

Executive Committee Meeting

April 12, 2018

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

Draft 2018 MRGESCP Work Plan and Tracking

MRGESCP Adaptive Management Definition

Mission of the MRGESCP

FY17 MRGESCP Cost Share Report

MRGESCP Projects

Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

Proposed EC Structure [presentation]

News Release: Reclamation to Release 2018 Annual Operating Plan for Rio Grande

MRGESCP Newsletter April 2018 [not included]



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING April 12, 2018 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113

Call-in Information:
Phone: 800-857-2850 **Passcode:** 26121

MEETING AGENDA

8:15 – 8:30	Arrival	
8:30 – 8:40	Welcome and Introductions	<i>Co-Chairs</i>
8:40 – 9:00	Review of February 2018 EC Meeting Minutes and Action Items (<i>read ahead</i>)	<i>Co-Chairs</i>
	➤ Decision: Approval of February 2018 EC Meeting Minutes	
9:00 – 9:15	Program Manager Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletter Updates, Questions, and Discussion• Communication Plan Update• FY16/FY17 Annual Report Update• Non-federal FY17 Cost-Share Update (<i>read ahead</i>)	<i>Debbie Lee</i>
9:15 – 9:30	Adaptive Management Work Group Progress Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revised definition (<i>read ahead</i>)• Proposed 2019 MRG Science Symposium• Proposed Tribal Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Decision: To hold a MRG Science Symposium in early 2019, and request WEST begin the planning➤ Decision: For USACE to expend funds to support the MRG Science Symposium➤ Action Item: Formation of a small group to help with the Symposium planning➤ Decision: Request WEST plan a Tribal Conference for 2018	<i>Dave Wegner</i>
9:30 – 9:50	Science/Habitat Restoration Work Group SOW Recommendations (<i>read ahead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Decision: Approval of project ideas to be submitted to the funding agencies as placeholders, and to be developed into full scopes of work (SOW) by September 2018	<i>Ashley Tanner</i>

9:50 – 10:00	Break	
10:00 – 10:15	Goal and Mission of the MRGESCP	<i>Debbie Lee</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposed: <i>The Program's goal is to be a collaborative space for independent science to inform the actions of organizations working in the Middle Rio Grande (MRG), and in support of meeting management requirements and complying with Biological Opinions for the betterment of the MRG, its listed species, and water users.</i> 	
10:15 – 11:40	Proposed Program Structure <i>(read ahead)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised strawman from WEST <i>(presentation)</i> • Roles and functions of each committee and work group • Transition timeline • New charters all committees; new charges for all ad hoc work groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Decision: Approval of new Program structure ➤ Action Item: Reconvene By-laws Group to continue revising Program By-laws to incorporate EC decisions ➤ Action Item: Convene a work group to revise draft charters and charges for Program committees and work groups 	<i>Debbie Lee (facilitator)</i>
11:40 – 11:50	2018 Program Work Plan/Project Tracking <i>(read ahead)</i>	<i>Julie Dickey</i>
11:50 – 11:55	June EC Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on the MRG Biological Opinions • Other suggested agenda items • Location suggestions • Tentative barbecue after 	<i>Debbie Lee</i>
11:55 – 12:10	Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Date: TBD (tentatively May/June) • Brown bags • Annual Operating Plan (AOP) meeting at Reclamation at 1:30 • City of Albuquerque Open Space National River Cleanup Day ➤ Others 	
12:10 – 12:20	Public Comment	
12:20 - 12:30	Meeting Summary and Next Steps	<i>Co-Chairs</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Decision: Next EC meeting – June 20, 2018 (proposed) 	
12:30	Adjourn	



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

Executive Committee (EC)

Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2018 – 9:00 AM–3:30 PM

Location: U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – 4101 Jefferson Plaza NE

Decisions

- ✓ Pending the requested changes, the minutes of the December 12, 2017 EC meeting were approved with no objections.
- ✓ With no objections, the EC agreed with the February 2018 recommendations presented by the Minnow Action Team's (MAT).

Action Items

WHO	NEW ACTION ITEMS	BY WHEN
WEST	Make requested changes to the December 2017 EC meeting minutes and distribute final the version.	ASAP
WEST	Distribute a Microsoft Word version of the "Proposed 2018 Goals and Objectives" (renamed "Proposed 2018 Program Accomplishments") for Program comments and suggestions.	ASAP
WEST	Provide the presentations given at the EC add them to the DBMS once it is functioning.	ASAP
All signatories	Send questions about Endangered Species Act permitting to WEST, for consideration by USWFS as they develop a permitting guidebook and prepare a presentation for the Program.	ASAP
All signatories	Send comments and suggestions to WEST on the following related to Adaptive Management (AM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed definition of AM developed by the AM Work Group (whether to include "experimental") • Proposed conceptual framework for AM • The triennial budget cycle concept 	3/9/18
WEST	Refine the draft Communication Plan and distribute to the Program for feedback.	3/16/18
All signatories	Send 2018 Program-related project information to WEST for inclusion in a project tracking sheet.	3/16/18

All signatories	Provide WEST with comments and suggested revisions on the Proposed 2018 Program Accomplishments	3/16/18
USFWS (Susan Millsap)	Send WEST suggested additions to the scope of responsibilities for the proposed “Project Planning Committee” to address coordination.	3/16/18
All signatories	Provide comments and suggestions on the proposed Program Structure.	3/16/18
WEST	Distribute the revision of the proposed Program Structure based on feedback from the Feb. 21st EC meeting and comments received through 3/16/18.	3/30/18
WEST	Distribute the draft FY16/FY17 Annual Report for Program review.	3/12/18
All signatories	Provide comments and suggested edits to WEST on the draft FY16/FY17 Annual Report.	3/27/18
All signatories	Provide feedback on the revised draft Communication Plan to WEST.	3/27/18
WEST	Provide the revised draft Communications Plan as an April EC meeting read ahead based on feedback received through 3/30/18.	4/5/18
AM Work Group & WEST	Revise the proposed AM definition based on feedback from the 2/21/18 meeting and received through Mar. 9th. Provide as an April EC meeting read ahead.	4/5/18
WEST	Compile 2018 Program-related projects received from signatories through 3/16/18, and develop a tracking mechanism for the EC to review project progress. Provide as an April EC meeting read ahead.	4/5/18
Science/Habitat Restoration Work Group	Define and prioritize Program work to present at the next EC meeting (prior to submittal to funding agencies – USACE and Reclamation – in mid-April).	4/5/18
WHO	ONGOING ACTION ITEMS	BY WHEN
All signatories	Provide updates and other content to WEST for inclusion in the Program newsletter.	Ongoing

All signatories	Share Program-related project information, updates, and changes as they are awarded/revised/progressed/completed with WEST for inclusion in the project tracking sheet for review at each future EC meeting.	Ongoing
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Next Meeting

- April 12, 2018, 8:30am–12:30pm, Location TBD
 - The planned location is Reclamation, dependent on availability of a meeting space.
 - The meeting will end at 12:30pm to accommodate those attending Annual Operating Plan (AOP) meeting that day.
- Proposed agenda items:
 - Program Structure Discussion
 - AM Work Group Update
 - Annual Report Update
 - Standing EC Agenda Item: Status of 2018 Program accomplishments and projects
 - Project Descriptions/Work Plans Review Before Submittal to Agencies
 - Permitting Discussion: USFWS proposed giving a presentation on their guidebook being developed.
 - MRG BO's Presentation: 2016 MRG BO partners will meet with USFWS in March. The partners proposed making a presentation to the EC on the outcomes. Additional MRG BO's will be presented at a future EC meeting. The objective of the varied MRG BO presentations is to determine if and how the Program might have a support role.
 - MAT Update: If MAT recommendations presented on Feb 21st have substantially changed, the MAT will present the new recommendations.

Announcements and Deadlines

- The BEMP Crawford Symposium: March 6, 2018, 3:30 PM–7:30 PM at UNM. The theme is “In this Together: Collaboration along the Middle Rio Grande.” Please RSVP to Kim Eichhorst if planning to attend.
- Reclamation requests proposed projects for funding in FY19 (title, dollar amount, and a short description) by April 16, 2018.
 - After the descriptions are developed, the EC will provide direction on which proposed projects should move forward to be funded. This is prior to completion of full scopes of work by the Program.

Review and Approval of December 2017 EC Actions Items and Meeting Minutes

- Approval of December 12, 2017 EC meeting minutes. The group discussed a few changes:
 - BEMP has 33 sites, but only one will look at the historical impact of saltcedar.
 - NMISC proposed changes to the minutes, of which a portion is summarized below:

- Page 11, last bullet, description of the MAT is revised to explicitly acknowledge that MAT recommendations do not change BO obligations on the part of agencies that have BO's.
- ✓ Pending the requested changes, the minutes of the December 12, 2017 EC meeting were approved with no objections.
- **WEST will make the requested changes to the December 12, 2017 EC meeting minutes and distribute them.**

Program Manager Update

- Lana Mitchell is WEST's new Project Coordinator.
- Newsletter updates, questions, and discussion
 - The Program newsletter is designed to allow more effective updates to EC members while providing more time at meetings to focus on decision-making items.
 - In the future, the newsletter will be provided as a PDF document read ahead.
 - Newsletter change requests and updates:
 - NMDGF's contact for the New Mexico Riparian Habitat Map is Malia Volke (malia.volke@state.nm.us).
 - The listed species update should be as factual as possible. If there are research projects being described, the researchers should be referenced.
 - Include a disclaimer noting that it is informational and that it does not come directly from the EC (i.e., information comes directly from agencies).
 - Notate the author and submitting organization (e.g. "Submitted by...")
- **Ongoing: All signatories provide Program newsletter updates and other content to WEST at least two weeks prior to an upcoming EC meeting. WEST requests bios with photographs for future newsletters.**
- Communication Plan Update
 - WEST received comments that were significant enough to require more review and revision. The next draft will be sent out mid-March, and WEST requests comments on the new draft by March 30th so it can be revised prior to the next EC meeting.
 - All signatories should review it and understand its implications as it will become "standard operating procedure" for communication within the Program. While it serves as an internal communications plan for the Program, WEST is developing a separate plan for external communications (i.e., public involvement, external funding).
 - **WEST will refine the draft Communication Plan and distribute for feedback by March 16, 2018.**
 - **All signatories will provide feedback on the revised Communication Plan to WEST by the March 27th so a draft final can be revised, reviewed, and approved at the April EC meeting.**
- The draft FY16/FY17 Annual Report is currently being formatted, and there will be a draft out for review in mid-March. WEST will request a 2-week review by signatories so that WEST can provide a final draft for the next EC meeting.

SWCA Drone Work Presentation: “UAV Photogrammetry Modeling of a Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Habitat Restoration Project in Albuquerque, New Mexico: Geomorphological, Inundations, and Vegetation Changes Over Time”

- SWCA presented on a project that assessed geomorphic changes at ABCWUA’s San Juan-Chama Drinking Water Environmental Mitigation Projects within about one river mile of the Rio Grande, including several restored habitat features, such as lowered banklines and embayments.
 - The presentation will be provided to the EC within two days of the meeting, and will be added to the DBMS once it is functioning.

Minnow Action Team Update

- The MAT met in February 2018 to discuss hydrology forecasts and models from Reclamation.
 - The presentations given at the EC will be provided within two days of the meeting, and will be added to the DBMS once it is functioning.
 - Presentations summarized the MAT meeting including an update on hydrology and biology, MAT coordination, and MAT recommendations.
 - The recommendations are intended to involve all agencies since this is expected to be a difficult year.
- ✓ With no objections, the EC accepted the MAT’s February 2018 recommendations.

Adaptive Management Work Group Progress Update

- The AM Work Group has focused on formulating what the AM program/process could look like.
- Suggestions that were discussed at the AM Work Group and EC:
 - Speed up the process of formulating the AM program. This will be challenging due to the concurrent BO processes and hydrologic forecast. At the same time, there is a lot of expertise to amass, and the AM Work Group should take the time that it needs to get it right.
 - Defining the structure for the AM program/process is necessary, including integrating the current Program structure into it. An important part of this is defining roles of all parties, the need to recognize and embrace the roles that folks have, so that no one is excluded and that overlap is avoided.
 - To work effectively, the AM process must integrate with the overall Program in a timely and effective way. Otherwise it will be a stranded effort with limited value to the overall goals of the Program.
 - Dave Wegner has been connecting with scientist colleagues for advice on how they have done AM in other places (i.e., Columbia River Gorge). This ensures that we are identifying “potholes” early, and using lessons learned from elsewhere.
- The AM Work Group recognizes that there have already been several MRGESCP efforts to understand what AM is and is not. One of the first things the AM Work Group did was develop a work group definition of what AM means for the Program. This definition represents the perspective of the AM Work Group requests EC review and recommendation. A common definition is necessary to make the AM program

development process have a focal point from which to develop. The definition was read aloud to the EC:

“Adaptive Management for the Collaborative Program is a structured, science-based process to promote flexible and informed decision making in the face of natural variability and other uncertainties. Monitoring of management actions and responses will advance scientific understanding and assist stakeholders in adjusting policies and/or operations in an iterative learning process.”

- Feedback on the definition:
 - This definition does not mention the concept of *experimentation*, although it is an important part of AM. The AM Work Group has been intentional about recognizing the importance and value of the science and the management and regulatory requirements that drive the work of the Program. The group was intentional in using the term “science-based” because of this concern.
 - How else can we highlight experimentation?
 - Suggestion: Include “*testing and monitoring of management actions and responses.*”
 - Suggestion: There should be language about “*to the benefit of the species.*”
- **All signatories will send additional feedback to WEST on the proposed definition of Adaptive Management that was developed by the Adaptive Management Work Group, to be considered at the next Adaptive Management Work Group meeting. The next meeting is March 21, 2018, and feedback is due March 9, 2018.**
- **WEST and the AM Work Group will revise the proposed AM definition, based on feedback, and will present at the April EC meeting.**
- Initial conceptual AM framework rendering
 - This framework recognizes the importance of decision-making. It is less an organizational structure, and more a framework of functional components for the AM program. For example, the Science Coordination Group would not necessarily be a new group, but it would be a function that can be applied to the Program’s organizational structure.
 - Technical Work Groups know the workings of their individual agencies and the day-to-day challenges of managing the MRG.
 - Basic and Applied Science Applications: Example is the “jiggle” – the flow releases that are being discussed by the MAT.
 - Monitoring Programs: This is the ongoing monitoring we are doing today. These are distinct from the research-driven projects that may be done as a part of AM.
 - Science Advisors provide review of the science work. They need to be independent and not directed by any one agency or group. They may not need to be a standing committee.
 - Predictive Models: Examples are the PVA and hydrology models.
 - Suggestion: Change so that this encompasses other models.
 - There are inconsistencies in the organizational structure when looked at next to the AM framework. Both the organizational structure and the AM framework are just first shots at putting something together for discussion, and more work will be necessary to refine and integrate them.

- One of the things the Program may consider is looking 7+ years into the future for projects, which is something that some agencies do, such as USACE. These different planning horizons are one of the constraints that the AM Work Group must work within. The conceptual model was based on what has been used with other AM programs that have federal partners, which have used triennial planning.
- Triennial planning is suggested for this AM program as well, so the AM Work Group wants to assess whether this works for the individual Program partners.
- What are the resources to administer the AM program? This may be a barrier to effectively implementing AM. Attention should be given to what is actually necessary (i.e. money, employee positions, structure) to perform the functions under the AM framework.
- At the March meeting, the AM Work Group will begin expanding on what function the boxes in the framework provided, identifying parts of organizations that can perform those functions, and identifying the pieces that already exist.
- After the EC decides on an organizational structure, and what committees and work groups will be in existence, the next critical step is for each group to have a work plan.
 - **All signatories will send additional feedback to WEST on the proposed conceptual framework for AM, as well as the triennial budget cycle concept by March 9th.**

2018 Program Direction and Goals

- At the December EC meeting, the group brainstormed Program goals and committed to submitting further Program goals to WEST, including goals for the Program and goals for organizations for their involvement in the Program.
- WEST synthesized both the EC meeting input and the individual signatory submissions to develop the 2018 Program Goals and Objectives document.
- WEST reminded the EC of the goals listed in the “Progress Report on the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program for 2001 through 2003” and the April 2016 Retreat Summary of Decisions to provide context for this part of the discussion.
- The Proposed 2018 Program Goals and Objectives document is essentially an annual work plan. A programmatic long-term plan still needs to be developed.
- Signatories were supportive of WEST holding a tribal participation conference.
- Feedback:
 - Suggested changes to the 2018 Program Goals and Objectives:
 - Second bullet under the second first-level bullet: Change from “Begin” to “Continue.”
 - Rename the document “2018 Planned Accomplishments.”
 - The goals in the 2003 Annual Report were aspirational. The proposed 2018 list is task-oriented toward achieving Program goals.
 - The list provides direction for the Program. The EC requested a standing agenda item to regularly check-in on work plan progress.
 - Suggested metrics of success: Setting and meeting deadlines, having trackable items, and finding short-term items to complete.

- Progress metrics and actual accomplishments are important for obtaining funding, and they set the foundation and/or serve as inputs for future projects.
- Is anything perceived to be missing?
 - There is a need for a baseline map to identify past and current HR projects that can inform future projects. This is an item currently being worked on by the ScW/HR with support from WEST, with the idea that this will eventually feed into DBMS development. USACE has offered to take on the bulk of this work given their large GIS database, and requests information from other agencies to support this effort.
 - **All signatories should send any map files that they have in any format to Ashley Tanner at WEST, who will provide the files to USACE.**
 - Several members noted that they did not want to lose sight of developing an Independent Science Panel, which fits into successfully implementing AM. Independent science panels can aid in designing better scientific approaches. The issue is whether the panels need to be a standing group, an ad hoc group, or something else.
 - WEST is currently working on a review of past and ongoing science.
- Selection of 2018 Direction and Goals
 - The group discussed making the list more specific including having explicit projects or activities under each accomplishment. There was a suggestion for more details of each activity to better inform the EC on status.
 - The EC is supportive of all items on the list.
 - Some EC representatives voiced the need to prioritize listed activities and suggested using deadlines or timelines to accomplish that. One EC member suggested a spreadsheet to help with tracking.
 - The EC suggested renaming the “Proposed 2018 Goals and Objectives” to “Proposed 2018 Program Accomplishments”
 - **WEST will distribute a Microsoft Word version of the “Proposed 2018 Goals and Objectives (Accomplishments)” 2/21/18 EC meeting read ahead.**
 - **All signatories will provide WEST with comments and suggested revisions on the “Proposed 2018 Program Accomplishments”**
 - **WEST will compile 2018 Program-related projects received from signatories through 3/16/18, and develop a tracking mechanism for the EC to review project progress.**
- An EC representative recalled that in the past, the EC received a spreadsheet list of projects, which included Program-related projects.
 - If the EC wants to do this again, every agency needs to contribute and the Program should focus on the current year (2018).
 - **All signatories will send 2018 Program-related project information to WEST by March 16, 2018 for inclusion in a project tracking sheet.**
 - **WEST will compile 2018 Program-related projects from signatories through March 16th and develop a tracking mechanism for the EC to review project progress.**
 - **Ongoing: All will share Program-related project information, updates, and changes as they are**

awarded/revised/progressed/completed with WEST for inclusion in the project tracking sheet that will be reviewed at each EC meeting.

Program Structure Discussion

- At the December meeting, the EC requested that WEST develop a proposed Program structure for discussion. The locations of the boxes on the figure can be moved around once they are defined. Each of the boxes in this proposed structure have preliminary definitions in the meeting read-ahead.
 - The Adaptive Management Committee (AMC) in the proposed structure is distinct from the current AM Work Group (the AM Work Group is currently an EC-sanctioned ad hoc work group to develop the Program's AM program and plan. The group will dissolve once the EC directs the Program's implementation of an adaptive management process).
 - The Work Groups box is specific to ad hoc groups that will sunset after their charge is fulfilled. For example: The RGSM Early Life History group that was formed to develop a SOW.
 - Solid lines denote direction or recommendations, and dashed lines denote coordination.
 - The Program Management Team (PMT) is currently WEST, serving as the third-party Program manager.
 - The By-Laws Ad Hoc Work Group will reconvene once the Program structure is finalized by the EC.
- Discussion
 - The structure is a work in progress and has not been finalized.
 - Suggestions:
 - Work Groups can be formed by the EC or the Project Planning Committee (PPC) and the diagram should depict this.
 - Do not include Work Groups at all as the by-laws address them, and they fall under other boxes in the structure (i.e., all ad hoc work groups are created and are directed by a standing group).
 - Given the PMT's overall coordination and support role for the Program, it could be considered as part of the EC.
 - The MAT is not currently a chartered group, and it may not belong in the Program structure if it remains unchartered.
 - The structure, as proposed, lacks hierarchy that might be expected from the lines of direction (top-down).
 - Discussion is needed to determine how and which groups under the current structure will or will not continue to operate under the new structure.
 - There are Program functions that are not currently captured in the structure:
 - Short and long-term planning
 - Non-AM projects
 - Public engagement and involvement
 - A comment was made that Independent Peer Review Panels are shown in the structure, but they are not officially part of the Program.

- **USFWS will send WEST suggested additions to the scope of responsibilities for the proposed “Project Planning Committee” to address coordination.**
- There needs to be more clarity around how the Program structure diagram and the AM functional framework diagram related to each other.
 - Some of the AM functions fall directly under the AMC, others are elsewhere. Some of the arrows in the AM framework are not captured by the structure.
 - The AM framework and the Program structure came from two different charges. With feedback from the EC, WEST will work on bringing them together.
- **WEST will distribute the revision of the proposed Program Structure based on feedback from the Feb. 21st EC meeting and comments received through 3/16/18.**
- At the April 12, 2018 EC meeting, the EC will review and discuss the revised Program structure and potentially direct the By-laws Ad Hoc Work Group to reconvene and continue their work.

Long-Term Planning Discussion

- In February, the CC proposed a joint CC-ScW/HR March meeting to work on medium- and long-range planning.
- It was voiced at the EC meeting that the only groups that would carry over under the new structure would be the EC and potentially the MAT. Long-term planning will be a function under one of the groups in the new structure – likely the PPC.
- Before the EC can make a decision on creating a PPC or other groups, more work is needed on the structure, but there is general agreement that the PPC can take over medium- and long-term planning.
- The outcome of the EC structure decision will determine if current work groups will continue or if their functions will be subsumed by groups in the new structure.
- The groups will not begin new tasks or undertake long-range planning until a new structure is approved.
- The ScW/HR has an agenda item for the February 27th meeting to review, prioritize, and draft project descriptions. These descriptions will be submitted to Reclamation in mid-April 2018 to consider for FY19 funding. Beyond the work tasked to the ScW/HR at the December EC meeting, no new work should be undertaken.
- Once the EC has decided the structure, and the By-Laws Committee revises the By-Laws, the EC can talk about defining what the PPC is.
 - **The ScW/HR will define and prioritize science work to present at the next EC meeting (prior to submittal to funding agencies – USACE and Reclamation – in mid-April).**

DBMS Update and Discussion

- WEST and USACE have been working with USGS to develop the new DBMS.
- Beginning in March 2018, WEST and USACE will be scheduling stakeholder meetings with work groups and signatories to determine how they use the DBMS and what features would be useful to them.
 - The EC would like the calendar to be available soon, which will happen by the end of March.

- The EC also wishes to see geo-referencing features in the DBMS.

MRGESCP Signatories Quarterly Reporting

- At the December EC meeting, the EC requested that WEST collect quarterly contract progress reports, including expenditures from all signatories.
- At this meeting, it was agreed that the standing agenda item to track project timelines would suffice, and that quarterly reporting is not practical given the amount of work required to gather and report the information.

April EC Planning

- April 12, 2018, 8:30am–12:30pm, Location TBD
 - The planned location is Reclamation, dependent on availability of a meeting space.
 - This meeting is scheduled to end before the Reclamation Annual Operating Plan (AOP) meeting at 1:00pm.
- Permitting Discussion
 - USFWS worked individually with those signatories that submitted questions regarding permitting. If other signatories would like to discuss permitting, USFWS will meet with them, or signatories can submit questions to WEST and/or USFWS so that USFWS can prepare for the discussion with the appropriate staff and information.
 - USFWS is working on a guidebook for permitting. The beginning will address permitting types and what they are used for, and the appendix will address species-specific requirements. The guidebook will not be completed by the April EC meeting, but USFWS can be prepared to present on it.
 - **All will send questions about Endangered Species Act permitting to WEST, for consideration by USFWS as they develop a permitting guidebook and prepare to present on it at the next EC meeting.**
- Proposed Agenda Items:
 - Presentation on MRG BO's
 - At the December EC meeting, the EC suggested that the 2016 MRG BO partners meet beforehand, and that WEST gather information about the other MRG BO's to present to the EC. This stemmed from looking at Program goals and direction and asking the question, "How might the Program have a role in supporting the various BO's?"
 - The 2016 MRG BO partners will be presenting to the USFWS in March. The partners will make a presentation to the EC in April regarding the 2016 MRG BO.
 - It was suggested that all the MRG BO's should not be presented at once, but can be presented at future meetings as well so the EC can work with BO signatories to determine if, and the manner in which the Program has a role in supporting the various BO's.
 - Program Structure Discussion
 - AM Work Group Update
 - Annual Report Update
 - Standing EC Agenda Item: Status of 2018 Program accomplishments and projects

- Project Descriptions/Work Plans Review Before Submittal to Agencies
- MAT Update: If MAT recommendations presented on Feb 21st have substantially changed, the MAT will present the new recommendations.

Meeting Participants

Participant	Organization
EC Representatives in Attendance	
Rick Billings	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
James Booth LTC	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kim Eichhorst	Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
Brent Esplin	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
David Gensler	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
Alan Hatch	Pueblo of Santa Ana
John Longworth	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Susan Millsap	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Megan Osborne	University of New Mexico
Matthew Peterson	City of Albuquerque
Cody Walker	Pueblo of Isleta
Jim Wilber	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Matthew Wunder	NM Dept. of Game and Fish
Other Representatives in Attendance	
Brian Bader	SWCA Environmental Consultants
David Campbell	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Rowan Converse	University of New Mexico
Julie Dickey	WEST, Inc.
Joseph Fluder	SWCA Environmental Consultants
Lynette Giesen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Grace Haggerty	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Kyle Harwood	Egolf+ Ferlic+Harwood (EFH) for Buckman Direct Diversion Project
Janet Jarratt	Assessment Payers Association of the MRGCD
George MacDonnell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mike Marcus	Assessment Payers Association of the MRGCD
Anne Marken	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
Kate Mendoza	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Ed McCorkindale	WEST, Inc.
Lana Mitchell	WEST, Inc.
Page Pegram	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Michael Porter	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Elizabeth Reitzel	U.S. Representative Lujan Grisham
Matt Schmader	University of New Mexico, Anthropology
Summer Scholz	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Tanya Scott	LRPA – Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
Dale Strickland	WEST, Inc.
Cody Stropki	SWCA Environmental Consultants
Jared Studyvin	WEST, Inc.
Ashley Tanner	WEST, Inc.
Rich Valdez	SWCA for NM Interstate Stream Commission
Dave Wegner	WEST, Inc.
William Whitehead	SWCA Environmental Consultants
Stephen Zipper	SWCA Environmental Consultants
Signatories Not Present	
	Pueblo of Sandia
	NM Office of the Attorney General

2018 Program Project Tracking (Work Plan/Accomplishments)

Task	Program Group	Timeline (milestones, deadlines)	Deliverable	Notes
Annual Work Plan (Calendar Year)				
<i>Science Work Plan</i>	ScW/HR	Ongoing (calendar year)	Science Work Plan document	Work in progress
<i>Program's Work Plan</i>	EC	Ongoing (calendar year)	Annual Work Plan document	
Adaptive Management Plan	AM Work Group	Ongoing	Adaptive Management Process and Plan section within the Long-Term Plan	
Long-Term Plan	EC		Long-Term Plan document	
Administration and Reporting				
<i>Annual Report</i>	WEST	Final version for EC approval: June 2018	Public report	Draft in revision
Complete FY16/FY17 Report		July/August 2018	Signatory coordination	
Begin FY18 Report		December 2018	Draft to signatories for review	
First draft FY18 Report				
<i>Cost Share</i>	WEST	February 2018	Report to Reclamation	
Report FY17 Cost Share		August - October 2018	Non-federal signatory coordination	
Begin Gathering FY18 Cost Share				
<i>Other Reporting</i>	WEST	Projected FY19 budget: Current request Projected FY20 budget: <i>Federal:</i> October – December 2018 <i>Non-federal:</i> April – June 2019 FY17 expenditures: Current request FY18 expenditures: <i>Federal:</i> October – November 2018 <i>Non-Federal:</i> July – August 2018		
Gather signatory budgets for reporting annually				
Draft the Program's internal/external communications plan		Contingent on Program Structure decision	Communication Plan document	

Develop a new DBMS - calendar, website, database, GIS		Ongoing	Navigable and useful website, DBMS, calendar, and mapping feature	In coordination with USACE's contract with USGS
Individual Standing Group Work (Suggestions given based on the decision for a new structure)				
EC	EC			
Develop and approve a new Program structure		December 2017 - April 2018	Implemented Program structure	
MRGESCP Goals		December 2017 - April 2018	Decision to move forward	
Program's Possible Role in supporting all MRG BO's		Ongoing		
Develop Long-Term Plan		Ongoing		
AMWG	AMWG			
Continue developing an AM framework				
Outline an AM Plan				
Draft AM Plan Sections				
AMC	AMC			
Establish a Science Peer Review Process				
Draft AM Plan Sections of LTP				
FPG	FPG			
Determine signatory fiscal planning deadlines				
Identify potential sources of outside funding				
AWG	AWG			
By-laws revision				
Develop new charters and revise old charters				
Draft the Program's long-term plan				
RET	RET			
Identify areas/topics necessary to better inform management actions on the MRG as a whole				

STN				
RGSM Population Monitoring Data Re-Analysis Task	DAT			DAT needs new, clear charge
Continue Population Viability Analysis (after DAT)	STN	Will continue once DAT concludes		
Prioritize Peer Review Panel Recommendations		Ongoing		Prioritize all panel recommendations
Begin implementing Peer Review Panel Recommendations		Ongoing		
Complete RGSM Early Life History SOW (award contract one year into RGSM High-Throughput Markers development)		Ongoing		
Complete Contracting and begin work on the Identifying Restoration Priorities for Threatened Tamarisk Dominated Habitat to Benefit Future Habitat for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher SOW		Contracting completed; work to begin soon		

Adaptive management for the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program is a structured, science-based process to promote flexible and informed decision making in the face of natural variability and other uncertainties. Testing and monitoring of management actions and responses will advance scientific understanding and assist stakeholders in adjusting policies and/or operations in an iterative learning process.

The Program's goal is to be a collaborative space for independent science to inform the actions of organizations working in the MRG, and in support of meeting management requirements and complying with Biological Opinions for the betterment of the MRG, its listed species, and water users.

FY17 Cost Share Report

Non-Federal Signatories that Reported Cost Share
Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
City of Albuquerque Open Space
Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Pueblo of Santa Ana
Pueblo of Isleta
Total Cost Share Reported <u>\$357,539.00</u>

MRGESCP Projects

Signatory Organization	Project	Begin	End
Habitat Restoration			
NMISC - Reclamation - USFWS	Habitat Restoration in the Isleta and San Acacia Reaches	FY16	Ongoing
NMISC - ABCWUA	Habitat Restoration Fisheries Monitoring	FY16	Ongoing
Pueblo of Isleta	Isleta Diversion Dam Preliminary Engineering Analysis Report	FY17	FY23
Pueblo of Sandia	Riverine Habitat Restoration and Endangered Species Monitoring	FY07	Ongoing
Pueblo of Santa Ana	Pueblo of Santa Ana Bar 3 Restoration Project	FY08	Ongoing
USACE	Groundwater levels and response to river discharge in the Angostura Reach	FY15	FY17
USACE	Literature Review of Techniques for Creating Channel Bars for Instream RGSM Habitat	FY15	FY18
USACE	Los Lunas Habitat Restoration Project Monitoring	FY00	Ongoing
USACE	Tamarisk Leaf Beetle Monitoring	FY13	FY19
Rio Grande Silvery Minnow			
CoA - Reclamation - ABCWUA	City of Albuquerque Rearing/Breeding Operation and Maintenance	FY01	Ongoing
MRGCD	MRGCD Drain Outfall Monitoring	FY14	FY16
NMISC - Reclamation - ABCWUA	Operations and Maintenance of the Los Lunas Silvery Minnow Refugium	FY07	Ongoing
Pueblo of Santa Ana	Pueblo of Santa Ana Fish Community Surveys	Ongoing	
Reclamation	Assessment & Monitoring of RGSM Genetics	FY03	Ongoing
Reclamation	RGSM Population Monitoring	FY02	Ongoing
Reclamation - USFWS	RGSM Propagation, Augmentation, and Rescue/Salvage	FY01	Ongoing
Reclamation	RGSM Spawning Monitoring/Egg Monitoring in Canals	Ongoing	
Reclamation - USFWS	Southwest Native ARRC Rearing/Breeding Operation and Maintenance	FY03	Ongoing
USACE	Evaluation of RGSM Population Model Alternatives	FY15	FY18
USACE	Evaluation of Using eDNA for Detecting Larval RGSM on the Rio Grande Floodplain	FY17	FY17
USACE	Investigation of RGSM Mesohabitat Preferences	FY15	FY18
USACE	RGSM Monitoring in Habitat Restoration Areas	FY14	FY17
Avian Species			
Pueblo of Santa Ana	Southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL) monitoring	Ongoing	
Reclamation - USACE	SWFL Surveys and Nest Monitoring	FY13	Ongoing
USACE	Avian Monitoring	Ongoing	
USACE	SWFL Surveys on the Rio Grande in the Albuquerque Metro Area	FY14	FY19

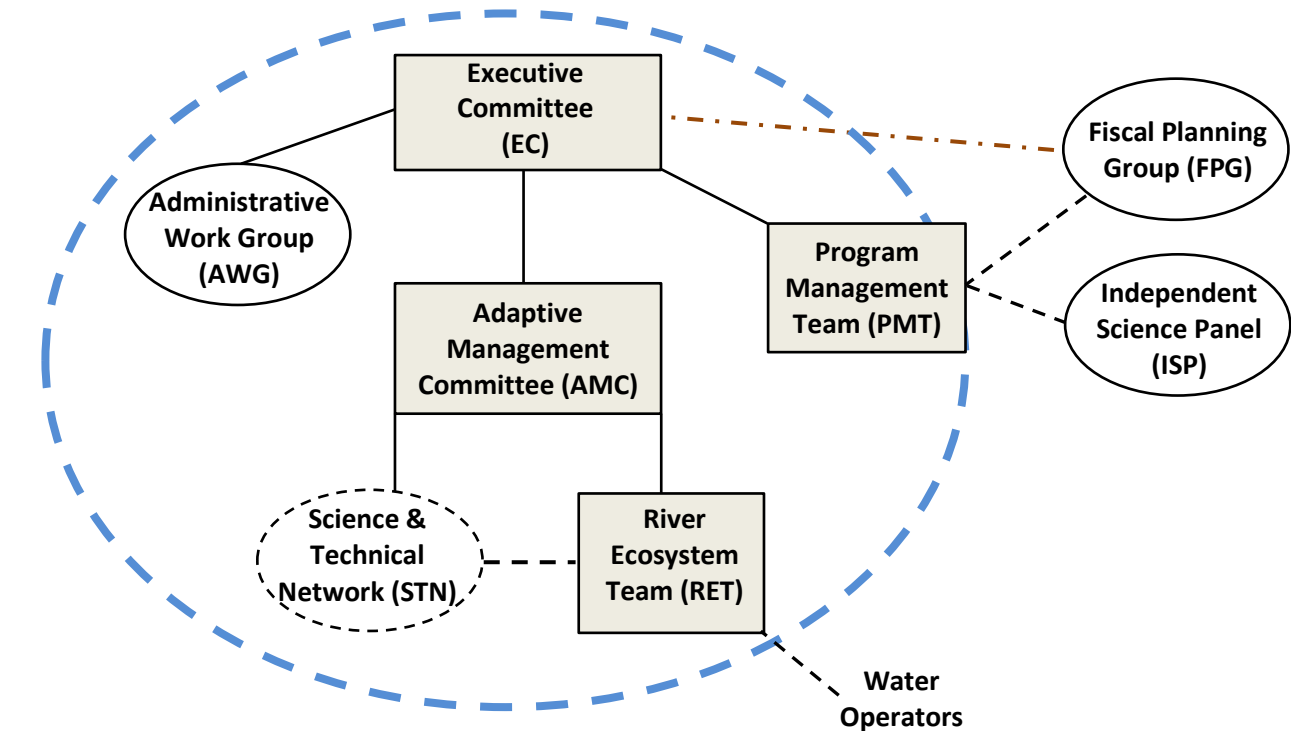
MRGESCP Projects

Signatory Organization	Project	Begin	End
Science Support			
USACE - BEMP	Bosque School BEMP Site Monitoring	FY14	Ongoing
USACE	Collaborative Aerial Data Collection and Analysis	FY16	FY18
USACE	Fire Access Run Books	FY16	FY16
USACE	Monitoring Climate Change in the MRG	FY12	Ongoing
USACE	Production of 1962 Image and Terrain Maps of the MRG	FY17	FY17
USACE	Rio Grande and Tributaries Geomorphic Characterization Study	FY11	FY17
USACE	Rio Grande Sediment Gages: Rio Puerco, San Acacia, San Marcial	FY10	Ongoing
Program Support			
ABCWUA - USACE	Database Management System	FY07	Ongoing
Reclamation	MRGESCP USFWS Management and Support	FY02	Ongoing
Reclamation	MRGESCP Program and Science Support Contract	FY17	FY21
USACE	Adaptive Management Framework for the MRGESCP	FY15	FY18
Water Management and Operations			
USACE	Continuous Water Temperature Monitoring of the MRG Basin	FY13	Ongoing
USACE	Rio Grande Nature Center High Flow Channel Gage Monitoring	FY10	Ongoing
USACE	Water Quality Monitoring of Aquatic Refugia in the MRG	FY17	Ongoing

Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

The following structure and summary are provided by Western Ecosystems Technology, Inc. (WEST) for the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) Executive Committee (EC) consideration at the April 12, 2018 meeting. This is only a proposed Program structure and is subject to EC revision.

Future Structure



- - - - - PMT Coordination
- - - - - Group Communication
- - - - - Program Recommendations
- Direct Coordination
 - Direction/Requests (top-down)
 - Recommendations (bottom-up)

Standing Group

Ad Hoc Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Recurring as needed

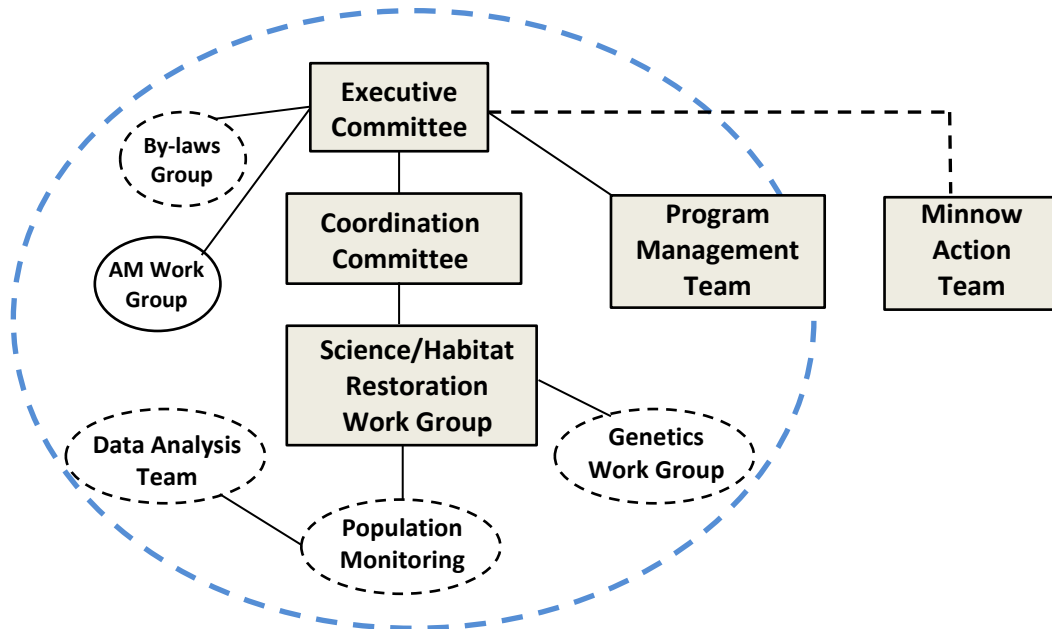
At-will Groups

Convene for specialized work

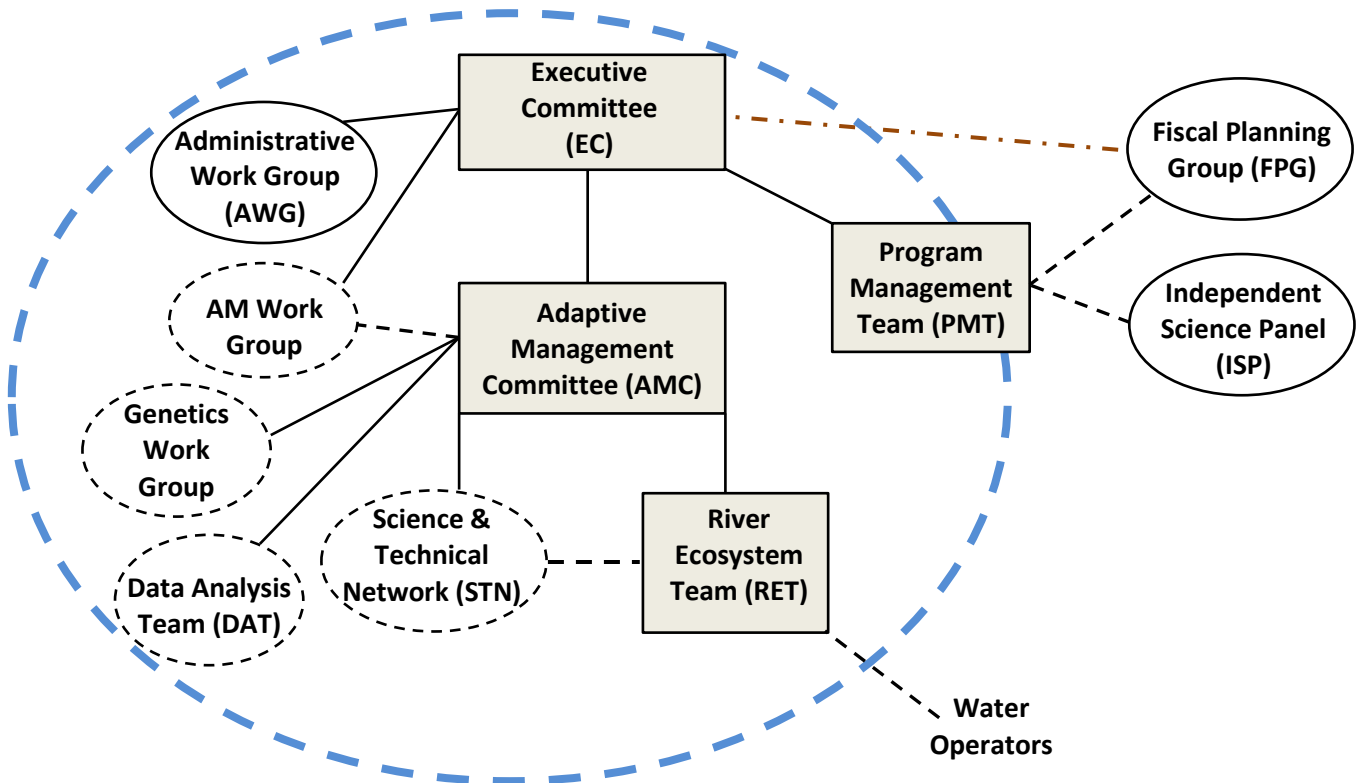
- Limited charge
- Limited timeline

Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

Current Structure



Interim Structure



Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

STANDING GROUPS

Executive Committee (EC)

- **Function:** Decision-making body of the Collaborative Program
- **Composition:**
 - One Federal Co-Chair, and one Non-Federal Co-Chair
 - Executive level signatory representatives
 - Each signatory appoints one primary and one alternate representative
- **Meeting Frequency:** Currently bi-monthly meetings, moving to quarterly meetings
- **Roles:**
 - Develop the Program's Long-Term Plan
 - Provide Program recommendations to agencies
 - Program-related project funding and implementation, including recommendations to the Fiscal Planning Group (FPG)
 - Regarding Adaptive Management
 - Convene ad hoc groups as needed
 - Administrative Group
 - Others
 - Provide direction to standing groups
 - Long-Term Plan
 - Adaptive management
 - Approve Program documents and plans (i.e. Annual Reports, Work Plans)

Adaptive Management Committee (AMC)

- **Function:** Coordinate Program science and related management efforts to inform management actions on the Middle Rio Grande (MRG)
- **Composition:**
 - Chair: WEST Science Coordinator
 - Self-selection as appropriate
 - WEST proposes that it is the agency managers that oversee each organization's science, technical contractors, and operations
- **Meeting Frequency:** To be determined
- **Roles:**
 - Develop annual Science Study Plans (science and management priorities)
 - Act in an advisory capacity to the FPG to coordinate on funding
 - Ensure priorities are aligned with the Adaptive Management Plan/Long-Term Plan
 - Communicate tasks to the River Ecosystem Team (RET) and the Science and Technical Network (STN) as needed
 - Recommend science studies and research projects for implementation
 - Convene ad hoc groups to complete specific tasks (e.g. Scope of Work (SOW) development; specific task analysis; etc.)
 - Provide recommendations to the EC on management actions related to science studies and projects
 - Recommend topics to the EC for independent peer review panels
 - Assist with planning the MRG Science Symposiums

Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

River Ecosystem Team (RET)

- **Function:** Provide short- and long-term forecasts and projections on the MRG to inform management decisions, water operations, and priority research areas
- **Composition:**
 - Chair suggestions:
 - BEMP staff
 - WEST staff
 - Signatory managers and technical experts based on topic
 - External experts as needed based on topic
- **Meeting Frequency:** TBD
- **Roles:**
 - Provide specialized technical review of Program work as needed with direction from the AMC
 - Coordinate with the AMC and the STN on answering questions regarding the future of the MRG ecosystem and watershed. For example:
 - Climate change
 - Vegetative cover
 - Water availability and projected needs
 - Coordinate to provide recommendations on annual water management and operations, and scientific and research studies to the AMC
 - Identify and provide research and monitoring priority recommendations to the AMC
 - Provide support for the adaptive management process

Program Management Team (PMT) *this is currently WEST as the third-party Program Manager

- **Function:** Coordinate and provide support for day-to-day and longer-term Program and Program science needs
- **Composition:**
 - Program Manager
 - Science Coordinator
 - Support staff
- **Roles:**
 - Program Support:
 - Handle meeting logistics, gather and prepare meeting materials, and complete and follow up on action items for Program groups
 - Manage planning and logistics for the Program's independent science panels
 - Public outreach including tabling and staffing events for the Program
 - Maintain Program records and data on the Program's database management system (DBMS)
 - Facilitate the following:
 - Program meetings as appropriate
 - Communication between Program groups on Program activities
 - Communication between signatories on Program activities
 - Communication and outreach to external stakeholders and the public
 - Develop documents as needed
 - Science Support:
 - Coordinate and provide day-to-day and long-term science support

Proposed MRGESCP Program Structure

- Coordinate and support the Program's adaptive management framework and the development and implementation of the adaptive management portion of the Long-Term Plan
- Convene and provide support to the Program's independent science panels
- Support work on independent science panel recommendations
- Facilitate communication on science topics
- Provide subject matter expertise and scientific integrity oversight on Program work

AD HOC GROUPS

Administrative Work Group (AWG)

- **Function:** Coordinate drafting of and revisions to Program documents
- **Composition:**
 - Self-select per task
- **Meeting Frequency:** As-needed
- **Roles:**
 - Revise the by-laws
 - Develop Program group charters
 - Draft the Long-Term Plan
 - Coordinate with Program groups and signatory representatives as necessary for document drafting and revisions
 - Make recommendations to the EC regarding documents

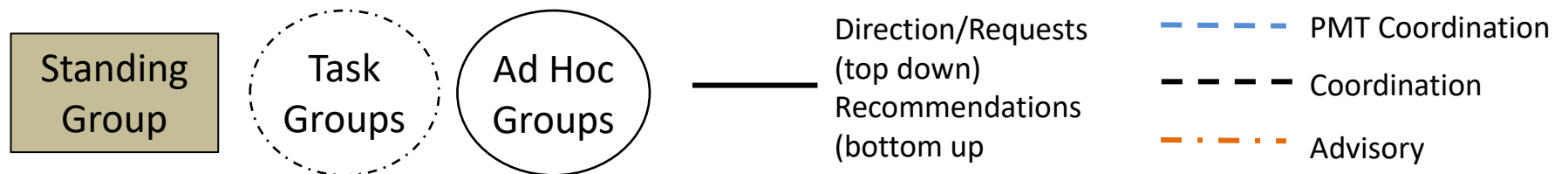
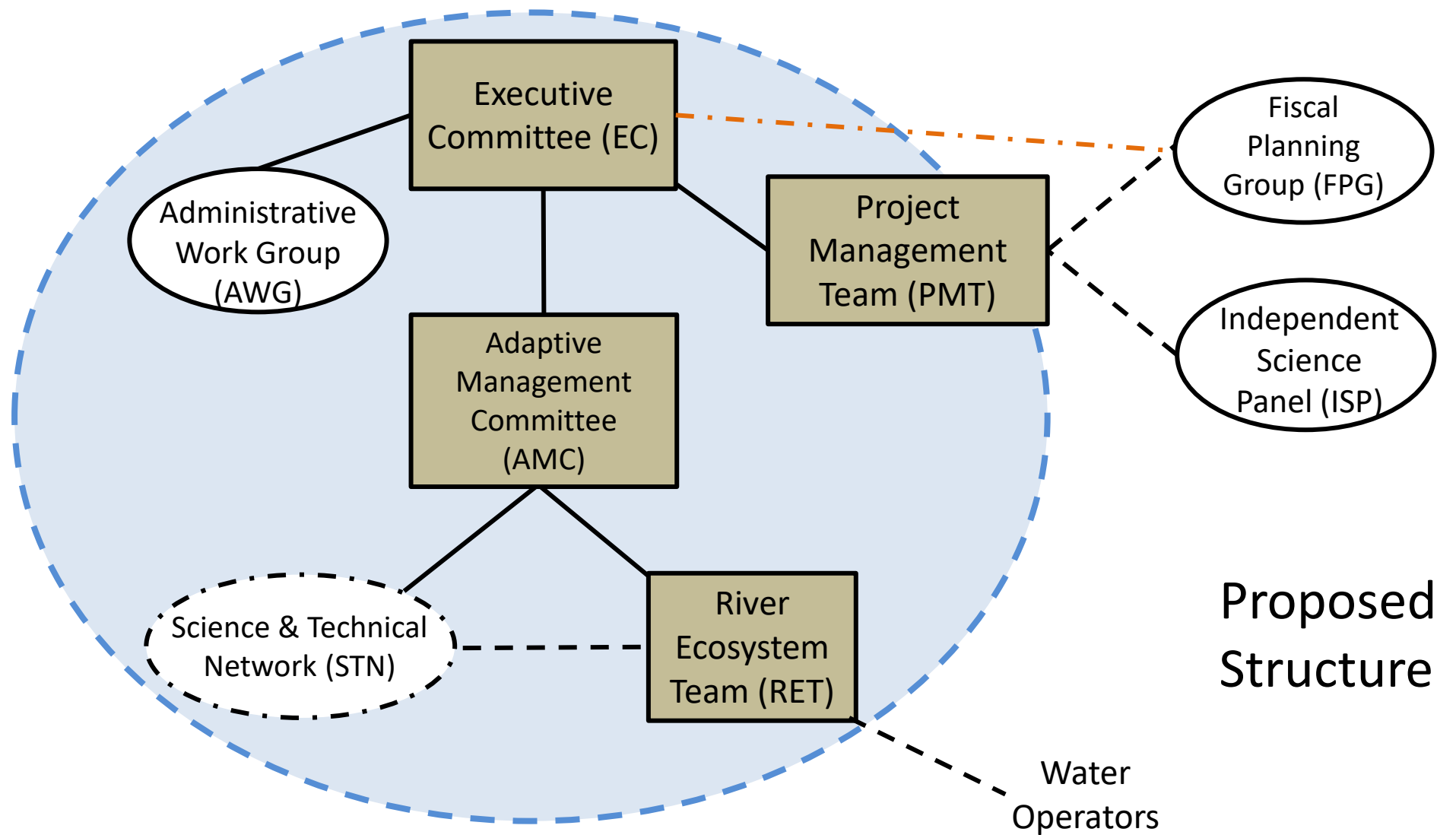
Fiscal Planning Group (FPG)

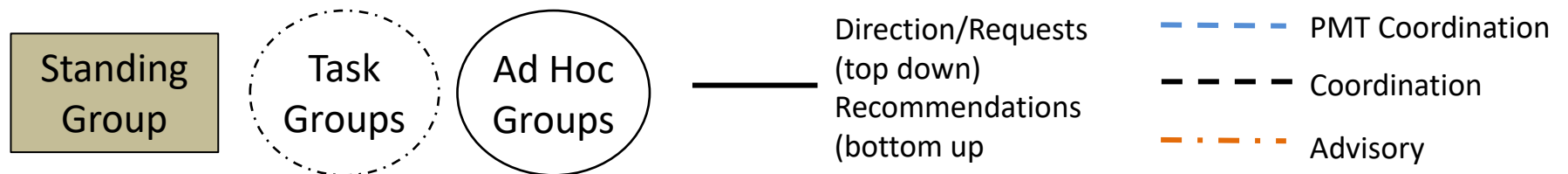
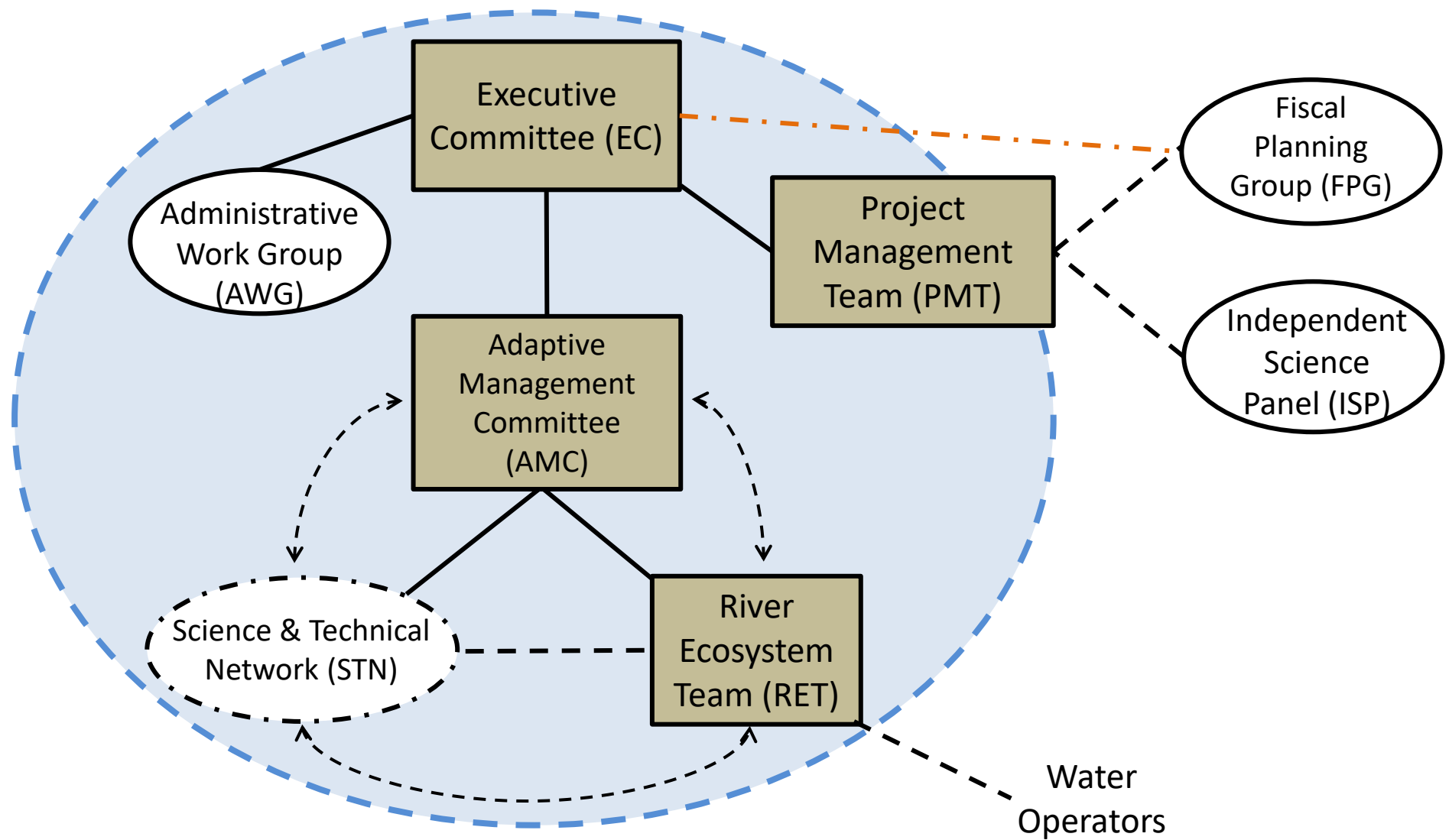
- **Function(s):**
 - Coordinate on signatory agency's funding capabilities to support Program projects
 - Non-federal signatory planning to pursue future funding sources in support of Program activities
- **Composition:**
 - WEST recommends the following signatories: ABCWUA, City of Albuquerque, MRGCD, NMISC, Reclamation, USACE, Pueblo(s), BEMP
- **Meeting Frequency:** Meets as needed to coordinate for various timelines
- **Roles:**
 - Consider EC recommendations for funding priorities
 - Coordinate with the AMC on SOW planning and development
 - Identify potential resources (e.g. partnerships, funding) for Program-related project implementation
 - Identify and pursue additional funding sources (e.g. lobbying efforts, grant writing)

AT-WILL GROUPS

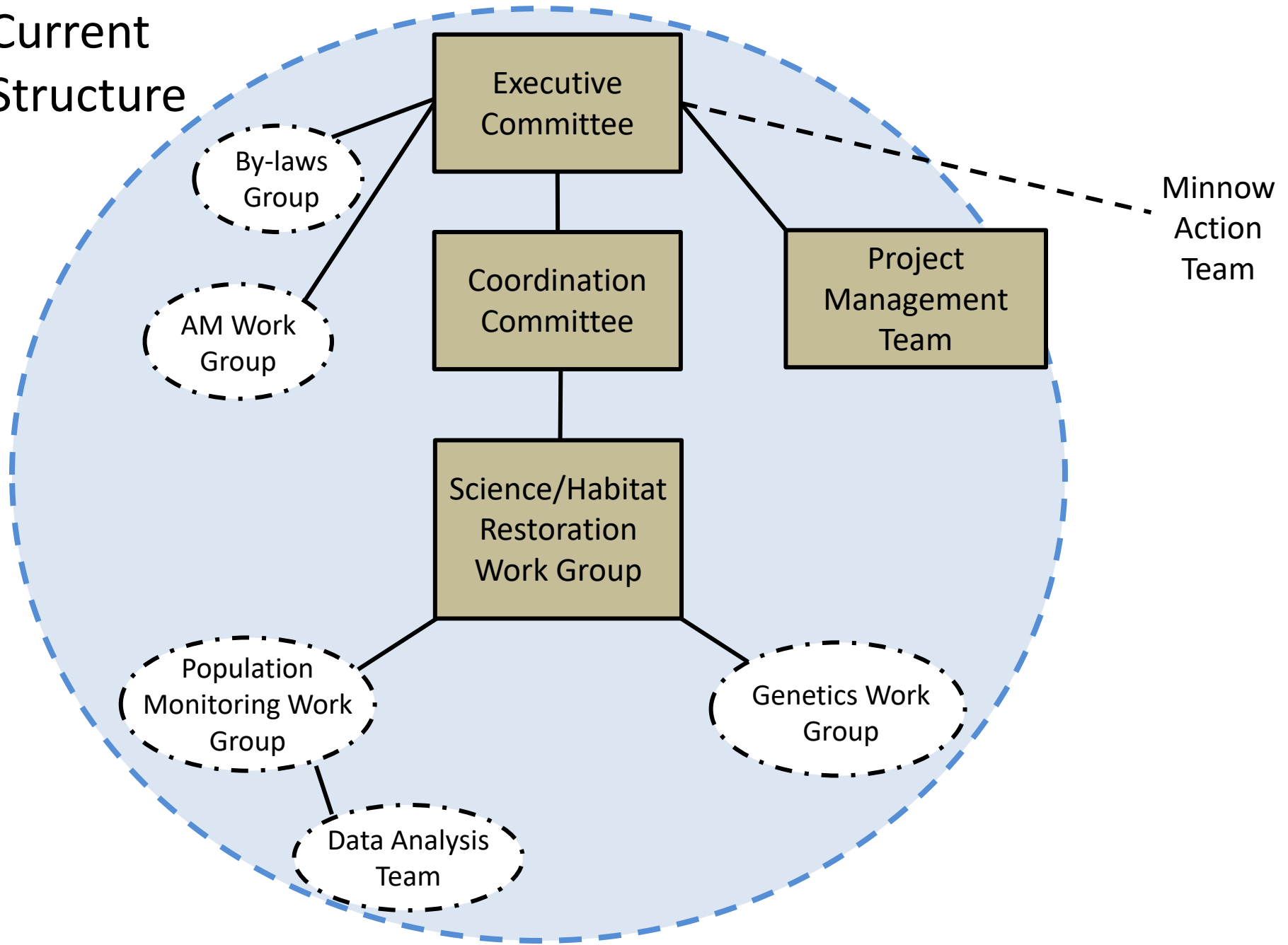
Science and Technical Network (STN)

- **Function:** Provide task-specific scientific and technical expertise
- **Composition:**
 - Self-select based on expertise and interest
- **Meeting Frequency:** Task groups meet when a specific task, timeline, and deliverables have been identified

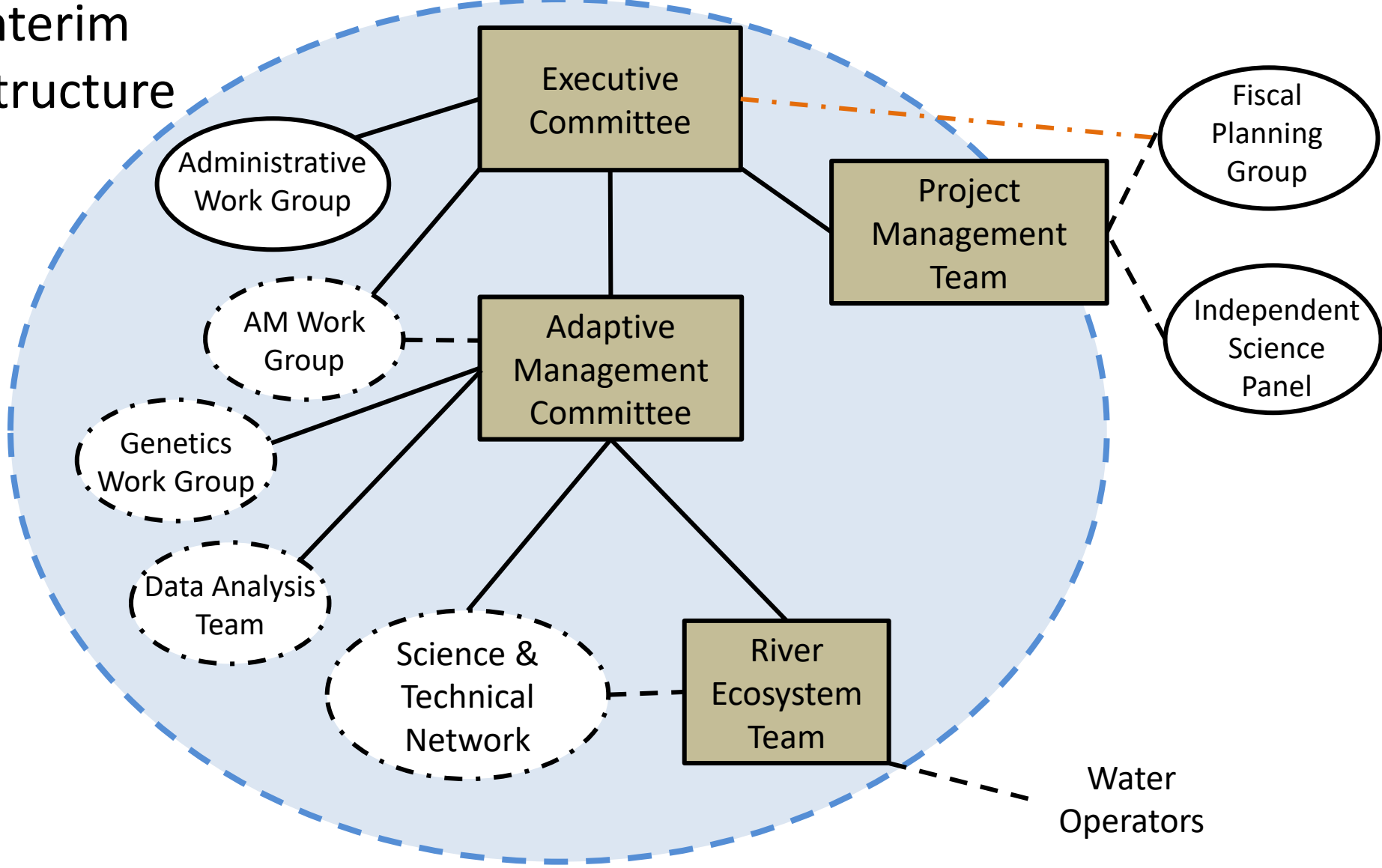




Current Structure



Interim Structure



Standing Group

Task Groups

Ad Hoc Groups

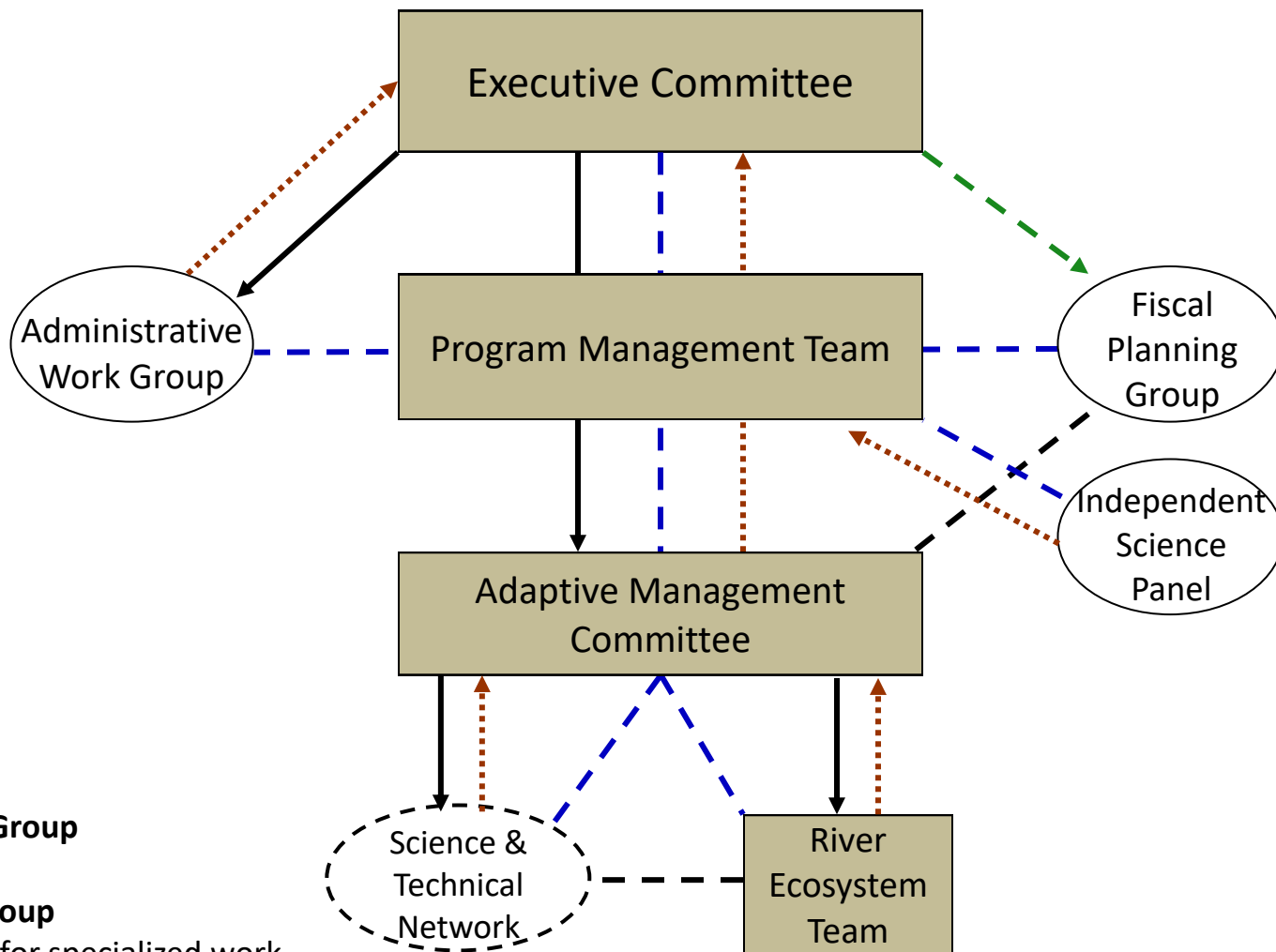
Direction/Requests (top down)

Recommendations (bottom up)


PMT Coordination


Coordination

Advisory

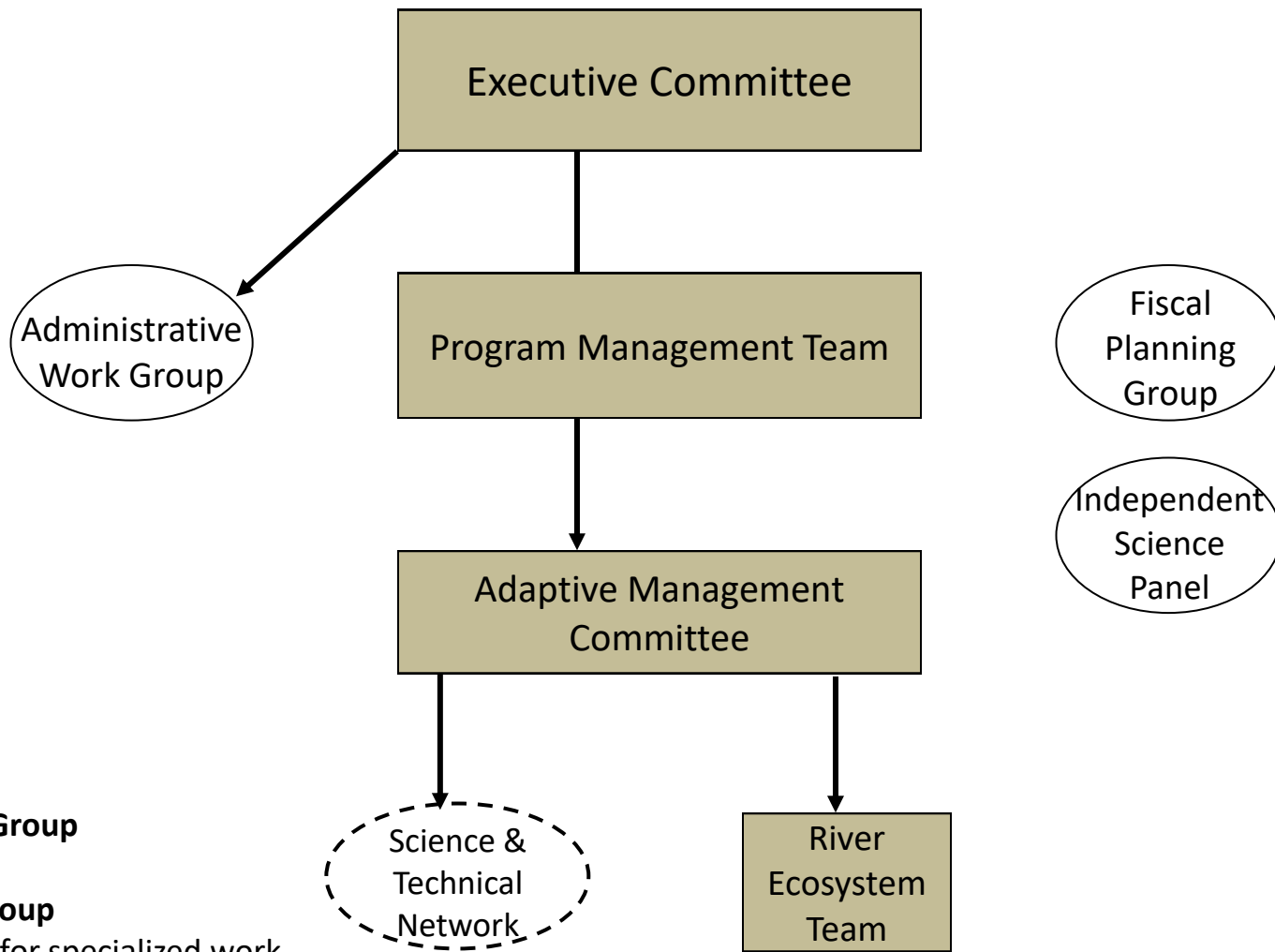


 **Standing Group**

 **Ad Hoc Group**
 Convene for specialized work
 • Limited charge
 • Recurring as needed

 **At-will Group**
 Convene for specialized work
 • Limited charge
 • Limited timeline

 Direction/Request
 Recommendations
 Advisory
 Direct Communication
 PMT Coordination



Standing Group



Ad Hoc Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Recurring as needed



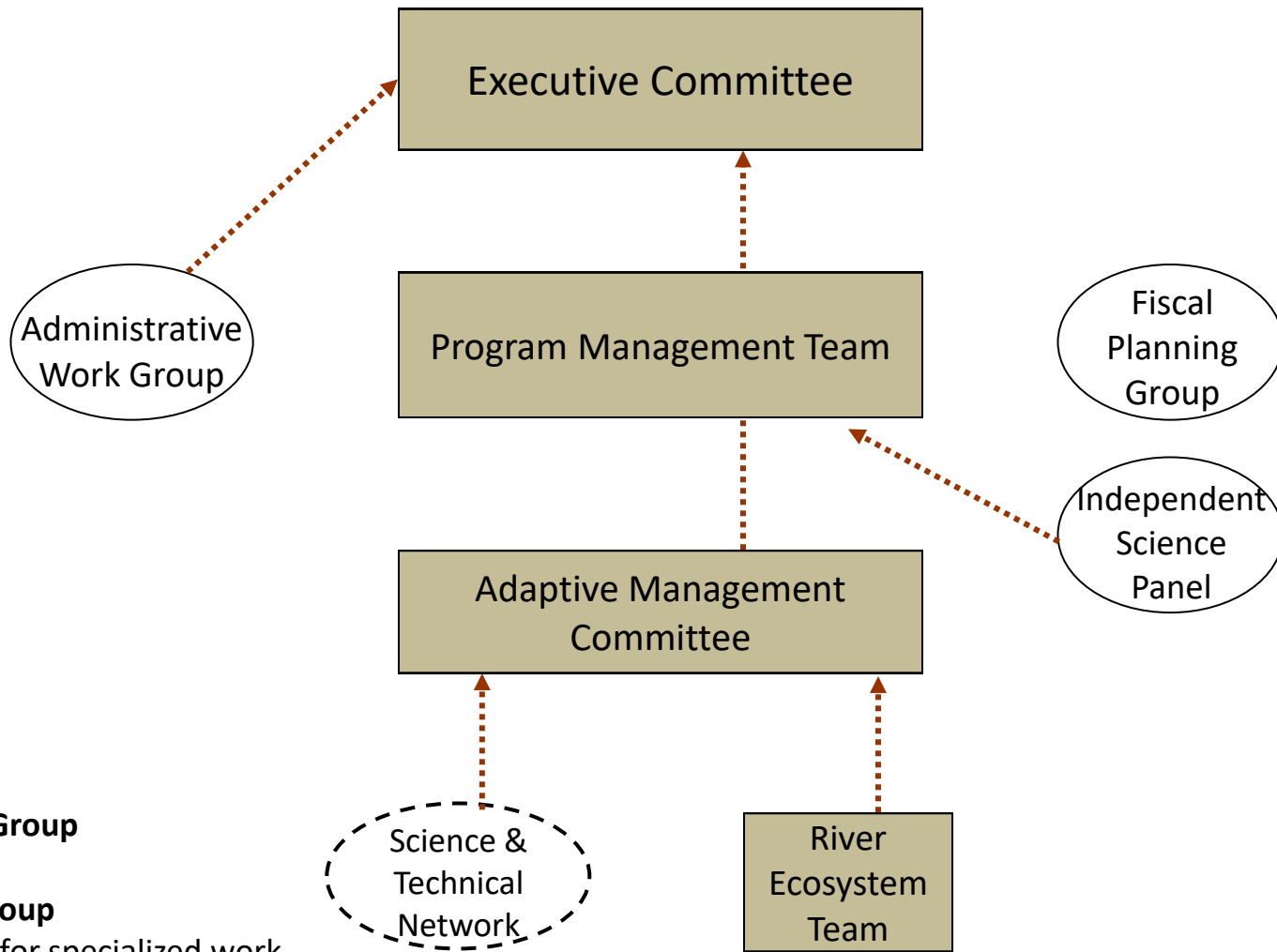
At-will Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Limited timeline



Direction/Request



Standing Group



Ad Hoc Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Recurring as needed



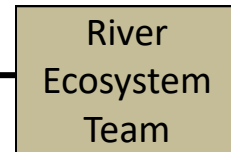
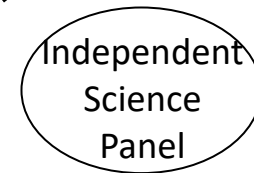
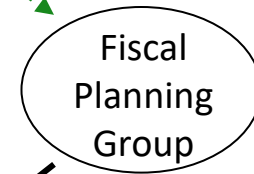
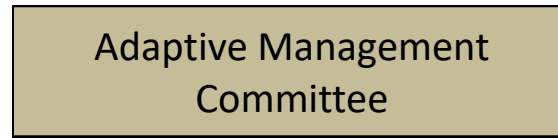
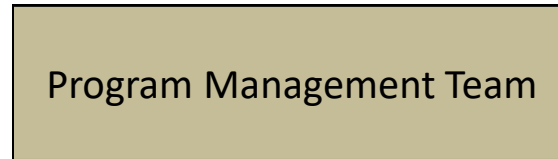
At-will Group




Convene for specialized work



- Limited charge
- Limited timeline

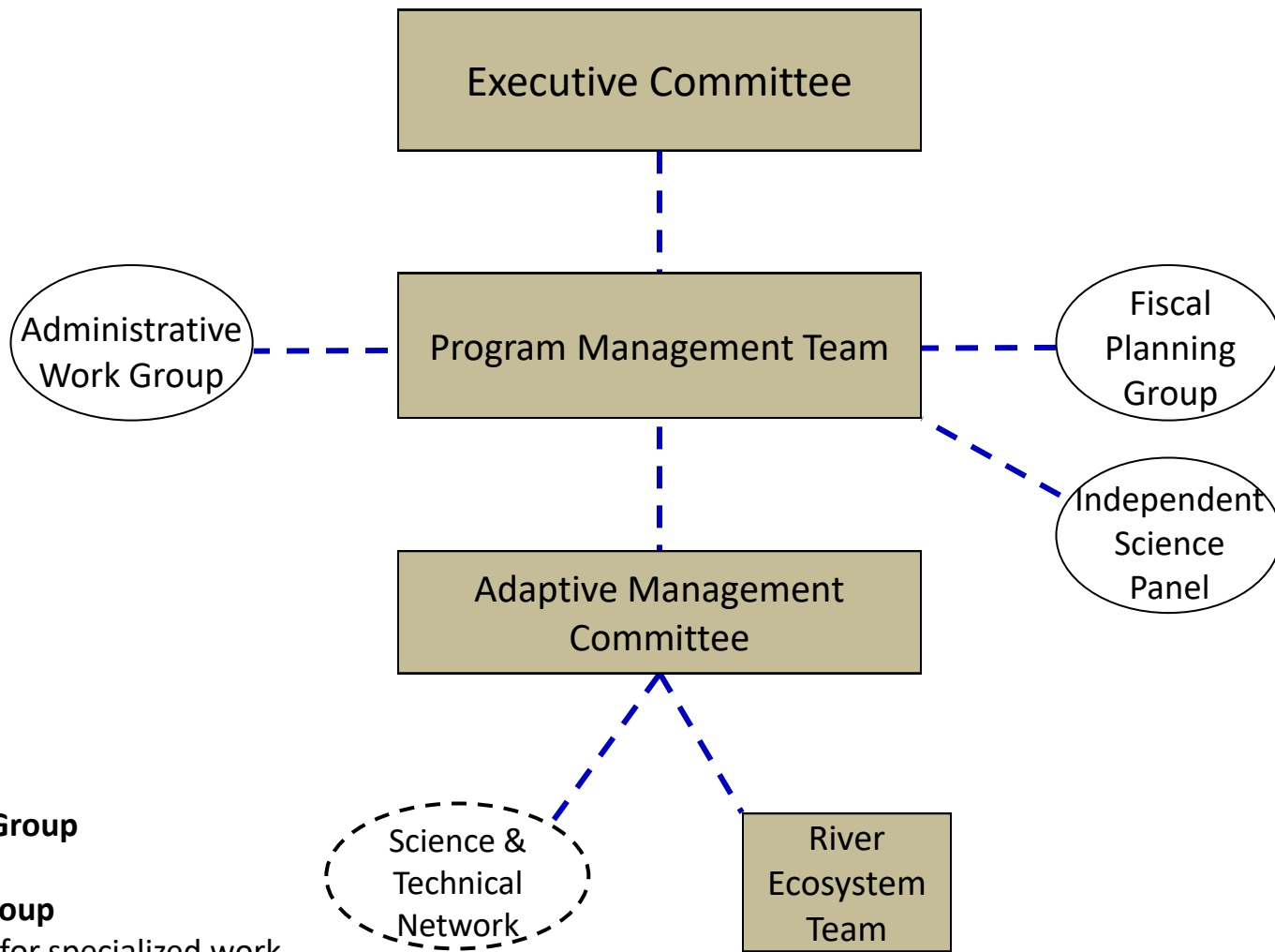


Recommendations



-  **Standing Group**
-  **Ad Hoc Group**
 - Convene for specialized work
 - Limited charge
 - Recurring as needed
-  **At-will Group**
 - Convene for specialized work
 - Limited charge
 - Limited timeline

-  **Advisory**
-  **Direct Communication**



Standing Group



Ad Hoc Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Recurring as needed



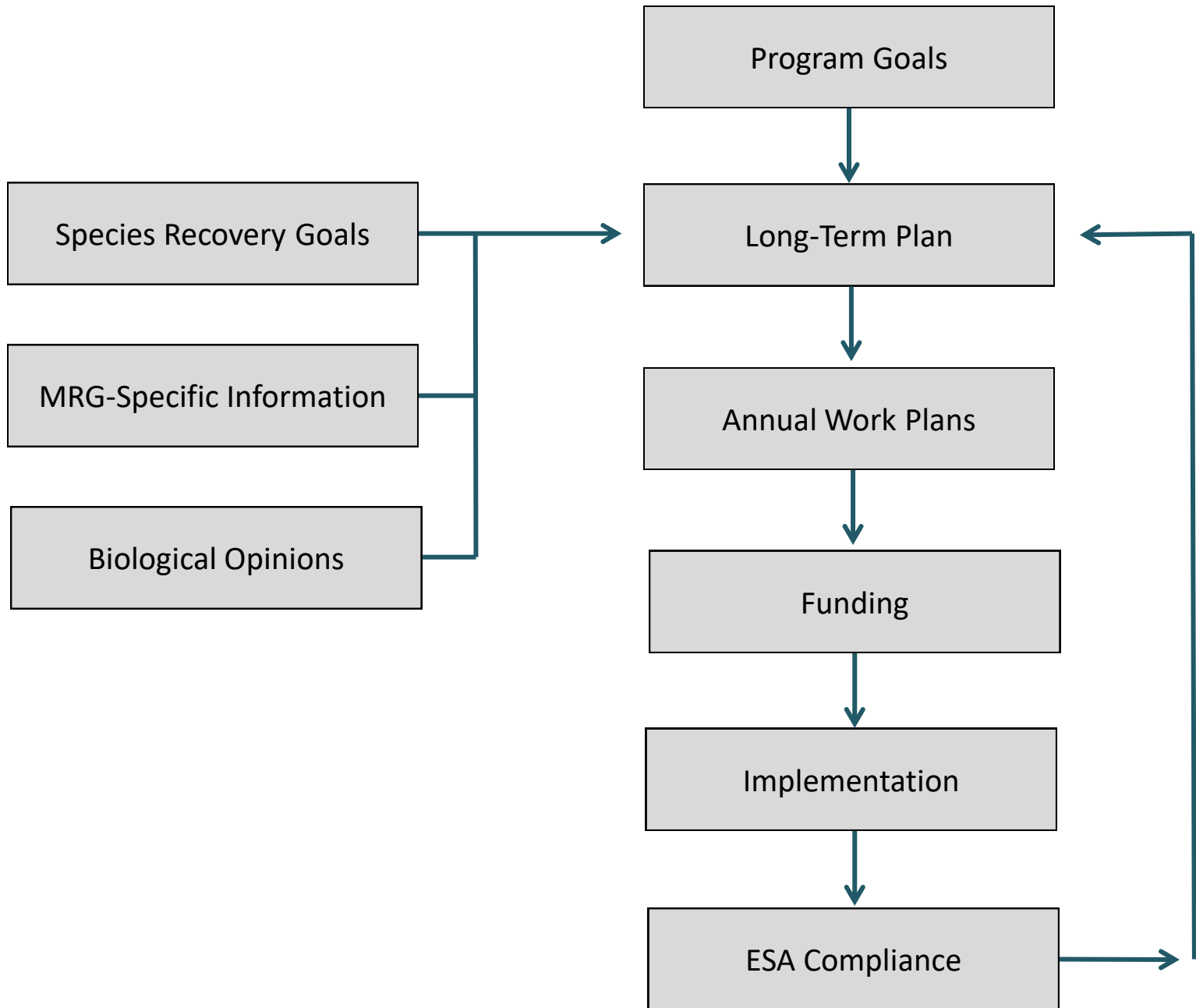
At-will Group

Convene for specialized work

- Limited charge
- Limited timeline



PMT Coordination



**Albuquerque Area Office
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

Media Contact: Mary Carlson, (505)462-3576, mcarlson@usbr.gov

For Immediate Release: April 5, 2018

Reclamation to release 2018 Annual Operating Plan for Rio Grande

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – The Bureau of Reclamation invites the public to a presentation to explain plans for water operations in 2018. Snowpack is far below average in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico and it is likely the spring runoff has already peaked. The presentation will cover the process for determining the plan for water operations. It will include a review of the 2017 water predictions, as compared to actual storage and releases. Presenters will then explain the 2018 water forecast, potential for storage and release.

Who: Bureau of Reclamation

What: Release of Annual Operating Plan for the Rio Grande

When and Where:

Middle Rio Grande AOP: Thursday April 12, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. Bureau of Reclamation, 555 Broadway NE, Suite 100, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

Rio Grande AOP: Monday April 16, 2018, at 1 p.m. Elephant Butte Irrigation District, 530 S. Melendres St. Las Cruces, NM 88005.

Why: To learn more about the process used for determining this year's operating plan, water forecast, water storage, potential for water storage and release

How: Contact Mary Carlson at (505) 462-3576 with any questions. If you are unable to attend, but would like to participate in the Albuquerque meeting via Webex or would like a copy of the presentation, please e-mail Mary at mcarlson@usbr.gov.

###

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier in the United States, and the nation's second largest producer of hydroelectric power. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at <https://www.usbr.gov> and follow us on Twitter [@USBR](https://twitter.com/USBR).

