

Executive Committee Meeting  
*April 18, 2013*

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species  
Collaborative Program  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING AGENDA  
Thursday, April 18, 2013  
9:00 am – 1:00 pm**

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

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED AGENDA*</b>  | <i>5 minutes</i>  |
| <b>2. <i>DECISION</i> – APPROVAL OF <b>March 28, 2013</b> EC MEETING SUMMARY*</b>   | <i>10 minutes</i> |
| <b>3. FEDERAL AGENCY FISCAL PLANNING UPDATES</b>  | <i>20 minutes</i> |
| A. US Army Corps of Engineers ( <i>LTC A. Gant</i> )  |                   |
| B. Bureau of Reclamation ( <i>M. Hamman</i> )   |                   |
| C. US Fish and Wildlife Service ( <i>M. Shaughnessy</i> )   |                   |
| D. Collaborative Program Projects ( <i>R. Graham</i> )  |                   |
| <b>4. BIOLOGICAL OPINION SCHEDULE/CONSULTATION UPDATE</b>   | <i>40 minutes</i> |
| A. Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge ( <i>J. Vradenburg</i> )  |                   |
| B. RGSM Conservation Objective ( <i>USFWS</i> )   |                   |
| B. Consultation Process Schedule Status ( <i>USFWS-Group</i> )  |                   |
| <b>BREAK</b>  | <i>15 minutes</i> |
| <b>5. RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM DOCUMENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>  | <i>30 minutes</i> |
| A. RIP Action Plan Update ( <i>G. Haggerty</i> )  |                   |
| B. RIP 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Management Update ( <i>S. Farris/A. Moore/ R. Graham</i> )   |                   |
| C. Hydrology Forecast ( <i>BOR</i> )  |                   |
| D. Minnow Action Team ( <i>NMISC/MRGCD</i> )  |                   |
| E. Cochiti Lake Recruitment Flow Operation Update ( <i>USACE</i> )  |                   |
| <b>6. <i>DECISION</i> – APPROVE DEADLINE OF MAY 2, 2013 FOR DRAFT RIP PROGRAM DOCUMENT COMMENTS*(<i>D. Freeman, L. Robertson</i>)</b> | <i>60 minutes</i> |
| <b>7. MEETING SUMMARY</b>   |                   |
| <b>8. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>  |                   |
| <b>9. ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>   |                   |
| <b>10. <i>DECISION</i> - NEXT SCHEDULED EC MEETING May 16, 2013, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm</b>   |                   |

*\*denotes read ahead*

**Members**

ABCWUA  
ISC  
NMDA  
Sandia Pueblo  
UNM

APA  
Isleta Pueblo  
NMGF  
Santa Ana Pueblo  
USACE

CABQ  
NMAGO  
MRGCD  
Santo Domingo Tribe  
USFWS  
Reclamation

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013**  
**9:00 am – 12:10 pm**

**Actions**

- Comments on the Final Draft Program Document are due to Rhea Graham on or before May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013; please only submit one set of review comments per signatory. The standard comment template is available online.
- Rhea Graham will add a review of the Draft Final Cooperative Agreement document to the July 18<sup>th</sup> EC meeting schedule.
- EC signatories were asked to review their agency's Letter of Designations to (1) update primary and alternate(s) voting positions; and (2) determine who from their agency would be able to sign endorsing RIP documents at the July EC meeting.
- Grace Haggerty will provide information on the April 27<sup>th</sup> ISC Rio Rancho Habitat Planting Event for posting to the website.
- The FY2012 Work Group Accomplishments and FY2013 Work Plans will be posted to the website for EC informational review.
- The read-ahead document showing project expenditures through 3.31.13 posted to the website will be updated with the corrected start date for Pueblo of Santo Domingo's habitat restoration project.
- Agenda item #3 will be changed to Agency Fiscal and Planning Updates, reflecting the fact that any signatory that is an agency (Federal, State, Tribal, Local, etc.) may share updates

**Decisions**

- The March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 EC meeting summary was approved for finalization with no changes.
- The EC confirmed the existing CC approval process for work group work plan and accomplishment documents.
- With quorum present and no objections voiced, the EC approved a May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 deadline for review and comments on the Final Draft Program Document. Comments are due to [Rhea Graham](#) on or before May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please only submit one review per agency.

**Next Meeting: May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Bldg. 1**

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) Review of Draft Conservation Objective(s); (2) Agency Fiscal and Policy Updates; (3) RIP documents (table of milestones inserted below): Decision to compile final signatory comments for July approval of (a) Final Draft RIP Action Plan, and (b) Revised Long Term Plan (narrative only);
- Tentative June Agenda Items: (1) RIP documents (table of milestones inserted below): Decision to compile final signatory comments for July approval of (a) Draft Long Term Plan (with water management elements); (b) Draft Final Action Plan; (c) Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement;
- Tentative July Agenda Items: (1) Endorsement of all RIP Documents (table of milestones inserted below) included in Reclamation's amended Biological Assessment including the: (a) Final Program Document, (b) Final Action Plan, (c) Redline Edits to By-laws, and (d) Final Draft Cooperative Agreement<sup>1</sup>;
- 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; (3) Presentations on completed projects

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: "...any remaining elements", as it may create confusion over the fact that one of the first Action Plan tasks is to update the LTP

**Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:**

- April 23<sup>rd</sup> - RIP Action Plan Meeting from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at ISC
- April 24<sup>th</sup> – Minnow Action Team from 10:00am to 11:00am at Reclamation; agenda to include review the options write-ups
- April 27<sup>th</sup> – MRGESCP HRW grant to ISC--Habitat Planting Event at Rio Rancho Open Space site
- May 1, 2013, CC meeting at Reclamation
- May 9<sup>th</sup> – All EC meeting read aheads due: 2012 Workgroup Accomplishments, Draft Revised LTP, Revised Final Draft RIP Action Plan
- May 16<sup>th</sup> – EC meeting at BIA Bldg 1
- June 13<sup>th</sup> – All EC meeting read aheads due: Draft Final Action Plan, Draft Revised LTP with water management elements, Draft Cooperative Agreement
- June 20<sup>th</sup> – EC meeting at BIA Bldg 1
- June 2013 – CPUE workshop
- June 2013 – FY2014 projects and scopes of work due to Reclamation
- July 11<sup>th</sup> – All EC meeting read aheads due: Final RIP Program Document, Final RIP Action Plan, Redline edits of By-laws, Final Draft Cooperative Agreement
- July 18<sup>th</sup> – EC meeting at BIA Bldg 1

**Meeting Summary**

**Introductions and review agenda:** Brent Rhees brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.

- A voting “card” with 3 color options was provided to all signatories. The intent is for these to assist members in expressing their standpoint and facilitate discussions such as with decision items and voting. The green represents an approval or confirmation; yellow indicates a “maybe” or undecided standing; yellow could also indicate a cautionary standing or need for more discussions; and red represents a disapproval or “no” vote.
- The next several EC meetings (May, June and July) will be held at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office Building 1 in Room 133. This is a federal facility so please allow a few additional minutes to sign in and pass through the security check. Parking is free.
- The agenda was approved with no changes. However, it was suggested that the May meeting agenda be revised to include Agency Fiscal Planning Updates instead of Federal Fiscal Updates.
- MRGCD provided an email to Rhea Graham advising that Patrick Redmond will serve as Subas Shahs’ Alternative EC representative.

**Decision – Approval of the March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 EC meeting summary:** The March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Executive Committee (EC) meeting summary was approved for finalization with no changes.

**Federal Agency Updates**

- *US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps):* The Corps is awaiting approval of their work plan; there is funding under the Continuing Resolution (CR) but that funding has not been finalized so there is no new budgetary information at this time. With respect to sequestration and furlough, there are a few Corps employees subject to furlough but most employees under the Energy and Water appropriations have been exempted. The Corps has begun preparing their FY2015 budget.
- *Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation):* There is a 6% sequestration cut that will impact the last half of the fiscal year. However, how those impacts will be distributed is unknown. Work plans are in process but not finalized yet. Reclamation is also on Energy and Water appropriations so furloughs are not expected to have significant impact at this time. The FY14 budget appears to be close to the requested amount but it has not been approved by congress yet. The FY14 budget is assumed to be the FY12 budget minus the sequestration cuts.

- *US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service):* The Service had a 6.8% sequestration cut. The agency expects to complete this year fairly “unscathed” but next year and future years are really unknown. If the sequestration numbers go through as predicted, the Service will have undergone a 15% cut by the end of 2015.
- *Non-Federals and State:* OSE/ISC has an approved budget but also suffered a 6-7% cut. This will impact the contributions to the Program.
- *Interim Program Manager Update and Program Projects:*
  - *Coordination Committee (CC):* The CC met on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and reviewed the FY12 Work Group Accomplishments and FY13 Work Group Work Plans. Unless the EC has other instruction regarding the approval of these documents, they are ready to be approved by the CC and posted as informational read aheads. At their next meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>, the CC will approve those documents so that work groups can begin work on the FY2014 Scopes of Work (SOW) which are due to Reclamation before June.
    - The EC confirmed the existing CC approval process for work group work plans and accomplishment documents. The approved documents will be provided to the EC for informational purposes.
    - The project expenditure status as of 03/31/13 was provided as a read ahead for today’s meeting. The error in the performance start date for the Santo Domingo Habitat Restoration Project will be corrected. This expenditure status only includes the grants and contracts that are ongoing; expired project have not been included. There is only one award for FY2013 to date – to ASIR.
    - The Corps was thanked for purchasing note taking services for the April, May, and June EC meetings. The solicitation for the Program Administrative and Technical Support, which includes the note taking, is close to being advertised.
  - *Friends of Rio Rancho Open Space:* There will be a Habitat Planting Event at the Rio Rancho Open Space site on April 27<sup>th</sup>. In conjunction with a Program Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) grant, ISC constructed backwaters, some high flow channels, and lowered banklines. The site is in a beautiful bosque area and the Friends of Rio Rancho have volunteered for years – removing salt cedar, planting willows, etc. The site connects will with the Reclamation work completed on Sandia Pueblo.

### **Biological Opinion Schedule/Consultation Update**

- *Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (BdA NWR or Refuge):* John Vradenburg, Refuge biologist, presented on the significance of the Refuge’s “Arid Wetland and Riparian Systems.”
- , presented on the significance of the Refuge’s “Arid Wetland and Riparian Systems.”
  - Wetland and riparian areas represent less than 2% of the historic land cover in the southwestern United States. Of that historic 2%, approximately 1/3 has been lost to agriculture and urbanization. Southwestern wetlands are the most modified system in the western U.S. - physically, economically, and socially. Economically because so much monetary value is tied to water and the associated socio-economic drivers.
  - The Bosque del Apache was established as “...a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife” in 1939.
  - *Significance to Wildlife*
    - The Refuge provides critical landscape for the Rocky Mountain population of sandhill cranes, which fluctuates between 12,000 and 20,000.
    - The average wintering water bird population is between 150,000 and 200,000 birds.
    - One of the last known populations of the NM meadow jumping mouse (NMMJM) is located on the Refuge. This is also the only remaining NMMJM population in the Middle Rio Grande (MRG). There is a declining trend, even on the Refuge. There

- are currently 19 known populations. The impact of the recent, large fires on the NMMJM are unknown.
- The Refuge is located on a dynamic reach of river for the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (minnow) because of the elevation there is easy overbanking.
  - Currently, there are breeding pairs of both Southwestern Willow Flycatchers (flycatchers) and Yellow-billed cuckoo (on both the active and historic floodplain).
- *Economics*
    - Annual visitation to the Refuge is approximately 170,000 visitors in any given year. This generates nearly \$13.9 million for Socorro, Bernalillo, and Sierra counties.
    - \$4.3 million are generated in regional tax revenue.
  - *Significant Water Details*
    - Priority date of January 4, 1906. This water is "...for the purpose of protecting, production of feed, restoring, and propagation of wildlife."
    - The license is specific to the historic floodplain. Refuge water is not designated nor can be used on the active floodplain. Approximately 1,200 acres of land are used for food production.
    - The pre-existing water rights were purchased when the land was purchased; therefore, the pre-existing water rights have a 1906 date even though the refuge was not established until 1939. The license is held by the Service.
  - *Floodplain Management/Restoration*
    - The Refuge is managed to emulate historic MRG floodplain processes and conditions including flood timing and duration, disturbance, etc.
    - The intent is to create a mosaic of habitats to meet a diversity of wildlife needs across multiple life history events. This is partially done through understanding historic "floodplain hydrograph" patterns.
      - The "disturbance" is based on the yearly variations in flows. The intent is to try to have some high, short, and low disturbance every year.
  - *Wetland Management Program*
    - There are 60 managed wetland impoundments with independent inflow and outflow (approximately 2,500 acres). Each unit has prescribed annual flood up and draw-down schedule. About 400 acres are disturbed annually.
    - All units receive a mid-summer mowing (for cocklebur control) and irrigation for plant producing with seeds. The goal of these actions is annual seed production for feeding migratory water birds (500 – 2,000 lbs/acre).
    - Regulatory conditions (Article 7, ESA status, etc.) and climatic conditions (percent snow pack, monsoons, etc.) are considered when wetland and water allocation decisions are made.
  - *Refuge Collaborative Efforts*
    - Summer irrigations are timed to avoid "conflict" with river recessions – actions are not initiated until June 15<sup>th</sup>. The Refuge is located at the "bottom" of the system, so even with a good water right, there are always conflicting demands for the water. To avoid that, the Refuge tries to avoid doing any large efforts until the wet river requirements are met.
    - Forbearance of water helps to support low flow pumping operation – the Low Flow Diversion accounts for 75% of the Refuges water.
    - Three wetland units along the Riverside ditch were converted for management of NMMJM – in order to arrange for habitat to be coming "online" now. In addition, a 5-year rotating schedule of habitats adjacent to the Refuge's water delivery infrastructure was established for the benefits of the NMMJM habitat.

- Outdated diversion gates are being upgraded (to more efficient langemann gates). This is done for the NMMJM as well as to better “match” how the District is operating.
- Maximum irrigations of willow habitat are done for the benefit of the flycatchers.
- *Impacts of Water Shortages and Forbearances*
  - Water shortages and forbearances results in reduced annual seed production and reduced ability to feed and over-winter wildlife.
  - Migration and wintering bird populations are also reduced. In one example, the average wintering population was decreased by almost 50% because the Refuge couldn't flood until November. This means that the early migration period was missed. This has “big” overall impact when droughts are so severe and across such a big land scape.
  - Decreased corn for cranes which in turn increases the “off Refuge” depredation to local agricultural producers.
  - There is increased threat to the NMMJM and associated habitats.
  - Health of willow habitats is impacted. While there are not a lot of nesting flycatchers, the Refuge is looking to be proactive and have good habitat available considering the beetle and other threats.
  - Water shortages also impact (decrease) Refuge visitation and that has associated impacts to the local community.
- *Balancing Wildlife Needs*
  - The Refuge has an established purposed to meet the needs of the cranes, the minnow, the flycatcher, and the NMMJM. But the key driver is the water. Focusing on individual species needs instead of a “whole” means that there are some conflicting needs. The Refuge is constantly trying to determine the best balance and meet all the needs.
- *Proposed On-Refuge Ideas Include:*
  - North Boundary infrastructure modifications including a central water distribution point “hub” and moving the pumps on the Refuge.
  - Low Flow surface elevation shifts to help reduce gradient loss and loss of river flow to the Low Flow.
  - Create “living streams” in areas that are not necessarily good for water fowl but could help support the NMMJM and flycatcher. The areas could have meandering streams to provide multiple species benefits with the same water.
- *Tough Times for All*
  - The Refuge wants to partner on solutions to alleviate conflict.
  - The Refuge provides an important role in wildlife and habitat conservation including endangered species.
  - The Refuge appreciates all the support they receive from the partners in the water management community of the MRG valley.
- *RGSM Conservation Objective:* The Service is still internally deliberating over the details of the draft Conservation Objective(s). There have been discussions within a subgroup of select EC members (consisting of COE, BOR, FWS, ISC, NMAGO, and occasionally MRGCD) regarding the Conservation Objectives that the Service has been working on and whether and how to incorporate those into the Program documents.
- *Consultation Process Schedule Status:* The goal is to focus the July EC meeting on the approval/endorsement of all documents that make up the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP). Endorsement of these RIP documents is needed in order to include the RIP in Reclamation's

Biological Assessment (BA) package for the Service to analyze. Following the proposed schedule will allow for all final documents to be reviewed prior to the endorsement at the July meeting.

- EC signatories were asked to review their agency's Letter of Designations to (1) update primary and alternate(s) voting positions; and (2) determine who from their agency would be able to sign endorsing RIP documents at the July EC meeting.
- Some members expressed concern that there might be conflict with the Draft Cooperative Agreement, regardless of the standing of the RIP documents. It was requested that the Draft Cooperative Agreement be added to proposed schedule and include sufficient review time so that there is comfort at the EC level on that document by the July EC meeting. The actual execution of that document is deferred until the Draft Biological Opinion (BO) has been issued and everyone knows what to expect.

### **Recovery Implementation Program Documents and Other Activities**

- *Revised RIP Action Plan Update:* Based on the proposed schedule, the Draft Action Plan is to be available for discussion at the May EC meeting. The Action Plan Team has increased their meeting schedule accordingly to meet this deadline. The group is still working through the cost and schedules for the activities, funding amounts, etc. Next week, they will be talking about the Adaptive Management sections and potential sufficient metrics. The Draft Action Plan will be available as a read ahead for the May meeting; the Draft Final will then be generated by June for approval at the July EC meeting. The iterations allow for (1) addressing comments/feedback from the May meeting; (2) working on a parallel track to include the water management elements (not all of which may be available by the May deadlines); and (3) incorporation of the Refuge's actions. The EC will be informed as to what is not complete/in progress at each stage.
- *RIP 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management Update:* A subgroup of the EC (Reclamation, Service, ISC, MRGCD, N MAGO) met on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The Solicitor indicated that without specificity, the authorizing legislation did not allow for the Financial Management Entity (FME) to be hired through the Financial Assistance route. However, there is still an option to hire the FME through a contract. The subgroup has discussed and clarified that while contracting the FME is less desirable, the EC will still be able to select and direct the Executive Director and manage the Program. The biggest limitation that might come up through the contracting has to do with the cap of funds used to hire the Executive Director. Contract modifications would be needed if that cap were to be exceeded (ex. salary negotiations). There was general agreement from all parties in the subgroup as well as others who were notified of this change so Reclamation is proceeding with the contracting process to secure a FME.
  - By using this contract vehicle, the EC needs to be clear in expectations and "wants" so that the contracting officer(s) have a clear understanding. It was the Solicitor's determination that Reclamation could not award through Financial Assistance because the authorizing legislation does not allow it. The EC must determine what changes to the authorizing legislation are needed in order to pursue those options in the future.
  - In response to a concern that adaptive management might be impacted by using a contract (which has a very specific scope) versus financial assistance, it was shared that the FME is the "book keeper" who cuts the checks and hires the Executive Director and staff. The adaptive management activities and flexibility will really be captured in the work plans and action plans. However, this concern does point out that the scope of the FME will be really important and needs to be written carefully and correctly. The FME should not care what the payments are for as they are not intended to be invested in or directing the work of the Program.
    - Attendees were reminded of the "phased" approach to establishing the FME and Executive Director's office. The first step of the interim process is very narrow with the hiring of the Executive Director and some other incidental steps. The Executive Director will spend the first year working with the EC to finalize the work plans and authorize the scopes of work, and prepare and plan the budgets. Reclamation will still oversee each of those contracts with the COTRs. Reclamation is only "pulling the trigger" and managing that specific work item. The EC is still making decisions and



directing the Executive Director. The adaptive management functions are still covered under the other Reclamation contracts until the later stages of the stepped transition process.

- *Hydrology Forecast:* Allocations are at an all-time lowest in the history of projects for the lower Rio Grande and other areas. Even with the few recent small storm events, the forecast is dire. The diurnal effect of the cooling and warming prolongs the runoff and doesn't allow the water to get into the reservoirs efficiently. Only 10% of the expected 40,000 to 45,000 ac-ft has been stored in Heron to date. Melting of the high snow as the temperatures warm might help with that to some degree; it will hopefully also keep us out of the shortages. But this situation sets us up for low water in the Heron (20,000 to 30,000 ac-ft) for next year. The probability of declaring shortage on Heron increases as the month progresses. The District has a storage supply of 42,000 ac-ft. 10,600 ac-ft of combined Emergency Drought water and Prior and Paramount (P&P) has been stored in El Vado. The official designation of P&P will be made in consultation with the pueblos and the District after the May 1<sup>st</sup> forecast. Supplemental water is already being used just to meet the first BO flow targets and keep the river wet through June 15<sup>th</sup>. Even that effort is starting to look challenging. Snow packs are "hanging in there" at the upper elevations so there might be some runoff but the timing and amount is really unknown. These conditions are considered worse than the drought of the 1950s because we haven't had a good year in the last 4 or 5 to refill the reservoirs and bolster the minnow population. This means we continue to draw down and deplete without refilling. We would need a really good monsoon to provide any relief at this point.
- *Minnow Action Team Preliminary Recommendation(s) (MAT):* Since the March EC presentation, Alternative 1 (to provide favorable conditions for a spawn and recruitment flow) is no longer considered an option. The conditions are not favorable enough to cover the losses and still be able to pay back the ABCWUA water loan. In addition, the variable weather with colder temperatures made an earlier spawn less likely. However, there may be potential to utilize some of that ABCWUA water in the future but it is uncertain what that might look like.
  - *Alternative 2 - Standard USACE Deviation:* Regarding the standard USACE deviation, it is very unlikely that this will occur but there is still an attempt to have everything in place just in case. The Corps is still looking for opportunities to store and "stack" water to release in a short spawning spike. This release would not reach the 7 to 10 day flow, but a short spike might still be possible, although doubtful.
  - *Alternative 3 – Other Options to Minimize the Effects on the Species:* Some of options in this alternative might still be feasible.
    1. A modified recession start date could help to stretch supplemental water further in wetted reaches.
    2. Modified post-recession flow targets at Central Avenue could make a longer period.
    3. Work to provide in-channel and off-channel refugia habitat for this season.
    4. Ensure effectiveness of egg collection should any spawn be detected – consider rain events.
    5. Review the incidental take statement for any options or flexibilities.
    6. Seek additional water.
      - Given the April 1 forecast, even with the recent storms, the full amount of EDWA water is unlikely to be captured for EDWA and other uses. The worst case scenarios and emergency rescue efforts are now being considered.
- *Cochiti Lake Recruitment Flow Operation Update:* As previously discussed, the Corps continues to make preparations for a possible small "spawning" spike. As the consultation continues, the Corps would like to start discussions with regards to establishing flexibilities with Cochiti.

**EC Subcommittee (Reclamation, the Service, the Corps, MRGCD, NMAGO, and ISC) Tentative Agenda Items and Continued Discussions:**

- The EC subcommittee will meet today, following the regular EC meeting. In response to the concerns raised regarding the changing of the Program goals, they agreed to review and discuss the proposed changes to the Draft RIP Goals.
- It was explained that when this group does not produce meeting “notes” but does memorialize agreements in an end product document.
- Continued and future discussion items for this subgroup include:
  1. Concerns regarding the language of the RIP goals. The Service has requested stronger recovery language.
  2. Revisit the interim metrics – and make sure that everyone is “on the same page.”
  3. Conservation Objective(s) (currently under development) – one underlying concern is that since the Conservation Objective(s) represent an “ideal world” it will set up unrealistic goals and set the Program up for failure.
  4. 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Management – where is the flexibility for adaptive management via the contract versus a financial assistance.
  5. Long-term Plan – requests for commitments to the LTP, discussion on the Service’s needs on the LTP, etc.
  6. Permitting – how to expedite permitting and where in the RIP documents to include permitting so that adaptive management can occur quickly in any given year.
- Concern was expressed on the timing of the EC subcommittee discussions and when there would be report back to the full EC on recommendations. The larger group needs the opportunity to see the agreements of the subcommittee and be able to discuss and endorse the recommendations. This subgroup’s timing needs to fit in with the overall schedule if endorsement of the RIP documents is to occur at the July EC meeting.
  - In general, all the above topics need to be discussed and resolved very quickly. Several topics are included in the Program Document and therefore need to be completed before the next EC meeting.

**Decision Approval of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 Deadline for RIP Program Document Comments:** It is requested that the EC approve a comment deadline of May 2<sup>nd</sup> for the Final Draft RIP Program Document. This allows 3 weeks of review time and meets the July approval schedule.

- *Final Draft RIP Program Document*
  - The Final Review Draft RIP Program Document was provided as a read ahead for today’s meeting. The EC has seen all of it before, albeit in bits and pieces. The comments received to date have been addressed and incorporated.
  - Issues to highlight since the last version:
    - *Schedule:* If approved, all agency/entity review comments are due by May 2<sup>nd</sup>. It is requested that signatories focus on content and any significant issues remaining in the document. All comments received by May 2<sup>nd</sup> will be addressed by the Program Document focus group before the May 16<sup>th</sup> EC meeting read ahead deadline.
    - *Framework:* The Program Document is the framework document or “constitution” of the RIP. And while it can certainly be changed by the EC as needed, it is intended to be relatively permanent as the stable, framework document. Other RIP documents get updated and revised annually.
    - *Appendices and Attachments:* The Program Document subgroup recommended (and the EC agreed) to hyperlink to the other key RIP documents instead of providing those as appendices and attachments. This way, the “living documents” that are updated annually and as needed without having to update the Program Document as a whole.
    - *New Items:* There are two specific new “items” for EC review.

- Pages 24 and 25 contain a section on ESA compliance principles. There is new language that is drawn from the Service's draft Section 7 guidelines. The focus group agreed to incorporate that information in the Program Document rather than have the guidelines be on a "stand alone" basis.
  - Pages 30 and 31, at the end of the document, contain the budget guiding principles. There is new narrative and two tables. The first table contains historical funding levels by both federal and non-federal entities. The second table is set up to provide proposed budget categories and relative spending percentages by category. The focus group agreed to include this in the Program Document with the thought of providing starting points for budget preparations.
- *Editorial:* The rest of the document has undergone some relatively modest updates and revisions based on received comments.
  - *Update to Goals:* The Service has expressed concern that the Program goals need to be further updated to reflect the transition of the Program to supporting recovery. The language that is currently in the Program Document is the goals as they have existed for some time. They are similar to the "original" Program goals with some updating to reflect the intent under the RIP. However, the Service would like to see additional changes. The Service's suggested changes have been provided in a one-page read ahead.
    - The Service explained that recovery implementation programs – no matter where they are – have a fundamental purpose to recovery endangered species. At the November 2011 EC meeting, the Service spoke about the paradigm shift within the Program. The "old" Program was (is) all about avoiding jeopardy; but when we agreed to become a RIP, there is a necessary shift to focus on recovery and how to make progress. The Service recommends reformatted the goals to make recovery of the species the new focus.
    - Once the EC approves language for the goals, that wording will be imported directly into the Program Document.
- With quorum present and no objections voiced, the EC approved a May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 deadline for review and comments on the Final Draft Program Document. Comments are due to [Rhea Graham](#) on or before May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please only submit one review per agency

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

- The EC approved last month's meeting notes with no changes.
- The EC confirmed the existing CC approval process for work group work plan and accomplishment documents. The FY13 work plans and FY12 accomplishments will be posted as informational items for the EC to review.
- The EC reviewed and discussed the current deadline and document schedule.
- The Draft Conservation Objective(s) will be provided as a draft read ahead for the May 16<sup>th</sup> EC meeting.
- Agencies were asked to please review their signatory delegations to determine who can sign documents at the July EC meeting.
- The Draft Cooperative Agreement will be added to the July 18<sup>th</sup> EC meeting agenda.
- The Draft Final RIP Action Plan will be the next part of the "package" to be reviewed at the May EC meeting.
- Steve Farris, a representative of non-federal participants, noted that he was relieved in the understanding that the EC will still have the ability to select and direct the Executive Director, even though the FME will be secured through a contract with Reclamation.

- Questions were raised concerning how Adaptive Management will be/could be implemented with the FME being secured through a contract.
- The EC subcommittee will be meeting this afternoon to discuss the suggested changes to the Program's goals. It was requested that at some point in the near future, this subcommittee also address the permitting process and how it could be expedited in order to facilitate on-the-ground adaptive management.
- The EC approved the May 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline for comments on the Final Draft Program Document; please focus on content and significant areas in order for the document to be ready for approval at the July EC meeting.
- The next several EC meetings will be held at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) offices off 12<sup>th</sup> and Indian School.
- Reese encouraged all meeting attendees and participants to change their outlook from "deal breaker" to "deal maker" or "deal re-maker." He urged all that will be attending future meetings to adopt a "neutral" mindset so that everyone could actively "listen" to each other and really hear what the other is communicating.

#### **Announcements:**

- The Pueblo of Santa Ana was praised and thanked for their letter of support regarding the release of minnow onto their lands.
- Ms. Sally Jewell has been appointed the new Secretary of the Interior.

#### **Public Comment**

- There was no public comment.

#### **Next Meeting: May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Bldg. 1**

- Tentative agenda items include: (1) Review of Draft Conservation Objective(s); (2) Agency Fiscal and Policy Updates; (3) RIP documents (table of milestones inserted below): Decision to compile final signatory comments for July approval of (a) Final Draft RIP Action Plan, and (b) Revised Long Term Plan (narrative only);
- Tentative June Agenda Items: (1) RIP documents (table of milestones inserted below): Decision to compile final signatory comments for July approval of (a) Draft Long Term Plan (with water management elements); (b) Draft Final Action Plan; (c) Draft RIP Cooperative Agreement;
- Tentative July Agenda Items: (1) Endorsement of all RIP Documents (table of milestones inserted below) included in Reclamation's amended Biological Assessment including the: (a) Final Program Document, (b) Final Action Plan, (c) Redline Edits to By-laws, and (d) Final Draft Cooperative Agreement;
- 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; (3) Presentations on completed projects;

#### **Executive Committee Meeting Attendees April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

##### Attendees:

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Brent Rhees	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Federal co-chair
Estevan López	NM Interstate Stream Commission	ISC
Michelle Shaughnessy (P)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Service
Patrick Redman (A)	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 Schafer (A)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Matthew Wunder (P)	NM Department of Game and Fish	NMDGF
Frank Chavez (P)	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 Falser	Bureau of Reclamation
Mary Carlson	Bureau of Reclamation
Grace Haggerty	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Chris Shaw	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Deb Freeman	for NM Interstate Stream Commission
Susan Bittick	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
William DeRagon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Danielle Galloway	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Beth Pitrolo	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michelle Mann	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ryan Gronewold	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Stacey (Kopitsch) Stanford	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wally Murphy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Lori Robertson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sarah Conn	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Janet Bair (A)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Vradenburg	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – BdA NWR
Kevin Cobble	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – BdA NWR
Ella Wagener	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Refuges
Ann Moore (A)	NM Attorney General's Office
Brooke Wyman	MRGCD
Patrick Redmond	for MRGCD
Jessica Tracey (A)	Pueblo of Sandia
Kyle Harwood	City of Santa Fe/BBD
Alex Eubanks	Senator Heinrich's Office
Sarah Cobb	Senator Udall's Office
Mariana Padilla	Congressman Lujan Grisham
Laura McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Laura Paskus	Press
Brian Bader	SWCA
Reese Fullerton	GenQuest (facilitator)
Marta Wood	Tetra Tech (Note Taker)