

Science and Habitat Restoration Work Group Meeting  
*August 16, 2016*

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program**  
**Science and Habitat Restoration Joint Meeting**  
**August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – 1:00pm to 2:30pm**  
**ISC**

**Decision Items:**

- The July 19<sup>th</sup> ScW/HRW meetings notes were approved for finalization with no changes.
- With no concerns or objections voiced during the meeting, attendees agreed to a new meeting time of 1:00pm to 3:00pm for the joint ScW/HRW meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday.

**Action Items:**

- Workgroup members were asked to review the *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study* Performance Scope and email any comments to Mick Porter no later than September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Mike Marcus will contact Tetra Tech to obtain copies of (1) all files related to the 2013-2014 Map Projects (including GIS data and layers) and (2) monitoring reports for any/all 404 Permitted Projects.
- Mike Marcus will provide the 404 Permitted Monitoring Reports and Map Books to Mick Porter and Ken Richard.
- Mick Porter, Ken Richard, and Mike Marcus will convene a subgroup to begin addressing the compilation of Habitat Restoration GIS data and information. Other participants can be drafted as needed (ex. Mark Horner). The intent is to update all the baseline information, include recent and updated information, and potentially begin to link the system work through time.
  - One task is to determine whether or not all the 404 Permitted Monitoring Reports are in the database. This subgroup is to report back at the next ScW/HRW meeting in September.
- Rick Billings will elevate the project permitting concerns (ex. can't initiate permitting process in advance if contractor is not known) to the CC and/or EC for discussion.
- Alison Hutson will send a review request email to Joel Lusk (FWS ScW representative) for comments and feedback on the *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study* Performance Scope. If necessary, Alison will request contact information for an alternative Service representative(s) to review the material and provide feedback to the workgroups.
- Mick Porter will post the Genetics Peer Review Final Report to the Program's database.
- Brian Hobbs and Ann Demint will discuss potential Genetics Peer Review Recommendations process with Jennifer Faler and to provide guidance on the Genetics Contract. (*In other words, as the funding agency, Reclamation will take a lead in the planning effort regarding addressing any genetics contracting changes as a result of the Genetics Peer Review – what to change/not change, contract length, renewal process for future changes, etc.*).
- Kathy Lang will request a Genetics Peer Review Recommendation agenda item at the September Genetics & Propagation workgroup meeting.

**Ongoing Action Items:**

- Danielle Galloway will write a Habitat Assessment Activity Summary (or narrative) for Site Evolution Research – dynamic, changes, how can riverine processes be used to renew sites, restart succession, how a minnow site can evolve into a flycatcher supporting site, etc. (*continued from 07/19/16*)
- Danielle Galloway will forward the List of Questions and Transition Plans (and any associated attachments) to both (joint) workgroup members. (*continued from 07/19/16*)
- Attendees were asked to attempt to find the 2005 HRW Transition Plan. (Several agencies might have members who were around at that time. (*continued from 07/19/16*))

- All members were asked to determine and document additional needs/updates for the Database including reports and documents that are missing/needed. (*continued from 07/19/16*)
- A small subgroup will meet to discuss spawning/genetics needs, questions, review and update the existing RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study. Potential participants include: Mick Porter, Alison Hutson, and Mike Marcus. (*continued from 06/21/16*)

### Recommendations:

- ScW and HRW would like to elevate project permitting concerns to the CC and EC. As reported at the EC several months ago, the Service has recommended anticipating permitting needs and starting that process in advance. The workgroups are unsure how to secure permitting for projects without specific contractors in place and if specific contractors have to be identified prior, then permitting cannot be initiated in advance (and thus potentially resulting in delayed activity). Is there a process that could allow for advanced permitting (i.e. permitting for the project) with provisions of subsequently securing the appropriately qualified personal? (In other words, is there a process by which the Service could be confident in initiating permitting for a project as long as the selected contractor meets the specific requirements?)
- ScW and HRW would like to request a “joint effort” between ScW and the Genetics & Propagation workgroup in order to efficiently review, discuss, and address recommendations from the Genetics Peer Review Final Report. The facilities should be informed of changes they might be expected to make before January 2017.
- ScW and HRW would like to request that during the “kick off” meeting and introduction stages, the PASS contractor meet with the workgroups to be informed on near-term/immediate needs that will need to be addressed quickly.

### Meeting Summary:

- Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- The July Action Items were reviewed. Four (4) of the action items were completed as assigned and five (5) action items were of unknown status or marked as ongoing.
- The July 19<sup>th</sup> ScW/HRW meetings notes were approved for finalization with no changes.
- The release of the Draft Biological Opinion (BO) has been delayed indefinitely; as a result of this continued delay, the September 6<sup>th</sup> EC meeting has subsequently been cancelled.
- A brief Program Update was shared.
  - The PASS contract will hopefully be awarded by the end of September, but pending the evaluation process, could be delayed until October (beginning of the next fiscal year).
  - Please submit all FY2017 project placeholders now to allow for Reclamation to continue workload planning. Please include Estimated Date and Estimated Cost to any project summaries/narratives.
  - The September 6<sup>th</sup> EC meeting has been cancelled; the date of the next EC meeting has not been confirmed.
- The recommended FY2017 Projects were discussed. Reclamation has requested that Estimated Need Dates and Estimated Cost/Amount information be provided for each project.
  - After discussing the *Habitat Restoration Project GIS Summary*, some workgroup attendees recommended not submitting this project for contracting but instead recommended initiating the work in-house using existing agency experts.
  - There is some funding available for monitoring, maintenance, and potentially new Habitat Restoration projects. This could include the *Habitat Monitoring for Sevilleta Habitat Restoration Site and Habitat Restoration Technique Evaluations*. The Competitive Grant Process will be discussed at a future date.
  - Regarding the *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study*, attendees discussed the potential of awarding this contract in parts – purchase and test equipment in one fiscal year, and funding to run the experiments in the following fiscal year. This contract will need to be awarded in early July

(6 months prior to experiment date) in order to set up and test equipment. One estimated cost for this project was around \$350,000 (higher end of cost estimate).

- Concerns were expressed that no Service representatives have been available to participate in the project recommendations and scope development process for this year. Concerns focus on permitting needs which could impede or prevent a project (specifically the Life History Study) from completion.
- Attendees discussed how to proceed with addressing the Genetics Peer Review Final Report recommendations. Process concerns were raised regarding how the Genetics & Propagation group would be interacting with the Program's groups.
  - A Genetics Peer Review Recommendations agenda item will be requested at the next (September) Genetics & Propagation workgroup. A report out on this meeting will be provided at the next ScW/HRW meeting.
  - Some members suggested hosting workshops (or similar meetings) to facilitate larger-group discussions and recommendation considerations.
- There is a new combined workgroup email list that has been develop and provided as a read-ahead for today's meeting. Please use this new list for any electronic communications.
- With no concerns or objections voiced during the meeting, attendees agreed to a new meeting time of 1:00pm to 3:00pm for the joint ScW/HRW meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday.

#### Next ScW Meeting: **September 20, 2016 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at ISC**

- Tentative September Agenda Items include:
  - (1) Competitive Grant Process – information and report out;
  - (2) Subgroup Report Outs:
    - (a) HR Project GIS subgroup;
    - (b) RGSM Life History subgroup;
    - (c) Genetics Subgroup (determine peer review priority recommendations); this subgroup could potentially be a joint Genetics & Propagation with ScW interim group;
  - (3) Report Out from the September Genetics & Propagation meeting – Genetics Peer Review Recommendations, joint sessions with ScW?
  - (4) Population Monitoring Program Updates
  - (5) Program Updates – PASS, Draft BO

## Full Meeting Notes

**Introductions and Agenda Approval:** Rick Billings brought the meeting to order and introductions were made.

### Action Item Review

- ✓ Rick Billings will elevate the recommended FY2017 projects to the CC at their next meeting. – *complete*;
- Danielle Galloway will write a Habitat Assessment Activity Summary (or narrative) for Site Evolution Research – dynamic, changes, how can river processes use to renew sites, restart succession, how a minnow site can evolve into a flycatcher supporting site, etc. – *unknown; ongoing*;
- ✓ Mick Porter will distribute the *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study* Performance Scope to the full workgroups for additional review and input. – *complete*;
  - Workgroup members were asked to review the *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study* Performance Scope and email any comments to Mick Porter no later than September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ Dana Price and Danielle Galloway will develop a combined and updated ScW/HRW email list. – *complete*;
- Danielle Galloway will forward the List of Questions and Transition Plans (and any associated attachments) to both (joint) workgroup members. – *unknown; ongoing*;
- Attendees were asked to attempt to find the 2005 HRW Transition Plan. (Several agencies might have members who were around at that time.) – *ongoing*;

- ✓ Mike Marcus will extract the Total Habitat and Catalog of Restoration Sites from the Tetra Tech Eco-Hydrology report. He will also track down the 2012 Map Books. – *complete*;
  - An email with attachment was distributed this morning (08/16). Please contact a workgroup chair or Mike Marcus if you did not receive this email.
- All members were asked to determine and document additional needs/updates for the Database including reports and documents that are missing/needed – *ongoing*;
- A small subgroup will meet to discuss spawning/genetics needs, questions, review and update the existing RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study. Potential participants include: Mick Porter, Alison Hutson, and Mike Marcus. (*continued from 06/21/16*)
  - This subgroup has not been convened at this time.

### Approval of Meeting Notes

- The July 19<sup>th</sup> ScW/HRW meetings notes were approved for finalization with no changes.

### Announcements

- The release of the Draft Biological Opinion (BO) has been delayed indefinitely; as a result of this continued delay, the September 6<sup>th</sup> EC meeting has subsequently been cancelled.
- The Desert Fish Council Meeting is scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> in Albuquerque. Abstracts are due by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Updates on EC/RIP/PASS Status

- *Draft Biological Opinion (BO)*:
  - Originally anticipated on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the Draft BO has been delayed indefinitely. There is no indication when the draft BO might be released. The general assumption is not to expect the draft BO within the next 2 weeks.
  - This most recent delay was the result of concerns/issues raised during an Internal Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Review.
- *Program and Science Support (PASS)*:
  - One bid was received in response to the solicitation. The evaluation and acquisition process is moving forward. Hopefully the contract will be awarded this fiscal year (September 2016); however, depending on the evaluation process, there is a possibility that award will be delayed until next fiscal year (October 2016).
  - As requested, two (2) non-federal EC observers participated in the proposal review.
  - Once awarded, the contractor has 4 months (120 days) to hire an Executive Director and 2 additional months (60 days) to hire the Science Coordinator. The contract will be awarded as a Base Year with 4 Option Years.
- *FY2017 Project Planning*
  - Reclamation has already begun planning workloads for FY2017 acquisitions and contracting. Place holders for anticipated projects are being accepted at this time. In general, please allow 6 to 8 months from time of receipt (of scope) until award. This means that a project needed in June 2017 will have to have all paperwork submitted no later than January 2017 (and earlier is preferable).
- *Executive Committee (EC)*:
  - In response to the recent delay of the Draft BO, the September 6<sup>th</sup> EC meeting has been cancelled.
  - Suggested tentative October agenda items included: (1) Spring 2016/MAT (Minnow Action Team) updates and (2) Genetics Peer Review report and presentation.
- *Recovery Implementation Program (RIP)*:
  - Revisions and updating of the RIP documents have been on hold pending the release of the Draft BO. It is assumed that there will be no work on the RIP transition or documents until the EC has a chance to review the Draft BO and determine how to best proceed.

## Habitat Restoration (HR) Grants

- Ann Demint has requested information and guidance on the Competitive Grant Process. This information will be shared with the workgroups once available.
- Some attendees raised the issue of landowner (i.e., private landowner) issues that need to be included when exploring grant options.

## Update on Workgroup Priority Projects for Next Year

- Reclamation has requested Estimated Need Date and Estimate Cost/Amount be included in the FY2017 Project Summaries.
  - *Data Synthesis Project:*
    - A rough estimate of \$85,000 was assigned to the Data Synthesis project as a tentative cost amount.
  - *Collaborative Program Economics Study:*
    - Rick Billings reached out to economists that he knows to determine a project estimate of ~\$45,000 for this project.
  - *Habitat Restoration Project GIS Summary:*
    - Some attendees questioned the intent of this project: to compile existing data? New data? For what purpose? It was pointed out that there is a 2004 HR report (funded by ISC) that contains all conceivable restoration plan activities that could have been done and the benefits of each. That was a collaborative effort to compile all of the information – what else is this GIS project supposed to accomplish?
      - In response, it was shared that the original intent was to compile what has been done on all HR sites. But it could be modified to specify the updating of previous work - including all HR project work since 2004 and identify what has been learned.
      - There is a series of reports that get developed in response to the 404 Permitting compliance for monitoring of restoration sites.
      - Some attendees expressed the opinion that the Program seems to have a “communication synthesis” problem - unless people are working directly on projects or restoration sites, they don’t know much about it. A lot of money has been spent on habitat restoration, but the Program doesn’t know what we have – what has been successful? What is working?
    - Some attendees recommended not submitting this project for contracting but instead recommended initiating the work in-house using existing agency experts. The project could be kept as a Priority for the workgroups, but would include a notice that it is “in process through internal agency work.”
      - It might be more cost efficient to have agencies spend some time getting things together and narrowing down what really needs to be done. This could be provided to the EC as a presentation on the status of HR.
      - ISC shared that they are already using existing spreadsheets to assimilate and compile information with the intent of eventually building interactive (and user-friendly) GIS maps.
      - A small subgroup could be assigned to this task – including figuring out where all the information is and adding new information (such as the Sevilleta Project, Rio Rancho project, recent Corps’ projects, etc.).
        - The Map Project (and Map Books) was again suggested as a starting point to this work.
      - Attendees briefly discussed being mindful of what the data would be intended for (i.e., how to use the data/layers) as it gets built up.
        - One potential use is to determine how to evaluate sites and if they are successful. How is “success” defined – over-all restoration? All species? Vegetation? Limited species – such as the endangered ones?

- This project has the potential to be huge and not all restoration sites are monitored.
- Steven Kissock's master's thesis from 10 years ago (detailed analysis on the Los Lunas restoration site) was offered as an example of a quantitative evaluation.
  - Some potential questions included: (1) how much restoration (and of what type) has occurred?; (2) How many projects were designed to inundate at specific flow targets (1,500 cfs or 2,000 cfs) and in which reaches?; (a) How successful have the bankline lowering projects been?; (b) How many times have they successfully inundated at the intended flow?; (c) How many times has the intended flow even been reached in the last 5 years?
  - Subgroup initial tasks identified: (1) read through the HR site monitoring reports to determine what has been built; (2) determine what is already included in the Program's database and what is missing; (3) begin to determine the next steps in evaluations and adaptive management – such as remapping, new Lidar; etc.
    - A small subgroup will be convened to begin the coordinating an “in-house” compilation effort. The subgroup will report back at the next meeting.
- *Habitat Monitoring for Sevilleta Habitat Restoration Site:*
  - It is unknown what monitoring for this project has been planned already.
  - However, there is some funding for FY2017 to put toward general grant RFPs for monitoring, maintenance, and adaptive management for HR sites; and potentially new HR projects scopes.
- *RGSM Inundated Habitat and Life History Study:*
  - A cost estimate of \$350,000 was speculated for this project. An award would be needed by July 1<sup>st</sup> (6 months prior to actual experiment date) in order to purchase, set up, and test equipment.
  - Please note that \$350,000 was offered as a higher-end place holder amount but would not necessarily be required as a “lump sum” in any one particular year – the project and budget cost could be split over different budget years. For example, the first year might cost \$100,000 to purchase equipment and \$200,000 in the subsequent year to run the experiments.
  - Some attendees questioned whether or not there was any indication from the Service that this project would be allowed to happen?
    - In response, it was shared that a Service representative was directly involved in the project development, at least for the first iterations. However, there has been no regular Service participation over the last several months.
    - Concerns are mostly focused on the permitting for this project.
      - Is there a process by which to seek “pre-approval” from the Service before more time and energy are devoted to attempting this project?
      - Attendees briefly discussed the idea of “project permitting” instead of “people permitting.”
      - Attendees requested the idea of securing permits for a project be elevated to the EC for thoughts/guidance/direction. The question is: given the Service's request that permitting be anticipated in order to get in the queue months in advance, how can agencies move forward on permitting without having specific contractor's in place? If a specific contractor has to be identified, then there is no possible way to initiate permitting early because of the 6 to 8 month contracting process.
        - Possible work-arounds could be to ensure the Service is involved in the writing of project work statements so that as long as the contractor meets those needs (i.e., provides the appropriate,

qualified personnel), then the Service can be comfortable with initiating the permitting process early.

- Contracting documents would be due in December 2016 to get funded in FY2017; or the workgroups can decide to delay the project by another year while waiting for input from the Service.

### Genetics Discussion

- The Genetics Peer Review Final Report is available. *A copy was provided to Dana Price and Mick Porter will have it uploaded to the database.*
- The Genetics presentation will be postponed until the next appropriate EC meeting is scheduled.
- Several attendees questioned how the recommendations are going to be addressed. The facilities, in particular, are expecting to be directly impacted and the facility managers need to know what changes are coming before next spring (or there won't be sufficient time to properly address those changes). The facilities need to know before January 2017 what changes they might be expected to make.
  - In response, it was shared that ideally the Science Coordinator would help to structure and run/manage that process. Unfortunately, the Science Coordinator might not be hired until February or March of 2017.
  - It was suggested a Genetics Subgroup could work through the peer review report and select priority recommendations.
  - Attendees briefly discussed the Genetics and Propagation Group's potential roles and responsibilities concerning the peer review recommendations. How does that group fit into the Program's incorporation/addressing of recommendations?
    - The Genetics and Propagation Group is run by the Service and other participants are non-voting.
    - Reclamation is funding the genetics peer review (for the Program), and would be the agency dealing with a new or revised genetics contract (what to change, what not to change, contract length and renewal process for future changes, etc.). Because of this role, it was suggested Reclamation be very involved in the peer review recommendation process and planning process for this year.
    - A joint workshop that included ScW members, Genetics and Propagation members, and Reclamation contract specialists could be convened to ensure all the various needs are addressed/met.
    - It will be important to determine what should be incorporated into this next year's "interim contract" and how/what to move forward in terms of genetics monitoring.
    - The Genetics and Propagation group is scheduled to meet in September – Kathy Lang will request a Genetics Peer Review Recommendations agenda item.
      - It is unknown how the Genetics and Propagation Plan (which comes from the Service) will incorporate the genetics recommendations. It is this plan that directly impacts the operations of the facilities.
  - Given the timeline overlaps and needs, attendees requested that during the "kick off" meeting and introduction stages, the PASS contractor meet with the workgroups to be informed on near-term/immediate needs that will need to be addressed quickly.

### Combined Workgroup Email List (read-ahead)

- Dana Price and Danielle Galloway produced an updated, combined workgroup email list as assigned. This list was provided as a read ahead for today's meeting. Please use this new contact list when distributing ScW and HRW emails and documents.

### Meeting time (proposal to change to afternoon)

- Due to potential conflicts in schedules, a motion was put forward to change the joint workgroup meeting to the afternoons on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. With no concerns or objections voiced during the meeting, attendees agreed to the time change. The September meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at ISC.

**Next ScW Meeting: September 20, 2016 from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at ISC**

- Tentative September Agenda Items include:
  - (1) Competitive Grant Process – information and report out;
  - (2) Subgroup Report Outs:
    - (a) HR Project GIS subgroup;
    - (b) RGSM Life History subgroup;
    - (c) Genetics Subgroup (determine peer review priority recommendations); this subgroup could potentially be a joint Genetics & Propagation with ScW interim group;
  - (3) Report Out from the September Genetics & Propagation meeting – Genetics Peer Review Recommendations, joint sessions with ScW?
  - (4) Population Monitoring Program Updates
  - (5) Program Updates – PASS, Draft BO
- Potential Future Agenda Items: (1) Review and Discussion of Lists of Questions/Hypotheses/what’s been done;
- Potential November Agenda Items: (1) ISC and Corps presentation/updates on Spring 2016 Fish Monitoring Efforts;

**Science and Habitat Restoration Joint Workgroup Meeting  
August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Attendees**

	NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	Primary, Alternate, Other
1	Rick Billings	ABCWUA	505-259-0535	rbillings@abcwua.org	P – HRW Co-Chair
2	Brooke Wyman	MRGCD	505-247-0234	brooke@mrgcd.com	P – ScW Co-Chair
3	Michael Porter	USACE	505-342-3264	michael.d.porter@usace.arm.mil	A - HRW
4	Kathy Lang	COA/BioPark	505-848-7174	klang@cabq.gov	P - ScW
5	Justin Reale	COE	505-342-3138	justin.k.reale@usace.army.mil	A - HRW
6	Malia Volke	NMDGF	505-476-8160	malia.volke@state.nm.us	P - ScW
7	Mike Marcus	For APA	505-379-6891	mdmenv@gmail.com	P - ScW
8	Kim Eichhorst	BEMP	505-277-0758	kimde@unm.edu	P - HRW
9	Grace Haggerty	ISC	505-383-4042	grace.haggerty@state.nm.us	P - HRW
10	Michael “Shell” Scialdone	Pueblo of Sandia	505-771-5046	mscialdone@sandiapueblo.nsn.us	P - HRW
11	Ken Richard	ISC	505-918-9824	kenneth.richard@state.nm.us	A - HRW
12	Alison Hutson	ISC/LLSMR	505-841-5201	alison.hutson@state.nm.us	P - ScW
13	Ann Demint	Reclamation	505-462-3654	ademint@usbr.gov	O
14	Brian Hobbs	Reclamation	505-462-3566	bhobbs@usbr.gov	P – ScW/HRW
15	Marta Wood	Alliant Env.	505-259-6098	mwood@alliantenv.com	O – note taker