Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; May 8, 2003; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

In Attendance:

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps
Deb Callahan, USBR
Art Coykendall, USBR
Tim Darden, NMDA
William DeRagon, Corps
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps
Don Gallegos, Corps
Rhea Graham, ISC
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps
Debbie Hathaway, SSPA
Mark Horner, Corps
Jon Kehmeier, SWCA/NMISC
Conrad Keyes, Jr., Consultant to the Corps
Bill Leibfried, SWCA/ISC
Colleen Logan, Weston/Corps
Karen MacClune, SSPA/NMISC
Jim O'Brien, Tetra Tech/Corps
Brian Ortiz, USFWS
Gail Stockton, Corps
Nancy Umbreit, USBR
Jack Veenhuis, USGS
Dave Wilkins, USGS/URGWOM Technical Team
Doug Wolf, Tetra Tech/Corps

- Rhea Graham, Project Manager for the ISC, opened the meeting and provided an update of the status of the State Water Plan. Legislation and other information related to development of the State Water Plan are available on the State Engineer's web site. Recent changes in the legislation amended the law to give the lead for this effort to the ISC, with a deadline for the initial plan of late this year. Rhea was selected to be the director of this new division for the ISC, so Claudia Oakes will be more involved in URGWOPS Project Management decisions for the state in the future.
- Dave Wilkins reported that the URGWOM Planning Model has been running well except when they turn on the rules for rafting flows.
  - At the morning URGWOM Steering Committee meeting, it was decided that the Technical Team would run the Planning Model without the rafting flows in order to test the model and screen the draft alternatives. Gail Stockton suggested that, if the problem with the URGWOM rules for rafting flows cannot be fixed in time for analysis of alternatives, this issue might be addressed by using the model output and determining the frequency of flow/storage conditions when rafting would be possible.
  - The Technical Team has run the full 40-year sequence to test the model, and is setting up the initial conditions files to evaluate the draft alternatives.
  - They have determined that 14 model runs would be needed to process all of the draft alternatives.
- Doug Wolf and Jim O'Brien gave a slide presentation and demo of the FLO-2D model from Cochiti to Elephant Butte.
  - Doug reviewed the purpose, assumptions, and limitations of the model.

- Doug worked with Dave Wilkins to get preliminary URGWOM output from 1998 to run through the model and showed the results. The purpose was to determine if there was good correlation between the FLO-2D hydrographs, URGWOM predictions, and USGS historic flow data, focusing on high flows with potential for overbank flooding.
  - FLO-2D hydrographs correlated well with URGWOM and historic hydrographs when considering the timing and magnitude of high flows. The predicted flows on the rescinding limb of the test hydrograph (lower flows ~500 cfs) began to depart from the URGWOM results at the Bernardo gage. The accuracy of the USGS gages coupled with ungaged returns to the river make calibration and correlation difficult at low flows. The focus of this test was to assess correlation for flows which could result in overbank flooding.
  - FLO-2D appears to be correctly attenuating the flows when there is overbank flooding.
- There was a discussion about what factors were used to account for evaporation. FLO-2D has the ability to account for variable mean monthly evaporation coefficients. Right now, FLO-2D uses a single factor, which is averaged for the entire reach. Jim and Doug will review the evaporation rates used in URGWOM to determine whether they would be appropriate to use in FLO-2D.
- The model from the Rio Chama confluence to Cochiti (approximately 32 river miles) is now running and Doug is developing the Rio Chama (from below Abiquiu to the confluence) model. All of the FLO-2D models will work independently with initial inputs from URGWOM.
- The FLO-2D model can now output duration of flood inundation for floodplain grid elements.
- To aid in determining in-channel flows, Deb Callahan will provide the dates of the aerial photos that were used for mapping the riparian vegetation so Doug and Jim can establish the channel configuration that existed at that time.
- Jim O'Brien reviewed the development of an add-on to FLO-2D that was requested by the Geomorphology Technical Team.
  - A new application computes channel hydraulics averaged for a given reach and a specific discharge. The discharge and bounding channel grid elements are user-selectable and the program interpolates between the grid elements to summarize variables for the selected reach.
  - The next step in the MRG FLO-2D modeling will be to take the hydrographs from the Planning Model, use them to run through FLO-2D, and provide initial outputs requested by the technical teams.
  - The Riparian and Wetlands Technical Team will most likely supply locations of interest to obtain some site-specific data from FLO-2D later.
- **Question**: Has the documentation for the FLO-2D model been developed?
  - **Answer**: The user's manual is available electronically and will be made available to the project. This manual is currently being updated and the new version (3.0) will be available later this summer.

- The Project Managers developed an EIS outline that lists the number of pages for each section. The limit for the body of the EIS is 135 pages, which includes maps but not appendices.
  - Rhea requested that **technical team members notify the Project Managers of any other activities or projects that should be added under Section 1.6 (Related Activities and Projects).**
  - **A List of Preparers is required by NEPA and must be added to the document outline. It is also necessary to add sections on Indian Trust Assets and Environmental Justice.**
  - Detailed technical data will be incorporated into technical reports and will not be part of the body of the EIS. Much of the information in the draft Chapter 3 sections from each technical team will be included in a technical report. This information will be summarized for the EIS.
  - The Biological Opinion must be part of the decision document.
- Technical team reports
  - Aquatic Systems—Bill Leibfried
    - The team is preparing the biological technical report with the Riparian and Wetlands Technical Team.
    - They have a new member from NM Department of Game and Fish, Mike Roedel, who is also on the Riparian and Wetlands Technical Team.
  - Water Quality—Jon Kehmeier
    - The next meeting will be held on May 14.
  - Socioeconomics, Land Use, Agriculture, Recreation, Environmental Justice—Tim Darden
    - The team plans to meet soon.
  - Riparian and Wetlands—Art Coykendall
    - The team plans to meet May 14 with the Aquatic Systems Technical Team.
  - Water Operations—Debbie Hathaway
    - The team has been keeping track of Planning Model progress.
    - A representative of the City of Albuquerque attended their last technical team meeting and discussed the potential storage of native water in Abiquiu. He also discussed the plans for the release of 65 cfs of San Juan-Chama water in 2006 for Albuquerque's drinking water project.
  - Cultural Resources—Neal Ackerly
    - Neal Ackerly offered to send out a reminder request to the pueblos that received the request to review the Water Quality Technical Team report that listed the standards they plan to use. They were seeking review and comment to ensure that the standards they planned to used for analysis are correct.
    - Neal noted that any new requests or reminders to tribes and pueblos from the technical teams should be submitted soon, before the summer religious season.

- Other agenda items
  - The Memorandum of Understanding for the ESA Collaborative Work Group Programmatic EIS should be signed within a few weeks. This analysis will address planned actions (management, science, research) over the next ten years. The scope is to address all actions planned to be accomplished with Work Group funds. The schedule calls for the Record of Decision to be signed in January 2004.
  - Deb Callahan pointed out that the Collaborative Work Group has not yet released the color infrared photography for use by URGWOPS technical teams. **William DeRagon and possibly Tim Darden will follow up with the Work Group to get it on their agenda.**
- Due to conflicts with professional meetings and conferences, the June ID NEPA Team meeting has been cancelled. The **next meeting will be held on July 10 at 1:00 p.m. in the Corps conference room.**