



Full Stream Ahead

March/April 2009

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

A Progress Report on the Creeks and Communities Strategy

A new document has just been published that reports on the Creeks and Communities effort during the first 5 years (2003-2007) of implementing the revised strategy. In 2002, the original strategy was revised based on the findings of an extensive program evaluation covering activities during the period of 1997-2001 that identified a number of shortcomings and challenges. The revisions addressed the need to incorporate more of the principles and practices for dealing with human and social dimensions and to improve the blend and balance of technology transfer and problem solving within activities. One of the primary changes within the new strategy was an increased focus on service trips as a vehicle for achieving cooperative riparian restoration and management.

Service trips are a combination of training and place-based problem solving efforts that are designed to address the technical dimensions of riparian-wetland related issues while at the same time recognizing and addressing the social context within which these issues exist. Service trips often occur over a series of phases and emphasize incorporating and facilitating respectful communication across a diverse range of stakeholders while also involving the appropriate mix of natural resource specialists. Given the important role of service trips in the revised strategy, this progress report is designed to highlight this type of assistance and shed light on what it looks like on the ground. The document includes a description of the Creeks and Communities strategy, a summary of network activities, detailed case studies conveying the application of the principles and practices that characterize the strategy, and a synopsis of all service trips and extended training activities undertaken by the network.

Note: Copies of the Progress Report will soon be distributed to the Creeks and Communities Network. If you have any questions or have an immediate need for copies, please contact Carol Connolly at 541-416-6892, carol_connolly@or.blm.gov, or Susan Holtzman at 503-808-2987, skholtzman@fs.fed.us.

Save the Date - 2010 Creeks & Communities Network Conference

The National Riparian Service Team will once again be hosting the biennial Riparian Coordination Network Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for March 2-4, 2010 at a location that is yet to be determined. These are working meetings designed to increase and enhance the ability of the Riparian Coordination Network to effectively implement the Creeks & Communities strategy. A portion of the meeting will be set aside for finalizing FY2010-2011 state work plans.

Society for Range Management (SRM) High School Youth Forum

Members of the SRM Watershed/Riparian Committee and Creeks & Communities Network (Sherm Swanson, Jim Eisner, Roy Jemison, Michelle Buzalusky, Janice Staats) were as entertaining as we could be as we presented a riparian workshop to the High School Youth Forum at the SRM annual meeting in Albuquerque, NM. We were trying to be entertaining because we knew the twenty-two students had about 4 hours of sleep the night before the workshop. This is our fourth time being involved with teaching the SRM High School Youth Forum attendees about riparian function and management concepts. We have learned that one way to keep them engaged and awake is to present information, and then have a contest/quiz to repeat and reinforce the material. This year, we only had one hour, so we focused on these key messages:

- There are different types of streams, so depending on the situation, vegetation, landform, or large woody material is needed to dissipate stream energy associated with high waterflows. Many streams we deal with in rangeland management require riparian-wetland vegetation for physical function.
- The amount of root mass of plants living on a streambank is important for buffering the forces of water.
- A common understanding and vocabulary about riparian function helps people work together even if they have very different value systems.
- If you see conflict because of a riparian-wetland issue, think about what would help that group reach agreement (reflecting back to the first three bullets).

Students completed a written evaluation after the workshop for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to measure perceptual knowledge gained. Results show that most of the students already knew about the value of riparian areas, and about general erosion and runoff relationships. Most of them learned *new* information about the importance of vegetation, landform, or large woody material to dissipate stream energy, and how a riparian area acts like a “sponge” soaking up water (water infiltrates into the soil) during moderate to high stream flow events, and releases it later to plants or to channels for later season stream flow. About half of them learned *new* information about root mass differences and importance for holding streambanks.

The SRM High School Youth Forum program began in 1966. High school age delegates are selected for participation in the Forum by the Sections of the Society for Range Management based on their interest, achievements and activities in range and natural resource management at the Section level. The youth and organizers have a very busy week at the annual meeting with an orientation and social, field tour, professional interaction dinner, paper presentations, business meeting, and a workshop.

The organizers give a strong challenge to the youth to use what they have learned when they return home. This is something we should all be doing in our own riparian workshops whether teaching adults or youth.

Crook County School District Natural Resources Education Program, Oregon

Crook County School District in central Oregon is developing a Natural Resources Education Program that they hope will become an example for other rural school districts to follow. They have adopted their local catchment/watershed (Crooked River) as a place for learning about natural resources that involve multiple disciplines. They want the students to apply a variety of academic skills to understand watershed processes, change, and issues. These skills will enable students to appreciate the reasoning and effectiveness of existing natural resources management strategies and to develop their own dialogue, research and presentation skills to communicate their gained understanding. Every student will have a meaningful outdoor experience in the watershed before graduation from high school. Students will integrate critical-thinking skills, the scientific method, and communication skills to study natural resources and natural resource issues. The goal is that this program will result in awareness and skills that students can apply in any watershed in which they may live, including skills that are transferable to many professions, an enhanced desire to seek more knowledge and education at a higher level, and a basis for an ethic of responsible citizen-stewardship.

This dovetails right into the youth education emphasis of both the USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management. Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell's emphasizes reconnecting people, especially kids to nature (<http://www.fs.fed.us/emphasis/>). The BLM has recently published [Holding onto the Green Zone – A Youth Program for the Study and Stewardship of Community Riparian Areas](#) that advises teachers to involve local natural resource professionals and other community experts in teaching students about riparian-wetland areas (http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Education_in_BLM/riparian_module.html).

The Crooked River Watershed Council, local government agencies, and non-governmental organizations are partnering with the school district to provide mentors and visiting instructor days both in the classroom and in the field. The National Riparian Service Team got involved in two events during the 2008-2009 school years which highlight Creeks & Communities blend of natural resource and social sciences – (1) Two high school students attended Consensus Institute December 2-4, 2008, and (2) we presented a riparian function workshop to three science classes at the high school March 17-19, 2009.

1) Consensus Institute III

The Consensus Institute Scarcity Module was a concentrated 3-day workshop where people learned basic facilitation process tools for managing conflict and developing consensus in a highly experiential training approach. It introduced participants to the skills, attitudes and understanding needed to manage behaviors and conflicts that result from moving from an environment of plenty to one of scarcity. Participants learned to help others recognize and acknowledge the behaviors that result from scarcity, develop the ability to identify and ask the right questions, and make decisions that create richness in the environment and allow others to move from their worst fears to identifying and affirming the outcomes they want. They also learned the power that survival, or lower needs, have over consensus seeking and how to develop the ability to move people to higher level needs. Finally, participants learned how “purpose” has the power to move people through scarcity, that prioritization fosters scarcity thinking, while abundance thinking can allow people to do the impossible task... to get all of the needs accomplished. Everyone who attended the December Consensus Institute module on scarcity agreed that having the two young people from the local high school in the mix of participants enhanced their own learning experience. It was a great reminder of the value of age diversity into problem solving in many situations and to work toward creating this.

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2) Riparian Function Workshop

Prior to the workshop, the science teacher had the students read Holding onto the Green Zone Action Guide – A Youth Program for the Study and Stewardship of Community Riparian Areas (BLM and University of Wisconsin-Extension 2008). This was both for an introduction to the material, but also for future use of the the guides because the high school students are required to teach middle school and elementary school classes to pass the knowledge on.

The first day of the riparian function workshop was in the classroom and the challenge was to present information within the regular class schedule of 1 hour 10 minutes per period. Half the lecture was about how the interaction of vegetation, water, soil/landform shapes a channel and maintains the connection to a floodplain. The other half of the lecture was about important characteristics of riparian-wetland vegetation. The next two days were in the field at two sites within 15 minutes walking distance of the school. The first field day was spent at the Crooked River where students were put into small groups that collected information about bottom substrate sizes, streambank and floodplain substrate sizes, herbaceous vegetation, and woody vegetation. Each group presented what they found and helped determine what Greenline Riparian Capability Group the site represents using percent stream gradient and substrate classes, and learning what percent of the greenline should be covered by late seral community types or anchored rocks/logs when at ecological potential (Winward, A.H. 2000. Monitoring the vegetation resources in riparian areas. USDA Forest Service. Rocky Mountain Research Station. General Technical Report RMRS-GTR-47, Appendix A, page 34. NOTE: The paragraph in Appendix A has an error and should state: Values in parentheses refer to percent of the greenline that should be represented by late seral community types or anchored rocks/logs when riparian areas fitting each capability group are at ecological potential). During the second field day, the class was on a channelized reach of Ochoco Creek. Students were asked what pieces and parts of physical function could be added back into the area to improve physical functionality and habitat within the capability of the site.

State and Provincial Riparian Teams – Please consider sharing your youth education efforts with the Network via newsletter articles and during our next Network Meeting so we can learn from each other. There are many different youth education opportunities/situations to accommodate so the more detail you can provide, the better

Website of Interest

The latest technical papers from the Riparian/Wetland Project at the Aberdeen Plant Material Center (PMC) are found at <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/idpmc/riparian.html>. These are the latest papers from the continuing technology transfer effort on wetland and riparian issues at the PMC. Please contact Chris Hoag, Wetland Plant Ecologist at USDA NRCS, Aberdeen PMC, ID, (208)397-4133 or chris.hoag@id.usda.gov if you have any questions or have other items of topics that you would like to see addressed by the PMC.

Full Stream Ahead

Is there something you would like to see in a future issue of *Full Stream Ahead*? If so, send an email to nrst@or.blm.gov. The NRST utilizes this newsletter to share highlights, news and hot topics that pertain to the Creeks and Communities Strategy. This newsletter is for the entire network and we encourage you to send in ideas,

The National Riparian Service Team can be contacted at:



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