**Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**January 24, 2023; 9:30 AM­­­­ ­­– 11:00 AM**

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

**Decisions:**

* Approval of January 24, 2023 FPC meeting agenda
* Approval of November 1, 2022 FPC meeting minutes
* Approval of Anne Marken, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), as the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair

Announcements:

* The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) received $2 million in funding for the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) in its budget. Funds will be available in the next couple months.
* Grace Haggerty, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), reached the end of her term as FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair. Anne M. was elected as the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair.
* The 2023 Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting will be in New Mexico, most likely Santa Fe, in late April. More information will be available closer to the meeting date.

**Action Items:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **WHO** | **ACTION ITEM** | **BY WHEN** |
| Program Support Team (PST) | Incorporate FPC activities into the Biennial Schedule | 1/26/2023 |
| PST | Update the Funding Opportunities Calendar and Strategic Funding Graphic based on FPC discussion | 1/26/2023 |
| FPC | Review the Funding Opportunities Calendar, Strategic Funding Graphic, and updated Biennial Schedule | 2/23/2023 |
| PST | Explore option for putting the Funding Matrix and Funding Strategies Graphic on the Portal | 2/23/2023 |
| FPC | Volunteer to work with the PST to develop templates and standard language to use for proposals | 2/3/2023 |
| PST & FPC volunteers | Develop template letters of support with language regarding habitat restoration, adaptive management, the value of long-term monitoring, species descriptions, key uncertainties, and the value of the MRGESCP | One week prior to the April FPC meeting |
| PST | Confirm with Ryan Gronewold how long the USACE will fund the Program Portal, and whether USACE can accept complete pass-through funds to U.S. Geological Survey | One week prior to the March EC meeting |
| FPC | Request the EC task an Administrative Ad Hoc Group with discussing funding options for the Program Portal | March EC meeting |
| PST | Announce Anne Marken as the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair at the March Executive Committee (EC) meeting | March EC meeting |
| PST | Develop a checklist for environmental compliance considerations for project planning and implementation | April FPC meeting |
| Grace Haggerty | Provide information on the Rio Grande Compact commission meeting when available | Prior to the Rio Grande Compact commission meeting |

**Next Meeting:** April 2023

**Meeting Minutes**

# Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Debbie Lee, Program Support Team (PST), opened the meeting, led introductions, and reviewed the January 24, 2023 meeting agenda. The FPC approved the agenda with no amendments.

* **Decision**: Approval of January 24, 2023 FPC meeting agenda

# November 2022 Meeting Summary

Debbie L. reviewed minutes and action items from the November 1, 2022 FPC meeting. All action items were completed. The FPC approved the November 1, 2022 meeting minutes with no amendments.

* **Decision**: Approval of November 1, 2022 FPC meeting minutes

# Update on the Funding Opportunities Tool

Michelle Tuineau, PST, discussed the updated funding opportunities tools (see Funding Opportunities Calendar and Funding Strategies Graphic). The previous funding matrix was expansive, including many columns of information. The general feedback received was to reduce the number of columns, include links to additional information, and add a calendar element. The Funding Opportunities Calendar reflects the changes suggested by the FPC. In addition, the calendar categorizes the funding opportunities by their funding emphasis (e.g., habitat/ecosystem protection, drought resilience, etc.). The calendar is paired with the Funding Strategies Graphic, which organizes the opportunities by their funding emphases and eligible recipients, allowing users to strategize which opportunities to pursue.

The FPC discussed the calendar and graphic and made the following comments:

* The group was very positive about the calendar and graphic.
* The calendar indicates the period for submitting an application for a funding opportunity. Also include an indication of when an opportunity is due, such as with an X.
* Include an indicator for short-term versus multi-year funding.
* Possibly indicate types of funding (e.g., for scientific studies, programmatic funding, etc.)
* Include a column for cost share on the calendar.
* The group agreed that links should take you directly to funding information. It is best to link to the funding agency, as information on third-party sites may not be up-to-date.
* Funding deadlines should help inform the update schedule for the funding documents.
* The minimum cap for funding opportunities was agreed to be fifty thousand.
* Debbie L. suggested that the calendar could work well in an Access database, which would help users filter opportunities.

The PST will revise the funding documents based on discussion. Anything changed on one funding document will be reflected on the other as they are paired. The documents will be sent to the FPC for further review.

* **Action Item**: PST will update the Funding Opportunities Calendar and Strategic Funding Graphic based on FPC discussion
* **Action Item**: FPC will review the Funding Opportunities Calendar, Strategic Funding Graphic, and updated Biennial Schedule
* **Action Item**: PST will explore option for putting the Funding Matrix and Funding Strategies Graphic on the Portal

# FPC Co-Chair Update

Grace Haggerty opened discussion on selecting a new Non-Federal Co-Chair. Grace H.’s term as FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair ended and a replacement was needed. Grace H. called for nominees or volunteers for the role. Anne Marken, MRGCD, volunteered for the position. The FPC approved Anne M. as the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair. The group extended a thank you to Grace H. for all her hard work.

* **Action Item**: PST will announce Anne Marken as the new FPC Non-Federal Co-Chair at the March EC meeting

# Funding Strategies

Debbie L. opened discussion on developing funding strategies for the MRGESCP. According to the charter, the FPC is charged with developing a diverse financial support system for priority MRGESCP activities as set forth in the Long-Term Plan. This means coordinating and implementing MRGSECP activities, identifying and pursuing funding, and identifying and filling funding gaps. Any funding strategy undertaken by the MRGSCP should take into account the Work Plan, the administrative schedule, individual signatory calendars, and the Funding Opportunities Calendar. Debbie will revise the Biennial Schedule to include tasks for developing MRGESCP funding strategies. Information on individual signatory timing needs is also important to include.

The FPC discussed changes to the Biennial Schedule and made the following comments:

* Federal agencies plan three years in advance and it would be useful to reflect that.
* The State mostly plans year-to-year unless there are multi-year grants.
* The group discussed their caps for the amount they can fund without seeking a grant or cost-share partnership, which informs the minimum cap for opportunities on the Funding Opportunities Calendar. Fifty thousand was agreed upon. Although signatories may seek lower funding amounts, the group believes the focus should be on funding collaborative work. It is difficult to do collaborative work for under fifty thousand.

The PST will update the Biennial Schedule and provide it to the PFC for review. Debbie L. discussed

additional tools to help with funding. In the past, the MRGESCP has written letters of support for signatories seeking funding. The FPC may want to develop template letters of support to be used in the future. Also, the FPC could develop standard language that can be used in signatory proposals. One-pagers on the value of the MRGESCP and the value it brings to signatories may also be useful for justifying participation.

The FPC discussed template letters of support and standard language for proposals and made the following comments:

* Standard language is very useful for proposals; it can be hard for organizations to gather all the information needed.
* Demonstrating the support of other agencies weighs heavily when seeking funding. The template letters of support would speak to a high level of collaboration.
* Language on habitat restoration, adaptive management, long-term monitoring, species descriptions, key uncertainties, and the value of the MRGESCP would be helpful.
* NMISC is working on a template to describe restoration projects, which may be a useful resource for other projects. Grace H. will provide the template to the PST.

The PST and volunteers from the FPC will begin developing template letters of support and language for proposals.

The FPC discussed other information that would be helpful for proposals, for example property ownership and access needs. The group agreed to develop a checklist for environmental compliance considerations for project planning and implementation.

* **Action Item**: PST will incorporate FPC activities into the Biennial Schedule
* **Action Item**: FPC will review the Funding Opportunities Calendar, Strategic Funding Graphic, and updated Biennial Schedule
* **Action Item**: FPC will volunteer to work with the PST to develop templates and standard language to use for proposals
* **Action Item**: PST & FPC volunteers will develop template letters of support with language regarding habitat restoration, adaptive management, the value of long-term monitoring, species descriptions, key uncertainties, and the value of the MRGESCP
* **Action Item**: PST will develop a checklist for environmental compliance considerations for project planning and implementation

# Program Portal Funding Options

Non-Federal Co-Chair, Anne M., and Federal Co-Chair, Debra Hill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, opened discussion on Program Portal funding options. The USACE will fund the Portal through December 2023 and may be able to continue funding. The USACE contracts with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to fund baseline Portal maintenance and additional development. The EC asked the FPC to develop funding options for the Portal in the case of a lapse in funding. Baseline funding for the Portal is seventy thousand, but larger updates would not be included. The PST performs the regular Portal updates.

The group discussed potential funding options and made the following options:

* Funding will not be an issue for 2023 but long-term options are needed for the future.
* The group asked who has funded the Portal in the past. Debbie L. clarified that Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority funded it below baseline cost when USACE funding lapsed, but did so using an existing contract with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). USGS must contract with a public agency.
* Some organizations would be able to contribute but not at the full seventy thousand. There’s interest in splitting the cost or funding pieces of the Portal separately. Debbie L. clarified that the money would need to be funneled through one entity. Debbie L. will ask if the USACE may be able to keep their contract with USGS open to funnel funds for the Portal. The Office of the Solicitor concluded that pooling money through a membership fee would be illegal, but it may be possible to pool funds specifically for the Portal.
* The group asked about baseline funding. Debbie L. clarified that it may be possible to reduce the cost some if we ask for reduced time from the USGS team, but there will need to be regular updates that are not covered by baseline funding. The geospatial mapper requires the most costly updates, but could be updated every two years. The mapper updates may potentially be funded outside of baseline funding.
* It may work best to have federal signatories pay more than the non-federal signatories, as cost share is split 75/25 (Federal/Non-Federal) for the MRGESCP.
* Request to check with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation again if it can secure money for the Portal for the next two years.
* The group struggled to determine what funding options were possible and suggested asking the EC to task a group of legal experts with determining what funding options are legally possible.
* **Action Item**: PST will confirm with Ryan Gronewold how long the USACE will fund the Program Portal, and whether USACE can accept complete pass-through funds to U.S. Geological Survey
* **Action Item**: FPC will request the EC task an Administrative Ad Hoc Group with discussing funding options for the Program Portal

# Announcements:

* The USACE received $2 million in funding for the MRGESCP in its budget. Funds will be available in the next couple months.
* The 2023 Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting will be in New Mexico, most likely Santa Fe, in late April. More information will be available closer to the meeting date.
* **Action Item**: Grace Haggerty will provide information on the Rio Grande Compact commission meeting when available

**Meeting Participants**

**FPC Representative Organization**

Debra Hill, Federal Co-Chair U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Grace Haggerty, Non-Federal Co-Chair New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Anne Marken, Non-Federal Co-Chair Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Brittney Erdmann Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Dustin Chavez-Davis City of Albuquerque, Open Space Division

Lynette Giesen U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Mark Kelly Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority

Virginia Seamster New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

**Support Organization**

Debbie Lee Program Support Team

Kevin Shelley Program Support Team

Michelle Tuineau Program Support Team