

## **Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; February 13, 2003; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque**

### *In Attendance:*

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps  
Robert L. Browning, II, Corps  
Mike Buntjer, USFWS  
Deb Callahan, USBR  
Marsha Carra, USBR  
Tim Darden, NMDA  
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps  
Rhea Graham, ISC  
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps  
Debbie Hathaway, SSPA/ISC  
Mark Horner, Corps  
Jon Kehmeier, SWCA/NMISC

Conrad Keyes, Jr., Consultant to Corps  
Bill Leibfried, SWCA/ISC  
Karen Lewis, SSPA  
Colleen Logan, R.F. Weston/Corps  
Julie Maitland, NMDA  
Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC  
Chris Perez, USFWS  
Gail Stockton, Corps  
Nancy Umbreit, USBR  
Jack Veenhuis, USGS  
Scott Waltemeyer, USGS  
Doug Wolf, Tetra Tech/Corps

- ❖ Gail Stockton opened the meeting. After self-introductions, Gail expressed appreciation to the technical teams for all of the hard work they are doing to pull together the information and analysis for this EIS.
- ❖ ID Team members were asked to review the notes from the last meeting and provide any edits by the end of the meeting.
- ❖ Gail and Debbie Hathaway summarized the progress made by the Water Operations/URGWOM Integration Technical Team in combining and evaluating the draft alternatives that are feasible.
  - She distributed a draft list of 8 operations plan alternatives that remain after the initial screening process done by the Technical Team. The eight operation plan alternatives will be further screened using URGWOM in the 40-year flow sequence.
  - Elephant Butte and Caballo flood control protocols and overall coordination and protocol will be included under every alternative
  - The No Action alternative is still described in the current operations matrix that is available on Team Link.
  - Debbie added that the most limiting conditions would occur in the wet period of each alternative. She also pointed out that the actual upper limit of Abiquiu storage would be established through modeling.
  - Next steps involve providing a cleaned up version of the matrix that lists all alternatives to be evaluated and a narrative description of the alternative eliminated from further analysis and the reasons for elimination. The matrix will be available on Team Link.

- ❖ Gail updated the group on the development of the URGWOM Planning Model.
  - There has been progress in fixing some of the problems with the rules that were reported at the January meeting.
  - Necessary data from 1974-1985 is being input into the database to be used by the Planning Model.
  - The rules that represent Rio Grande Compact flows from Elephant Butte and Caballo are being developed and added to the model.
  - If all goes well, the Planning Model will be ready to use for evaluating alternatives by the end of February.
- ❖ Rhea Graham reported from the Water Operations/URGWOM Integration Technical Team meeting that they discussed the use of the historic USGS streamflow data from selected gages along the Rio Grande. She distributed a handout that shows the type of data available and asked the technical teams to consider how they might use it. The information is available from <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nm/nwis/monthly>.
- ❖ Deb Callahan gave a presentation and demonstration (using ArcView) of the color infrared (IR) aerial photography between Velarde and Elephant Butte recently obtained for URGWOPS. Other similar photography obtained last summer covered the Rio Chama from El Vado to the confluence with the Rio Grande.
  - The photography was printed at 1:24,000 (same scale as USGS 7.5 minute quad maps). However, the quality of the photography is actually 2-foot pixels (1:2,000) to be used to identify riparian habitat. The photography is available in hard copy and in georeferenced TIFF and MrSID files for use in GIS. They are in UTM projection, North American Datum (NAD) 1927.
  - The Velarde to Elephant Butte coverage was flown at the end of June and the beginning of July 2002. **Permission for its use must first be obtained by the ESA Collaborative Work Group.**
  - Similar photography of the Rio Chama was flown in April 2002 for URGWOPS.
  - **Use of this photography for interpretation of resources and analysis on pueblo or tribal lands must be approved by the pueblo or tribe first.**
    - In order to conduct analysis using aerial photography on pueblo and tribal land, a technical team must submit the request to the tribal government through the Cultural Resources Technical Team.
    - An alternative would be to use the publicly available 1:24,000 DOQQs that are available by reach for the river corridor.
    - **It was agreed that, unless and until permission is obtained from the relevant pueblo or tribe, technical teams must eliminate this land from analysis. Deb will look into getting the tribal land blacked out before distributing the photographs and files to the technical teams. It will be up to the tribes and pueblos later to decide if they wish to provide the information eliminated from analysis.**
    - **The modified photos must be the source cited in the EIS, not the original photographs and coverages.**

- ❖ The URGWOPS Project Managers and technical team representatives have been asked to present information on data collection, data gaps, and plans for analysis to the Science and Habitat Restoration subcommittees of the ESA Collaborative Work Group on February 20.
  - Each technical team should plan to provide a presenter and to use the posters that were developed for the Steering Committee and scoping meetings.
  - The purpose of the meeting is to establish a working relationship between the two groups studying the Rio Grande in order to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage data sharing.
- ❖ Reports from technical teams.
  - Cultural Resources—Neal Ackerly
    - Tim Seaman will present on February 20.
    - Neal, Dennis Oyenque, and the Project Managers presented project information to the Eight Northern Pueblos Council on Tuesday, February 11.
      - They delivered maps on the DOQQ photo base showing the maximum area of effect along the Rio Grande, at flows of 10,000 cfs from Cochiti Dam upstream to the Rio Chama confluence.
      - Questions were raised related to the silvery minnow.
      - The Pueblos of Picuris and San Ildefonso requested additional information on potential impacts. A meeting with each tribal council will be arranged to discuss further.
    - The Pueblo of Santa Ana has requested a meeting with the Project Managers.
    - The team received a separately contracted narrative on Hispanic culture in the northern basin that will be added to the description of the affected environment.
  - Aquatic Systems—Bill Leibfried
    - Ernie Jahnke will present on February 20. The main focus will be on the aquatic habitat model.
    - The technical team expects to receive a report on the analysis of the pilot site for the aquatic habitat model at Bernardo by the end of February.
    - At the last meeting the team members brainstormed potential impacts to aquatic resources without the proposed project.
    - The team has been working with the Riparian Technical Team to develop a technical report.
  - Water Quality—Jon Kehmeier
    - Jon will present on February 20 and will discuss available data, known data gaps, and their approach to analysis.
    - The team has been discussing how to handle the lack of reservoir water quality data.
    - They will participate in a teleconference with URGWOM and CADSWES to discuss how to incorporate water quality into the model as a future enhancement.
  - Land Use, Socioeconomics, Agriculture, Recreation, Environmental Justice—Susan Goodan, Steve Piper

- Susan will present information on February 20.
  - Susan reported that her current focus is on the completing data collection and write up of the affected environment for agriculture. It has been difficult to obtain even general descriptions of the amount of irrigated agriculture for the reaches along the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande in northern NM.
  - Susan attended the Aquatic Systems Technical Team meeting when they discussed sport fishery to gather information to use for Recreation.
  - Steve is working on collecting and analyzing potential impacts to commercial agriculture by county.
  - River Geomorphology, Mechanics, and Sedimentation—Scott Waltemeyer
    - The technical team will need to identify someone to make a presentation on February 20.
    - At the last meeting, the technical team reviewed and added definitions to the glossary of terms.
    - Claudia Oakes attended the meeting to learn what information would be useful to the Riparian Technical Team. She recommended that other technical team members attend also.
  - Riparian and Wetlands—Claudia Oakes
    - Claudia will present on February 20, with a focus on the use of FLO-2D and GIS.
    - The team has been discussing the use of GIS to process data and how to use the color IR photography to classify, locate, and interpret vegetation types verified during their field work. They determined a protocol for using the new data in comparison to the 1984 Hink and Ohmart vegetation mapping.
  - GIS—Ellen Dietrich
    - Ellen will present information on GIS analysis and document management on February 20.
    - The next technical team meeting is scheduled for February 27.
    - Deb's presentation on the color IR photography and technical team discussions of GIS analysis represent some of the work being done by technical team members.
  - Hydrology and Hydraulics—Gail Stockton
    - The FLO-2D model for the Rio Grande between Cochiti and Elephant Butte is complete.
    - Development of the model above Cochiti to the Rio Chama confluence is almost complete.
    - Development of the hydraulic model for the Rio Chama below Abiquiu has begun.
  - Water Operations/URGWOM Integration—Gail
    - Don Gallegos will present on February 20.
    - The team has been evaluating alternatives as discussed above.
- ❖ **The next meeting of the URGWOPS ID NEPA Team will be held at the Corps on March 13 at 1:00 p.m.**