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**MRGESCP, Vol. 3**

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## Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program Newsletter, Volume 3

### Letter from the Program Manager

Dear Collaborative Program Members,

I hope the summer is treating you all well, as we take a break from regular meetings of the Executive Committee. While somewhat frustrating, this break has allowed WEST some helpful preparation time and I look forward to meeting again in September.

WEST has hired two new staff people (see below for a full update), and is working to produce this regular newsletter to help keep members up to date on their colleagues work between meetings. WEST reached out to all of the program signatories for summer updates, and those we received are collected below. This will be a regular occurrence going forward, so if you missed sending us an update there will be another opportunity soon. In the meantime, if you have any important updates feel free to send them to Luc Moulson at [lmoulson@west-inc.com](mailto:lmoulson@west-inc.com).

I hope that this newsletter is useful for you all and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Lee  
Program Manager

**In This Issue**

Army Corps of Engineers

## Fish & Wildlife Service

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The Fish and Wildlife Service collects and reviews Silvery Minnow egg collection data for May and June to help understand the success and timing of spring minnow spawning. They combine collection data with flows (from the Albuquerque gage station) and a simple average water temperature calculation.

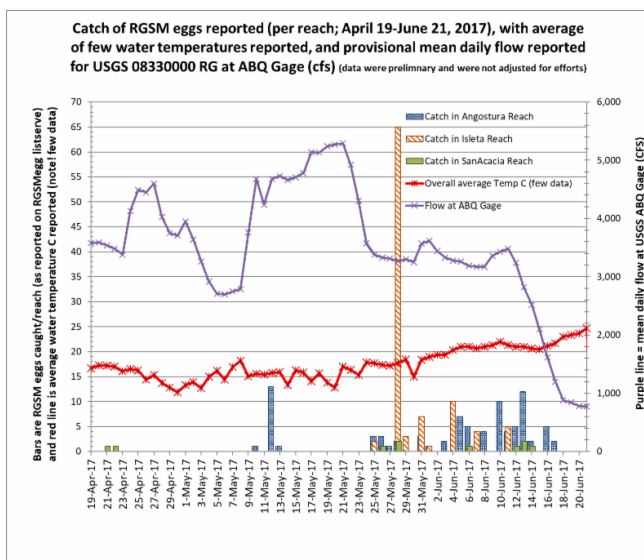
Below is a summary of the work done as of June 2017:

## Army Corps of Engineers

With the retirement of Susan Bittick, Lynette Giesen is the Corps' new Collaborative Program Manager. Susan will be greatly missed by all as she contributed so much to the Collaborative Program both professionally and personally over the past 9 years! Lynette brings a broad range of experience to the program, coming from her position as Project Manager of Civil Works projects at the Corps for the past 8 years. Prior to that she was in the Plan Formulation section and started at the Corps in 1991 as a Biologist. Lynette has worked with Corps signatories and stakeholders in various capacities over her entire career at the Corps. Additionally, Kris Schafer retired in May and George MacDonnell, Chief, Environmental Section, has assumed the role of the Executive Committee Alternate. The Corps remains committed to continuing their involvement and participation in the Program.

This was a record year for flows in the program

While the large catch number at Isleta is likely not significant, it is interesting to see the timing of the catches in each reach, and that even with only a few temperature readings there appears to be the data seem to confirm the species general proclivity to spawn in association with slightly warmer water. However, the methodology and lack of consistent monitoring makes it difficult to make firm conclusions.



## Bureau of Reclamation

In accordance with the 2016 Biological Opinion, the Lower Reach Plan will be submitted to the Service within the first 18 months of the B.O. being issued. Currently in development, BOR is reaching out to BiOp Partners for initial input into the plan. A draft is expected to be available for review by stakeholders in fall 2017. POC: April Fitzner ([afitzner@usbr.gov](mailto:afitzner@usbr.gov))

The Bosque Del Apache Realignment Pilot Project completed its Value Engineering Study, a required step in the federal implementation process for a project above a certain dollar amount, and is in the final design stages. Environmental compliance documents are also in preparation. Construction is currently targeted for January 2018, but high water levels in 2017 have prevented access to the site and may push receipt of

area and the Corps was actively monitoring all of their restoration sites in conjunction with their Civil Works program. Monitoring activities included areas of inundation, riparian response and recruitment, and avian monitoring. These activities were conducted on foot and via satellite and Civil Air Patrol imagery.

USACE hosted an Adaptive Management Team (AMT) meeting to discuss the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Independent Science Panel Report on Thursday June 8th. The report is available on the wiki site setup for the Adaptive Management (AM) Framework Contract [here](#). The Science Panel provided a rigorous review of the uncertainties regarding a number of topics for the silvery minnow. The panel report will be combined with deliverables from the other species for the Collaborative Program AM Framework.

## MRGCD

The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District has not done any active monitoring this summer. In past years, the District has monitored drains. However due to the significant spring runoff, it is unlikely that any drying will occur in the Isleta reach this year, so

some compliance documents to a date later than anticipated.

POC: Brian Hobbs ([bhobbs@usbr.gov](mailto:bhobbs@usbr.gov))

A site visit to the Rhodes Property with Doris Rhodes, Gina dello Russo, FWS, BOR, and ISC (represented by Chad McKenna) was conducted in mid-May to kick-off BOR's project assessment process. In late June, BOR's Technical Services Division assessed the site from the river and is developing an Alternatives Analysis, which builds-off the geomorphic analysis of the Canas Reach (RM 101-89) completed in 2016. A copy of this report can be found on the Program's website. The results of the Alternatives Analysis will be shared and discussed with all involved parties prior to proceeding with design.

POCs: Ashlee Rudolph ([arudolph@usbr.gov](mailto:arudolph@usbr.gov)) for Rhodes Property and Jonathan Aubuchon ([jaubuchon@usbr.gov](mailto:jaubuchon@usbr.gov)) for Geomorphic Analysis.

Designs for the Escondida Fire project are near 50% complete and environmental compliance has begun. Construction is currently planned for fall 2017.

POC: Dustin Armstrong ([dparmstrong@usbr.gov](mailto:dparmstrong@usbr.gov))

BOR's Technical Services Division is wrapping up a geomorphic assessment between Isleta and San Acacia Diversion Dams, as well as a Geomorphic Conditions and Dynamics Report for the entire Middle Rio Grande. The report is expected to be published by fall 2017 and several presentations will be given.

POCs: Jonathan Aubuchon ([jaubuchon@usbr.gov](mailto:jaubuchon@usbr.gov)) and Ari Posner ([aposner@usbr.gov](mailto:aposner@usbr.gov))

## WEST, Inc.

WEST is pleased to announce two new employees supporting the Collaborative Program in Albuquerque.

Julie Dickey has joined WEST as the MRGESCP Program Assistant. Her experience includes managing projects that adhere to NEPA and other environmental laws and regulations; working on public lands conducting resource surveys and managing resources; and directing agency and tribal coordination, and public involvement processes for environmental projects. Julie has a Masters in Community and Regional Planning with an emphasis on natural resource and environmental planning, and a B.S. in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences with a focus on program administration and

monitoring is not necessary. The District will continue to coordinate with other entities to actively manage water for the minnow, but doesn't plan to have any further Collaborative Program projects for the remainder of the year.

[View the program website here](#)

community development. As a graduate student, Julie worked to coordinate activities and projects for Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. She also worked with the US Forest Service to coordinate partnerships amongst federal, state, and local organizations on issues related to conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education in New Mexico. Julie will be tracking schedules and Program products and deliverables, as well as serve as a deputy program manager when Debbie is unavailable.

Luc Moulson ("Moulson") is a native New Mexican who has joined WEST as a Project Coordinator. Before coming to WEST, Moulson received his bachelors in psychology from the University of New Mexico, where he worked in the university's civil rights compliance office where he managed several large scale quality improvement projects as part of the university's Department of Justice monitoring agreement. Luc will be responsible for making the day to day operations of the Albuquerque office run smoothly, track the status of work products and support meetings, and provide any other needed support to the Program Manager.

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