

Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; July 8, 2004; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque

In Attendance:

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios/Corps
Robert Browning, II, Corps
Deb Callahan, USBR
Art Coykendall, USBR
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps
Darrell Eidson, Corps
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps
Mark Horner, Corps
Ernie Jahnke, Corps

Conrad Keyes, Jr., Consultant to Corps
Bill Leibfried, SWCA/NMISC
Colleen Logan, Weston/Corps
Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC
Nabil Shafike, NMISC
Gail Stockton, Corps
Valda Terauds, USBR
Larry White, USBR

- ❖ Gail Stockton chaired the meeting and requested that participants review the draft notes from the June meeting. The main purpose of this meeting was to review comments on the sections of PDEIS Chapters 3 and 4 and to discuss their status and schedule for completion.
 - Comments from the Project Managers were consolidated into a table that referenced page and line numbers of the hard copy versions of Chapters 3 and 4, all of which was distributed at the meeting.
 - Gail's instructions were for the technical teams to ignore editorial comments but pay attention to those regarding omissions and technical issues. In some cases, comments recommend figures or maps, and often missing source information that should be cited in the text or on the graphics.
 - **Things to remember when reviewing the sections and comments:**
 - In discussions of the impacts of the alternatives in chapter 4, **address the key indicators of effects.**
 - Include any **mitigation measures** necessary to address significant impacts under each alternative.
 - Include a **summary of cumulative effects** and where they would be expected to occur, based on other foreseeable actions in the basin. Chapter 2 lists the other projects to consider.
 - Each resource should assemble summary tables for a comparison of the effects of each alternative on their resources. An example was distributed that showed nine charts comparing how the alternatives ranked for different impacts to one resource.
 - Technical team leaders were also asked to identify acronyms and terms that should be defined in the glossary.
 - By close of business on **July 13, corrections and updates developed in response to the comments were required to be submitted** to Ellen Dietrich. Corrections should be made as hard-copy markups on the pages distributed at the meeting. If lengthy inserts are necessary, they may be submitted electronically, with a note on the hard copy to show where the text should be inserted. Any information that will be included, but is not available in time for the PDEIS should be briefly described with a note that it will be included in the DEIS.

- Any corrections not submitted by the July 13 deadline will not be incorporated into the PDEIS. However, technical teams should be aware that the PDEIS will be reviewed by their agencies and omissions may be noted as deficiencies.
- The Project Managers will review the status of Chapters 3 and 4 next Thursday, July 15.
- ❖ Claudia Oakes reviewed the NEPA concept of context and intensity.
 - In the first part of Chapter 4, environmental consequences, it is important to describe how impacts were determined and to define the context and intensity that may cause a resource impact to be considered significant. When describing impacts under each alternative, the resources sections should then refer back to this first section.
 - **The effects on each resource should be described in terms of their importance in relation to the overall condition and impact to the resource.**
 - The percent change should also be considered to assess whether it is within the margin of error in the analysis. Technical teams should pay attention to whether the difference in impacts between alternatives is outside the margin of error.
- ❖ Valda Terauds reviewed how the alternatives currently compare using high-medium-low impacts derived from the decision criteria data. She will develop this further and send out to the technical teams for review before incorporating into the PDEIS. This will feed into the Environmental Justice impact analysis.
- ❖ Tech Team reports and other issues
 - The Water Operations Technical Team is making the new URGWOM run for the No Action Alternative with diversions to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel (LFCC) and a new run with conservation storage in Abiquiu for Alternative B3 to determine if there would be water available to supplement low flows at San Acacia for threatened and endangered species.
 - Both runs will be used to provide a clearer understanding of T&E species would be affected to help the technical teams decide if mitigation measures should be proposed. The Special Status Species section of Chapter 4 will not be completed until the new URGWOM runs are done.
 - Deb Callahan brought plots showing the FLO-2D grid cells under each alternative that would be inundated by at least a 0.5-foot depth in the overbank areas. She will provide shapefiles of the flooded grid cells with attributes indicating the total number of days flooded under each alternative. **Deb asked the technical team representatives to review the plots and note any areas that look unlikely or incorrect, based on their knowledge of the area.**
 - The Aquatic Habitat Model final report should be available soon. Only the Executive Summary should be included in the Technical Report in the appendix of the EIS. For any other details, a reference should be made in the narrative to the complete report.
 - **All technical reports should be submitted by close of business on July 13**, before the Project Managers' final review.
 - Mark Horner reported that he has been meeting with tech team representatives to review their entries for the data quality worksheets. He should have this completed by the end of July so the information can be summarized for inclusion in the PDEIS.
- ❖ **It is unlikely that there will be an August ID NEPA Team meeting, so the next meeting may be scheduled for September 9.**