

Executive Committee Meeting
February 20, 2014

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species
Collaborative Program
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, February 20, 2014
9:00am – 12:00pm**

**LOCATION: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1001 Indian School Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM
Building 1 - Room 133**

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|---|------------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED AGENDA* | 10 minutes |
| A. University of New Mexico updated membership* | |
| 2. DECISION – APPROVAL OF November 20, 2013 EC MEETING SUMMARY* | 5 minutes |
| 3. AGENCY FISCAL AND POLICY PLANNING UPDATES | 60 minutes |
| A. Omnibus Appropriations Bill (<i>Congressional staff invited</i>) | |
| B. US Army Corps of Engineers (<i>K. Schafer</i>) | |
| C. Bureau of Reclamation (<i>M. Hamman</i>) | |
| D. US Fish and Wildlife Service (<i>M. Shaughnessy</i>) | |
| E. Non-Federal update (<i>TBD</i>) | |
| F. Collaborative Program Projects (<i>J. Wilber & R. Billings</i>) | |
| i. CC Co-chairs update | |
| DECISION - FY14 Workplan* | |
| ii. Presentation by USACE (<i>O. Hummel</i>) | |
| BREAK | 15 minutes |
| 4. MAT update/presentation (<i>G. Haggerty</i>) | 15 minutes |
| 5. OTHER ACTIVITIES | 20 minutes |
| A. Hydrology Forecast (<i>M. Hamman/USACE</i>) | |
| B. Species Update (<i>USFWS</i>) | |
| 6. DECISION - Recommendation to consider Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) for Executive Committee membership* | 10 minutes |
| 7. RIP TRANSITION PLANNING | 30 minutes |
| A. Third Party Management—Refined list of 1 st year priorities with associated implementation and timelines (<i>S. Farris/M. Hamman</i>) | |
| B. DECISION – Proposed Third Party Management statement of work (<i>J. Faler/S. Farris</i>) | |
| 8. MEETING SUMMARY | 5 minutes |
| 9. PUBLIC COMMENT | |
| 10. ANNOUNCEMENTS | |
| 11. DECISION - NEXT SCHEDULED EC MEETING March 20, 2014 (reschedule or postpone to accommodate Compact Commission meeting March 19-20, 2014) | |

*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
February 20th, 2014 – 9:00am to 12:00pm**

**Bureau of Indian Affairs
1001 Indian School Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM
Building 1 - Room 133**

Decisions

- With a quorum present but two undecided/cautionary votes, the EC agreed to send to the Program and Science Support Service Performance Work Statement (PWS) to the 3rd Party Management Subcommittee to incorporate recommended changes and feedback and otherwise “polish” the document. The EC granted authority to the subcommittee to submit the Performance Work Statement directly to Reclamation for implementation of the contracting process.
- The November 2013 EC Meeting Summary will be approved for finalization electronically, after the suggested revisions have been received and reviewed.

Actions

- Ali Saenz will send the revised November 20th, 2013 EC meeting summary and the revised associated ISC hand out to EC members for approval via email.
- Once received from Kaveh Sadeghzadeh, Ali Saenz will forward the appropriations committee expectations handout.
- Grace Haggerty will add Janet Bair and Stewart Jacks to the MAT distribution list.

Requests/Recommendations

- The 3rd Party Management Subcommittee was asked to incorporate changes and feedback to the Program and Science Support Services PWS. The subcommittee was authorized to submit the document directly to Reclamation for implementation of the contracting process. The PWS is due to Reclamation no later than March 15th to allow for internal review time.
- D.B. Stephen’s has provided the Program with a data status update for the Database Management System (DBMS). This data report highlights the missing and needed data. In order for the DBMS to be as robust and useable as possible, it has to be populated with the most current data/reports as well as any missing information from previous years. The most recent data is critical for regular and real-time decision making and management this year. Agencies are asked to review the data status report, identify any missing data not captured on this summary, and provide any reports and data available. Ideally, the recent and missing data will be supplied and uploaded to the DBMS by March for use in this year’s management activities.
 - If you are aware of data and/or reports but do not have access to that information, please identify the specific individual or Principle Investigator (PI) for that work so that they can be contacted in this effort.
 - If you have data/reports that can be provided, please note that all document submittals need to include a document submittal template located under the User Support tab on the database (<http://mrgescp.dbstephens.com>). Together, the submittal template and the actual report/data files should be provided to Ali Saenz.
- If anyone is interested in receiving the communications from the MAT, please contact Grace Haggerty.

Next Meeting: TENTATIVELY March 27th, 2014 from 9:00am to 1:00pm at BIA Bldg 1001

- The March EC meeting was tentative rescheduled to March 27th to accommodate the Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting scheduled for March 20th. The option remains open to cancel this meeting based on the agenda.
- Tentative agenda items include: (1) update on BO timeline; (2) update from subcommittee/Reclamation on the Program and Science Support Services Performance Work Statement; (3) CC update on work group and committee recommendations; (4) approval of CC's current recommended direction/tasks during transition; (5) MAT 2013 Draft Recommendations Report;

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:

- March 5th – CC meeting
- March 14th – MAT meeting, from 10:00am to 12:00pm at Reclamation
- March 15th – deadline for Reclamation to receive the revised Executive Director Performance Work Statement from the 3rd Party management subcommittee
- March 19th and 20th – Rio Grande Compact Commission Meeting, Santa Fe
- March 27th – Tentatively scheduled EC meeting

Meeting Summary

Introductions and agenda approval: Brent Rhees brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes. UNM representative Tom Turner was welcomed.

Approval of the November 20th, 2013 EC Meeting Summary:

- The November 2013 EC Meeting Summary will be approved for finalization electronically, after the suggested revisions have been received and reviewed.

Agency Fiscal and Policy Planning Updates:

- *Omnibus Appropriations Bill:*
 - Mr. Kaveh Sadeghzadeh was introduced as Senator Udahl's staff stationed in Washington, D.C. Over the next year, he will be working almost exclusively on water issues. Mr. Sadeghzadeh briefly highlighted some of the expectations of the Appropriations Committee as it relates to the Rio Grande in terms of (1) lack of water and (2) habitat restoration. These are not mandates, but expressions of the Committee for consideration in dealing with the existing funding and competing priorities, and how to address critical issues within the future. There is an expectation by the Committee to consider forbearance as a mechanism for lack of water, and an expectation to address habitat restoration in the San Acacia reach
 - A prepared statement with more exact language from the Committee will be provided to the EC in the near future.
- *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE or the Corps):*
 - As with most federal agencies, the passing of a congressional budget means that FY2014 is expected to be better than 2013. The Corps anticipates funding to be available in April (compared to August of 2013).
 - To dispel any rumors, it was clarified that the Corps did withdraw their Biological Assessment in order to make necessary updates to ensure policy compliance. The Corps has no intentions of not being a partner as it pertains to the Recovery Implementation Plan; the Corps fully intends to remain and stay fully engaged. How this plays out is not clearly defined yet.

- *Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation):*
 - The unsequestered budget that was passed is expected to provide for a little more for the Program – a bit more funding for implementation of additional items. However, a fourth of the procurement year has already passed. Reclamation is striving to get most, if not all, the Program items obligated and available for use this year and next.
 - It was shared that several of the federal agencies involved in the Program have received a legal Notice of Intent from an environmental group. The NOI does not necessarily mean a lawsuit is imminent.
 - Reclamation remains diligently working on the consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and non-federal partners to enumerate the responsibilities for the specific proposed actions versus the ongoing effects of the past actions (baseline).
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or the Service):*
 - Unfortunately, the FY2014 budget year is not projected to be much better for the Service than 2013. The Service is expected to remain unable to hire any new staff or fill vacancies.
 - As part of the Section 7 Consultation process, technical staff continues to work on the analyses that were created as part of the draft Biological Opinion (BO). The Draft BO is not available for release yet.
- *Non-Federal Update:*
 - For the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC), budgets are tight and the water situation is poor. Compared to last year, snow pack is actually worse this year. This is the 4th consecutive drought year. And while the partners in this Program have done better than anyone previously dealing with this many back to back drought years, we can expect this year to be very difficult and challenging.
 - Attendees briefly discussed the budget request process of the NM Water Trust Board and the fact that what was received is nowhere near the amount of water requested.
 - The pilot channel and river system held through the September 2013 flooding without incident and now NM is in a credit status with Texas.
- *Collaborative Program Projects:*
 - *Coordination Committee (CC) Update:* At their February 2014 meeting, the CC reviewed the FY2014 Work Plan with the current understanding of the FY2014 budget and acquisition process. Based on the expectations of funding, the CC was able to include a few additional projects to the Work Plan.
 - Related to transition planning, the CC discussed their recommendation to review the existing work groups and provide guidance on which existing work groups could support the efforts of the EC during the transition period. For groups that have completed their work, this would also provide opportunity for formal acknowledgment.
 - Until otherwise directed, the CC can continue to provide the support and operate as a bridge to the EC through the transition period. The bylaws do not contain information on how the group is to function during a transition. With that in mind, the CC would like to request that the EC express confirmation on the current path/tasks recommended by the CC.

- Official approval will be revisiting under Agenda Item #7. However, no concerns were voiced during this discussion.
- *Presentation by the Corps*
 - Ondrea Hummel shared a presentation highlighting the restoration work completed by the Corps over the last 10 years.
 - The Corps has had 4 main projects over the last 10 years: (1) the Bosque Wildfire Project; (2) the Albuquerque Biopark Wetland Restoration Project; (3) the Ecosystem Revitalization @ Route 66 Project; and (4) the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Ecosystem Restoration Project.
 - *Bosque Wildfire Project*: This project was developed in response to the 2003 fires. The project lasted from 2003 until 2007. Objectives of the project included assistance with burn restoration, fuel reduction/exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, weather stations for severity of potential fires through soil moisture, etc.
 - *Albuquerque Biological Park Wetland Restoration Project*: Components of this project included fuel reduction/exotic thinning, revegetation, jetty jack removal, wetland restoration and construction of new wetland features (deep marsh with island, shallow marsh, wet meadow). It was also completed in 2007.
 - *Ecosystem Revitalization @ Route 66 Project*: Tasks completed in this project included reduction/exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, high flow channels, willow swale construction, debris removal, bendway weirs, revegetation, and recreation components (trail improvements, pedestrian bridge crossings, benches, picnic tables). Construction was completed in April 2010.
 - In general, about 80% of all jetty jacks could be removed. However, there are places where the channel is very narrow and they have to be kept in place for potential flooding issues.
 - *Middle Rio Grande Bosque Ecosystem Restoration Project*: Activities in this project included fuel reduction/exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, high flow channel, backwater channel, bank terracing, bank scallops, willow swale construction, debris removal (from surface, debris continues down until almost the water table), stormwater drain outfall improvements, and recreation components (canoe ramp construction, boardwalk construction, trail improvements, pedestrian bridge crossings, benches, picnic tables, etc.). Construction of Phase I (8 sites) was completed in 2014; the design of Phase II (remaining 10 sites) is the next step.

Minnow Action Team (MAT) Update:

- The EC had instructed the MAT to continue its work in 2014 in a similar manner to 2013. Meeting prior to irrigation season with the most current available status of the minnow, the group will do its best to determine the options for creating the best possible situation for minnow spawning, recruitment, and survival for the year. The group will meet over the next few months to go over last year's recommendations and determine if there are any new recommendations that could be pursued.

- The 2013 MAT report is still undergoing review but the intent is to have it available for the March EC meeting.

Other Activities:

- *Hydrology Forecast:*
 - Please refer to the Hydrology handout for additional details. In general, the situation is very similar to this time last year (dry conditions with higher than normal temperatures) with the exception that the soil moisture profile might be better than last year. It is unknown how much the soil moisture will affect runoff; but high winds can also affect moisture. Several large, wet storms are needed early in the season if there is to be any chance of the system “getting” to normal.
 - A preliminary allocation of 18% was made on January 1 - which was far less than last year’s preliminary allocation of 56%. If sufficient runoff volume is not realized, we could experience a first-time shortage of San Juan/Chama allocations. That shortage would have to be shared equally among contractors.
 - In terms of the model predictions, the water volumes, temperatures, and precipitation outlooks are basically the same as last year. Hopefully, the wet fall period last year will help produce more runoff now. The modeling within the river indicates that there may be a natural peak upstream of Cochiti of around 800 to 1,200 cfs. This is about the same as last year. There is about 17,000 ac-ft of supplemental water currently available. There may be as much as 12,000 to 15,000 ac-ft of San Juan/Chama allocations that could be purchased.
- *Species Update:*
 - *Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (minnow):* The minnow abundance remains extremely low with very limited recruitment. No wild adult minnow are being captured. About 300,000 minnow were released into all 3 reaches.
 - *NM Meadow Jumping Mouse (jumping mouse):* The jumping mouse has been recommended for listing but the final decision is expected in June.
 - *Yellow-billed Cuckoo (cuckoo):* A second comment period will close within the next few days.
 - Attendees briefly discussed genetic concerns stemming from the lack of wild adult minnows in the river. The opinion was shared that fortunately the captive propagation program has maintained, to the extent possible, the genetic diversity of the minnow and the genetic diversity basically looks the same as it was 15 years ago.
 - As an update, it was shared that earlier this week Reclamation found wild fish in the San Acacia reach and that only about half of the silvery minnow collected by electrofishing were tagged.

RIP Transition Planning

- The 3rd Party Management Subcommittee has met to discuss and make recommendations regarding the interim transition periods and the establishment of the Recovery Implementation Program (RIP). The group has identified several main tasks: (1) establish essential committees and teams; (2) establish key positions as soon as possible; (3) establish the independent science advisory panel; (4) address non-demographic metrics; and (5) synthesize data and establish a single data set.
- Reclamation is working on the Performance Work Statement for the Program and Science Support Services. This will be a competed contract with a base year and 4 option years. This contract vehicle provides for performance evaluation reports that include stakeholder feedback.

- Attendees briefly discussed that there may be an initial investment necessary to getting the 3rd Party Management Office established, but the associated costs are expected to decrease over time. Some members expressed the opinion that having an autonomous management office (versus a Program management associated with a particular agency) is a value that cannot be discounted.
- For additional details on this portion of the discussion, please contact an EC member.
- Reclamation's budgeting office has a place-holder for the Program and Science Support Services but it has to be approved by the EC before it can proceed. If delayed too long, the positions will not be filled until next spring at the earliest.
 - With a quorum present but two undecided/cautionary votes, the EC agreed to send to the Program and Science Support Services PWS to the 3rd Party Management Subcommittee to incorporate recommended changes and feedback and otherwise "polish" the document. The EC granted authority to the subcommittee to submit the PWS directly to Reclamation for implementation of the contracting process.

Recommendation to consider Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) for Executive Committee membership:

- According to the Bylaws, any discussion regarding the consideration of potential new members will take place in Closed Session.
- Please contact an EC member for details on this discussion.

Meeting Summary: Jennifer Faler provided a brief meeting summary:

- The EC approved today's meeting agenda with no changes.
- The meeting agenda was followed as approved, with the exception of a change in order that occurred during the meeting to accommodate member's schedules.
- The November 2013 meeting notes will be finalized electronically via email once the suggested revisions are distributed for review.
- No decision was made on the CC's request for approval of current recommended work.
- The Corps presented on their restoration work projects spanning the last 10 years.
- MAT updates were provided.
- The hydrology forecast was shared.
- Interesting discussion was held on the RIP transition planning. The EC delegated the revision of the Program and Science Support Services PWS to the subcommittee.
 - The subcommittee will be convened as soon as possible to address the PWS and submit to Reclamation by March 15th.
- The March 20th EC meeting was tentatively reschedule to March 27th due to conflicts with the Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Closed Session

- At the conclusion of the regular meeting, EC members met in closed session to discuss consideration of the BEMP EC membership. Please contact an EC member for details on closed session discussions.

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**Executive Committee Meeting Attendees
February 20th, 2014**

Attendees:

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Brent Rhees	Bureau of Reclamation	Federal co-chair
Rick Billings (A)	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority	Non-federal co-chair
Rolf Schmidt-Petersen (A)	Interstate Stream Commission	ISC
Janet Bair (A)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Service
Frank Chavez (P)	Pueblo of Sandia	Sandia
Subhas Shah (P)	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District	MRGCD
Steve Farris (P)	NM Attorney General's Office	NMAGO
Mike Hamman (P)	Bureau of Reclamation	Reclamation
Matt Schmader (P)	City of Albuquerque	COA
Col. Gant (P)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Janet Jarrett	Assessment Payers Association of the MRGCD	APA
Matt Wunder	NM Department of Game and Fish	NMDGF
Alan Hatch (P)	Pueblo of Santa Ana	Santa Ana
Tom Turner (A)	University of NM	UNM
Ryan Ward (P)	NM Department of Agriculture	NMDA

Others

Jim Wilber	Bureau of Reclamation
Ali Saenz	Bureau of Reclamation
Jennifer Faler (A)	Bureau of Reclamation
Mary Carlson	Bureau of Reclamation
Ann Demint	Bureau of Reclamation
Josh Mann	Bureau of Reclamation
Joe Jojola	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Ryan Gronewold	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ondrea Hummel	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michelle Mann	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kara Hickey	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lori Robertson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wally Murphy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stacy Stanford	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Fisheries
Stewart Jacks	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Fisheries
Brooke Wyman	MRGCD
Angela Brannigan (A)	NM Department of Agriculture
Ann Moore (A)	NM Attorney General's Office
Chris Shaw	NM Interstate Stream Commission

Grace Haggerty
Patrick Redmond
Kaveh Sadeghzadeh
Kyle Harwood
Rick Carpenter
Marta Wood

N.M. Interstate Stream Commission
for N.M. Interstate Stream Commission
Senator Udall's Office
BBD/City of Santa Fe
City of Santa Fe
Alliant Environmental (note taker)