

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

“NRST Mentoring Opportunities”

A message from
Steve Smith, NRST Team Leader



Dear colleagues and friends,

With the field season now behind us, as expected, 2010 was indeed a very busy year for the team as I imagine it was for many of you as well. One of the greatest aspects of my job is the diversity of management units, people, and landscapes that I am privileged to work with to help improve riparian resources. Each of these experiences are tremendous learning opportunities; not only for the unit, but for the team as well. That being said, we are becoming increasingly interested in sharing these learning opportunities with the network. Although we frequently ask network members to assist us, please understand that you, as network members, are welcome to accompany us in a learning capacity on many of our service assignments. If you are a member of a state team, most of you should be aware of NRST assignments within your state and may have been involved in the past; however, you may not be as aware of other assignments we take – particularly those that do not occur in your state.

Building the capacity for communities to solve complex issues surrounding riparian resources is a central tenant of the Creeks and Communities Strategy. It also includes providing opportunities for network members to increase their skills and abilities in order to better serve the state riparian teams and perhaps eventually be considered for a future position on the NRST (believe it or not, we will retire someday!). I think this is a timely topic since many are in the process of drafting training and development plans. If you are interested in a career path that includes Creeks and Communities and would like to be considered for this kind of mentoring, please contact me or a member of the team and we can discuss possible opportunities.

Thanks for all you do and if any of you ever need us to provide letters of support or telephone calls on your behalf for your work in Creeks and Communities, please let us know. I can be reached at 541-416-6703 or steven_smith@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Steve

2010 Secretary of Interior’s “Partners in Conservation” Award

September 30th, in a special ceremony in Washington, D.C., Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Bob Abbey presented USDI Secretarial “Partners in Conservation” Awards to four BLM coordinated partnership efforts including the interagency National Riparian Service Team (NRST). The awards honor external and Internal agency partnerships that promote the conservation of America’s cherished landscapes, preserve natural and cultural resources, bring innovative approaches to resource management, and engage diverse entities – including youth – in accomplishing the mission of



BLM National Riparian Service Team: Steven Smith, Team Leader and Rangeland/Riparian Specialist, BLM National Riparian Service Team, OR; **Laura Van Riper**, Social Scientist, BLM National Riparian Service Team, OR; and BLM Director **Bob Abbey**.

the Department of Interior. The NRST received recognition for their significant efforts in fostering a collaborative and partnership culture within and across Departmental organizations, including building capacity for collaboration and partnerships and promoting internal coordination. Through implementation of the interagency Creeks and Communities Strategy, the team, along with a network of individuals and organizations, serves a diverse clientele with a focus on building capacity through training, place-based problem solving and mentoring aimed at fostering cooperative management of riparian-wetland resources west-wide. The Creeks and Communities approach serves as a model for dealing with natural resource conflicts and facilitating integration of technical information into collaborative decision making. In conferring the awards,

Director Abbey remarked, “The Partners in Conservation Awards recognize that our greatest conservation legacies often emerge when diverse stakeholder, agencies, and citizens come together to address shared challenges and to act on a mutual commitment to conservation and community.”

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, questions and articles for us to publicize.

“Healthy Streams Through Bringing People Together”

THE CONSENSUS INSTITUTE DIVERSITY MODULE

December 7-9, 2010 ♦ Prineville, Oregon

The National Riparian Service Team and the National Landscape Conservation System is sponsoring the fourth module of the Consensus Institute. The diversity module is a concentrated three day workshop where people will learn basic process tools for managing conflict and developing consensus in a highly experiential training approach. Participants will learn by doing and, at the conclusion of the session, will be capable of working within their own groups and communities to apply the lessons learned. While the diversity module builds upon the past three modules (conflict & change, power & stereotypes, and scarcity); it can also stand alone, enabling the participation of individuals who did not attend previous sessions.

Diversity exists in all spheres of our environment, and is a consistent, upfront motivator for conflict. Differences exist not only in race, religion, gender, age, mental and physical ability, but also in the beliefs, values and information base as well as profession, organization, role, etc. The Diversity Module allows the participants to experience the conflict resulting from diversity, as well as the potential that lies in inclusion, or tapping that diversity for its perception, its information, and its knowledge. Participants will learn how to acknowledge diversity, the impacts it has, and to move those diverse viewpoints to a common solution; one that creates understanding, tolerance and higher performance levels for the participants and others with whom they live and work. Participants will also explore the underlying theory for consensus building; how it works in the human brain, how to convene groups of people around conflicts, preparing to lead people in workshops, how to match the kinds of conflicts with the various process tools; and above all, to learn to trust oneself in helping others.

As in previous years, the session will be held at Brothers Diner conference room in Prineville, Oregon from 8am-5pm (plus "homework") each day, and a block of rooms will be held at the government rate at the Stafford Inn (541-447-7100). If you would like to participate or have questions, please contact Laura Van Riper at laura_van_riper@blm.gov or 541-416-6702.

Grazing Management for Riparian-Wetland Areas Sponsorship and Mentor Requests

It is time once again to put out the call for sponsorship of the [Grazing Management for Riparian-Wetland Areas Course](#). This course is designed to meet local resource and management needs and is provided in an interdisciplinary setting. The 3-day course offers a curriculum, designed by members of the Creeks & Communities Network, which complements the Interagency Technical Reference 1737-20 titled *Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian-Wetland Areas*. The intent of this course is to facilitate the application of the principles and practices of riparian compatible livestock grazing by establishing a foundation of understanding upon which people can collectively address opportunities and solve problems. Participants learn to develop riparian resource objectives and design grazing management strategies that are practical and foster sustainable conditions. Collaborative planning, the need for focused monitoring, and adaptive management are emphasized, along with success through operator commitment.

Go to <http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst/grazing.php> for a copy of the sponsorship request form, a sample agenda, and an electronic copy of TR 1737-20. Please contact Sandy Wyman, NRST, (541)416-6886 or sandra_wyman@blm.gov if you have any questions regarding course costs and site requirements. We will send out information regarding course locations and dates to the network. Each grazing course provides a unique set of circumstances as related to local issues and conditions. We also plan to continue to provide **mentoring** opportunities for course trainers. Let Sandy know if you are interested in becoming a member of the riparian-wetland grazing management training team!

"Healthy Streams Through Bringing People Together"

Riparian Function Workshops for Lubbock, TX - NRCS Zone 1 September 22-23, 2010

The National Riparian Service Team and Texas Riparian Team partnered to fill a request from the Lubbock, TX NRCS Zone 1 to introduce NRCS employees and stakeholders to riparian attributes and processes. Steve Nelle (NRCS Wildlife Biologist), Ken Mayben (NRCS Engineer), Wayne Elmore (Full Stream Ahead Consulting Riparian Specialist), and Janice Staats (National Riparian Service Team Hydrologist) taught two one-day workshops, one in Clarendon at Diamond Tails Ranch (home of Dr. Curtis) and Lake Creek field site, the other in Matador at the public library and South Pease River field site. Stan Bradbury coordinated local logistics and picked two very good field sites to demonstrate riparian function attributes (see photo 1 and 2); 81 people attended.

Highlights from the workshops:

- Stan started out the workshops by letting everyone know about the September 2010 NRCS riparian guidance in General Manual Title 190 – Ecological Sciences, Part 411 – Riparian Area Recognition and Management. You can see the one page manual guidance at <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=18913>.
- Wayne Elmore created a presentation on riparian myths, and used science references and photographs to debunk those myths. It was a very effective introductory presentation for the workshops.
- When introducing people to riparian attributes and processes, it is helpful to show them a riparian area that is in healthy condition so they can visually see what it looks like for that particular stream type, sometimes even if it is a relatively small, fenced-in right-of-way as we saw on South Pease River (see photo 2).
- After the second workshop we had a close-out where each participant was asked what they learned and how they felt about the workshop. Having the participants hear each other's perspectives on riparian function and how they will use this information in their work was a very important part of the workshop. Wish we would have done one the first day too.



Steve Nelle pointing out vegetation attributes at the Clarendon workshop, Diamond Tails Ranch, on Lake Creek.



South Pease River right-of-way has very dense vegetation. It is a small area, but a good place to take people new to riparian function because they can see the type and amount of vegetation that can grow there.

After the workshop, Stan Bradbury reported hearing a lot of positive feedback from the participants, and believes everyone that attended would welcome more riparian information. He even had some folks come up asking how they could get involved and be a part of the Texas Riparian Team! He said it was one of the best trainings they have had in his Zone.

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Coaching BLM and Forest Service Field Units on Conducting Proper Functioning Condition Assessments - Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Colorado—October 18-21, 2010

Over the past 14 years, hundreds of Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment workshops have been conducted by members of the Creeks and Communities Network. However, more and more, the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) is receiving requests to coach BLM and Forest Service field units that want to gain experience by conducting PFC assessments with experienced PFC assessment practitioners. This article is about a recent experience with this type of request.

Recently, the Manager and the interdisciplinary team from the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in southwestern Colorado, requested assistance from the NRST to work through questions they had after conducting PFC assessments on some intermittent/interrupted streams. In addition, Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) provided partial funding for this effort with the added objective of the NRST coaching Monument employees on building community capacity for collaborative decision making. Monument personnel are using PFC assessments in determining compliance with Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and to gather information about riparian areas for their grazing allotment planning documents. (http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/grazing/rm_stds_guidelines.html). Also, the Colorado and Arizona Riparian Teams wanted to work with the NRST to experience coaching a field unit on this type of a project so the instructor team consisted of: Janice Staats, Mark Gonzalez, Mike Lunn, Steve Leonard (NRST); Jay Thompson, Carl Chambers, Liz Schnackenberg (CO Team), and Dave Smith (AZ Team).



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Geologist explaining the geology of the Colorado Plateau and the field site to the group.

In order to meet the coaching needs of the Monument's interdisciplinary team, we knew we needed to limit the number of people that would be in the field, for two reasons: (1) it is difficult for a large group to walk along together to keep focused on riparian attributes and processes, and to learn from each other, and (2) the field sites in question were logistically and physically difficult to access. The field sites were far from the office, required use of four-wheel drive vehicles and hiking in steep terrain. To meet NLCS's objectives, we needed to have a community component to the project and have more than just the Monument interdisciplinary team involved. We designed the assistance as follows: (1) a PFC assessment pre-work day with the Monument interdisciplinary team, (2) a classroom workshop for agency personnel and stakeholders, (3) a field session that was limited to 20 participants, and (4) a discussion of how to effectively use PFC assessment results that was again open to everyone.

So, how well did that design work? Having only one field day was not adequate time to see enough of the stream to coach the Monument interdisciplinary team as effectively as we would have liked. In hind sight, it would take a week or more in the field walking several canyons from top to bottom to see enough and have enough time to adequately address the potential and function of those intermittent/interrupted canyon stream systems. On the other hand, we provided some introductory riparian PFC training to several San Juan Public Lands Office employees in several disciplines (range management specialists, hydrologists, ecologists,

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wildlife biologists, geologist) and stakeholders (rancher, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, San Juan Citizen Alliance). In addition, we were able to model our facilitation and open discussion style, which hopefully helps the Monument and San Juan Public Lands Office employees with understanding riparian function and talking through technically complex situations in a collaborative manner. Highlights and lessons from the week:

- Each specialist on the Monument's interdisciplinary team did a great job of reviewing existing references and files for pertinent information about the field site, and sharing that information to the group on the first day of the project and during the field day (see photo 1). Information on geology, hydrology, grazing management history, etc., set the stage for going out to the field and using what we learned to help make interpretations of what we saw in the riparian-wetland area and the channel. PFC assessment procedure calls for this "pre-work" (see TR1737-15, page 9, A. Review Existing Documents), and is a very important part of the procedure.
- Having several years of aerial photography available helped the group understand changes that have gone on in the system since 1937 (thanks Paul Curtis!).
- Colorado Riparian Team, Arizona Riparian Team, and NRST members all participated in the presentations during the classroom workshop.
- The Colorado Riparian Team has access to stream trailers that add a great visual demonstration of stream and riparian attributes and processes to a workshop. Liz Schnackenberg recruited help from the audience to show them riparian attributes and processes as well as stream morphology measurements such as bankfull width and sinuosity.
- In the field, Dave Smith explained how to take quick channel measurements and use regional discharge curves and drainage area to help identify bankfull stage in the arid southwest (see photo 2). For more information see www.naturalchanneldesign.com/Reports/Arid%20SW%20Report.pdf.
- A good facilitation technique that Mark Gonzalez came up with is to have the local interdisciplinary team be the first to answer the checklist items, and then have the "coaches" fill in or give a different perspective if needed. That kind of feedback leads to more capacity building than having the coaches giving their opinions first.
- If you are doing PFC assessments on intermittent/interrupted reaches that include naturally ephemeral segments, you should answer the checklist items only on the intermittent segments, and document the percent of the different soil/water states within the complex (use Global Positioning System to make this easier).
- Steve Leonard developed a new PowerPoint presentation on effectively using PFC assessment findings. On the third day, back in the conference room, we were able to discuss what we had seen and the Implications for grazing management and monitoring. In that regard, it was good to have a day after the field visit for this type of presentation and discussion.
- The NRST has offered to continue helping the Monument's interdisciplinary team to delve deeper into the potential and function of their intermittent/interrupted canyon systems by spending more time with them in the field with a smaller group.



Dave Smith (standing in channel) illustrates a method to calculate bankfull cross-sectional area for use in the regional discharge curves developed for the arid Southwest.

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Wallowa-Whitman/Umatilla National Forests Range Program Assistance—October 5-7, 2010

Mitch Bulthuis, Range Program Manager for both the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests, requested field assistance after members of the NRST participated in two video conferences as part of the Forests' yearly rangeland management training. Objectives were to gain an understanding of designated monitoring area (DMA) site selection, especially for sites atypical of examples shown in the Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM) Technical Bulletin, the relationship of the MIM protocol to monitoring of riparian and aquatic conditions concerning listed fish species (PacFish/Infish Biological Opinion (PIBO) implementation and effectiveness monitoring)¹, and to learn about the analysis of MIM data. In addition, they wanted to discuss the use of streambank alteration as a surrogate for "take"² because of potential impacts to the habitat of listed fish species. Anticipated outcomes were to improve consistency across both forests, and address the need to foster more effective interdisciplinary involvement in consultation and planning activities. Participants visited field sites on the Whitman, La Grande, and Wallowa Mountains Districts of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in northeast Oregon. Mark Gonzalez and Sandy Wyman (NRST), Bryce Bohn (Idaho BLM and part-time NRST), and Tim Burton (Riparian Management Services LLC) provided on-site recommendations and clarification relative to setting management objectives, the MIM protocol, and various grazing management tools.

Discussions included:

- Stratification of stream reaches and determination of DMA location.
- Developing a systematic monitoring program (grazing management, PIBO, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), watershed planning, etc.).
- DMA site selection on sites that do not match the MIM DMA criteria, and documentation of the site selection rationale.
- What to do with existing PIBO effectiveness monitoring sites that do not meet livestock grazing management monitoring needs (e.g., livestock do not graze in some of the selected PIBO sites).
- What to monitor if there is not an herbaceous community present.
- Long-term monitoring needs.
- Monitoring plans (including what, when, why, how, and prioritization).

It was recommended that each district designate a monitoring coordinator and develop a monitoring plan that would be reviewed annually by the District Ranger, staff, and permittees to determine priorities based on needed livestock management information, available funding and manpower. Mark Gonzalez and Bryce Bohn agreed to develop a *Stratification User Guide* to help field staff efficiently and effectively stratify stream reaches for PIBO implementation and effectiveness monitoring, assessments (i.e., Proper Functioning Condition), grazing management monitoring, NEPA, watershed and Forest planning, etc. Tim Burton has placed PowerPoint presentations at <http://www.rmsmim.com/Presentations/tabid/119/Default.aspx> for use by field staff and for inclusion in the user guide. Forest staff discussed follow-up opportunities that would include all disciplines, permittees, and other stakeholders in the future to improve understanding among all the interests

¹ The Forest Service's Regions 1, 4, 6 and Bureau of Land Management's Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington have made commitments through the Pacific Anadromous Fish Strategy (PACFISH) and Inland Fish Strategy (INFISH) (INFISH is Forest Service only) Management Strategies to improve aquatic resources found in the Interior Columbia River Basin. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring plans are in place to evaluate the effect of land management activities on aquatic and riparian communities at multiple scales, and to determine whether PACFISH/INFISH management practices are effective in maintaining or improving the structure and function of riparian and aquatic conditions.

² Take – to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct. [Endangered Species Act section 3(19)] Harm is further defined by USFWS to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing behavioral patterns such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering (USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service. 1998. Endangered Species Consultation Handbook – Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Ranching Heritage Alliance/Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Monitoring Training—August 16-19, 2010

The NRST was asked to provide riparian monitoring training on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest at Springerville, Arizona, sponsored by the Ranching Heritage Alliance (RHA), University of Arizona School of Natural Resources and the Environment, Cooperative Extension, Arizona Cattle Growers Association, U.S. Forest Service, and The Quivira Coalition. It was the fifth workshop at Springerville that the NRST has presented since 2008 and over 30 people attended implementation Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM) training as a follow-up to the training they received last year. Workshop participants included permittees, Forest Service personnel from three Forests, AZ Game & Fish, BLM, University, and Audubon Society. The RHA group had asked for this additional training to help them stratify and develop designated monitoring areas (DMA's), conduct monitoring, and analyze the monitoring data. Tim Burton and Steve Smith led the group through their paces on Burro and Hay Creek and the East Fork Little Colorado River. Mark Gonzalez, NRST, reviewed the use of PFC in developing goals and objectives. Dave Smith, AZ Creeks & Communities Team Lead discussed the need for monitoring and Sandy Wyman, NRST, presented grazing management tools and techniques that included ideas of how livestock can be used as a tool to influence wildlife forage and behavior.



Photo 1: Carey Dobson, Rancher, and Dan Condie, USFS Rangeland Management Specialist, collecting pebble counts on Hay Creek. (Photo by Mark Gonzalez)



Photo 2: Burro Creek after 25 days livestock grazing in the Burro Creek Riparian Pasture. Cattle were being herded to the next pasture. (Photo by Mark Gonzalez)

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to bring interested parties together on the ground to discuss site potential, Apache trout habitat use and condition, and the timing of use of certain kinds of habitat by trout. The group was also encouraged to develop baseline monitoring, and advised that not all components of MIM have to be implemented on all DMAs. The permittees who attended the hands-on training indicated that they have a better understanding of how to do the monitoring and how the data is used to help make management decisions (Photo 1:). One of the primary reasons that the RHA continues to be active and expand, is their desire to maintain livestock grazing on federal land allotments. The Burro Creek photo (Photo 2) shows an excellent example of stubble height on the greenline as the cattle are herded to the next pasture after a 25 day grazing period in this riparian pasture. But the ranchers question whether there will be as much cover by spring due to elk grazing. Wildlife/livestock competition is a key issue on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, and the group hopes to work on this in the near future. An opportunity was also taken to view the upper section of Hay Creek with the permittee. Steve Smith, Daric Knight, and Mark Gonzalez discussed the current and potential condition of upper Hay Creek, and the effects of grazing by livestock and wildlife.

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Alaska Grass Field Guide

Dr. Quentin Skinner, University of Wyoming Emeritus and Sandy Wyman, NRST, spent two weeks in Alaska in July and August compiling their final collection and field photographs of grasses for the Alaska Grass Field Guide. Development of this book is being sponsored by a number of groups in Alaska including State of Alaska, BLM, US Forest Service, NRCS, and US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Dr. Skinner is the primary author and photographer. Stoney Wright, Alaska Plant Materials Manager, Bob Henszey, USFWS, and Joanne Henszey, Botanist, provided assistance in the collection of plant samples for use in the development of the book. This effort also provided an opportunity for Alaska Plant Materials Center employees to receive direct mentorship from the group. Lyubomir (Lyubo) Mahlev, Agronomist, worked with us in Kotzebue and Nome (Photo 1). Phil Czapla, Agronomist worked with us in Juneau and Sitka (Photo 2).

This is the 3rd year that Skinner and Wyman have collected in Alaska. The first trip, in 2007, was to collect for a Riparian Grass Field Guide (in progress) and inspired Wright and Henszey to put together a proposal for funding an Alaska Grass Field Guide which is now scheduled for completion in late spring, 2011. An interesting side note to the development of the Alaska Guide is that it is being created by University of Wyoming (UW) alumni (4 of the 5 graduated and one took classes from UW). Phil Czapla is also a UW grad (Photo 2) and the second in two years that Stoney Wright has hired at the Plant Materials Center. Dr. Skinner just completed A Grass Field Guide for Wyoming.



Photo 1: Lyubo Mahlev, Bob and Joanne Henszey and Quentin Skinner searching for grass species outside Nome, Alaska. (Photo by Stoney Wright).



Photo 2: Phil Czapla assisting Quentin Skinner and Sandy Wyman with photo, plant data, and plant collection near Juneau, Alaska (Photo by Stoney Wright).



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