**Executive Committee (EC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**December 22, 2022; 9:00 AM­­­­­­–12:00 PM**

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

# Decisions:

# Approval of the December 22, 2022 EC meeting agenda with addendums

# Approval of the September 8, 2022 EC meeting minutes with corrected typo

# Approval of the revised Public Outreach and Messaging on Drying Administrative (Admin) Ad Hoc Group charge

# Approval of the revised Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) Biennial Schedule

# Approval of development of the proposed climate scenario planning exercise

# Approval of the 2023 Work Plan

# Approval of the following desired subject matter areas of expertise for new Science and Adaptive Management Committee (SAMC) members to be included in the SAMC application cover letter: aquatic ecology, engineering, economics, environmental planning, and climate change

**Announcements:**

* Grace Haggerty, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMSIC), is the winner of the 2022 Rick Billings Award.
* Katrina Grantz, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has taken on new duties and will be stepping down as the Federal Co-Chair following the EC meeting. Her replacement as the Federal Co-Chair is to be determined.
* The 2023 Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting will be in New Mexico. More details will be shared once they are known.
* New Mexico’s 50 Year Water Plan should be released by the end of December 2022.
* The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) MRGESCP budget was included in the Omnibus Bill at a level consistent with past budgets.
* The WEST Albuquerque office will be closed the week of December 26th.

# Action Items:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **WHO** | **ACTION ITEM** | **BY WHEN** |
| Program Support Team (PST) | Send out a link for the Collaboratory evaluation | 12/23/2022 |
| EC representatives | Provide trainee names for Science and Adaptive Management Information System (SAMIS) training if they have not done so | December 2022 |
| EC representatives | Confirm a point-of-contact for the Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) if they have not done so | 1/6/2023 |
| PST | Revise the climate scenario planning exercise proposal to clarify that the exercise will use existing information so as not to repeat efforts | 1/6/2023 |
| EC representatives | Send suggestions for participants in the climate scenario planning exercise | 1/6/2023 |
| EC representatives | Submit 2022 Signatory activities via the SAMIS (if they’ve received SAMIS training) or the Signatory Activity Input Google Form | 1/13/2023 |
| EC representatives | Submit signatory highlights (short summaries of your Signatory’s work in 2022) to be included as quotes in the 2022 Annual Report | 1/13/2023 |
| PST | Prepare a webinar on the Collaboratory outcomes | February 2023 |
| PST | Schedule the Habitat Restoration (HR) Coordination Group field trip to Pueblo of Sandia | January-February 2023 |
| MRGESCP members | Contact the PST to be included on the doodle for scheduling the field trip to the Pueblo of Sandia | January 2023 |
| PST | Schedule EC meetings for 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM MT on the fourth Thursday of the month | January 2023 |
| PST | Coordinate the application process for SAMC membership, including drafting a call for applications and collecting applications | 2/17/2023 |
| EC Small Group (Jim Wilber, Mark Kelly, Anne Marken, Deb Hill, and Grace Haggerty) | Convene to review SAMC applicants and provide recommendations to the EC | 3/17/2023 |
| EC representatives | Fill out the Survey of Manager Confidence in Science Support | 3/9/2023 |
| EC representatives | Fill out survey for the Program Evaluation once available | March 2023 |

**Next Meeting:** March 30, 2023; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Meeting Minutes**

# Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

The Non-Federal Co-Chair, Mark Kelly, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) and Federal Co-Chair, Katrina Grantz, Reclamation, opened the meeting, led introductions, and reviewed the December 22, 2022 meeting agenda. The PST added a decision point to approve the revised Public Outreach and Messaging on Drying Admin Ad Hoc Charge. One EC member requested a litigation update be added to the agenda. The EC approved the December 22, 2022 agenda with the addition of a decision point on the revised charge and a litigation update.

Ashleigh Morris, Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, gave a litigation update.

* **Decision**: Approval of the December 22, 2022 EC meeting agenda with addendums

# September 2022 Meeting Summary

Debbie Lee, the Program Manager, PST, reviewed the September 8, 2022 meeting minutes and action items (see September 8, 2022 Draft EC Minutes). Summary updates for action items are below:

* There were two responses to the Survey of Managers’ Perception of Science Support. EC members were asked to continue filling out the survey.
* Membership for the Strategic Plan for Potential Drying in the Angostura Reach Science & Technical (S&T) Ad Hoc Group was finalized and the group began meeting.
* A Portal Stakeholder meeting was held on September 22, 2023.
* The PST began holding SAMIS training sessions and posted the SAMIS User Guide to the Program Portal (<https://webapps.usgs.gov/MRGESCP/documents/samis-user-guide-1-1-1>) and SAMIS applications.
* The 2022 Rick Billings Award winner was unanimously nominated and no administrative ad hoc group was needed to select a winner.
* Membership for the Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group is still being finalized. The first meeting will be convened in 2023.
* Ondrea Hummel presented a Collaborative Seminar on December 14, 2023. The seminar is available at <https://webapps.usgs.gov/MRGESCP/documents/collaborative-seminar-hummel-bosque-assessment-and-update-prioritization>. The PST will continue setting up potential seminars.

A small typo was identified in the summer 2022 hydrology debrief section of the minutes. The EC approved the September 8, 2022 meeting minutes with the corrected typo.

* **Decision**: Approval of the September 8, 2022 EC meeting minutes with corrected typo

# Collaboratory Update and Feedback

Debbie L. and Catherine Murphy, the Science Coordinator, PST, opened discussion on the Collaboratory held on December 6-7, 2022 at the University of New Mexico (UNM) Continuing Education Conference Center. There was high attendance and engagement over the two-day event. The Collaboratory will occur on alternating years with the Science Symposium, and is intended to align the MRGESCP’s science with management needs.

EC members who attended the Collaboratory provided feedback about the event. Remarks were generally positive, and EC attendees noted they were very pleased with the event. The following individual comments were made:

* The Collaboratory was a good transition point for the MRGESCP, explicitly marking the shift from development of an adaptive management process to implementation.
* It may be more convenient to have the Collaboratory earlier in the calendar year.
* The last breakout session was the most challenging for participants, but the agenda led into it very well.
* The Collaboratory allowed for a safe space for hard conversations to be held.
* There were a lot of new participants, including young professionals and students. The MRGESCP should make sure to continue bringing in younger people across the different signatories.
* It was good to be reminded of all the MRGESCP has accomplished over the last few years.
* The continued reminders to drop assumptions and open your mind were helpful, and led to some really good conversations.

Catherine M. noted that one of the main themes that arose from the Collaboratory was one of internal and external communication and messaging. She made the case for improving communication both externally (MRGESCP to external management/research communities), and internally (among signatories and MRGESCP participants) in order to more effectively apply science to adaptive management. She stated that each of the signatories already adaptively manages its respective resources, and that the Collaboratory provides a forum for doing so collaboratively. She pointed out that collaboration is the hardest part of adaptive management, and that, with practice, it will become more routine.

An initial write-up on the Collaboratory will be in the December 2022 newsletter. The EC also requested a webinar to explain the Collaboratory outcomes and next steps. Output from the Collaboratory will inform multi-year planning in the Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management (Long-Term Plan). There will be an update on the Long-Term Plan at the March 2023 EC meeting.

* **Action Item**: PST will prepare a webinar on the Collaboratory outcomes
* **Action Item**: PST will send out a link for the Collaboratory evaluation

# Program Support Team Update

Debbie L. and Catherine M. presented updates on MRGESCP activities. Summary updates are below:

* SAMIS training sessions:
	+ Participants from Reclamation, USACE, NMISC, ABCWUA, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), Pueblo of Sandia, and Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program have attended training sessions. The PST is scheduling sessions for the remaining signatories.
	+ Trainees are able to enter 2022 project information into the SAMIS to be included in the 2022 Annual Report.
* Program Portal:
	+ Florence Thompson, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), gave a presentation on the Program Portal at the 2022 Collaboratory.
	+ There was good input at the fall Portal Stakeholder meetings. The USGS Portal development team will continue to work with the PST and any participants from the MRGESCP to implement requested upgrades.
		- The search function is much faster, which was a commonly requested fix.
		- At the second Portal Stakeholder meeting, the group discussed the need for better visualization of data relationships on the Portal. The USGS team presented some options for updates. There will be a workshop in 2023 to discuss data visualization improvements further. Participants will also determine additional data collection needs.
		- The Portal will include a Resources page for external links that are useful for the MRGESCP.
* Upcoming administrative deadlines:
	+ The PST is developing the 2022 Annual Report. A Signatory Highlight Form was sent out to collect short snapshots on what each signatory has done in 2022.
	+ The Signatory Contributions and Cost Share Reports will be developed from the 2022 projects entered in the SAMIS. Signatories are asked to enter their 2022 projects into the SAMIS directly or through the 2022 Signatory Activity Input Form.
	+ The PST will send out the Annual Program Evaluation in early 2023. Responses will help make the MRGESCP more effective and efficient.
* HR Coordination Group meetings:
	+ The group decided to host field trips every other meeting.
	+ The first field trip will be co-hosted by Pueblo of Sandia and City of Albuquerque (CoA), Open Space Division. The group will meet at the Pueblo of Sandia Rail Runner Station parking lot, then head to the Romero Fire burn area. The group will then visit an old bank lowering project site and the AMAFCA Channel/North Diversion Channel, before visiting the Alameda Open Space. All are invited to take part in the field trip. The PST will schedule it in January or February 2023.
* Management of Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Workshop:
	+ Outcomes from the workshop were taken to the SAMC to determine next steps. Two examples of next steps are below:
		- Define technical terms and specify relationships addressed at the workshop to improve communication during future discussions.
		- A modeling exercise and reports were suggested at the workshop. The SAMC recommends developing a conceptual model of island/bars first.
* Revised charge for the Public Outreach and Messaging on Drying Admin Ad Hoc Group (see charge):
	+ The revised charge includes an additional task to develop a messaging and public outreach strategies for the recommendations provided by the Strategic Plan for Potential Drying in the Angostura Reach S&T Ad Hoc Group.
	+ An EC representative suggested analyzing the effectiveness of the 2022 response to drying in the Angostura Reach.
	+ One EC representative believes the drying mailer should have gone out sooner, but another spoke about the need to avoid spreading alarm unnecessarily. If the mailer is to be provided sooner in the future, the message could change to assure the public of the plan in the case of drying.
	+ One EC representative suggested holding a briefing for reporters a month or so before a potential drying event to make sure they understand the language and context.
	+ The EC approved the revised Public Outreach and Messaging on Drying Administrative Ad Hoc Group charge.
* Revised Biennial Schedule (see schedule):
* The revision reorders the committee meetings so the SAMC meeting is held the month before the EC meeting and the FPC meeting is held the month after.
* An EC representative requested the Biennial Schedule note when A or B years occur.
* An EC representative noted there was a lot of work to be done before March. There was a suggestion to potentially move approval of the revised Long-Term Plan to June if needed.
	+ The Long-Term Plan update in March will include multi-year planning informed by the Collaboratory outcomes. The SAMC is working on the Project Evaluation Criteria, which may be applied to the projects in the Long-Term Plan. If signatories have any other needs that should be met by the Long-Term Plan, they should share those with the PST.
	+ The Biennial Schedule is meant to be a living document and will be adjusted if needed.
* The EC approved the revised Biennial Schedule.
* **Decision**: Approval of the revised Public Outreach and Messaging on Drying Admin Ad Hoc Group charge
* **Decision**: Approval of the revised MRGESCP Biennial Schedule
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will provide trainee names for SAMIS training if they have not done so
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will submit 2022 Signatory activities via the SAMIS (if they’ve received SAMIS training) or the Signatory Activity Input Google Form
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will submit signatory highlights (short summaries of your Signatory’s work in 2022) to be included as quotes in the 2022 Annual Report
* **Action Item**: PST will schedule the HR Coordination Group field trip to Pueblo of Sandia
* **Action Item**: MRGESCP members will contact the PST to be included on the doodle for scheduling the field trip to the Pueblo of Sandia
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will fill out the Survey of Manager Confidence in Science Support
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will fill out survey for the Program Evaluation once available

# SAMC Summary of 2022 Activities and Accomplishments

Catherine M. summarized SAMC activities and accomplishments for 2022. Summary items are below:

* The SAMC helped coordinate the Management of Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars Workshop and Collaboratory.
* The SAMC helped coordinate seven Collaborative Seminars. Speakers were also asked to provide abstracts to help facilitate the sharing of scientific information.
* The SAMC developed the Project Evaluation Criteria for the Long-Term Plan. The criteria will be tested during a pilot run before being applied to all projects in the Long-Term Plan. The three aspects evaluated by the criteria are clarity and completeness, relevance and value to mission, and vision and utility for adaptive management.
* The SAMC helped review the work of admin ad hoc groups and hybrid ad hoc groups, with two examples being the Peer Review Admin Ad Hoc Group and Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group.
* The SAMC coordinated around these five S&T Ad Hoc Groups: the Rio Grande Silvery minnow (RGSM) CEM/Genetics Ad Hoc Group, RGSM Population Modeling Ad Hoc Group, RGSM Hypotheses Development Ad Hoc Group, Strategic Plan for Potential Drying Ad Hoc Group, and MRG HR Monitoring Guidance Ad Hoc Group.
* Key takeaways for 2023:
	+ In 2023, the SAMC will focus on providing science and adaptive management recommendations to the EC.
	+ There is a lot of good science happening and communication needs to be improved around it. In 2023, the SAMC will focus on connecting science to adaptive management.
	+ Many studies addressing the Independent Science Panel recommendations are concluding. Findings need to be incorporated into the SAMIS.
	+ Synthesis of the recently developed RGSM models is needed to increase their application.
* Climate scenario planning exercise (see Climate Scenario Planning Exercise Proposal):
	+ Changes to the hydrograph underscore the need to plan for more effectively allocating resources. To address this, the MRGESCP will develop a climate scenario planning exercise for 2023 (see Climate Scenario Planning Exercise Proposal). The MRGESCP will plan for likely future scenarios. A small group will work with the PST and the SAMC to help develop the scenarios and plan the exercise.
	+ An EC representative was concerned about whether the MRGESCP would use existing scenarios or develop its own. The planning group will rely on existing work, so as not to repeat work. The proposal was revised to clarify this.
	+ An EC representative suggested use of the Upper Rio Grande Water Operations Model (URGWOM) model or a rules-based water management model as the natural hydrograph is no longer accurate.
	+ Potential participants for the climate scenario planning exercise include Dave Moeser and collaborators, USGS; Dagmar Llewellyn, Reclamation; and Ariane Pinson, USACE. Reclamation is developing a basin study, which may connect to this exercise.
	+ An EC representative was concerned about whether incorporating the hydrograph, informed by anthropogenic factors, will predispose the results of the exercise. It was acknowledged that management flexibility needs to be included in the exercise. The URGWOM model reflects operational rule sets for the agencies, which incorporates flexibility and aids in decision-making.
	+ One EC representative advises that we not just focus on hydrology as climate change may bring other conditions. It may be useful to have a more open discussion on the effects of climate change before the exercise (e.g., changes in vegetation).
	+ An EC representative suggested use of the term aridification, which avoids the stigma around climate change. Another representative stated that aridification could have different meanings. More discussion is needed on this topic.
	+ The EC approved the proposal for the climate scenario planning exercise with revisions to clarify the use of existing information so as not to repeat efforts.
* **Decision**: Approval of development of the proposed climate scenario planning exercise
* **Action Item**: PST will revise the climate scenario planning exercise proposal to clarify that the exercise will use existing information so as not to repeat efforts
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will send suggestions for participants in the climate scenario planning exercise

# 2022 MRGESCP Work Plan Accomplishments

Debbie L. reviewed the accomplishments from the 2022 Work Plan (see 2022 MRGESCP Work Plan Accomplishments). See the read-ahead for the full list of accomplishments and updates. Noteworthy accomplishments are summarized below:

* Approved an updated Long-Term Plan
* Signed and executed a new Memorandum of Agreement
* Adopted a peer review process
* Developed strategies from the Science Objectives
* Developed an RGSM integrated population model
* Developed an informative mailer to include in September 2022 ABCWUA water bills about drying in the Rio Grande
* Hosted seven Collaborative seminars
* Hosted a Workshop on the Management of Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars
* Hosted the first biennial Collaboratory

# 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan

Debbie L. reviewed the proposed 2023 Work Plan (see 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan). The proposed activities are divided into the following categories:

* General Collaborative Program Administration
* Communication and Information Sharing
* Science Decision Support Planning and Tools Development
* Implementing Adaptive Management Activities
* Coordination of Signatory Activities

Debbie L. reminded EC members that the work plan is a living document, and will be evaluated and adjusted as needed at each EC meeting to reflect changing priorities and reassessments on the level of effort for each task. The EC approved the 2023 Work Plan.

* **Decision**: Approval of the 2023 Work Plan

# 2023 SAMC Membership

Catherine M discussed the SAMC memo on 2023 SAMC membership (see SAMC Memo to EC – 2023 SAMC Membership). Summary items are below:

* SAMC members serve two-year terms but the first group of members were invited to stay on an additional year if they chose to, in order to stagger the need to fill SAMC positions. It is also helpful to have older members share institution knowledge with new members.
* The four standing areas of expertise on the SAMC are aquatic ecology, terrestrial ecology, ecosystem function, and hydrology. The four remaining areas of expertise are determined by the EC with recommendations from the SAMC.
* The SAMC members that have stepped or will step down from the group are Alan Hatch (EC *ex officio* member), Thomas Archdeacon (aquatic ecology expert), and Mo Hobbs (aquatic ecology expert).
* S. Dave Moore (terrestrial ecology expert), Megan Friggens (climate science expert), and Ara Winter (statistics/modeling expert) are staying on for another year.
* Meghan Conway (ecosystem function expert), Ryan Gronewold (hydrology expert), and Ari Posner (geomorphology expert) are willing to stay on one additional year at the discretion of the EC. The EC has the flexibility to search for members with different areas of expertise, if desired.
* The SAMC recommends keeping two aquatic ecology expert positions on the SAMC. Other areas of expertise recommended by the SAMC are restoration ecology, climate science, and environmental planning.
	+ SAMC member, Ari P., offered that the SAMC often discusses what can or cannot be done, and believes expertise in the regulatory environment would be helpful.
* Generally, the science discussed during the Collaboratory indicate the need for experts on RGSM, climate change, HR, hydrology, and geomorphology.

EC representatives discussed the areas of expertise needed on the SAMC. Summary comments are below:

* The EC did not want to cut any existing positions.
* One EC representative was in support of the MRGESCP focusing on the ecosystem instead of the RGSM or endangered species.
* There was a suggestion to seek a natural resource economist.
* NMISC, USACE, and UNM may have suggestions for potential members with environmental planning or economics expertise.
* One EC representative suggested including an engineer, as they can explain how plans will work in actuality.
	+ Reclamation will have the capacity to bring more outside folks into ad hoc groups. There is the possibility of bringing in an engineer to an ad hoc group instead of the SAMC.
* Ryan G. is willing to serve as the EC *ex officio* member in addition to his role as hydrology expert to free up one position.
* The following EC representatives volunteered to review SAMC applications: Jim Wilber, Reclamation; Debra Hill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Mark Kelly, ABCWUA; Grace Haggerty, NMISC; and Anne Marken, MRGCD.

The EC approved seeking SAMC members with the following subject matter areas of expertise: aquatic ecology, engineering, economics, environmental planning, and climate change. This list will be included in the SAMC application cover letter. Final decisions on SAMC members will be determined at the March 2023 EC meeting.

* **Decision**: Approval of the following desired subject matter areas of expertise for new SAMC members to be included in the SAMC application cover letter: aquatic ecology, engineering, economics, environmental planning, and climate change
* **Action Item**: PST will coordinate the application process for SAMC membership, including drafting a call for applications and collecting applications
* **Action Item**: EC small group (Jim Wilber, Mark Kelly, Anne Marken, Deb Hill, and Grace Haggerty) convene to review SAMC applicants and provide recommendations to the EC

# Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) Update

Grace H. provided the FPC update. Summary updates are below:

* The group met in November and welcomed many new participants (see updated FPC Roster)
* The next meeting is in January 2023.
* A new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair is needed to replace Grace H. as her term ended. The position is well supported by the PST.
	+ Anne M. is considering volunteering to be the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair.
* The FPC is working on compiling a matrix of funding opportunities to support funding efforts for collaborative projects and individual signatories.
* Funding for the Program Portal is currently provided by USACE through December 2023. Stable funding is needed past this date. The FPC is developing a list of Program Portal funding options for the EC.
* **Action Item**: EC representatives will confirm a point-of-contact for the FPC if they have not done so

# 2022 Hydrology Review

Carolyn Donnelly, Reclamation, provided an update on 2022 hydrology (see Hydrology Update Presentation). There were high winds and temperatures in April, which reduced the expected runoff. In addition to normal drying in the Isleta and San Acacia reaches, there was historic drying in the Angostura Reach. Maximum total extent of drying occurred in July at just under 60 river miles. Supplemental water (6,337 acre-feet [ac-ft]) was released from May 25 to September 21. Monsoon rains were crucial in 2022. A late-May modified water operations “jiggle” did not lead to increased egg spawning.

The following observations were made in regards to 2022 hydrology:

* High temperature and winds can rapidly take snowpack.
* Managers must be ready with alternative options, such as the jiggle.
* A successful jiggle may require low flows well before it occurs (ex. 200 cubic feet per second [cfs]), which can be drastically increased to 400 cfs.
* Close coordination between agencies is vital for managing drying and other water operations.

Heading into 2023, snowpack is low but it is too early to make predictions about 2023 runoff. It is possible we briefly exit Article VII of the Rio Grande Compact. Reclamation has approximately 5,000 ac-ft of supplemental water from 2022, and 5,000-12,000 ac-ft from 2023 leases. Agencies will focus on RGSM spawning efforts. Water managers will need to continue close coordination in 2023.

EC representatives discussed the 2022 hydrology update. Summary points are below:

* Agencies closely coordinated around historic drying in the Angostura Reach and learned lessons that will help prepare for future drying events.
* El Vado Reservoir is currently under construction, which limits water storage and flexibility. There have been grouting issues that have delayed completion of construction until 2024.
* Storage limitations contributed to drying in 2022. MRGCD releasing San Juan Chama water likely reduced the extent and duration of drying.
* The San Acacia gage got up to almost 6,000 cfs in 2022. There were big flows during the monsoon season.
* According to NMISC, delivery efficiency to Elephant Butte Reservoir was 73% in 2022. New Mexico will end 2022 with a debit of approximately 100,000 ac-ft, which restricts storage even if we are out of Article VII. New Mexico reduced the debit with the help of monsoon rains.

# 2022 Species Update

Debra H. shared species updates for the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (NMMJM), Pecos sunflower (PESU), southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL), and yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU). Joel Lusk, Reclamation, shared a species update for the RGSM. Summary updates are below:

* PESU:
	+ Contact Sarah Yates, PESU lead at USFWS, (sarah\_d\_yates@fws.gov) with any questions.
	+ In 2023, there will be a five-year review for the PESU. In west central New Mexico, the core population is located at La Joya. One additional stand was recently found in the Bernardo Waterfowl Area.
	+ There is a better chance of downlisting or delisting the PESU than other listed species.
	+ EC representatives are asked to provide any relevant information for the five-year review to USFWS.
* NMMJM:
	+ Contact Mark Brennan, NMMJM lead at USFWS, (mark\_brennan@fws.gov) with any questions.
	+ The final NMMJM recovery plan is due in January 2023.
	+ Instead of eight geographical units, there will be six in the final plan; this change is based on new genomic information.
	+ In 2022, track plate surveys were conducted for the SunZia power line, and there were no detections of NMMJM. Another year of surveys will occur in 2023.
	+ A population of NMMJM was discovered at the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge.
* SWFL:
	+ Contact Jenny Davis, SWFL lead at USFWS, (jennifer\_l\_davis@fws.gov) with any questions.
	+ During 2022 surveys, 504 resident SWFLs were documented in the Middle Rio Grande (MRG). Overall, territory numbers in the MRG increased in 2022 compared to all previous years.
	+ In 2022, 679 nests were located and nest fates were determined for 541 nests with 47% of those nests fledging young.
	+ There was no observed range-wide population increase for the species.
	+ The next five-year review for the SWFL will occur in the next couple of years.
* YBCU:
	+ Contact Jenny Davis, YBCU lead at USFWS, (jennifer\_l\_davis@fws.gov) with any questions.
	+ During 2022 surveys, 480 YBCU detections were recorded during the breeding season and 122 territories were delineated. Overall, apparent detections and territory numbers in the MRG increased in 2022 compared to all previous years.
	+ There was no observed range-wide population increase for the species.
	+ USFWS will continue to work on the Species Status Assessment (SSA) to inform the future YBCU recovery plan.
* RGSM:
	+ In 2023, USFWS will be conducting a five-year review for the RGSM. EC representatives are asked to provide any relevant information to inform the review to USFWS.
	+ Reclamation’s RGSM population monitoring program recorded an October catch-per-unit-effort density of 0.15 fish per 100 m2, which is low compared to the threshold provided in the 2016 Biological Opinion. As a caveat, this value will change when zero catches are added into the model.
	+ As of December 5, 2022, 126,000 RGSM were released at four locations along the MRG. This is 142,000 RGSM short of reaching the goal of one fish per 100 m2. 50,000 more RGSMs may be released in the MRG this season.

# 2022 Rick Billings Award

Mark Kelly presented the winner of the 2022 Rick Billings Award. Rick Billings was the former EC Non-Federal Co-Chair, an EC member, and a long-time supporter of the MRGESCP. In his memory, Reclamation’s Albuquerque Area Office sponsors an annual award recognizing an individual's contributions to the success of the MRGESCP. The winner of the 2022 Rick Billings Award, who was unanimously nominated by multiple MRGESCP members, is Grace Haggerty, NMISC. Nominators called Grace H. a guiding force in the MRGESCP, and cited her high engagement in the MRGESCP and contracted work that benefits the MRGESCP as reasons for her nomination.

* **Announcement**: Grace Haggerty, NMISC, was the winner of the 2022 Rick Billings Award.

# Public Comment and Announcements

* Wally Murphy, member of the public, commented that conservation storage at Cochiti is important for RGSM recovery.
* Bill Grantham, New Mexico Office of the Attorney General (NMOAG), spoke about the transition at the NMOAG given the new attorney general coming in January 2023. Bill G. requests that the EC share any way the NMOAG can contribute to the MRGESCP moving forward. He believes the FPC may be a good place to get involved.
	+ EC representatives voiced that they wanted to continue seeing participation from the NMOAG.
* Kyle Harwood, Buckman Direct Diversion, asked that MRGESCP emails indicate whether EC action is needed in the subject line.
* **Announcement**: Katrina Grantz, Reclamation has taken on new duties and will be stepping down as the Federal Co-Chair following the EC meeting. Her replacement as the Federal Co-Chair is to be determined.
* **Announcement**: The Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting in 2023 will be in New Mexico. More details will be shared once they are known.
* **Announcement**: New Mexico’s 50 Year Water Plan should be released by the end of December 2022.
* **Announcement**: The USACE MRGESCP budget was included in the Omnibus Bill at a level consistent with past budgets.
* **Announcement**: The WEST Albuquerque office will be closed the week of December 26th.

# Closing Items

* There has been interest in scheduling a set date and time for EC meetings to cut down on the need for scheduling emails. The EC meets every March, June, September, and December. The EC decided to meet at 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM MT on the fourth Thursday of the month.
* **Action Item**: PST will schedule EC meetings for 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM MT on the fourth Thursday of the month

**Meeting Participants**

**EC Representative Organization**

Katrina Grantz, Federal Co-Chair U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Mark Kelly, Non-Federal Co-Chair Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority

Alan Hatch Pueblo of Santa Ana

Anne Marken Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Bill Grantham New Mexico Office of the Attorney General

Blane Sanchez Pueblo of Isleta

Debra Hill U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Grace Haggerty New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Jennifer Faler U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Kelsey Bicknell Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility

Kim Eichhorst Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program

Kyle Faig City of Albuquerque, Open Space Division

Kyle Harwood Buckman Direct Diversion

Matthew Wunder New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

Michael Scialdone Pueblo of Sandia

Quantina Martine Audubon Southwest

Ryan Gronewold U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Thomas Turner University of New Mexico

**Participant Organization**

Andy Dean U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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