

**Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review  
Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; June 14, 2001; 1:00 PM;  
Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque**

*In attendance:*

Neal Ackerly, Corps/Dos Rios Consultants,  
Inc.

Scott Collins, Corps/Weston

Ellen Dietrich, Corps/SAIC

Richard Fike, Corps

Don Gallegos, Corps

Susan Goodan, Corps/SAIC

Rhea Graham, NMISC

Conrad Keyes, Jr., EWRI of ASCE

Dick Kreiner, Corps

Dagmar Llewellyn, SSP&A

Julie Maitland, NMDA

Natalie Maldonado, Corps/Weston

Art Martinez, BIA

Clay Mathers, Corps

Bill Miller, WJM Engineering, Inc.

Claudia Oakes, NMISC/SWCA

Robert Padilla, USBR

Gail Stockton, Corps

Rae VanHoven, NMSHTD

Scott Waltemeyer, USGS

Doug Wolf, Corps

- ❖ Gail Stockton announced that Leann Towne, who has been the URGWOPS Project Manager for USBR, will be taking a new job as Chief of Operations. Her replacement on the Water Operations Review will be Steve Kolk.
- ❖ Rhea Graham asked if anyone had any changes to be made in the notes from the last ID NEPA Team meeting. She will be requesting concurrence on the notes from the technical teams at each meeting.
- ❖ The presentation on geomorphology in the middle Rio Grande by Drew Baird will be rescheduled.
- ❖ Discussion followed on the updated Alternatives Development Matrix. The matrix is a preliminary draft that was distributed to discuss the details of the No Action Alternative. The information under this alternative has not yet been reviewed by the URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team and is subject to change.
  - The No Action Alternative has been defined from information from other technical teams and the Project Managers and will be used to characterize the existing conditions of water operations facilities. The Project Managers stressed the need to do a good job in describing the No Action Alternative because this will be used for comparison to evaluate potential changes under other alternatives.
  - Other discussion addressed some specific changes in wording, mostly related to the Goals.
  - **The Executive Committee stressed at their last meeting that all technical teams focus only on operations within the jurisdiction of existing authorities when developing their alternatives and work plans.**



- ❖ Rhea showed a slide presentation with photos and graphics that the Project Managers are adapting to explain the No Action Alternative and the other alternatives, when developed.

**Recommendations from the group included the following:**

- Move the cartoon to the beginning to explain the project and its difficult task.
- Use larger scale maps around reservoirs so more detail can be displayed, with locator map insets to show the location within the basin.
- Add tribal names in their relative locations, without boundaries.
- Develop and display a list of stakeholders. Eventually display them on a map.
- Add goals for each facility from the No Action Alternative in the matrix. These would be added to the slides with photos of facilities.
- Emphasize the background and scope of the project in a few review slides.
- Discuss the tools to be used in URGWOPS on the slide showing the railroad bridge at San Marcial, and show how the tools would be used to help analyze impacts.

- ❖ Technical Team reports and information

- **Rhea stressed the importance of having each technical team represented at every ID NEPA Team meeting. If the team leader is not available, arrangements should be made to have someone else on the team attend and be able to represent the team and report on the meeting.**

- Water Quality Technical Team—Rhea Graham reported for this team because the team leader had a conflicting meeting and was unable to arrange for another representative on short notice.

- The team met on June 13 and discussed GIS data and water quality database development.
- They have time series data for some locations that may be of use to other technical teams. **Other technical teams should consider adjusting their data collection locations to correspond with the locations of the water quality data** so there would be better data correlation and integration.

- Aquatic Systems Technical Team—Rick Fike

- At their last meeting on June 12, they refined the statement of work for the aquatic habitat model development. They also discussed the defensibility of the data collection sites and types of data to be collected.
- They have developed their alternatives matrix.

- URGWOM Integration/Water Operations—Don Gallegos

- Their next meeting will be moved to July 11 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps to avoid the holiday.
- Wayne Treers, El Paso USBR, will be available via teleconference to discuss Elephant Butte and Caballo.

- Riparian and Wetlands Technical Team—Claudia Oakes

- The team met on June 8 and refined the riparian habitat criteria.

- 
- They recognize that there is a lack of habitat data for the Rio Chama and the northern Rio Grande so they are looking for remote sensing data to use. **Clay Mathers may be able to locate suitable mapping or photography.**
- 
- They requested clarification of the Chapter 3 baseline guidance. Gail referred them to the Shipley book, handed out to each technical team previously, on how to prepare an EIS or EA. Three formats are listed there and the **Project Managers need to select one and inform the teams.**
- River Geomorphology—Robert Padilla
    - The team took a field trip to review river morphology from Abiquiu to Elephant Butte.
    - They have been working on characterizing channel forming flows, sediment condition, morphology, and bed material.
    - They are developing criteria for vegetative encroachment, sediment mobilization, and maintenance flows, and have described the goals and objectives for their resources.
    - The next technical team meeting will be held on June 25 at 1:30 p.m. at the USBR conference room.
  - Hydrology and Hydraulics Technical Team—Doug Wolf
    - Doug has continued working on developing the overbank flood routing model in the middle Rio Grande valley, which will be complete within the next few months.
    - He plans to develop data soon to generate the maps showing the potential impact from water operations in the floodplain that will be distributed to the tribes to identify the possible areas of impact to cultural concerns. GIS will generate the maps.
    - Grid development from Cochiti to the confluence with the Rio Chama is underway. He anticipates having running Flo2D models for the river between Velarde and Elephant Butte by the end of the year.
    - Dick Kreiner pointed out that it is necessary to evaluate sediment transport in the Rio Grande. This was followed by discussion with the River Geomorphology Technical Team on their role in developing this information to be used in impact analysis.
  - Cultural Resources Technical Team—Neal Ackerly
    - Several consultation meetings with tribal groups have been held during the last month to introduce the Water Operations Review, NEPA, and the Project Managers and cultural resources points of contact. Meetings were held with the Ten Southern Pueblos Council, and the Pueblos of Cochiti, Santo Domingo, and San Felipe. A meeting with the Eight Northern Pueblos Council will be held on June 18.
    - At the last technical team meeting, they discussed adding consultation with the Jicarilla Apache, Mescalero Apache, and Hopi Tribes, as well as the Pueblo of Zuni.
    - ▪ **Neal stressed the importance for the technical teams to treat all information obtained from tribes as sensitive. The team will be developing agreements with each tribe on how to obtain and use their data. Many tribes have their own confidentiality and privacy requirements that must be honored by everyone on all technical teams.**
    - ▪ **Gail will schedule a future presentation to the ID NEPA Team by government lawyers who will discuss the confidentiality issues.**

- ➔
  - The team leaders on this technical team will be the primary contacts with tribes for all interactions with other technical teams. **Initially, all requests for data and interaction with tribal groups will funnel through the Cultural Resources Technical Team.** Follow up meetings and contacts, once approved by the tribe, can be arranged by each team as needed.
- ➔
  - **Technical teams are requested to make data requests for tribes in writing to one of the Cultural Resources Technical Team leaders. Make sure that the requests are clearly stated and include a justification and description of how data would be used.**
- Land Use, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Recreation and Agriculture Technical Team—Susan Goodan
  - The team has not met recently, but has developed outlines for the affected environment sections on land use and socioeconomics.
  - The recreation alternatives in the matrix represent only non-tribal activities.
  - Socioeconomics information must be added to the matrix.
  - Agricultural issues will be evaluated for potential impacts to water deliveries resulting from changing water operations, but there will not be a separate agriculture alternative.
- GIS Technical Team—Clay Mathers
  - The team last met on May 31 and discussed forms developed to help the other teams draw and describe their analysis scenarios and how they would be analyzed using GIS. **Clay will distribute these forms to team leaders through e-mail.**
  - The intent of using these forms is to facilitate teams thinking about analysis and integration of GIS data across teams, once the data and uses are identified. On the forms, teams are requested to identify what spatial data they have and how it will be used.
  - GIS team liaisons will make themselves available to attend other technical team meetings to discuss this and to assist the teams in developing the scenarios. **Team leaders should invite these liaisons to their meetings if they plan to discuss GIS.**
- The draft Administrative Record Manual and entry forms have been posted on Team Link for use by the technical teams. They are encouraged to start completing the forms and sending them to Ellen Dietrich.
- ❖ The next ID NEPA Team meeting will be held on July 12 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District conference room.