

Fiscal Planning Committee Meeting
May 16, 2022

Meeting Materials:

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[USACE FY22-23 Projects \[follow-up\]](#)

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Fiscal Planning Committee Meeting
May 16, 2022

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Agenda



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC)

May 16, 2022

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Zoom Meeting

<https://west-inc.zoom.us/j/8983593120?pwd=bU54V3NGeG93bXVISlJFcElzcE9wZz09>

Call-In: +1-669-900-6833

Meeting ID: 898-359-3120; Passcode: 1251

Meeting Objectives:

- Review action items from the January 2022 FPC meeting.
- Receive an update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) funding for FY22 and FY23.
- Review and discuss priority projects to fund.
- Receive updates on NM Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) projects, and discuss potential opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
- Recommend opportunities on how the FPC can improve the management relevance of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (Collaborative Program).
- Discuss FPC membership, and recommend having a set membership.

| | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1:00 – 1:10 | Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Decision: Approve May 16, 2022 meeting agenda | Grace Haggerty, Non-Federal Co-Chair; Debra Hill, Federal Co-Chair |
| 1:10 – 1:20 | January 2022 Meeting Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action items review <p>Read-Ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Draft January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes✓ Decision: Approve January 27, 2022 meeting minutes | Program Support Team (PST) |
| 1:20 – 1:50 | Update on USACE FY22 and FY23 Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority USACE projects | TBD, USACE Facilitated Discussion |
| 1:50 – 2:20 | NMISC Update on Planned Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on Water Trust Board funding for Habitat Restoration project• Potential collaboration and partnerships➤ Action Item: NMISC follow-up with individual signatories as needed➤ Action Item: NMISC work with PST to update activities in the Project Bank | Grace Haggerty, NMISC |

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| 2:20 – 2:30 | Break | |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Other Collaborative Opportunities | <i>Roundtable Discussion</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action Item: Signatories follow-up as needed ➤ Action Item: Signatories work with PST to update activities in the Project Bank | |
| 3:00 – 3:40 | Opportunities to Increase Management Relevance of Collaborative Program | <i>FPC Co-Chairs Facilitated Discussion</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging to funders and legislatures ✓ Decision: Recommendations to the EC on opportunities to increase the management relevance of the Collaborative Program | |
| 3:40 – 3:50 | FPC Administration | <i>FPC Co-Chairs</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPC membership ✓ Decision: Recommendation to the EC to set membership for the FPC ➤ Action Item: PST update FPC charter, if the EC approves | |
| 3:50 – 3:55 | Announcements | |
| 3:55 – 4:00 | Meeting Summary and Action Items | <i>FPC Co-Chairs</i> |
| 4:00 | Adjourn | |

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Fiscal Planning Committee Meeting
May 16, 2022

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Minutes



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2022; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Zoom Meeting

Decisions:

- ✓ Approval of May 16, 2022 FPC meeting agenda, with the amendment to close the meeting by 3:00 PM to accommodate meeting conflicts
- ✓ Approval of January 27, 2022 FPC meeting minutes
- ✓ Approval of recommending the Executive Committee (EC) have a conversation on how to increase management relevance of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) by taking a systems approach
- ✓ Approval to recommend to the EC that membership be set for the FPC

Action Items:

| WHO | ACTION ITEM | BY WHEN |
|---|---|-----------|
| Program Support Team (PST) and Dana Price | Distribute final cost estimates and scopes of work for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) planned projects to FPC members | 5/27/2022 |
| PST | Confirm gage cost estimates with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) | 5/27/2022 |
| PST and USACE | Determine users and uses of sediment gage data | 5/27/2022 |
| PST | Schedule next Habitat Restoration (HR) Coordination meeting | 5/27/2022 |
| PST and Grace Haggerty | Coordinate on including a conversation about opportunities related to New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC)'s planned HR 2022 project at the next HR Coordination meeting | 6/1/2022 |
| PST and EC Co-Chairs | Discuss how to structure a conversation about increasing MRGESCP management relevance at the June EC | 6/3/2022 |
| Kim Eichhorst | Send list of BEMP monitoring sites to the PST | 6/3/2022 |
| PST | Inform the EC Co-Chairs of the request to have a set FPC membership | 6/9/2022 |
| PST | Draft an update to the FPC charter on set membership for the June EC meeting | 6/16/2022 |

Next Meeting: TBD

Meeting Minutes

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Debbie Lee, Program Manager with the PST, opened the meeting, led introductions, and reviewed the May 16, 2022 meeting agenda. FPC members expressed a timing conflict after 3:00 PM. The FPC approved the agenda with an amendment to close the meeting by 3:00 PM.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of May 16, 2022 FPC meeting agenda, with the amendment to close the meeting by 3:00 PM to accommodate meeting conflicts

January 2022 Meeting Summary

Debbie L. reviewed minutes and action items from the January 27, 2022 FPC meeting. Summary updates to the January action items are below:

- The PST did not receive any evaluation forms from FPC participants. PST members are working on revising the Annual Program Evaluation to be more meaningful and hopefully encourage more participation.
- The PST worked with the EC Co-Chairs on responding to USACE funding needs. Debbie L. informed the EC Co-Chairs of the FPC's agreed-upon funding priorities for the USACE. Due to the USACE receiving Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) funding, some of the action items related to USACE funding were not necessary.
- Kim Eichhorst will send list of Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) monitoring sites and data collected to the PST.

The FPC approved the January 27, 2022 meeting minutes with no amendments.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of January 27, 2022 FPC meeting minutes
- **Action Item:** Kim Eichhorst will send list of BEMP monitoring sites to the PST

Update on USACE FY22 and FY23 Funding

Grace Haggerty, FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair, opened discussion on USACE FY22 and FY23 funding. While the USACE received FY22 funding, they were not included in the President's FY23 Budget. The Non-Federal signatories sent a letter to the New Mexico Congressional Delegation and the chairs of the respective House and Senate committees in support of the USACE. An FPC member related that Senator Heinrich is supporting some marked funding for the USACE MRGESCP budget.

Dana Price, USACE, summarized the USACE priority projects and the current plans for funding. She noted the USACE is not planning on funding the whole list in FY22 in order to fund USACE staff to participate in the MRGESCP in FY23. Summary points are below:

- The USACE has funded BEMP for the last option year of their contract, and any further funding will not be guaranteed.
- The USACE has proposed funding the Program Portal at a reduced scope through December 2023. There was a suggestion that the signatories take turns funding the Program Portal, as it is important to MRGESCP operations. The base cost for maintaining the Program Portal is approximately \$70,000 a year. In response to a question about changing contractors, Debbie L. explained that it would be difficult to have another entity take over hosting and maintenance of the Program Portal, as it was built on USGS servers.
- The funding for other projects has not yet been decided. These include:

- A Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) eDNA project through ERDC
- Southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo monitoring at habitat restoration sites in the Middle Rio Grande
- Raptor nesting monitoring in early spring
- Water quality monitoring, with a much reduced scope
- Several hydrology and hydraulics reports

Anne Marken, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), informed the group that MRGCD has around \$50,000 of funding, and is willing to fund the flow gages discussed at the last FPC meeting. MRGCD will also continue funding its annual bird surveys.

- **Action Item:** The PST and Dana Price will distribute final cost estimates and scopes of work for USACE planned projects to FPC members
- **Action Item:** The PST will confirm gage cost estimates with USGS
- **Action Item:** The PST and USACE will determine users and uses of sediment gage data

NMISC Update on Planned Projects

Grace H. shared with the FPC that the NMISC is anticipating receiving official confirmation in June 2022 for its Water Trust Board proposal “Middle Rio Grande Habitat Restoration 2022.” She informed the FPC that the NMISC would like the MRGESCP’s help in setting up pre- and post-construction monitoring programs. NMISC will be in the planning stage for approximately a year, and construction would start spring 2023 at the earliest but more likely fall 2023. The NMISC is still determining whether its work will focus on several small projects or a few large projects. Currently, the focus is RGSM, but that is also not final.

The NMISC project will be a topic at the next HR Coordination meeting, where further coordination opportunities will be identified and discussed. The NMISC is planning on hiring someone in the next month to help with coordination efforts. FPC members requested the following individuals be invited to the next HR Coordination meeting: Jenny Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Anne Marken, MRGCD; and Casey Ish, MRGCD.

- **Action Item:** The PST will schedule the next HR Coordination meeting
- **Action Item:** The PST and Grace Haggerty will coordinate on including a conversation about opportunities related to NMISC’s planned HR 2022 project at the next HR Coordination meeting

Other Collaborative Opportunities

No other collaborative opportunities were shared by FPC meeting participants.

Opportunities to Increase Management Relevance of MRGESCP

Debra Hill, FPC Federal Co-Chair, opened discussion on increasing the management relevance of the MRGESCP. Debra H. spoke about increasing management relevance through long-term funding opportunities that allow for multiple partners. Grace H. added that with a third year of drought and ongoing climate change, the MRGESCP has a role in coming up with meaningful solutions. Debbie L. conveyed that in conversation with Grace H. and Debra H., the three discussed the need to move to a systems approach in order to ensure continued management relevance for the MRGESCP, which can facilitate securing funding.

The FPC discussed moving the MRGESCP's focus from species to the broader system. One participant stated that focusing on broader issues and not solely endangered species might be difficult due to agency authorities and missions, but it is still worthwhile to discuss. In response, it was stated that the MRGESCP would still focus on listed species but within the context of what is happening at the systems level (e.g., probable future conditions, how changes in the system due to climate change will impact listed species, how best practices for restoration will have to evolve, etc.). A systems approach takes into account stressors to the ecosystem, and not just individual species. The PST clarified that the MRGESCP moving to a systems approach should not require a new Memorandum of Agreement. The FPC approved recommending the EC have a conversation on increasing the management relevance of the MRGESCP using the systems approach.

Participants suggested the following potential activities to increase the management relevance of the MRGESCP:

- Link the MRGESCP's priorities and activities to the issues that are actively being funded
 - Track external efforts and how to leverage the science from those efforts to inform MRGESCP priorities and activities.
 - Develop a "Middle Rio Grande Fifty-Year Plan" to complement the state's Fifty-Year Water Plan. All available relevant efforts should be used to develop the options in a Middle Rio Grande Fifty-Year Plan
 - Leverage partnerships and scientific learning to increase support and funding
- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of recommending the EC have a conversation on how to increase management relevance of the MRGESCP by taking a systems approach
- **Action Item:** The PST and EC Co-Chairs will discuss how to structure a conversation about increasing MRGESCP management relevance at the June EC

FPC Administration

Debbie L. noted that the FPC was originally designed to not have a set membership, so that EC members could send the appropriate staff members to each meeting based on the agenda topics. Unfortunately, this has led to additional difficulties with scheduling meetings and getting wide engagement. To resolve these issues, Debbie L. proposed recommending to the EC at the June EC meeting that membership be set for the FPC. The FPC approved this recommendation.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval to recommend to the EC that membership be set for the FPC
- **Action Item:** The PST will inform the EC Co-Chairs of the request to have a set FPC membership
- **Action Item:** The PST will draft an update to the FPC charter on set membership for the June EC meeting

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Meeting Participants

| Co-Chair | Organization |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Debra Hill, Federal Co-Chair | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Grace Haggerty, Non-Federal Co-Chair | New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission |

| Participant | Organization |
|--------------------|---|
| Anne Marken | Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District |
| Brittney Erdmann | Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District |
| Dana Price | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| Debbie Lee | Program Support Team |
| Kevin Shelley | Program Support Team |
| Kim Eichhorst | Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program |
| Luana Sencio | Program Support Team |
| Lynette Giesen | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation |
| Mark Kelly | Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority |
| Matt Wunder | New Mexico Department of Game and Fish |

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Fiscal Planning Committee Meeting
May 16, 2022

See the following meeting material on the page below:

USACE FY22-23 Projects [follow-up]

From: Dana Price, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
To: Fiscal Planning Committee
Date: Monday, May 16, 2022
Subject: Proposed USACE Projects for FY22 and FY23

For gages we had proposed:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Gages at San Marcial, San Acacia, Rio Puerco | \$ 174,940 |
| RGNC Sediment Gage | \$ 8,700 |
| Alameda Gage Water Temperature Probe | \$ 3,125 |

For other proposed but unfunded activities, there is one H&H study we aren't funding that was going to be either done by USACE Hydrologic Engineering Center (HEC) or contracted: 2022 MRG Flow and Sediment Analysis ~89,000.¹

The RGSM Portable Bubble Barrier field study (follow-up to the lab study below) was proposed at \$125,000. It's related to Bernalillo to Belen Levees (B to B) and may be funded under construction of that project.

FY22 fully funded activities:

- **BEMP** funded at \$453,113 for one year. It's the last option year of their current contract. We will not be able to continue funding them in FY23.
- **eDNA** marker development for RGSM ~84,000 (one year only)
- **Portable bubble barrier** development for RGSM ~46,000 - lab study (Minimize adverse effects to RGSM from levee & other projects construction)

FY22 reduced scope/ partially funded activities:

- **USGS Program Portal** was proposed at \$208,000 for one year; we're doing ~\$300,000 for 1.5 year (through Dec. 2023)
- **Water Quality Monitoring** was proposed at \$210,000 for six sites; we reduced to \$100,000 for three sites.
- **Avian monitoring** ~48,000 for one year. This formerly included three tasks (WIFL and YBCU surveys at MRG Restoration sites; raptor nesting surveys along 26 river miles; songbird surveys along 85 transects). We omitted the songbirds and are planning to fund nesting raptor surveys (~\$7,000) only for a limited reach (4 miles) to cover Bernalillo to Belen levees. B to B may pick up monitoring during construction.

Aside from these activities, our funds are going towards labor so we can continue participating through FY23. H&H will be writing up a series of four unfinished reports, and the Biologists hope to continue attending meetings, presentations etc.

¹ This corresponds to "Flow frequency analysis for Albuquerque south to Belen" in the Long-Term Plan.

Status of USACE FY22-23 Projects:

| | Title | Status |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Assessing temporal and spatial continuous water quality trends in the Angostura, Isleta, and San Acacia reaches of the Middle Rio Grande | Funded at a reduced scope |
| 2 | Flow frequency analysis for Albuquerque south to Belen | Not funded |
| 3 | Historical evaluation of alluvial channel crossings | H&H report to be completed FY22-23 |
| 4 | Qualitative assessment of the MRG from the perspective of geomorphology, hydraulics, and hydrology | H&H report to be completed FY22-23 |
| 5 | Sediment analysis for Middle Rio Grande | H&H report to be completed FY22-23 |
| 6 | eDNA marker development for Rio Grande Silvery Minnow | Fully funded FY22 |
| 7 | Portable bubble barrier development and testing | Fully funded FY22 |
| 8 | Quantify Middle Rio Grande channel habitat diversity analysis | H&H report to be completed FY22-23 |
| 9 | Minimize the adverse effects to Rio Grande Silvery Minnow from levee project construction and in-situ monitoring | Field testing of the bubble barrier – not being funded; may be funded via B to B |
| 10 | MRG restoration site WIFL and YBCU annual surveys | Will be contracted |
| 11 | Raptor nest monitoring | Will be contracted |
| 12 | BEMP Option Year | Fully funded FY22; last option year of current contract |