relative Humidity:* Flycatchers eat insects so presumably the more humid the environment, the more there would be to eat. The active restoration/backwater areas have higher relative humidity but the humidity at the passive restoration sites is more stable.
 - *Vegetation Composition:* In the high use sites, about 75% of the vegetation is native. By comparison, the non-use sites are about 50% native and 50% non-native vegetation. The active restoration sites are about 80% coyote willow. Using this data, the pueblo is trying to make these sites more realistic to the vegetation composition selected by the flycatcher.
 - *Vertical Foliage Density:* The passive restoration does a good job mirroring the vertical foliage density of the high use areas. So the active restoration is being modified to add the vegetation heterogeneity of the high use sites.
 - *Lessons Learned:* The species specific monitoring results are being used to modify the restoration activities in order to better mirror the preferences of the animals. The pueblo has started to see increased habitat use during migrations.
- In Summary
 - Monitoring projects actively guide habitat restoration and the monitoring results/data is used in adaptive management.
 - Results and changes are not necessarily immediate - habitat needs time to grow.
 - Yearly conditions vary and we are in a drought period.
 - Tamarisk beetle and cottonwood die-off impact habitat and thus site usage.

- Combining the monitoring and restoration efforts help to more efficiently meet/address Program goals.

Biological Opinion Schedule/Consultation Update

- *Biological Assessment (BA) Submittals:* All three agency draft BAs were submitted and accepted by the Service which initiated Formal Consultation. This means that coverage for the spring and summer activities will be provided by the 2003 BO until a new BO is issued. Please remember that the Reclamation BA also includes the proposed actions from State and MRGCD and the associated effects analysis for all three agencies. A section on the ABCWUA conservation measures has also been included.
- *Milestone Schedule:* Reclamation developed a draft detailed schedule of tasks, major milestones and associated deadline dates that have to be completed in a fairly compressed timeline.
 - The Final Draft RIP Program Document will be presented for EC consideration at the April meeting.
 - The Revised Long-term Plan (LTP) and Final Draft RIP Action Plan will be provided as read aheads for the May 16th EC meeting.
 - By June 13th, the findings and draft documents on the Water Management Elements will be provided for consideration at the June EC meeting. Hopefully, the Draft Cooperative Agreement will also be provided for the June meeting.
 - The target is to have the EC take action on the RIP Program Document, RIP Action Plan, and revised bylaws.
 - There is an aggressive timeline because the Program has to stay on track in order to provide all these pieces to the Service for consideration with the new BO. This is what is necessary for a non-jeopardy BO which is what the Program is trying to accomplish with the transition to a RIP. The EC has to embrace these documents in order for them to be included in the proposed action for Service to analysis from the non-jeopardy perspective.
 - It was noted that the Corps has included participation in the Program and program goals as a conservation measures.
 - Some of the non-federal partners raised their concern that there has been “slippage” over the last several months from the original point(s) of agreement on where the Program was going and how the transition would be achieved. For example, regarding the conservation measures, the RIP itself was intended to be the conservation measure with subparts. But it itself needs to be consulted on. The non-federal partners are concerned that this will become (or has become) a piecemeal situation instead of consulting on the entire RIP as a full package. There is also concern that there has been “slippage” on the agreements made last summer regarding the three “deal breakers.” These “deal breakers” included (1) broad coverage, (2) expedited way for new members/participants, and (3) the sufficient progress metrics. The Service’s presentation on the Conservation Objective specifically stated that it is “intended to be used for annual evaluation of the Program” but this was not agreed to by all parties. The agreement was to develop the sufficient progress metrics as a group – the perception is that this has changed and it is not acceptable. It is understood that it will take time to have the independent 3rd Party Management in place but it is a critical part of the RIP. The main concern is that all of this needs to be done at the same time and not piecemeal.
 - It was explained there is not necessarily a disagreement but more detailed discussions would be prudent in order to make sure everyone understands and is on the same page. It was clarified that the federal partners did not intentionally back away from or change on the original points of agreements.
 - There are two main discussion points to cover: (1) funding and process of providing money to the Financial Management Entity (FME) for the 3rd Party Management and (2) the interim sufficient progress metrics.

- (1) Reclamation staff submitted the 3rd Party Management FME to their contracting staff, who requested Solicitor review of the proposed award instrument. Reclamation is committed to completing requirements required based on the authorizing legislation, to be able to streamline money into the Program's FME. There are some contractual issues and concerns that have been discussed before and are still being worked through. It is likely that changes to the legislation will be needed to address the authorities in order for Reclamation to put funds into the 3rd Party Management entity.

Recovery Implementation Program Documents and Other Activities

- *Hydrology Forecast (BOR):* There was decent moisture for the northern portion of state in February which helped the March 1 forecast a bit. But there hasn't been much precipitation since then. The forecast for the rest of March only indicates warming and dry weather. The April forecast is likely to be less than the March 1 forecast. Reclamation has started diverting water on the San Juan/Chama project in the upper watershed of the San Juan. There has been discussion of the possibility of shortage being declared on the San Juan/Chama project. With the expected runoff figures, Reclamation is optimistic that they will be able to make a full allocation; it would take a significant change in the weather situation (high winds or no more precipitation) to threaten the possibility of a full allocation. A daily minnow release of 200 cfs has already been initiated this season. It is not unprecedented to start this early in order to "fill the gap" before runoff begins. This early release will help to meet the 2003 BO continuous flow requirements and help in generating base flows for the recruitment and spawning flows. The intent is to store 90,000 ac-ft in El Vado, but it is unknown whether or not this amount will be feasible given the Article 7 situation and the mainstem supply bypass situation. Storage could be less than that if runoff is slow and there are high winds. However, a spring storm or two could change the picture too. Overall, things are not looking great. The snow pack continues to fall. Alternative water supplies will be needed in order to accommodate this and future dry conditions in order to create a "flexible water management world."
 - Concern was expressed that total relinquishment can't be fulfilled if 30,000 to 33,000 ac-ft is for P&P (Prior and Paramount), 19,000 ac-ft is from last year leaving only 30,000 to 40,000 ac-ft for the District's relinquishment. It was responded that the final amount will be as balanced to be as fair as possible and it might be pro-rated.
- *Minnow Action Team preliminary recommendation(s) (MAT):* The MAT is focused on determining options and alternatives on what can be done in 2013. The MAT group provided a hand out listing the top three draft alternatives that the group has discussed.
 - *Alternative 1 – Spawning/Recruitment Flow:* This alternative was ranked high primarily due to the previous two poor flow years resulting in poor recruitment and spawning. This is a daunting task considering the best estimate is for 5,000 cfs for 20 days. The group is working to determine the optimum given the conditions we have. This alternative includes utilizing a "loan" of 30,000 ac-ft of ABCWUA water (10,000 ac-ft of which is being moved into Elephant Butte anyway) to create a spike. The group has discussed trying to do this no sooner than April 15th – the conditions should be as warm as possible in order for the minnow to be as gravid and ready to spawn as possible. While May is typically the best time for a spawning spike, the May 1st deadline has a significant increase in carriage losses. The biologists in the group would like to a minimum peak of ~2,000 cfs at the Albuquerque gage for 7 days with a ramp down of 500 cfs over the next 3 days.
 - *Alternative 2 – Standard USACE Deviation:* The Corps is continuing to look at storing water in order to augment the spring flow in case something happens to the ABCWUA water; however, a deviation is not very likely.

- *Alternative 3: Other Options to Minimize Effects on the Species:* This option will require close communications between the federal agencies for discussions about what modification options are feasible (ex. post-recession flow targets at Central, or change the start of the recession date from June 15th to June 1st, separate out the flow targets and BO requirements, etc.). These options are still in preliminary discussions. We also may need flexibility in flow targets later in the season. There needs to be a lot of coordination over the next months in order to have options and alternatives in place.
- *Albuquerque District Reservoir Operations Forecasting: Water Year 2013 Precipitation (Oct 2012-Feb 2013):*
 - Percent of normal conditions for the state:
 - Statewide Average: 51% of normal
 - Northwest Plateau: 63% of normal
 - Northeast Plains: 67% of normal
 - Central (MRG) Valley: 30% of normal
 - Southern Desert: 26% of normal
 - Almost all of the state is in moderate to severe drought status and there are several areas that are in extreme exceptional drought.
 - The April through June 2013 outlook is below average precipitation throughout the state along with above average temperatures; this is also predicted for Colorado. It is assumed that runoff will come early and be low volume.
 - The March 1 streamflow forecast at the 70% exceedance for volume (pessimistic) is:
 - Rio Grande near Del Norte – 295,000 ac-ft (or 57% of normal)
 - El Vado Reservoir inflow – 95,000 ac-ft (or 42% of normal)
 - Rio Grande at Otowi Bridge – 300,000 ac-ft (or 42% of normal)
 - Jemez River near Jemez – 12,000 ac-ft (or 23% of normal)
 - Rio Grande at San Marcial – 121,000 ac-ft (or 24% of normal)
 - By elevation: the higher elevations (10,000 ft and 9,300 ft) were around 60 to 75% of average snow. However, at the 8,400 elevation nearly 1/3 of the snow had already melted and the melt response was not seen in the river. This means that not much of the runoff is reaching the river.
 - The URGWOM forecasting model indicates that El Vado storage could be around 75,000 ac-ft. Remember, the model is set up specifically for modeling the Cochiti Deviation so there are a lot of details not included (ex. the annual operating plans, storage and release amounts, allocations, etc.).
 - The predicted minnow release out of Abiquiu is around 1,300 cfs.
 - The model predicts that not enough water can be stored in Cochiti to meet downstream demand and still develop a 1,400 cfs deviation to augment the peak flows. It appears that it will be challenging to meet the 100 cfs flow minimum at Albuquerque, although this does not include any San Juan leases.
 - *Alternative 1 Modeling:*
 - The model was able to get a 2,500 cfs release out of Cochiti for about 7 days with a sharp increase and sharp decrease. This translates to a peak of about 2,000 cfs for 7 days and then descending.
 - With the predicted drying, the model indicates <100 cfs at Central for mid-August to mid-September.
 - It would be better to conduct a spawning and recruitment spike in April instead of May due to the losses. Losses in April would be around 5,000 ac-ft from the original 30,000; but losses in May would increase to around 9,000 ac-ft.

- This modeling presentation is the predicted bare minimum necessary to produce a potentially good spawning and recruitment. The reality is that the situation could be more dire than this - in which case it could be impossible to achieve.
 - Even with a peak of 2,000 cfs it is unlikely that the spawn would be great. We have to consider the alternatives beyond that. If there is poor natural flow (<1,000 cfs), poor runoff, no spring storms, etc. then any spawning is likely to occur in channel. We have to have contingency plans in place (ex. collect eggs, salvage fish, etc.).
 - There has been strong resistance within the group to going that direction (in terms of relying on egg and fish collection).
 - There will be a very low take statement this year based on the calculated number of fish in the river. Drying cannot be avoided. This is where Alternative 3 might become important - to look at modifications and how to prolong wetted areas as long as possible and how to use supplemental water to even achieve the flow targets.
- The April forecast is what “tells the story” and the decision to conduct a deviation is based on that forecast. The next model runs will need to be completed on April 9th or 10th at the latest in order to inform decisions and implementation of Alternatives.
 - It was commented that this is a prime opportunity for adaptive management. The sooner we look at all possibilities and absolute worst conditions, then the quicker we can get things into place. There are options that should be talked about and not immediately dismissed. Everything possible should be considered.
 - This year could also provide opportunity to test some hypotheses related to flow needs: peak, duration, timing, etc.
 - It was clarified that ABCWUA has offered to “loan” 30,000 ac-ft of water to help concentrate on achieving a successful spawning and recruitment flow. But keep in mind that this water has to be paid back. It is not a gift.
 - ABCWUA’s offer was praised as “heroic and unprecedented.” It is proof of water managers thinking outside the box and coming together.
- *Service’s Draft Conservation Objective for the Minnow White Paper (FWS)*: The Service is still in process of internal discussions and is not able to provide the Conservation Objective for the Minnow White Paper at this time.
- *Program Document (J.Faler)*: The RIP Program Document is in the final stages of editing and formatting. It will be the first final draft document that will come to the EC as read ahead on April 11th for discussion for April 18th. The Program Document focus group’s last meeting will be April 9th.
 - The only real change to the document since the last time it was presented is that the many attachments will be kept in electronic form. The Program Document is considered a stable document that should not need to be modified often, if at all. However, many of the attachments might need to be updated and revised more often. Keeping the attachments in electronic form and posted to the website will facilitate the regular and timely updating of those.
 - One member expressed concern that while the transition of the Program to a RIP reflects the changing philosophy toward recovery, the Program goals do not appear to mirror that change. The concern is that the old goals were just “copied and pasted” into the new Program Document.
 - It was responded that the goals were updated and approved at the 2009 Taos retreat and ratified in September 2010. It was pointed out, however, that this group does not have the capacity to be a full recovery program. We have had long discussions about authorities and jurisdiction. Remember, we are trying to recover a species in a situation where there needs to be 3 separate populations. We are focusing on one particular area

and there has been a lot of discussion as to why the goals should only contain a “light touch” of recovery language.

- *Revised RIP Action Plan Update:* The group has been discussing when the RIP Action Plan might be ready to present to the EC for endorsement. Based on the current milestone schedule, it appears that the Final Draft RIP Action Plan is due by May 9th as a read ahead for the May 16th meeting. However, the water management elements won't be included by this time. Water operations are already in the plan but there is no individual water projects included yet. The Action Plan team met with the Science and Habitat Restoration workgroups in a joint session in order to garner input on minnow and flycatcher elements that affect those areas (adaptive management, science, research, etc.). The group is still working on costs and schedules as well as determining potential commitments on tasks and actions. Patrick Redmond has continued to work on the sufficient progress metrics section. The group is also “beefing up” the adaptive management discussion so that readers will understand that adaptive management is integrated and used throughout the entire plan.

Program Execution

- *Non-federal Cost Share Reporting for FY2012:* There is 25% non-federal cost share that is applied to the \$59 million. In the authorizing legislation, the cost share is determined on the programmatic budget not a project-by-project basis. To date, all non-federal participants have contributed to some degree on the cost share contributions (ex. completion of studies, monitoring, in-kind services, etc.) There are some outstanding cost share reports at this time. Based on the projections, it is assumed that participants will be able to continue meeting the 25%.
- *CC/PM Report:*
 - Ali Saenz and Michelle Mann have covered all the Program Management Team (PMT) duties and responsibilities, including workgroup support, in Stacey's absence. Workgroups are developing their FY2013 work plans and completing their FY2012 Accomplishment Reports. These documents are important as they provide written records on progress and activities completed.
- *FY2014 Budget:* Reclamation now has earlier deadlines due to the new acquisitions process and database. Reclamation needs direction on the FY14 projects by June in order to help avoid a repeat of the contracting chaos of this year.
- *FY2013 Contracting Updates:* All of the projects on the CC/EC approved list have been submitted to contracting to meet the March 31st deadline. Based on requirements and process, those are on track (unless something unforeseen comes up or related to the sequestration) to be awarded by June 30th (3rd quarter) or if carried over by the 4th quarter. Right now, unless something is returned because the scope of work or other required documentation needs revision, then all projects should be on track to move through the process.

Meeting Summary: Reese Fullerton (facilitator) offered a quick summary of today's meeting:

- The EC approved last month's meeting notes with minor changes.
- Project updates and information sharing will be added to the monthly agenda under the PM update section; all agencies and contractors are encouraged to bring project presentations, updates, etc. to the EC.
- The EC will talk about the contract issuing(s) and will continue that discussion in more detail in closed session.
- The non-federal and federal partners need to make sure all are on the “same page” with the three “deal breaker” issues and Conservation Objective concerns.
- The Milestone Schedule was quickly reviewed to highlight what has to be done in order to have full endorsement of the RIP documents by June and implementation of the cooperative agreement in that same time frame.

- Cost share reports for FY12 are due to Rhea Graham by mid-April.
- The workgroup's work plan and FY12 accomplishments will be available by April.

Announcements:

- State Legislative session has been ended and Senator Michael Padilla (Sponsor of [Senate Memorial #8](#)) requested a meeting sponsored by MRGCD and with participation of others to discuss maximum water supplies in the MRG. This is a great opportunity for the Program to describe what the regional issues are. This is a great educational opportunity and worthwhile for agencies to participate and contribute.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Closed Session Discussion Topics:

- The EC meet in closed session. Please contact your EC representative for details on this discussion.
- Close session discussion topics were: (1) contracting issues – particularly related to the RIP 3rd Party Management and (2) monitoring and data collecting contracting.

Next Meeting: **April 18th, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Reclamation**

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) Final Draft RIP Program Document and Presentation; (2) Review and/or Update of Minnow Action Team Draft Plan; (3) FY2013 work group work plans and FY2012 work group accomplishments;
- Tentative May Agenda Items: (1) Review/Approval (?) of Revised Long-term Plan; (2) Final Draft RIP Action Plan and Presentation;
- Tentative June Agenda Items: (1) Review/Approval (?) of Draft Water Management Documents; (2) Review of Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement;
- Tentative July Agenda Items: (1) Endorsement of all RIP Documents so Reclamation Biological Assessment can be revised to include the RIP: Program Document, Action Plan, Revised By-laws, Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement and any remaining elements;
- Future Agenda Items: (1) Updated 10(j) population schedule and report out on FWS Regional Office approval to proceed; (2) Updates/continued discussion on the acquisition of past mesohabitat data;

Executive Committee Meeting Attendees

March 28th, 2013

Attendees:

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Brent Rhees	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Federal co-chair
Michelle Shaughnessy (P)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Service
Subhas Shah (P)	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District	MRGCD
Steve Farris (P)	NM Attorney General's Office	NMAGO
Mike Hamman (P)	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	BOR
Rick Billings (A)	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority co-chair	ABCWUA/Non-federal
Kris Schaffer (A)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Matthew Wunder (P)	NM Department of Game and Fish	NMDGF
Jessica Tracey (A)	Pueblo of Sandia	Sandia
Matt Schmader (P)	City of Albuquerque	COA

Alan Hatch (P)	Pueblo of Santa Ana	Santa Ana
Janet Jarratt (P)	Assessment Payers Association of MRGCD	APA
Joe Jojola (P)	Bureau of Indian Affairs	BIA

Others

Rhea Graham (Interim PM)	Bureau of Reclamation
Ali Saenz	Bureau of Reclamation
Jennifer Faler	Bureau of Reclamation
Josh Mann	Bureau of Reclamation
Mary Carlson	Bureau of Reclamation
Rolf Schmidt-Petersen	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Grace Haggerty	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Chris Shaw	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Kris Schafer (A)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Susan Bittick	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
William DeRagon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mick Porter	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Orcutt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ryan Gronewald	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Stacey (Kopitsch) Stanford	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wally Murphy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sarah Conn	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Janet Bair	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kevin Cobble	Bosque del Apache NWR
Ann Moore (A)	NM Attorney General's Office
Brooke Wyman	MRGCD
Patrick Redmond	for MRGCD
Glenn Harper	Pueblo of Santa Ana
Nathan Schroder	Pueblo of Santa Ana
Cathy Nishida	Pueblo of Santa Ana
Kyle Harwood	City of Santa Fe/BBD
Rick Carpenter	City of Santa Fe
John Fleck	Albuquerque Journal
Sarah Cobb	Senator Udall's Office
Mariana Padilla	Congressman Lujan Grisham
Jen Pelz	WildEarth Guardians
Reese Fullerton	GenQuest (facilitator)
Marta Wood	Tetra Tech (Note Taker)

**Coordination Committee and Program Manager Update
Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
Executive Committee Meeting
March 28, 2012**

Coordination Committee

Co-Chairs: Rick Billings and Jim Wilber

The Coordination Committee (CC) met on March 6, 2013 at the USACE with a quorum present consisting of: USACE, ABCWUA, Reclamation, NMG&F, NMAG, NMISC, and the Pueblo of Santa Ana. Meetings have been changed to Wednesday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00 am to accommodate a standing meeting for Reclamation managers regarding acquisitions.

The PM has been requested to contact the PVA Co-chairs (David Campbell and David Gensler) on behalf of the CC for an update of the status of models and deliverables review.

The CC approved of adding the contract/grant timeframe (expiration dates) to the spreadsheet provided quarterly showing updated status of outlays vs. obligations for Program awards through Reclamation as the Program's fiscal agent.

The PM committed to a detailed evaluation of all participants progress vs. timeframe within contracting constraints so that future project selection for FY2014 is enhanced/improved with lessons learned.

The PM is updating cost share reports for FY2012.

Next CC meeting – April 3, 2013 @ Reclamation from 9:00 to 11:00am

Program Management Team

Ali and Michelle have supported all work groups during Stacey's maternity leave. We expect Stacey to return at this month. Information collection for the 2013 Work Group Work Plan & the 2012 Work Group Accomplishments reports was finally provided to PMT Liaisons on March 25, 2013, for compiling for CC review and approval.

Habitat Restoration Workgroup

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

The Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) met on January 13th. Workgroup members attended a joint ScW/HRW workgroup presentation from USGS on Mesohabitat. After the joint workgroup meeting, workgroup members were given a Diorhabda presentation from Vicky Ryan discussing the affect Diorhabda will have on SWFL populations. The 2012 Workgroup Accomplishments and 2013 Work Plan were then reviewed. The workgroup also discussed further development of the rapid assessment tool, habitat, and sub reach evaluations. The next HRW meeting is currently scheduled for February 19th.

The Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) met on February 19th. Workgroup members attended a joint ScW/HRW workgroup presentation by Parametrix regarding potential monitoring protocol/rapid assessment for SWFL and RGSM. After the joint workgroup presentation, workgroup members discussed the ScW proposed Collaborative Program Research Symposium. The 2012 Accomplishments and 2013 Work Plan were reviewed and approved and a joint meeting between HRW and ScW was planned to discuss the rapid assessment tool. The next HRW meeting is currently scheduled for March 19th at ISC.

The Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) met on March 19th. Workgroup members attended a joint ScW and HRW workgroup meeting to discuss the rapid assessment tool. The workgroup members also attended a joint workgroup meeting to discuss the RIP Action Plan. After the joint workgroup meetings, the workgroup members

were given an update on rapid assessment, habitat, and sub reach evaluations. The workgroup members also chose a HRW Co-Lead for ScW Collaborative Program Research Symposium. Rick Billings gave an update in the La Orilla Project and the Minnow Action Team and Gina Dello Russo gave an update on San Acacia projects and the Tamarisk Coalition. The next HRW meeting is currently scheduled for April 16th at ISC.

Science Workgroup

Co-chairs: Dana Price and Alison Hutson; PMT Liaison: Ali Saenz (Stacey Stanford)

In the absence of note-taking support bulleted notes of meetings have been recorded. Brooke Wyman was nominated as the new non-federal co-chair and was elected unanimously in January. Kathy Lang is the new manager at the City BioPark. The ScW has been discussing a Research Symposium, field trip ideas, and the HRW proposed Assessment Tool. ScW has been reviewing and providing comments on several reports – Fish Health, Pop Monitoring, RIP Action Plan, and Salvage 2012 draft report. The ScW has discussed the development of a process on how draft work group information and/or documents will be included in the DBMS at the workgroup level to facilitate/ensure availability of documents to workgroup members.

Species Water Management Workgroup

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

The SWM Workgroup delayed meeting until April 10th in hopes of having note takers to attend the meeting. The next SWM meeting is currently scheduled for April 10th at BIA.

Monitoring Plan Team ad hoc Workgroup

Co-Chair: Ondrea Hummel; PMT Liaison: Ali Saenz (Stacey Stanford)

The MPT work group has submitted a work plan for 2013. No meetings have been scheduled.

San Acacia Reach ad hoc Workgroup

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

The San Acacia Workgroup (SAR) presented their final product to the EC met on January 17th. The SAR final product will be sent out to SAR stakeholders. SAR Workgroup has met its intended mission and has discontinued meeting

Population Viability Analysis (PVA)/Biology ad hoc Workgroup

Co-chairs: Dave Gensler and Dave Campbell; PMT Liaison: Ali Saenz (Stacey Stanford)

The next PVA workgroup meeting has not yet been scheduled.

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

Co-chairs: Amy Louise and Dagmar Llewellyn; PMT Liaison: Ali Saenz (Stacey Stanford)

PHVA workgroup has met its intended mission and discontinued meeting.

Database Management System ad hoc Workgroup

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

DB Stephens is working on resolving the comments they have received regarding issues with the Data Base Management System (DBMS) by April 12th. Comments will be back checked at that time. The DBMS will be made public soon. The DBMS Workgroup is meeting as needed. No meeting is currently scheduled.

Public Information and Outreach Workgroup

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

Due to limited admin support the PIO work group will be meeting quarterly with the award of new CP support contract. PIO members continue to communicate via email and provide new releases pertaining to the Collaborative Program to Ali to be included in the MRGESCP website. PIO members have been drafting a press release for the RIP transition when/if the EC endorses the RIP documents and are also collaborating in preparing a press release for the DBMS is ready for release to the public.

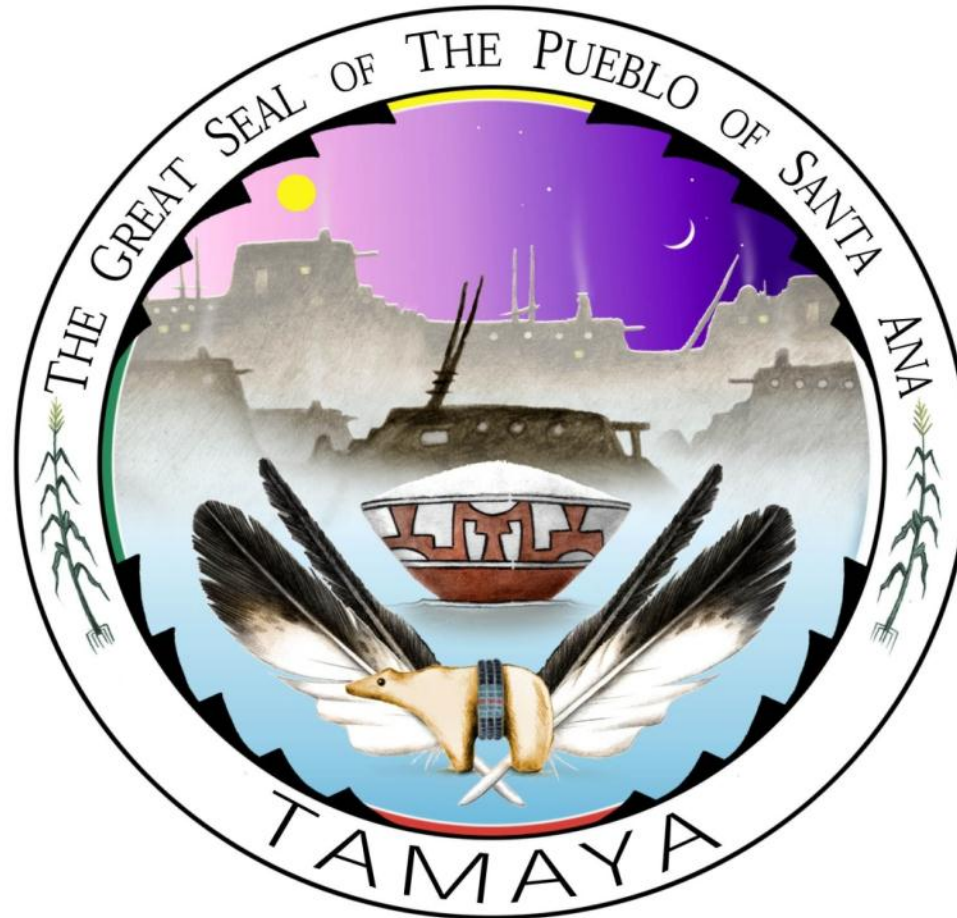
DRAFT

Website Updates

Document Title/Description	Date Received	Location posted
2012 OSE Restoration Offset Policy	12/11/2012	Library » Public Documents
2012 NRCS Gross Lake Evap NM jpg	12/11/2012	Library » Public Documents
2013 SAR Floodplain Land Use Final Draft January 2013	1/17/2013	Library>>Public Documents
2012 RGSM Salvage Report	2/19/2013	Committees & Work Groups » PVA - Population Viability Analysis » Work Group Documents » PVA Documents » RGSM Augmentation & Salvage Report
2012 RGSM Health Study Final Report_Dec 2012	2/19/2013	Committees & Work Groups » ScW - Science Work Group » Work Group Documents; and "New" Final Documents
GeoSystem Parametrix Presentation	2/19/2013	Library>> Presentations; Committees & Work Groups » ScW - Science Work Group » Work Group Documents>>Documents & Presentations; and Committees & Work Groups » HRW-Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents
MRG Initiation of Formal Consultation letter	02/26/2013	Home page
2012 Egg Entrainment Monitoring Report Final	2/28/2013	Committees & Work Groups » ScW - Science Work Group » Work Group Documents and; "New" Final Documents
Medley and Shirey 2013 Ecohydrology RGSM life history paper	3/6/2013	Library>>Public Documents>>Links to documents
BdA BA	03/07/2013	Posted to EC & CC 2013 Read Ahead modules
2013 GeoSystems-Parametric Presentation	3/12/2013	Library>> Presentations; Committees & Work Groups » ScW - Science Work Group » Work Group Documents>>Documents & Presentations; and Committees & Work Groups » HRW-Habitat Restoration » Work Group Documents

PUEBLO OF SANTA ANA: RIO GRANDE AND RIO JEMEZ BIOLOGICAL AND HABITAT SURVEY

Grant #R08AP40819

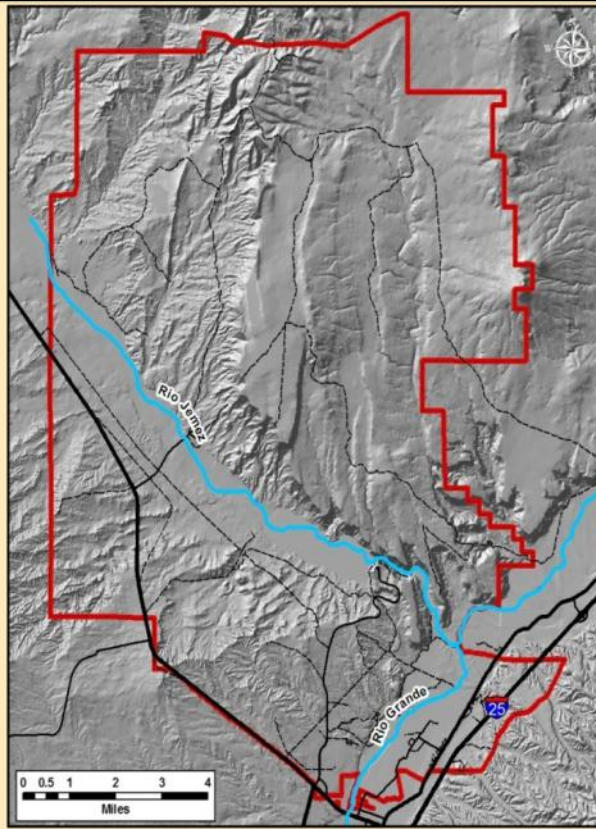


**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
March 28, 2013
Executive Committee**

PUEBLO BACKGROUND

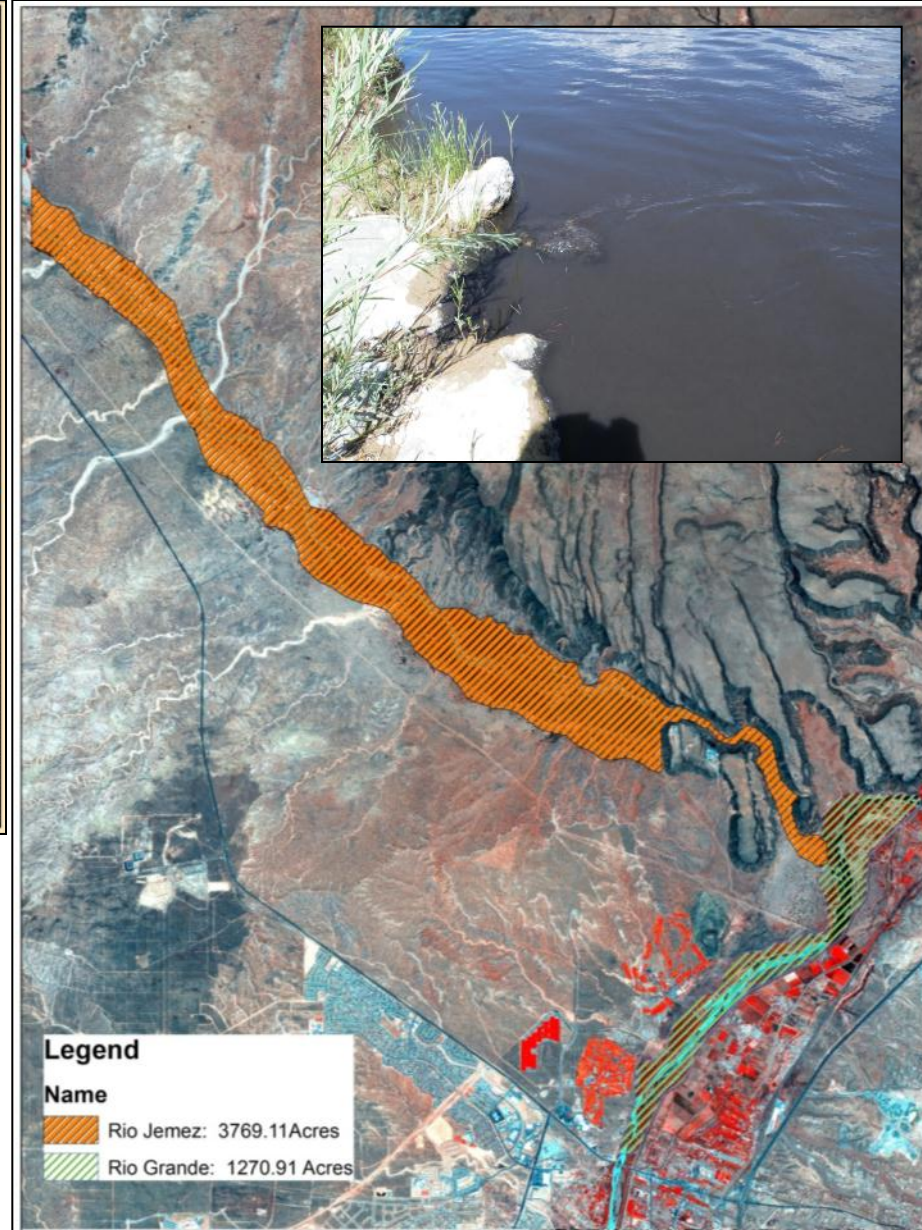


The Pueblo of Santa Ana



6 miles Rio Grande
12 miles Rio Jemez
5,040 acres of riparian ecosystem

2010 – Tamarisk beetle
2011 – Cottonwood die-off
2011 – Fire scar run-off
2012 and 2013 – Low run-off



GRANT BACKGROUND

- Tribal specific RFP for monitoring RGSM and SWFL on tribal lands.
 - Issued in early 2008.
 - RFP called for a 5-year activity and funding plan.
 - Fish program began monitoring in 2009.
- Bird program began planning in 2009, monitoring began in 2010.
 - Asked (by BOR) to present at HR in fall 2011.

PROJECT BENEFITS

1. Pueblo staff permitted for threatened and endangered species monitoring.
 - 2 for RGSM, 4 for SWFL
2. Provided protocol and training for Santa Ana.
3. Drives the Pueblo's adaptive management decisions.
4. Provides a means by which Santa Ana and FWS can work together.
5. Provided data for FWS consultation regarding restoration activities, easily over \$1 million in project work.
 - Hazardous Fuels Treatment
 - BOR west bankline stabilization
 - BOR GRF east bankline stabilization
 - BOR River Maintenance Program RM205.8
 - Gas pipeline company west bankline stabilization
 - Collaborative Program bar 3 modification

FISH PROJECT

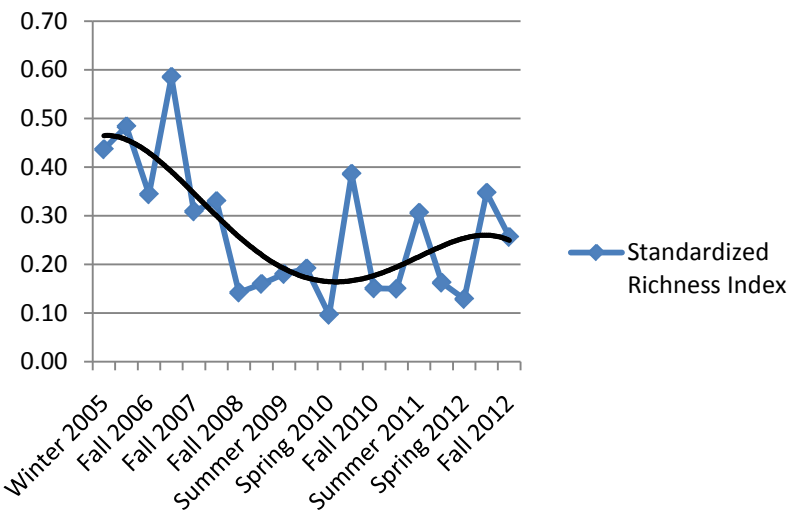
Activities

- Fish community survey at 14 locations
 - Seine em' and count em'
 - Minnow SL
 - Habitat info – depth, flow, channel location, etc.
 - Water quality – YSI
 - River cross-sections
- Egg survey
- Macroinvertebrate survey
- Pebble counts
- Rapid bioassessment
- Site descriptions

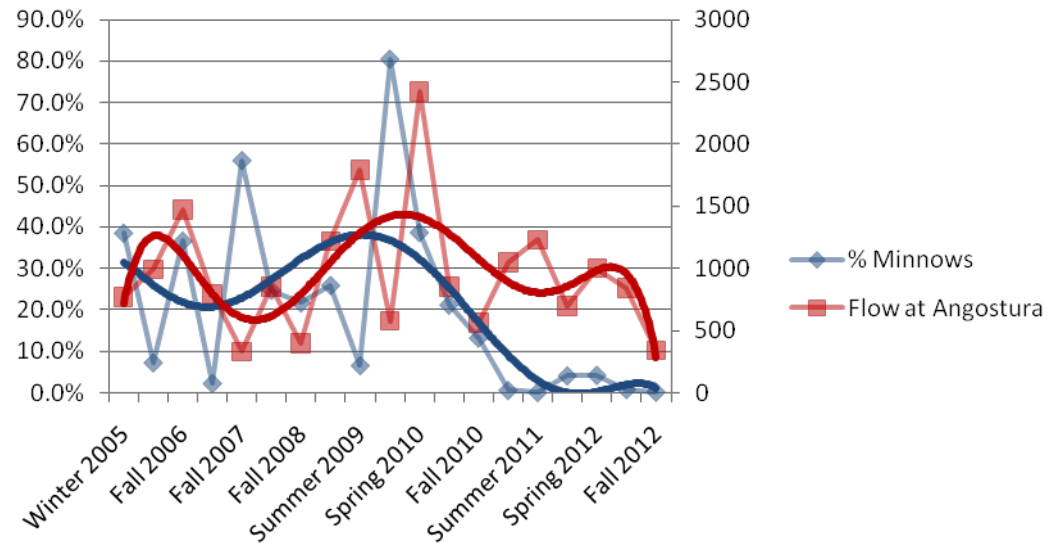


HOW WE USE THE DATA – TREND TRACKING

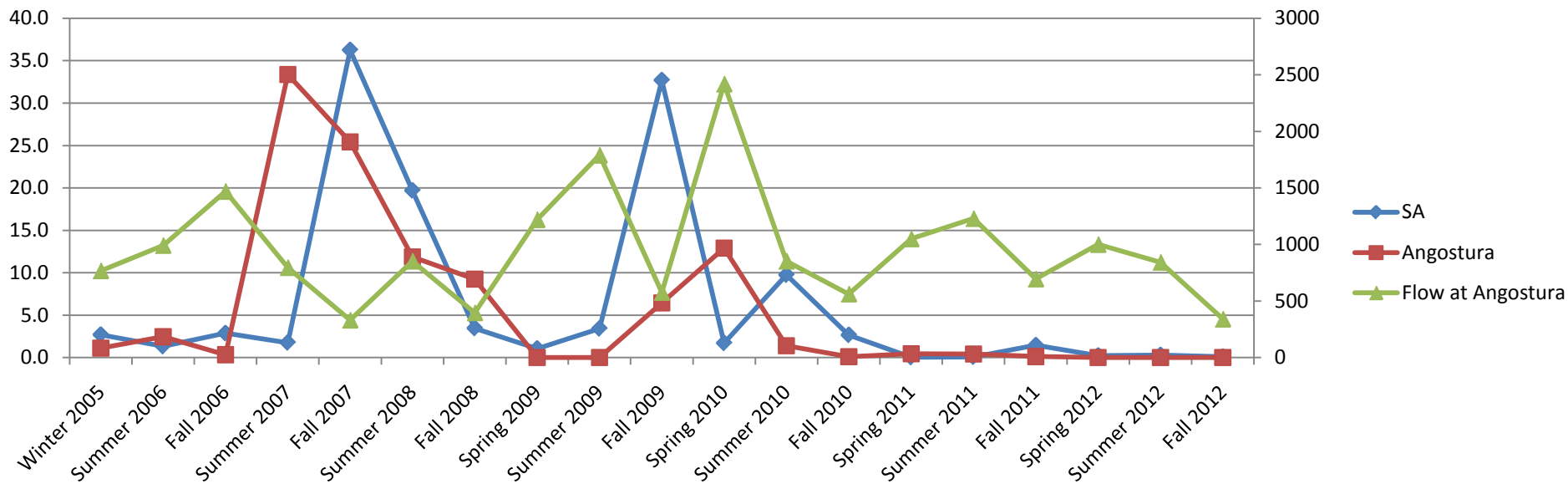
Standardized Richness Index



Trends in %RGSM caught compared to flow at Angostura



RGSM CPUE at Santa Ana compared to the entire Angostura reach



HOW WE USE THE DATA - ANALYSIS

- **Effects of restoration on the species**

1. What changed in the river channel
2. How did it affect fish habitat
3. How did it affect the fish community?

1) Geomorphology



channel elevation
thalweg location

2) Habitat

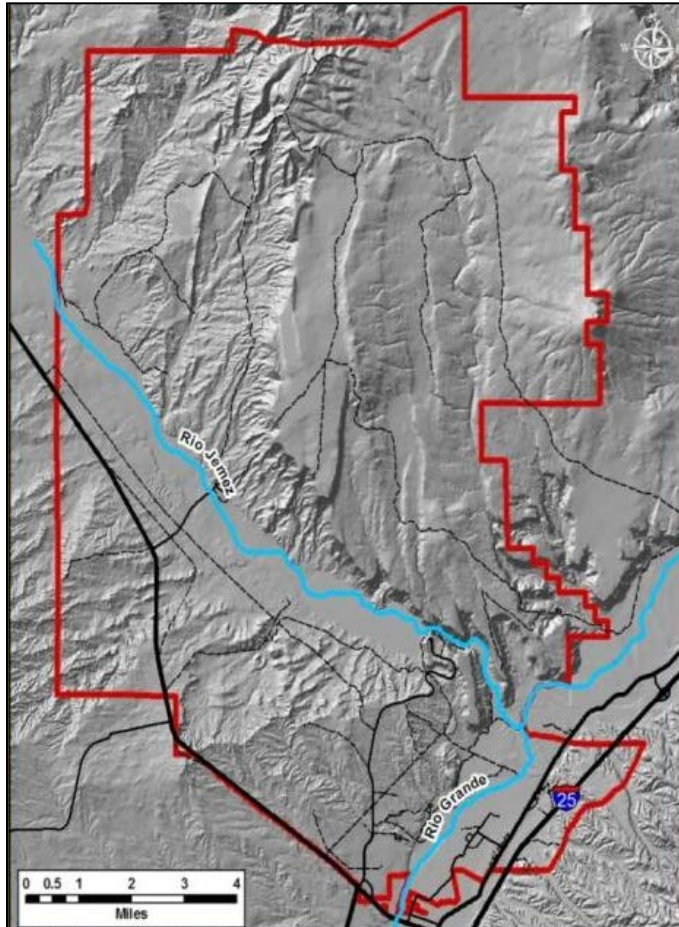


features
substrate
depth
flow

3) Biometrics

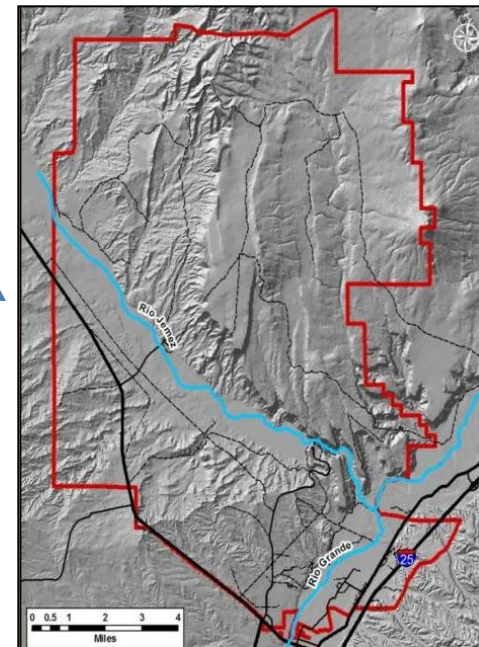
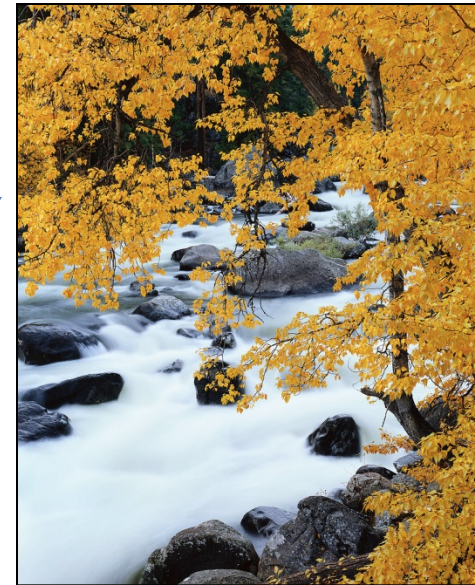


richness
diversity
CPUE
dominance



Restoration
Trajectory

Changes to
the System



ANALYSIS – PROJECT PROGRESS

1) Geomorphology



channel elevation
thalweg location

2) Habitat



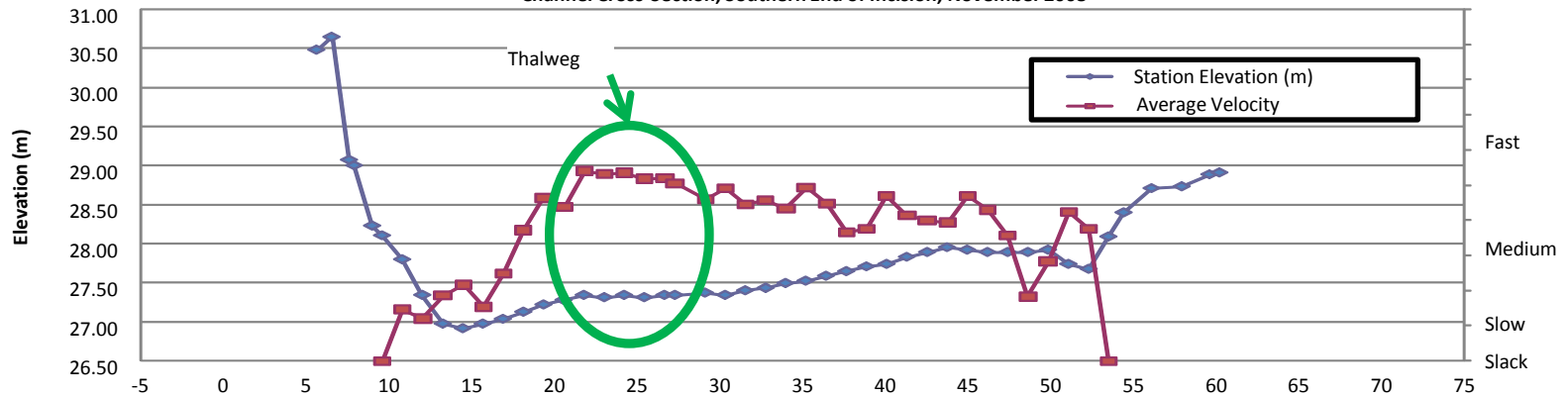
features
substrate
depth
flow

3) Biometrics



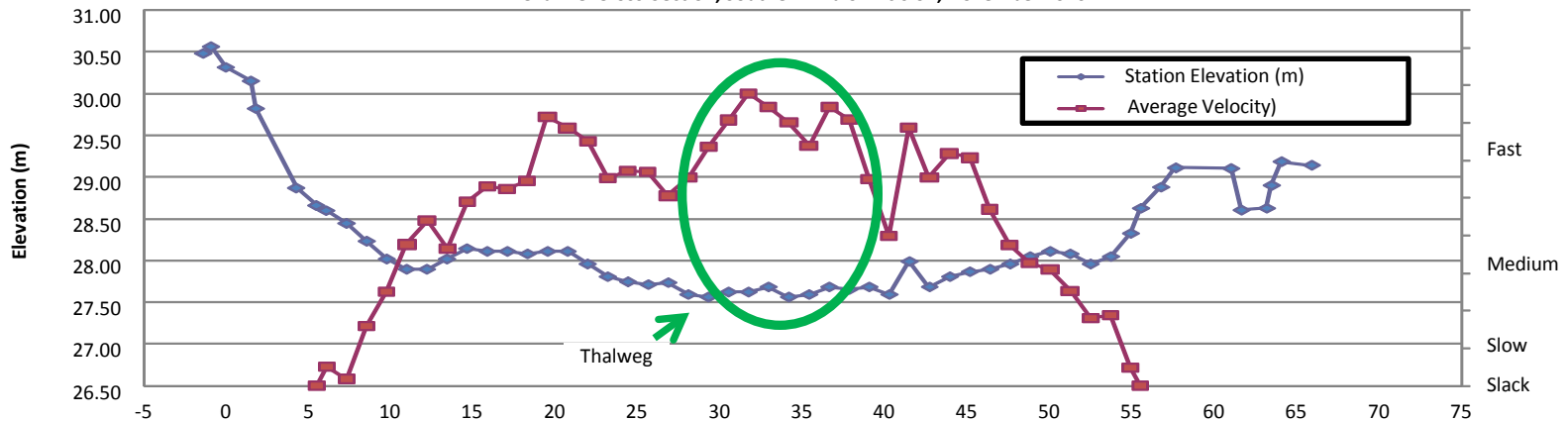
richness
diversity
CPUE
dominance

Channel Cross-Section, Southern End of Incision, November 2008



Flow Categories

Channel Cross-Section, Southern End of Incision, November 2010



Flow Categories

ANALYSIS – PROJECT PROGRESS

1) Geomorphology



channel elevation
thalweg location

2) Habitat



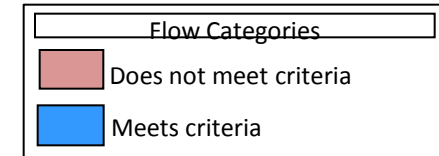
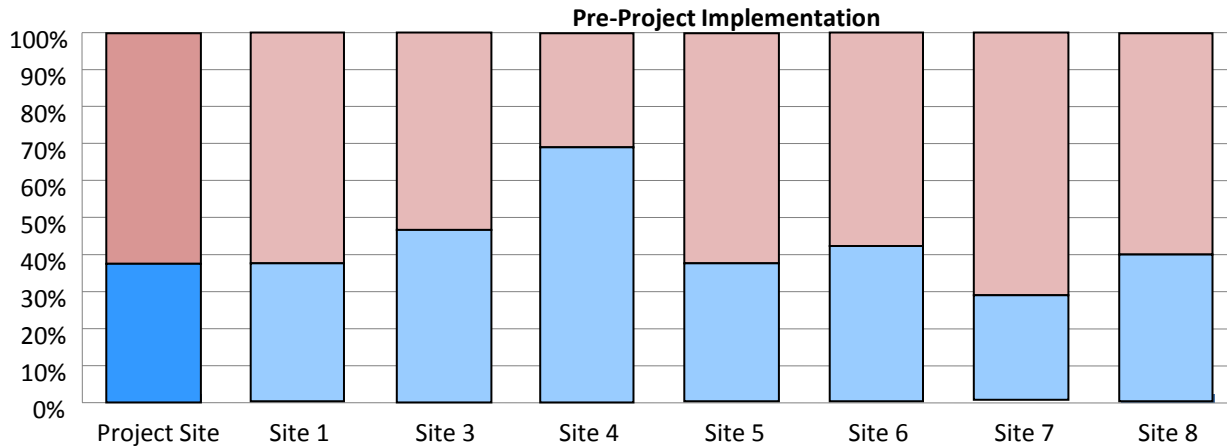
features
substrate
depth
flow

3) Biometrics

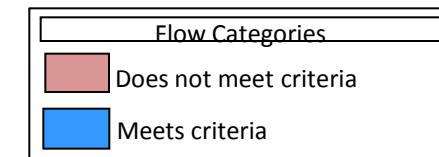
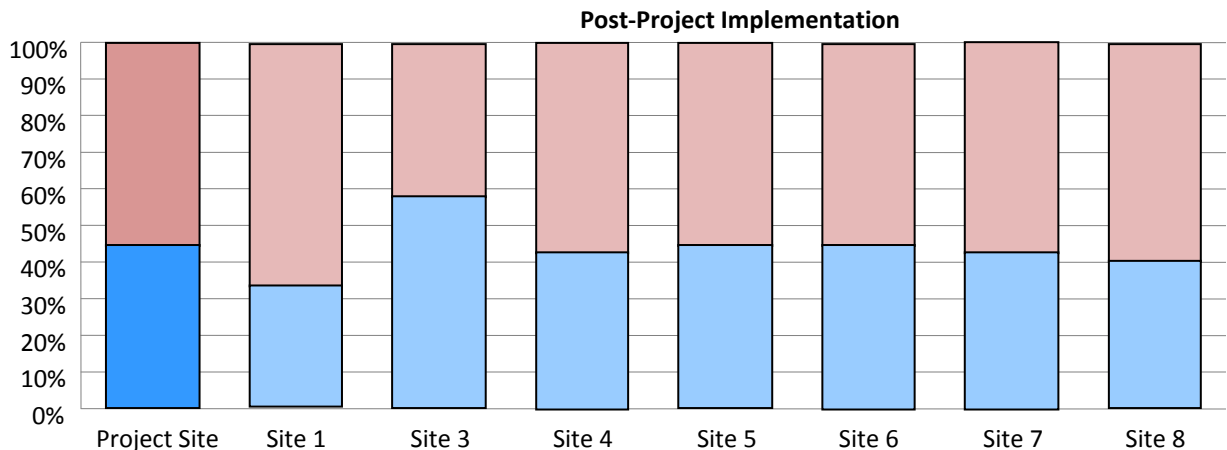


richness
diversity
CPUE
dominance

Braided runs, backwaters, or pools, stream margins, side channels, and off-channel pools, backwaters, pools, and habitats associated with debris piles.



Equal Interval Min-Max Range	
1st 1/4	59%-69%
2st 1/4	49%-59%
3st 1/4	39%-49%
4st 1/4	29%-39%



Equal Interval Min-Max Range	
1st 1/4	51.75%-58%
2st 1/4	45.5%-51.75%
3st 1/4	39.25%-45.5%
4st 1/4	33%-39.25%

ANALYSIS – PROJECT PROGRESS

1) Geomorphology



channel elevation
thalweg location

2) Habitat



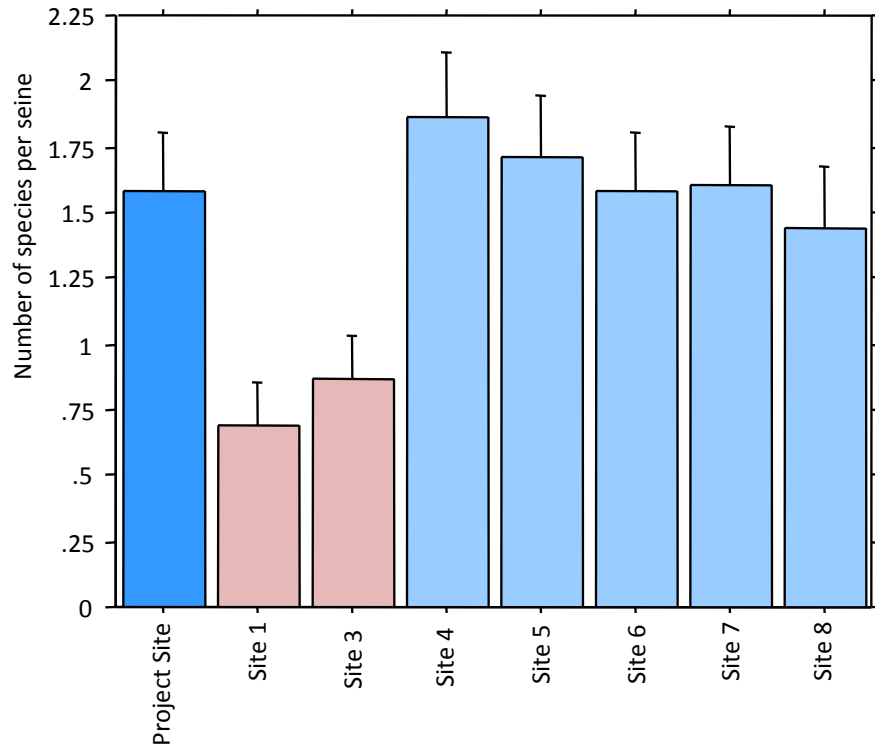
features
substrate
depth
flow

3) Biometrics

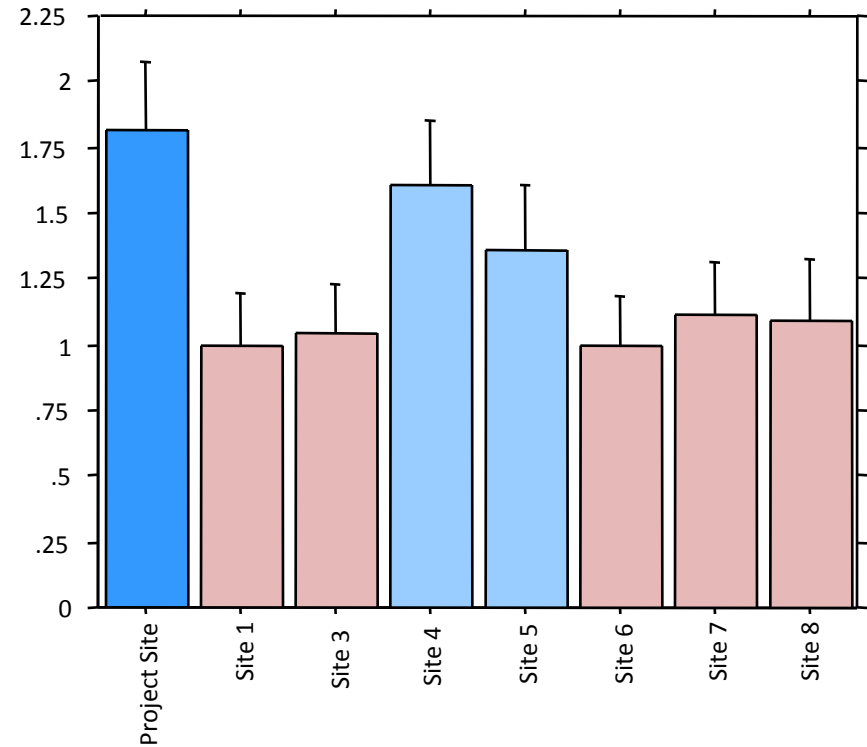


richness
diversity
CPUE
dominance

Species Richness Before Project Implementation



Species Richness After Project Implementation



Habitat Restoration for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher



Pueblo of Santa Ana

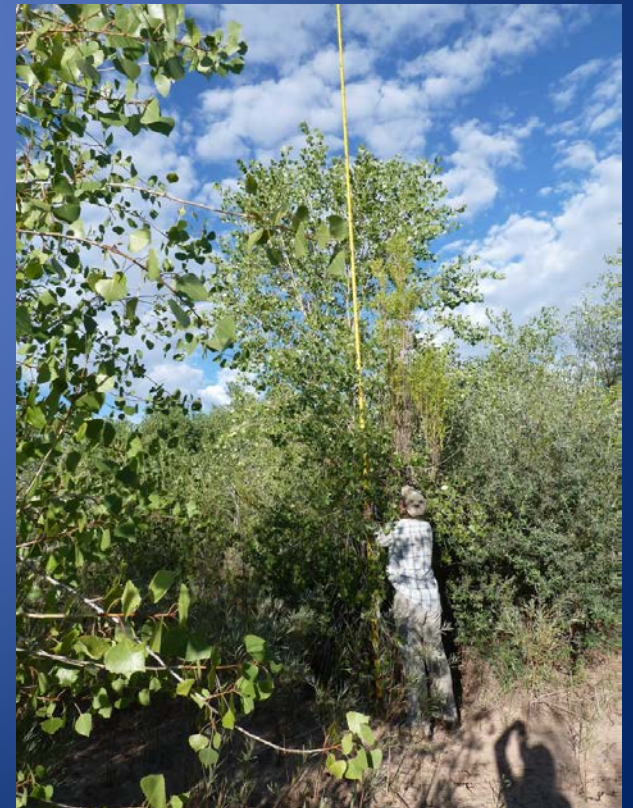
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

- Insectivore
- Neotropical Migrant
- Riparian Obligate Breeder
- Federally Endangered subspecies
- Habitat Loss and Modification
- Riparian Restoration



Study Design

- Tribal Landowner Incentives Program
- Based on 6 years of surveys, designated High Use and Non-Use Areas for comparison
- Measured: Vegetation structure and composition, Temp, RH, and Soil Moisture
- Restoration: Active & Passive



Active Restoration - Backwaters

2005



2011



Passive Restoration - Confluence

1999



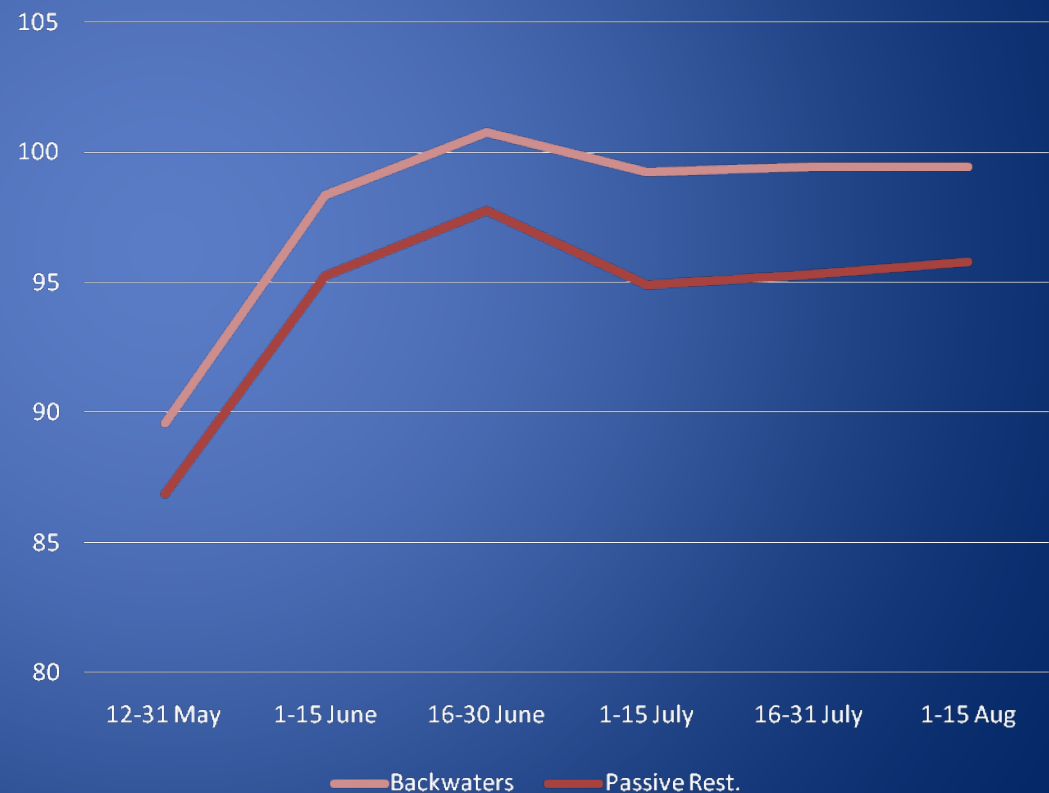
2009



Temp: Passive vs. Active Restoration

- Max Daily Temps
- Min Daily Temps
- Daily Temp Variation
- Wilcoxon signed rank (0.05 level)
- Max temp difference 4.3 ± 0.4 SE

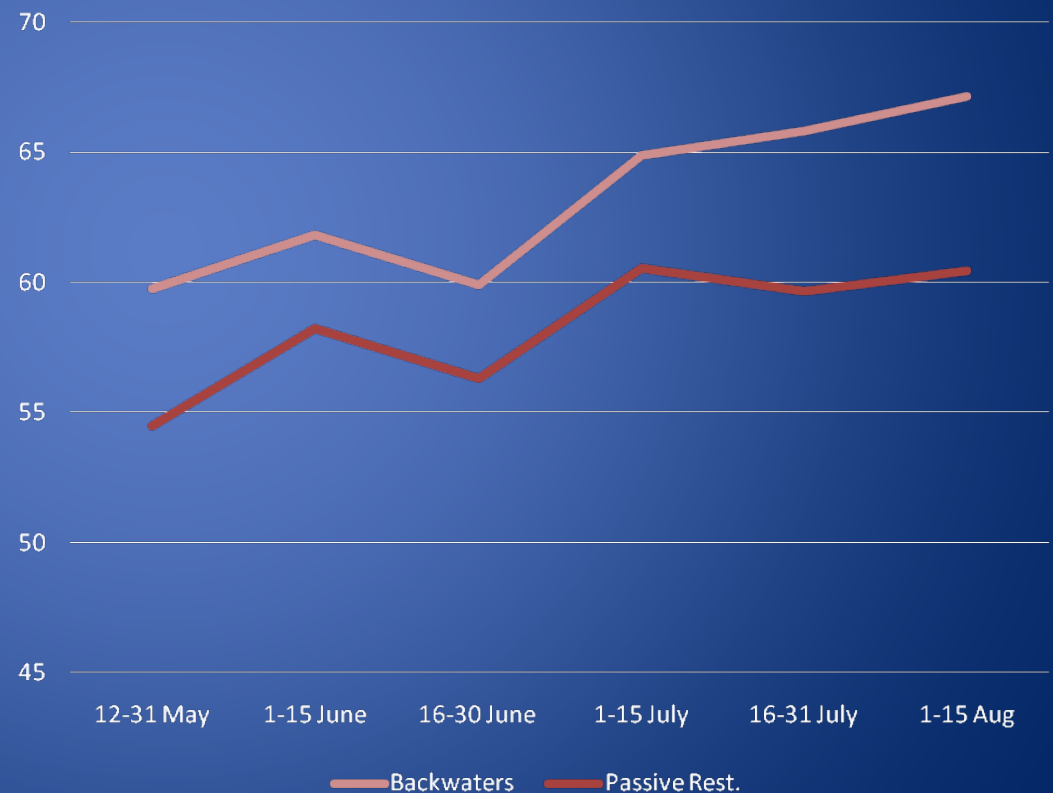
Maximum Daily Temperature



RH: Passive vs. Active Restoration

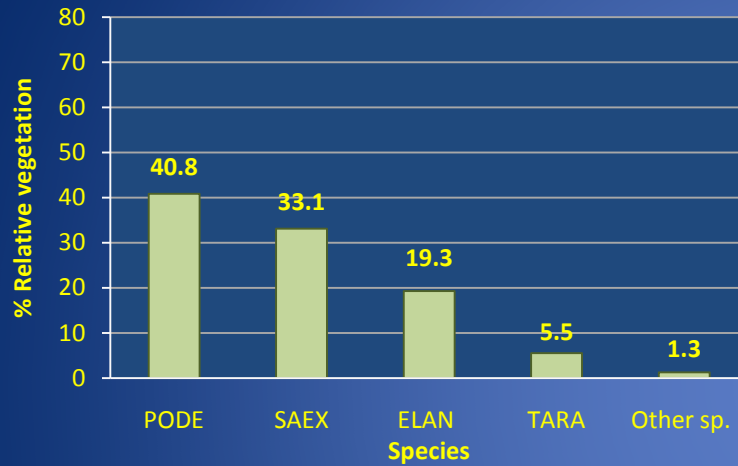
- % Relative Humidity in 24-hr period
- Wilcoxon signed rank 0.05 level
- Max, Min RH similar
- RH daily variation

Relative Humidity – Daily Variation

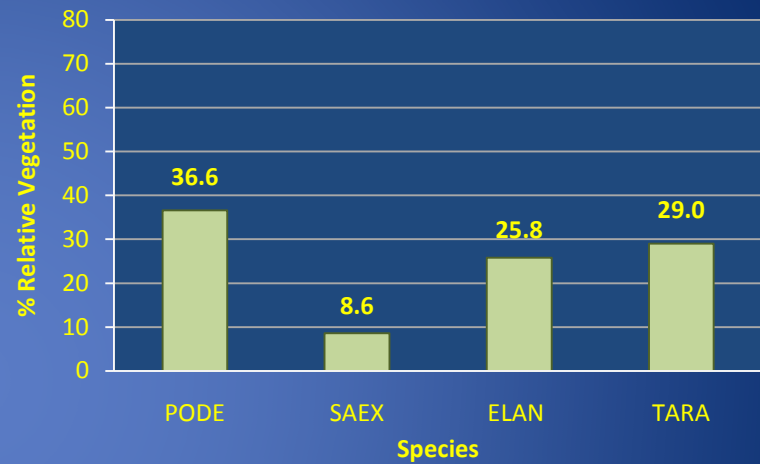


Vegetation Composition

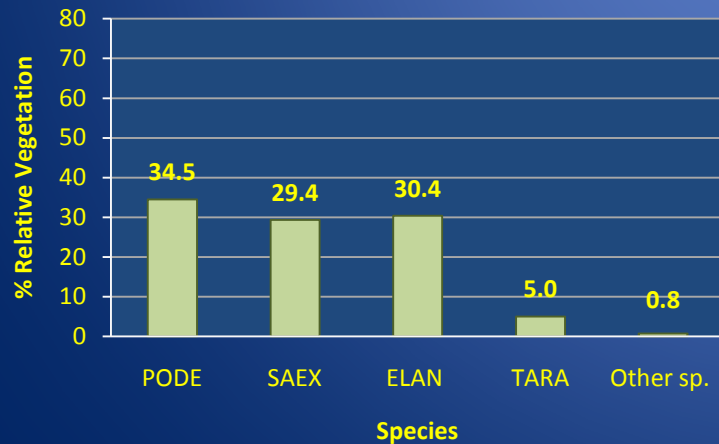
High Use



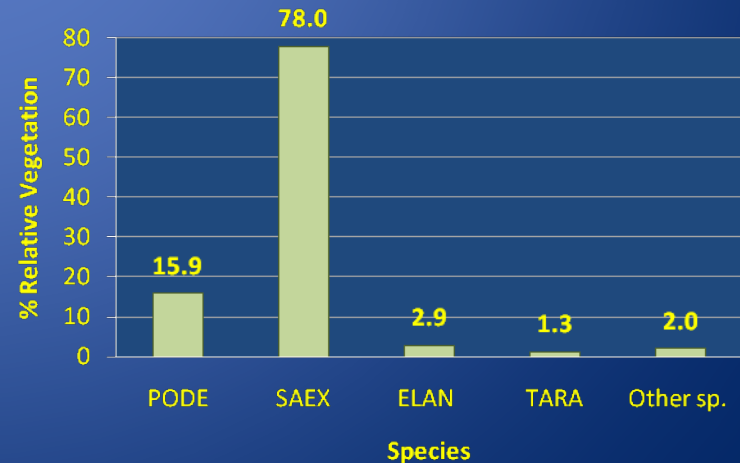
Non-use



Passive Restoration

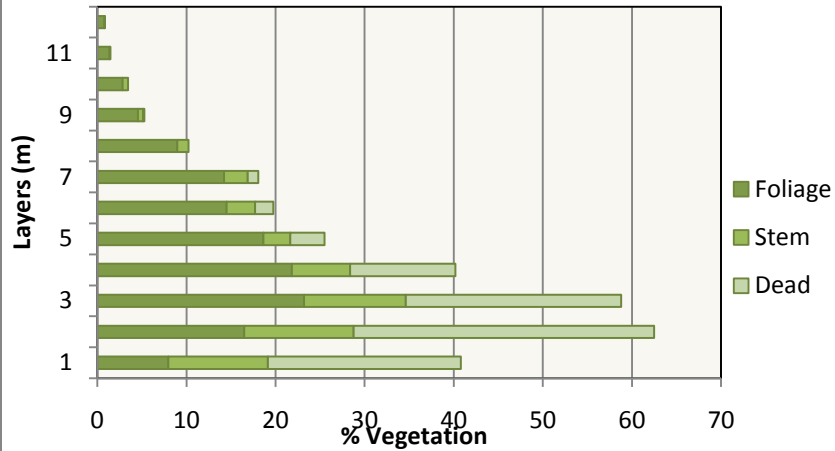


Active Restoration

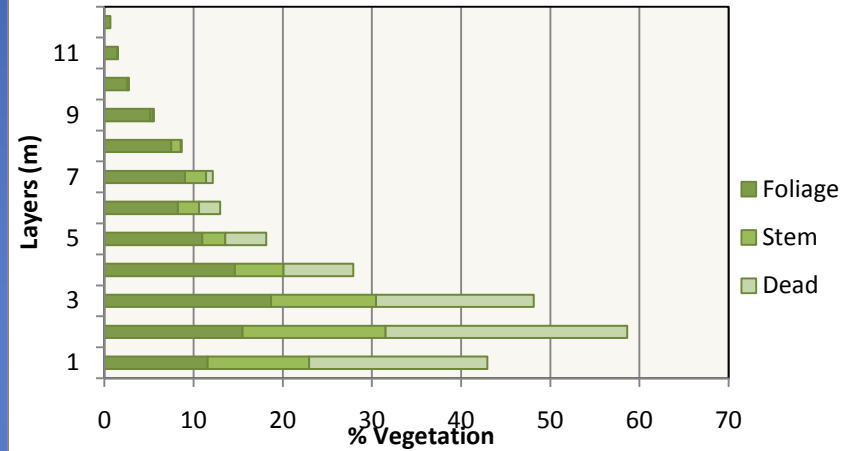


Vertical Foliage Density

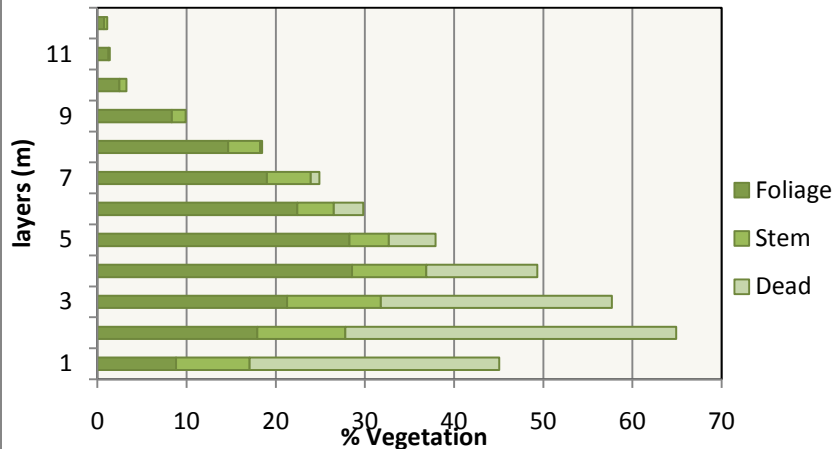
High Use



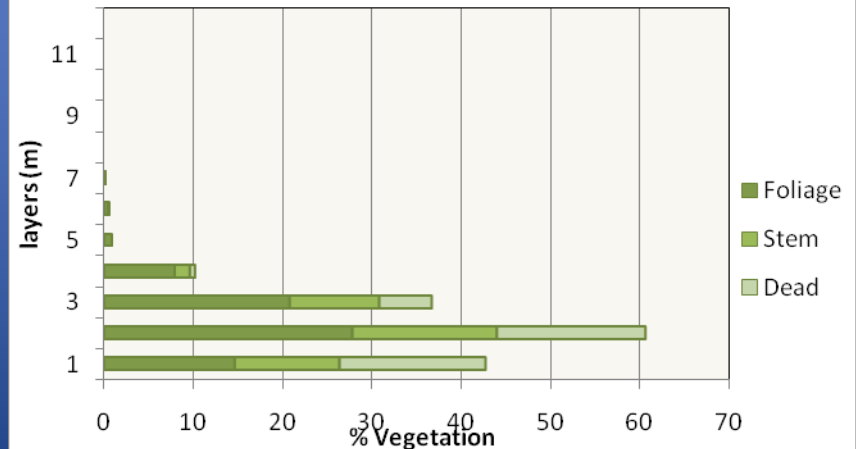
Non-use



Passive Restoration



Active Restoration



Restoration: Lessons Learned





In Summary:

- Monitoring projects actively guide habitat restoration
- Habitat needs time to Grow
- Yearly Variation and Drought
- Tamarisk beetle impacts and Cottonwood die-off
- Habitat Models need Refining
- Adaptive Management
- Collaborative Programs goals