

Full Stream Ahead

News and Highlights from Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management

May-August, 2005

Riparian Coordination Network Meeting

The National Riparian Service Team will once again be hosting the biennial Riparian Coordination Network Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for November 8-10, 2005 at the Silver Legacy Hotel in Reno, Nevada. To make your hotel reservation call The Silver Legacy at 1-800-687-8733 and use code LM117 in order to receive the group rate of \$49.00 per night. To take advantage of this rate, reservations must be made **by October 18, 2005**. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to carol_connolly@or.blm.gov. The conference will begin at 8:00 am on November 8th and end at 12:30 pm on November 10th. The afternoon of November 10 is optional time that has been reserved for participants to meet with Riparian Coordination Network members and other invited guests in order to discuss site-specific projects and needs and possible ways to better support each other's efforts.

These are working meetings designed to increase and enhance the ability of the Riparian Coordination Network to effectively implement the Creeks & Communities strategy. Presentations will be given by agency partnership/collaboration leaders, university specialists and non-government organizations and there will be ample networking opportunities. Participants will build awareness of the larger context of the strategy including specific ways to integrate science and the social dimension using very concrete steps and examples. Speakers will also address how the Creeks and Communities Strategy can be applied to meet agency goals as well as day to day program needs. A portion of the meeting has also been set aside for finalizing FY2006-2007 work plans.

For more information contact Carol Connolly at (541) 416-6892 or Carol_Connolly@or.blm.gov

Wyoming Field Days

The National Riparian Service Team (NRST) recently completed an assistance trip to several field office locations in Wyoming. Their visit included sites within the Rock Springs, Lander, and Rawlins BLM Field Offices, and the Washakie Ranger District of the Shoshone National Forest. Mark Gorges, WY Interagency Riparian Cadre and BLM Riparian Program Coordinator, recently requested that NRST conduct a series of 'field days' within the state. He asked Cadre members and also others who are actively using the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) for Riparian-Wetland Areas assessment method,

to participate. The Creeks and Communities approach emphasizes working with all landowners and managers on a watershed scale to build understanding of riparian-wetland systems using common terms and definitions. The foundation tool used for this is the PFC assessment method. Also, the concepts and principles of riparian-wetland function, as well as PFC assessments, are the foundation of the BLM's Riparian-Wetland Program.

The objectives for the 3 field days were to: (1) help people get re-grounded in the context of PFC, both as an assessment and communication tool, (2) reinforce various aspects of conducting assessments, and (3) foster consistency and quality control. Participants were given the opportunity to express what was working well for them and to address issues they are having difficulty with. Don Prichard (BLM National Science and Technology Center) and Wayne Elmore (Retired BLM Riparian Specialist) were able to give people a first hand account of program and tool development, as well as a long term perspective, illustrating just how far the awareness and management of riparian resources has come in the last two decades. Each day the following topics were covered:

- History of why and how PFC was developed, and where and how it is being used today
- Definitions and concepts of 'potential' and 'capability' and the importance of understanding attributes and processes to the appropriate use of PFC
- Pre-work - what kind, how much, and relationship to the quality of assessment results
- PFC Checklist and Summary Determinations

Beyond the topics previously listed, additional items were emphasized with each group:

- Assessment is not done for assessment's sake but rather to provide information that guides management and monitoring, reinforcing the need for a quality job
- Use of aerial photos, especially a series that will show change over time
- Thorough notes on the PFC checklist along with ID Team discussion is critical
- ID Teams monitor how they are implementing PFC assessments and use the technical references for guidance, particularly the intent of each attribute explanation.

Where things are working well, hydrology and vegetation skills are adequately represented on ID Teams and ID Teams have the support of their Manager. Some stated that employee tenure was a factor in building stronger working relationships to successfully address issues. While participants relayed that they have used PFC to solve problems, both internally and externally, some factors surfaced that do affect the quantity and quality of assessments:

- Too few people with riparian vegetation identification skills
- Inability to adequately staff ID Teams with enough disciplines represented
- Intermixed private/public land and ability to assess and manage as a whole system
- The need for a corporate database for PFC assessment information (reporting and information sharing)
- A recurring theme concerning heavy workloads and lack of time and money to do a quality job upfront and yet spending much more later in litigation

The NRST found that people generally value and have a good grasp of the PFC method. It has definitely enhanced interdisciplinary understanding and continues to serve as a strong foundational process. Furthermore, the Creeks and Communities approach has provided a framework for expanding awareness and understanding of riparian-wetland resources through the work of the State Cadres who are helping to create a common vocabulary with the instruction of PFC within, and beyond federal and state agencies.

PFC and Grazing Management Workshop at Lehi, Utah

A PFC workshop was held at Lehi, UT August 22-24. This was preceded by a special evening session for producers from the West Canyon Group and included a brief overview of how streams function as well as grazing management tools, techniques and strategies for achieving compatible use in riparian-wetland areas. Twenty-two people attended the 2-day PFC session that was presented by Steve Smith, Mark Petersen, and Mindy Pratt of the Utah Team, along with Sandy Wyman of the NRST. The Utah Team has started conducting their PFC training sessions in conjunction with a specific issue or area of concern. This allows the Utah Team to provide additional assistance with open discussion using a common vocabulary.

Collaboration – An Evolving Movement

On a recent trip to northeast Nevada, the NRST had the opportunity to meet and spend time with people deeply committed to the principles and practices of collaboration. The individuals involved represented federal and state agencies, universities, interested citizens, environmental activists, professional societies, and long time ranching families.

Together they are seeking solutions to a myriad of problems on both public and private land. Through facilitated processes, issues are being identified and addressed and progress is being made following group norms established over time, by trial and error. Relationships are the glue helping them hold the course when purpose and intentions are tested. Similar interactions are playing out at various locations throughout the country and yet their effectiveness is influenced by what may best be classified as both institutional and individual barriers. There is evidence that even when the 'best' people are involved, there are struggles and tensions to be reckoned with. And while individuals will state that they would never go back to the way they used to communicate, handle problems, etc. there tends to be an ever present tendency to pull back to those default positions.

Incentives and disincentives for collaboration exist, and recent experiences have led to an awareness and examination of several aspects relative to some of these. It is important to recognize that current organizational cultures (and bureaucracies in general) do not create time and priority for collaborative stewardship. Presently there are few incentives or performance standards for acting outside traditional approaches. The institutionalization process, hierarchical structures of authority and decision making, and existing workforce constraints all present barriers to collaboration. The budget and performance structures still lack the mechanisms for reporting the benefits gained from participation in collaborative activities. Decision making authorities can inhibit exchange of ideas and hinder the type of flexibility and adaptability needed to support innovative solutions generated through more inclusive processes. Organizational downsizing has resulted in

fewer people with expanded duties, less time, and increased stress. A majority of employees are trained in 'hard' science and as a result, many of the skills needed for effective collaboration are not found within the existing agencies' workforce.

These same characteristics also provide the focus for accelerating efforts to improve this evolving movement of collaboration. Following are suggestions:

Institutionalization Processes

- Identify and institutionalize appropriate performance standards for collaborative activities, including short and long-term indicators for various levels of success.
- Demonstrate the value of process and product with increased focus on how work gets done and less reliance on 'widget counting' (or a focus on units of accomplishment).
- Create an institutional culture that rewards risk and innovation by endorsing on-going efforts, sharing experiences, providing recognition and visible rewards for success, and drawing lessons from less successful efforts.

Hierarchical System of Authority and Decision-Making

- Provide a clear and consistent message explaining what collaboration is and that it is a priority as a way of doing business across all organizational levels, functions and positions.
- Support innovative activities occurring across all organization levels.
- Encourage communication and coordination between higher organizational levels and employees working to build partnerships on the ground.

Workforce Constraints

- Incorporate collaboration as part of job duties and performance packages.
- Make concerted efforts to hire more employees with training and skills in applied social science while supporting employee participation in training and activities designed to increase their collaborative skills.
- Work to enhance flexibility and use of existing mechanisms for sharing resources across disciplines, programs, districts, and jurisdictional boundaries.

The challenges and the opportunities lie in creating awareness of a broad range of collaborative principles, setting a foundation for valuing collaborative processes and motivating people to examine and shift their beliefs to those necessary for supporting collaborative behavior. Some people have embraced collaboration and it gets done (and gets done right) because they have the will, ability, and support to do it. Others do not want to collaborate. In the end, each individual makes a personal decision to engage in collaborative decision-making because it does or does not benefit them. This is important to understand, because one of the key components of successful collaboration is that people come to the table voluntarily. If individuals are unwilling to participate under the

current structure, it is important to re-create that structure to remove barriers and encourage participation in collaborative activities.

The following article was submitted by Joni Vanderbilt, Wenatchee National Forest, illustrating key aspects and outcomes of a successful and continuing collaborative effort in that area.

“WHISKEY’S FOR DRINKING, WATER’S FOR FIGHTING OVER”

Mark Twain’s famous quote is printed on the ribbons tied around the celebratory one-shot whiskey bottles handed out during the finalization of the Entiat Watershed Plan. The Entiat Planning Group, however, has proved that this statement does not always hold true in the west. The daunting inch-thick plan, the results of 13 years of labor, synthesizes the numerous scientific studies sponsored by the group, the history of land use in the basin, results from years of monitoring, and numerous restoration plans for the Entiat Watershed. It is an amazing compendium of the state of knowledge put together by a diverse range of individuals ranging from local landowners, environmental organization representatives, and federal, tribal, and state employees. But the group is not resting on their laurels; they continue to plug away at implementing the plan. The instream flows agreed upon in the plan will be cemented into State of Washington administrative code through a formal ‘rule-making’ process during the spring of 2005. Grants for the restoration of a reach of the Entiat are being pursued and stream surveys are being completed in anticipation of this exciting project. And the group continues to participate in larger efforts in Chelan County towards salmon recovery as well as diffusing a potential conflict regarding recreational angling in the Entiat. They make it look easy. Of course, it wasn’t always like this and many factors have come together to make the Entiat Watershed Planning Group the much heralded model of success that it is today.

One of the pivotal events occurred in 1992 when a valley orchardist cleared vegetation from within the ordinary high water line without a permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The ensuing hub-bub resulted in a rift between Entiat Valley Landowners and the WDFW that quickly spread to encompass all ‘bureaucrats’. The listing of several species of fish as endangered was on the horizon and there was heightened concern amongst the landowners about increased regulation of water rights and erosion of private property rights in the name of fisheries protection. One of the local landowners, concerned about the adversarial atmosphere, advocated for a more cooperative and organized approach to ensure that locals had a say in how the Entiat Watershed would be managed in the future. Within a year, a watershed group was formed. Today the orchardists speak confidently about juvenile chinook rearing habitat and look forward to planting riparian vegetation along the river bank. Likewise, the biologists have a better understanding of the challenges facing orchardists and what it takes to retain agricultural lands within the watershed.

From the beginning, the Forest Service has had a strong voice in the Planning Group. The recovery of anadromous salmon and bull trout, something the agency has a vested interest in, requires stepping outside the green line. With the implementation of the Plan, the chances of recovery within the Entiat Watershed will be vastly increased largely by

addressing issues on private land. Additionally, because of the Plan's strategy for recovery, the river will not be included on the State's 303(d) list for exceeding temperature and therefore this issue will not complicate future forest projects. The less quantifiable benefit is the change from an adversarial atmosphere in the Entiat Valley, to one where local landowners, environmental groups and state and federal agencies work together cooperatively.

For more information on the Entiat Plan visit the following Website:

<http://www.chelancd.org/watershed.htm>

Riparian-Wetland Soils

Excerpt taken from: Lewis, L., L. Clark, R. Krapf, M. Manning, J. Staats, T. Subirge, L. Townsend, and B. Ypsilantis. 2003. Riparian area management: Riparian-wetland soils. Technical Reference 1737-19. Bureau of Land Management, Denver, Co. BLM/ST/ST-03/001+1737. 109 pp.

“Riparian-wetland areas are more dynamic than uplands. They change dramatically, and often, in relatively short time periods. They can be influenced by flooding (either temporary or more long-term, as when caused by beavers); deposition of sediment on streambanks and floodplains; accumulation of organic materials in areas such as wet meadows, swamps, and bogs; dewatering by a variety of means (for example, irrigation, diversions); and changes in actual channel location.

The overall distribution and makeup of plant and animal communities is a reflection of these dynamic processes. Floods, in particular, result not only in the erosion of established vegetation and animals, but also in the deposition of substrates where colonization and succession of plant species begin again. Over time, these events create complex patterns of soils and ground-water dynamics that direct the development of specialized riparian vegetation and animal communities. The support and benefit of wildlife to riparian-wetland soils is not always passive. Many animals, such as “annelid worms” (elongated, segmented worms) and “oligochaete worms” (class of hermaphroditic worms without specialized heads), crayfish, small mammals, and mollusks also augment the function of riparian-wetland soils by creating burrows and tunnels that provide conduits for oxygen and water movement. These conduits assist in oxygenating the soil, as well as contributing to the development of hydric soil features.

As a result of these dynamic properties, each riparian-wetland has its own unique characteristics and level of ability to withstand natural and human-induced stress (Buckhouse and Elmore 1993). The natural variation of riparian-wetland areas is an important consideration in understanding and subsequently managing these areas. Knowledge of physical riparian-wetland components – geology, soils, hydrology, and vegetation – is also essential to perceiving and comprehending the significant variations among riparian-wetland areas” (Lewis, L. et al, 2003:21).

For more information on this subject, refer to the Riparian-Wetland's chapter in Technical Reference 1737-19, Riparian-Wetland Soils. If you do not have the publication, request a

copy from BLM National Business Center. Email: blm_ncs_pmds@blm.gov. Make sure to include the reference number, as well as a physical mailing address and phone number.

Additional soils information:

1.) <http://soils.usda.gov> "Helping People Understand Soils." While on the website, check out the topics offered under "Quick Access."

2) <http://www.texasriparian.org/riverbanks.htm>

New Website for MIM

Following is the new website for the Riparian Multiple Indicator Monitoring methodology (MIM) developed by Ervin Cowley and Tim Burton, BLM, Idaho. They have been conducting training sessions throughout several states this summer. Designed specifically for use in riparian areas that are grazed, this method integrates short and long-term vegetation and streambank monitoring protocols.

<http://fswb.boise-nf.r4.fs.fed.us/swarm/Range/MIM.htm>

If you have specific questions, or ideas for future articles, please contact Carol Connolly at (541)416-6892 or email at carol_connolly@or.blm.gov