

Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; February 14, 2002; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

In Attendance:

Raymond Abeyta, USBR	Conrad Keyes, Jr., Consultant to Corps
Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps	Steve Kolk, USBR
Scott Anderholm, USGS	Clay Mathers, Corps
Carolyn Brumfield, Corps	Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps	Robert Padilla, USBR
Darrell Eidson, Corps	Chris Perez, USFWS
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps	Garret Ross, USBR
Rhea Graham, NMISC	Gail Stockton, Corps
Debbie Hathaway, SSPA/NMISC	Julie Tsatsaros, NMED/SWQB
Jon Kehmeier, SWCA/NMISC	

- ❖ Gail Stockton opened the meeting. After self-introductions, she asked the group to review the draft notes from the January meeting and submit any comments or changes to Ellen Dietrich as soon as possible.
- ❖ Gail turned the meeting over to Rhea Graham, who led the discussion of technical team progress in writing Chapter 3 of the EIS, Affected Environment. Rhea reminded the group to use their Preliminary Draft EIS notebook to store their narratives and information from other technical teams.
 - Water Quality Technical Team—Julie Tsatsaros
 - The team is about 75% done with a draft of chapter 3 in which they split the discussion into reaches and reservoirs. For each reach and reservoir, they compare the application of water quality standards with water quality data.
 - They are developing a map of the reaches, reservoirs, and applicable standards that will be posted on Team Link once completed.
 - The next team meeting is scheduled for March 14, 8:30-noon, at the SWCA office.
 - Aquatic Systems Technical Team—Rhea
 - Work is progressing on the aquatic habitat model surveying and writing of chapter 3 sections.
 - They have scheduled a conference call on February 22 to discuss the types and format of the GIS data to be generated for the aquatic habitat model. Clay Mathers and Ellen Dietrich will participate to represent the GIS Technical Team.

- Riparian and Wetlands Technical Team—Claudia Oakes
 - The team is working on writing chapter 3. They plan to have an overview of riparian and wetland resources, followed by a description of the resources unique to each reach. A draft should be posted on Team Link around February 20.
 - They need to coordinate with the Aquatic Systems Technical Team to understand the representative sites being sampled for the aquatic habitat model.
 - The next team meeting is scheduled for March 5 at 1:00 p.m. at the Bureau of Reclamation.

- Land Use, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Agriculture Technical Team—Susan Goodan
 - Some sections of chapter 3 are close to being completed, including flood control and recreation. For recreation, Susan faxed information request forms to each of the facility managers. The response to the forms was mixed, so she plans to follow up.
 - The land use section will address such topics as patterns on the land, land ownership, and crop types.
 - There will be a social values section that will address the non-economic values of the land. Susan will coordinate data collection and topics to address with the Cultural Resources Technical Team. Gail reminded the team that they should coordinate with the BIA to address the importance of subsistence agriculture and land use values. At the Steering Committee meeting, Art Martinez requested that the BIA be involved in this discussion. This information might be used as an introduction to the land use section in chapter 3.
 - Susan is setting up a tour of the Bosque del Apache with Gina DelloRusso on March 20. While they do not want a large crowd, technical team members interested in attending should contact Susan.
 - The next meeting is expected to be held on March 14, 9:00 a.m. to noon, at the Corps.

- Cultural Resources Technical Team—Neal Ackerly
 - Neal and Dennis Oyenque revised the study plan and sent an overview to Gail for review. Part of the study plan outlined the types of information that will be included in chapter 3.
 - Clay and Neal have begun to summarize and compile the archaeological site record data. They hope to give a presentation on the characteristics and distribution of sites at the April or May ID NEPA Team meeting.
 - The co-chairs are continuing to attempt to set up the rest of the “meet and greet” sessions with the tribes and pueblos.
 - In response to Claudia’s question on how to submit requests to the technical team to obtain data from tribes, Neal said that requests to tribes from technical teams must be written and include information on what is needed, in what format, why, and how it will be used, accompanied by a map that delineates the location of the data. These requests should be specific and concise, avoiding technical jargon.
 - The Cultural Resources Technical Team will submit the requests, track them, and follow up as needed.
 - Teams should allow a minimum of 2 months to get responses.



- **Neal and Clay will develop a form for this request and post it on Team Link.**
- The Water Quality Technical Team may submit a request to ask tribes to review the water quality standards that the team obtained from NMED, EPA, or pueblos.

- River Geomorphology, Sedimentation, and Mechanics Technical Team—Robert Padilla
 - The team has been writing up the current conditions and historic trends of flows, hydrology, channel morphology, aggradation/degradation, and sediment transport.
 - Their next meeting is scheduled with the Hydrology and Hydraulics Technical Team for March 5 at the Bureau of Reclamation, but they usually meet on the last Monday of the month.
- Water Operations Technical Team—Garret Ross
 - Don Gallegos is developing a description of flood operations at Elephant Butte and Caballo. Garret is working on describing water operations at the USBR facilities. The focus is to describe what triggers communications protocols, such as notifying the public.
 - There was a discussion on whether water rights should be briefly summarized to set a framework for understanding water operations.



- Rhea pointed out that the policy direction in the MOA with the Joint Lead Agencies and from the Executive Committee has been concentrated on avoiding discussions of water rights, but **she will check on this and notify the team.**

- Gail recommended referring to other documents on water rights and water law instead of including the information in this EIS.
 - The team plans to summarize the legislation related to managing and authorizing each facility.
 - The Water Quality Technical Team plans to attend the next Water Operations meeting to discuss the methodology that they plan to use to analyze the alternatives.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for March 7 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at the Corps.
- GIS Technical Team—Clay Mathers



- **Julie requested that there be a review of the types of data being collected by each team at an upcoming ID NEPA Team meeting.**



- **Clay asked that all teams draw the needed GIS datasets on the forms he developed previously and document how the data would be used.** The forms were discussed in the June 14 meeting of the ID NEPA Team (see notes). The forms are available on Team Link under Project Information, GIS Tech Team, Maps. GIS Technical Team members have also discussed them at some of the other technical team meetings.
- The metadata standard will use the FGDC standards eventually, but for now, the archive forms should be completed for data obtained.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 28 at 9:00 a.m. at the Corps.

❖ Public meetings

- The next public meetings on the draft alternatives are scheduled for March 19 in Albuquerque and March 20 in Santa Fe from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.



- **The Project Managers encourage all technical team members to attend one of these local meetings, especially if they haven't attended one previously.**
- The Santa Fe meeting will be held after the social the night before the Rio Grande Compact Commission meeting, so commissioners and engineer advisors will be likely to attend.
- At the T or C meeting, the deputy superintendent of schools attended and offered to arrange an in-service day for teachers to learn more about the Water Operations Review.
- No additional alternatives have been proposed so far, so technical teams should consider the current alternatives if they want to identify the necessary information to include in chapter 3 and to plan ahead for data collection for impact analysis.
- It may be possible to tour the power plant at Abiquiu before the April 17 meeting.

- ❖ If items or issues need to be brought before the Executive Committee from a technical team, bring the information to a Project Manager.



- ❖ **The next ID NEPA Team meeting will be held on March 14 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps.**