

**Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review
Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; March 8, 2001; 1:00 PM;
Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque**

In attendance:

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios Consultants

Scott Anderholm, USGS

Olga Boberg, BOR

Ellen Dietrich, SAIC

Richard Fike, Corps

Don Gallegos, Corps

Hector Garcia, BOR

Susan Goodan, SAIC

Rhea Graham, NMISC

Brian Hanson, USFWS

Bill C. Hays, NMDGF

Julie Maitland, NMDA

Art Martinez, BIA

Clay Mathers, Corps

Christine Pacheco, NMED

Robert Padilla, BOR

Cynthia Piirto, Corps

Steve Piper, BOR

Gary Rutherford, Corps

Debbie Smith, Corps

Gail Stockton, Corps

Leann Towne, BOR

Julie Tsatsaros, NMED

Scott Waltemeyer, USGS

Gary Watts, NMISC

Doug Wolf, Corps

- ❖ After introductions, the meeting began with reports from each technical team.
 - Land Use, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice—Gary Rutherford
 - The team met today and discussed their budget and criteria.
 - They would like to have an URGWOM Integration/Water Operations team member explain more about water operations at a meeting.
 - Regular meeting is usually the second Thursday of the month in the morning, but in April it will be on Friday, April 13 at 8:00 a.m. at the Corps.
 - Aquatic Systems—Hector Garcia
 - They met on Tuesday and discussed their Study Plan, budget, criteria, and data for the GIS Pilot Study.
 - They would like to meet with the Water Quality and URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Teams soon.
 - They would like to be working on filling in data gaps.
 - Regular meeting day: the Tuesday before the ID NEPA Team meetings.
- **Leann Towne reminded the tech teams that they have funding to begin data collection.**
- Water Quality—Julie Tsatsaros
 - The team met this morning and discussed their Study Plan and budget. Their next meeting is on April 11 in Santa Fe.

- They are working on compiling existing data by using the USGS database to which they will add data from NMED.
 - They have developed a list of the appropriate governmental authorities for different water quality jurisdictions, and have assembled their standards. Their impact analysis will evaluate whether these standards are being met under each alternative.
 - They would like to have the bathymetric data for the reservoirs developed and want to know if other teams would use it. The BOR has contours for Elephant Butte that could be used to model sediment deposition in the reservoirs. The Corps and BOR have sediment data for many of the other reservoirs. Contact Don Gallegos at the Corps and Robert Padilla at BOR.
- Cultural Resources—Neal Ackerly
- The kick-off meeting for this team was held today.
 - A principal responsibility will be handling the tribal consultations for the project. They plan to develop this as a three-step process.
 1. “Meet and greet” representatives of the tribal governments to explain the Water Operations Review and invite consultation.
 2. As the alternatives are finalized, the team hopes to take a full set of maps to each tribe and request a review of the areas of concern, such as traditional cultural properties, archaeological sites, plants and animals, acequias, and other special areas or issues. They do not expect site-specific information or locations to be supplied, and intend to maintain confidentiality of the information.
 3. The team will retrieve the annotated maps or lists of concerns and ensure that they will be included in the documents prepared for the project.
 - The team needs to review the overall schedule and determine when the tribal reviews can occur.
 - All tech teams should be assembling questions and issues to be carried by the Cultural Resources Team for tribal consultation, which will be discussed with the other teams at a meeting. Neal has the lead to set up this meeting as soon as possible.
 - Art Martinez recommended that the team invite someone from the BIA to attend the “meet and greet” sessions.
- River Geomorphology, Sedimentation, and Mechanics—Robert Padilla
- They met on February 26 and have been working on characterizing the existing stream environment, including channel forming discharges, bed material, and sediment loads.
 - At their next meeting on March 26, they plan to describe the reaches from Abiquiu to the confluence with the Rio Grande.
- URGWOM Integration/Water Operations—Don Gallegos
- Their meeting was held on March 5. They developed the pamphlets on the reservoirs that were distributed. They also distributed copies of excerpts of the “Programmatic Biological Assessment of Federal Discretionary Actions Related to Water management on the Middle Rio Grande, New Mexico”, October 1999, and the “Rio Chama Instream Flow Assessment”, December 1992.
 - They developed a glossary for other teams to use.

- At their next meeting on April 5, they plan to fill in the details of the matrix for evaluating input to develop alternatives based on the criteria developed by the other tech teams, with help from representatives of each team.
- Hydrology and Hydraulics—Doug Wolf
 - This team will provide the extent and duration of overbank flooding for each of the seventeen reaches from Flo2D model output, based on input from URGWOM.
- Riparian and Wetlands—Leann Towne
 - Their draft criteria have been completed for each reach. Leann generalized them to describe overall goals that can be addressed by water operations.
 - The team had a field trip at their last meeting.
 - They are also working on their work tasks and budget.



- **Gail Stockton told the group that all tech team Work Plans are on the Team Link web site.**



- **Team leaders should add their meeting dates, times, and locations to Team Link.**
- ❖ Gail told the group that the final Scoping Summary is posted on the URGWOPS web site.
- ❖ Leann distributed a revised draft matrix for evaluating input to develop alternatives.



- The goals on the draft matrix have been taken from the available tech team criteria, which were requested to have been **submitted to the Project Managers by February 21. However, no alternatives will be developed until the Tech Team reaches consensus on its criteria and goals.**
- The details under each column of input for each alternative will be filled in by describing the operations that would meet the goals of each alternative. This will be developed with the Water Operations Technical Team at their next meeting on April 5, 2001.
- Specific needs that are unique to a resource should be captured in the inputs based on criteria from each team.
- Where the goal for a resource is to be in compliance with specific regulations or standards, there would be no goal for enhancing conditions beyond the compliance standards. For example, the water quality goal would be to meet the required standards, which vary depending upon the jurisdiction of the governmental entity. The Water Quality Technical Team has identified compliance criteria by jurisdictional boundary.

- ❖ Gail reported that the integration of the Work Plan is almost complete.
- ❖ Ellen Dietrich distributed a draft of the Administrative Record Manual and discussed the proposed procedures. There were questions and some discussion that will result in changes to the manual. She requested that tech team members review and offer recommended changes as soon as possible. **The Archive Forms have changed and the new version will be sent to the team leaders electronically.**



- ❖ Clay Mathers briefly discussed the GIS Pilot Study. He has received data from some teams and will integrate the spatial data and demonstrate their use at the April meeting. **He asked that tech teams providing data for the study also include a summary description of how the data are to be used.**



- ❖ The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 9. The Project Managers will be discussing their recommendation for a decision analysis system, approval of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plan, and signing the NMDA cooperating agency agreement, as well as status of the Work Plans.



- ❖ **The April 12 meeting of the ID NEPA Team will include:**
 - URGWOM forecasts by Don Gallegos.
 - An update on the City of Albuquerque's Water Management Strategy, and
 - The GIS Pilot Study.
- ❖ **The May 10 meeting will feature Flo2D results and a presentation by Louis Scuderi from UNM on their model of the Rio Grande.**