

**Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review
Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; May 10, 2001; 1:00 PM;
Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque**

In attendance:

Scott Anderholm, USGS	Julie Maitland, NMDA
Art Coykendall, USBR	Clay Mathers, Corps
Gina DelloRusso, FWS	Robert Padilla, USBR
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps	Gary Rutherford, Corps
Don Gallegos, Corps	John Sorrell, Pueblo of Isleta
Hector Garcia, USBR	Gail Stockton, Corps
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps	Leann Towne, USBR
Chris Gorbach, USBR	Julie Tsatsaros, NMED/SWQB
Rhea Graham, NMISC	Doug Wolf, Corps
Conrad Keyes, Jr., EWRI of ASCE	Mark Yuska, USBR/URGWOM Technical Team
Kevin Lansey, University of Arizona	
Russ MacRae, FWS	

- ❖ Leann Towne started the meeting with reports from each technical team on their activities in the past month.
 - Aquatic Systems—Hector Garcia
 - The team met last Tuesday and completed their criteria, which they will post on Team Link.
 - They discussed their budget and plan to present it to the Project Managers.
 - They have developed a list of research data for the silvery minnow.
 - Hydrology and Hydraulics—Doug Wolf
 - The team has completed their work plan and schedule. They plan to have Flo2D running for impact analyses by the end of the calendar year.
 - The grid for Flo2D has been completed from Cochiti to Elephant Butte. The model is under development in cooperation with the Bosque Hydrology Group.
 - The initial grid has been developed for the reaches (8 and 9) from Cochiti up to the Rio Grande confluence with the Rio Chama. Plans are being developed for the creation of the grid in reach 4, from Velarde to the Rio Chama confluence.
 - If no new mapping is acquired for the Rio Chama, the team will use the old mapping dataset for overbank flooding. From Velarde north to Alamosa, above Abiquiu, and below American Dam, no data appears to be available for developing grids. It was recommended that the team check with the IBWC for data from American Dam to Fort Quitman.

- Land Use, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Recreation, and Agriculture—Gary Rutherford
 - The team last met on April 13, when they discussed their work plan and schedule, which are posted on Team Link. They met with the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team to learn more about the model.
 - They have been working on their criteria, but have not completed them.
- Water Quality—Julie Tsatsaros
 - The team met earlier in the day and got some training on using the database of existing water quality data developed by Scott Anderholm. In developing this database, they found that data for Colorado is limited to STORET data up to 1990. Texas water quality data is limited to USGS data; no STORET data are available.
 - They discussed their budget and schedule.
 - Scott created a bibliography in an Access database that he will distribute to other technical teams for review. They can add to this if they wish. The team will flag references in the database that they know should be included in the Administrative Record.
- Riparian and Wetlands—Art Coykendall
 - The team took a field trip to Chama and Española to view southwest willow flycatcher habitat. They plan to make other field trips and will notify technical teams if they are interested in attending.
 - The team has requested that Weston set up an area on Team Link to allow team members to work together on writing sections for the EIS.
- River Geomorphology, Sedimentation, and Mechanics—Robert Padilla
 - The team plans a trip from Abiquiu to Elephant Butte this month.
 - They have been working on characterizing the affected environment, especially channel geometry and sediment.
- Cultural Resources—Rhea Graham
 - The team leaders, Dennis Oyenque and Neal Ackerly, and the Project Managers made a presentation this morning to the Ten Southern Pueblos Council to explain the Water Operations Review process and to introduce the Cultural Resources Technical Team leaders as points of contact for tribal consultation on the project.
 - The tribal leaders in attendance stated that they want government to government contact with individual tribes. **The team will be scheduling these as soon as possible.**
 - Tribal leaders are concerned over how litigation in the basin would affect their participation in URGWOPS and the maintenance of confidential information.
 - **As technical teams determine their needs for information from tribal groups, they should inform Neal Ackerly. Technical teams must also keep Neal informed about any requests made for site visits on tribal land.**



- URGWOM Integration/Water Operations—Don Gallegos
 - The team has been developing the details for the No Action Alternative and the other alternatives for the EIS.
 - The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on June 7 at the Corps.
 - ➔ **The Aquatic Systems and Riparian and Wetlands Technical Teams will set up a special meeting** with the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team before the next regularly scheduled meeting of the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Tech Team to work on resource emphasis items for those teams. This is needed in order to expedite progress on the Alternatives Development Matrix.
 - ➔ **The Land Use, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Recreation, and Agriculture Technical Team has scheduled a teleconference** with a representative from the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team before the June 7 meeting to work on resource emphasis items for the Alternatives Development Matrix.
- ❖ Don Gallegos gave a presentation on the hydrographs developed using URGWOM for an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the impacts of storing native water in Jemez and Abiquiu Dams. The Proposed Action involves storing native water from mid April to June 30, with peak releases of 5000 cfs in late May or early June from Jemez to offset storage of native water in Abiquiu.
 - Don reviewed the hydrographs developed for Abiquiu and Jemez outflows and the resulting impacts of projected flows at different gages. The May 1 forecast was used for the model runs.
 - The EA evaluated the impacts at Abiquiu and Jemez Dams and downstream caused by additional flows in the Rio Grande and by drawing down the Jemez pool, then restoring it.
 - The EA is available to view or download on the Albuquerque Corps web site and on Team Link from the Links page.
- ❖ Further discussion about URGWOM followed.
 - **Mark Yuska told the group that the URGWOM Technical Team wants to know what inputs to URGWOM will need to be changed to facilitate the analysis of impacts by the Water Operations Review technical teams.** The URGWOM Technical Team plans to build those features into the model now so they will be available for the Planning Model.
 - URGWOM controls reservoir releases and timing, in addition to diversions to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel.
 - Another possibility would be to model a range of flows to be diverted at different points in the system by controlling the amount of water that bypasses diversion channels in the middle valley.
- ❖ The project budget was discussed by Rhea Graham.
 - To date, the Project Managers have received a total of \$10.7 million in requests from technical teams, which is more than the project budget.
 - The Executive Committee will review the budget allocation and requests after they see the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS.

- **It will be important to have consensus on the No Action and other alternatives in the June ID NEPA Team meeting so the Project Managers can take the decisions to the Executive Committee meeting on June 19.**
 - The No Action Alternative developed with the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team has excluded operations that are not “normally” done.
 - **Rhea encouraged all technical teams to send a representative to the June 7 URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team meeting at the Corps at 1:00 p.m. to discuss formulation of the alternatives.**
- ❖ Other information for technical teams:
 - The project schedule shows that **drafts of the Affected Environment sections for each resource are to be submitted to the Project Managers by May 31.** Technical teams should review their existing data and the appropriate sections of other EISs to determine what information should be presented in their section.
 - **Technical teams should obtain consensus on the content of their team meeting notes before they are posted on Team Link.**
- ❖ **The next meeting of the ID NEPA Team meeting will be held on June 14 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps.**