

Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; May 9, 2002; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

In Attendance:

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps

Steve Kolk, USBR

Scott Anderholm, USGS

Colleen Logan, Weston/Corps

Carolyn Brumfield, Corps

Clay Mathers, Corps

Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps

Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC

Don Gallegos, Corps

Michael Porter, USBR

Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps

Garret Ross, USBR

Rhea Graham, NMISC

Gary Rutherford, Corps

Conrad Keyes, Jr., Consultant to Corps

Gail Stockton, Corps

❖ After self-introductions, the group reviewed the draft notes from the April meeting. No changes were recommended.

❖ Follow-up items from the April meeting

➤ The Project Managers requested that the technical team leaders update an electronic version of the roster by adding new team members, deleting old members, and updating any contact information. **Ellen Dietrich will e-mail a copy to each technical team leader after Linda Tenorio at the NMISC generates the roster from the database.** The following technical team members were identified by the group **to be deleted from the current roster:**

- Chic Spann
- Maija Mencks
- Dennis Oyenque
- AnnaMaria Muñoz
- Jonathon Ambrose
- Mike Marcus
- Richard Fike

➤ Aerial photography list from Deb Callahan

- No additions were recommended.
- Clay Mathers will develop a spatial index map of the photography to complement the list. He suggested that the list be linked to the index and include summary descriptions of the available photography.

❖ The Project Managers have planned the next URGWOPS Steering Committee meeting for June 27 at 11:30 p.m. in the Rio Grande conference room of the Bureau of Reclamation.



- This meeting may replace the June ID NEPA Team meeting that would be regularly scheduled for June 13.
 - The Project Managers will present an abbreviated description of the draft alternatives.
 - **Resource teams should plan to give presentations** (maximum 10 minutes) that will provide an understanding of the river, the affected environment as it relates to their resources, and demonstrate that they know how to conduct an EIS. Other requirements for the presentations are listed below.
 - Should be interactive.
 - Describe current conditions and how (in general terms) each team will analyze the impacts of the alternatives.
 - Teams should develop and use no more than 3 PowerPoint slides in each presentation. Maps or other display boards can also be used.
 - There will be 5 minutes for questions.
 - **Resource team leaders should submit a rough draft of the presentation that includes an overview and descriptions of the slides and other visual aids to the Project Managers by May 24. An outline of each technical team presentation and the slides to be used must be submitted to the Project Managers by June 13.**
 - It was suggested that the technical teams use FLO-2D output to demonstrate the use of that model for URGWOPS.
 - It was agreed that the meeting room would be opened at 11:30 a.m. for Steering Committee members to view displays/posters before the meeting and ask questions or provide comments that will be recorded. Lunch will be provided.
 - Clay recommended that a poster be developed to show how the administrative record is being maintained, and another poster with the DOQQ index.
 - The Project Managers informed the group that the City of Albuquerque has expressed an interest in becoming one of the Joint Lead Agencies after their EIS has been completed.
 - **An e-mail reminder of the Steering Committee meeting will be sent to the technical teams.**
- ❖ Technical Team Reports
- Cultural Resources—Neal Ackerly
 - Neal has written a letter to Charles Lujan encouraging San Juan Pueblo to select a new co-team leader for the Cultural Resources Technical Team as soon as possible.
 - Neal drafted and sent a letter to each pueblo and tribe describing URGWOPS and offering to meet with them to explain the project and obtain their input. He plans to send a similar update letter quarterly.
 - Neal attended the Riparian Technical Team meeting on FLO-2D and plans to attend their next team meeting on June 11 to discuss data requests from tribes. He stressed that the current FLO-2D model does not include the Rio Chama. Gail Stockton reported that BIA has contracted with the Dept. of Justice to obtain the digital terrain model data (DTM) that is required to develop the FLO-2D model from the confluence of the Rio Grande upstream to Abiquiu Dam.

➤ Riparian and Wetlands—Claudia Oakes

- The team met before the ID NEPA Team meeting and had a presentation from the contractors that are developing and running the FLO-2D model.
 - They learned that there are some problems in calibrating the gage data and flows. Coordination with the Water Operations Technical Team is needed to compare releases and flows at key gages.
 - It was recommended that the Aquatic Systems Technical Team compare their high flow measurements to be collected with the model results.
 - Scott Anderholm suggested that the FLO-2D developers contact Mike Roark at the USGS to obtain the raw data of water surface elevations instead of the flows calculated at each gage because this could aid their calibration efforts.
 - Christi Young, USBR in Denver, has been modeling sediment transport in the Rio Grande and may also be able to provide some insight into the calibration problems.
- The team is thinking of having a workshop for all technical teams on FLO-2D, possibly after obtaining initial model output that can be incorporated into a GIS coverage.
- The team recognizes that they must soon develop requests to pueblos and tribes but plans to minimize the amount of information to be requested. They will request only that information needed to ground truth their vegetation data. They recently learned that even though some tribes have approved use of data by a federal agency, it cannot be assumed that approval has been given to use the same data for URGWOPS.
Permission must be requested from the pueblo or tribe to use the data each time they are needed for a specific purpose or project.
- The team asked for clarification on the use of digital terrain model (DTM) data. If permission had been granted by a tribe for the use of these data to set up the FLO-2D model for URGWOPS, can the data be used for other purposes for the same project?
Gail will check on this and let the team know.



➤ Aquatic Systems—Michael Porter

- Their next meeting is scheduled for May 14.
- The Corps is adding a second site for the aquatic habitat model on the Chama.
- Development of the 2-D pilot model should begin by mid-June.
- Bill Miller submitted a summary of the fish species to evaluate through the model, from which the team will select five.
- The Corps has Hydrolab water quality data from Abiquiu and Cochiti Dams.

➤ Water Operations—Garret Ross

- The team has been working on describing flood control protocols and the format for the descriptions of facilities and their operating authorities to be included in the Affected Environment section. They may use a technical writer from the USBR.
- The team may modify the draft alternatives table to make it understandable for public presentations and to use as a starting point for a display.

- They are working on completing the descriptions of the Elephant Butte and Caballo facilities, and on draft proposals for improving interagency, tribal, and public communications.
- They plan to set up a matrix to help identify unfeasible alternatives and narrow the list to realistic choices.
- Hydrology and Hydraulics—Carolyn Brumfield
 - Attended the Geomorphology Technical Team field trip, which she found very informative.
 - The FLO-2D model is being installed on the Corps' computer.
 - Carolyn completed drawing the location of the 1800 cfs flood levels for the Rio Chama on hard copy maps. This can be used as an interim product to inform communities and tribes of which areas would be affected under the highest flows that may be considered in the alternatives.
- Water Quality—Scott Anderholm
 - The team last met Monday, May 6 at 8:30 a.m. at the SWCA office.
 - They discussed the comments on their draft measures and practices that were provided by the Water Operations Technical Team.
 - They also reviewed their amended budget and scope to accomplish the data analysis portion of their work with existing data.
- Land Use, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Agriculture, Environmental Justice—Gary Rutherford
 - The team plans to meet at the end of May.
 - They worked with Neal to develop data requests from some tribes, which they sent to Art Martinez of the BIA for review.
 - They are working on the Affected Environment sections. Some sections, such as the description of commercial agriculture, have been completed. They have been discussing the difference between commercial and non-commercial agriculture and their importance as social values. They acknowledge a variety of reasons for agricultural activities in the basin and the need to separate subsistence agriculture from commercial agriculture.
 - Conrad Keyes suggested that the team look into accessing the statewide (NM) GIS land use database that has been developed for county tax assessments. Other possible sources include El Paso Water Utilities #1 and the City of El Paso.
- GIS—Clay Mathers
 - The team last met on April 25.
 - They discussed the color infrared photography (2 foot pixels) that will soon be taken along the Rio Chama, as well as the Corps' photography (leaf-off) of Abiquiu. The DOQQs that the Corps has now are leaf-on so they may help the Riparian Technical Team.
 - The team will be developing an index of the DOQQs in a mosaic format by reach that will be available for all technical teams in the near future.

- All of the GIS scenario worksheets (cartoons) developed by the technical teams have been scanned and can be made available for downloading from the Corps FTP site. Contact Clay to request.
 - **Clay stressed the importance of facilitating coordination and communication among the technical teams, the FLO-2D modelers, and the GIS Technical Team, possibly through regularly scheduled work sessions.**
 - Clay will work with the Riparian Technical Team to develop the workshop for FLO-2D model output and use.
- ❖ Public meetings to discuss the draft alternatives
- Rhea Graham reported that the April meetings in Española and Abiquiu were well attended. Flood control was of primary concern, especially the causes of higher flood releases from reservoirs and the negative impacts to cropland. A possible new alternative was recommended that would allow for lower flows in the Rio Chama than previously considered.
 - The next meetings to be held will be the last public meetings for this round. They will be held in Alamosa, Colorado, and Pilar, New Mexico on May 14 and 15.