

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



“Refining the Function and Roles of the Creeks & Communities Network”

A message from
Steve Smith, NRST Team Leader

Welcome to the spring 2013 edition of Full Stream Ahead!

By now many of you are aware that we are in the process of updating the Creeks and Communities Strategy. This past February, we asked a small group of Creeks and Communities Network members to participate in a meeting to help us refine the structure and roles of the network. Although we would have preferred to have met with a larger group as part of our biennial meetings, travel restrictions prevented us from sponsoring one this year. In lieu of a larger meeting, we met with a small, diverse group of network members representing a variety of perspectives and geographic areas. This group did a fantastic job focusing their energy and providing some valuable input on this topic. We covered a great deal during the meeting and I want to briefly highlight a few key items that were discussed.

A fundamental tenant of the updated strategy is to embrace an “Integrated Riparian Management Process (IRMP)” framework for advancing cooperative riparian stewardship. This framework is a comprehensive step-wise adaptive management model that recognizes the important linkage of activity components for effective riparian management. We are frequently asked by field level practitioners how tools like PFC and others directly integrate into the larger “whole” of riparian management. The IRMP model includes the necessary steps in the proper sequence to help define riparian potential; accomplish effective qualitative assessments; determine values; set goals and objectives; prioritize and implement management, monitoring and restoration actions; and acquire and interpret quantitative monitoring data. This framework fits well with the Creeks and Communities Strategy because a training, coaching, and stakeholder involvement activity can be built around one or more of these individual components.

Another difference in the updated strategy we discussed, both prior to and during this meeting, is the evolution of PFC training courses and the concept of “topical teams.” In 2012, the NRST piloted a new training course we have been calling (for lack of a more “catchy” title) “PFC for Professionals.” This is an intensive week-long training course specifically designed for resource professionals who will be conducting PFC assessments. This course was developed in response to widespread need for a more detailed and rigorous training opportunity than the 2-day PFC overview training sessions currently offered by most of the state riparian teams. We have learned from experience and our recent independent strategy evaluation that the 2-day format works very well for improving communication, advancing a common riparian language, and promoting the time-tested premise

that function is required before sustainable values can be produced. It has also provided a solid overview of the PFC protocol for a diverse audience including agency staff and various stakeholders. However, although many have been very high quality, these “short-courses” (or overview classes), cannot cover the PFC protocol to the level of detail necessary for most resource specialists. Because the objectives and target audiences are different for each of these two courses, there is a clear need to offer both of these PFC sessions in the future.

The concept of “topical teams” is based on individual groups of network members assembling to share information, lead training sessions and workshops, provide coaching, etc. These topical teams would be formed around a specific topic of interest where a Creeks and Communities activity is needed. These topics could include grazing management, monitoring/Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM), PFC, vegetation ecology, water quality, invasive species, etc., or they could be based on a specific geographical need. To some extent the network has already been doing this on activities such as riparian grazing training and others. The instructor cadre for the PFC for Professionals training course would be an example of a topical team assembled for a specific purpose – teaching the expanded PFC.

Our intent is to complete the updated Creeks and Communities Strategy document in FY 2014. Once it is complete, we will initiate a communication plan to share the updated strategy. As we move towards implementing the strategy, I ask for your patience in advance as we work through addressing action items identified by the network. The NRST workload is large and very diverse with a number of time consuming projects constantly in progress and we have to prioritize network activities.

Stay tuned for more details on the updated strategy and don't hesitate to call if any of the NRST staff if you have questions or comments. I can be reached at 541-416-6703 or sjsmith@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Steve

***Retirement Announcement ***

Susan Holtzman is retiring from the Forest Service August 2, 2013, after 40 years of service. We can't say enough about Susan's contribution to the Creeks and Communities effort! Not only has Susan helped coordinate and implement activities of the National Riparian Service Team and the Creeks and Communities Network since 1996, she was instrumental in helping Wayne Elmore and others develop and launch the west-wide, inter-agency strategy. Her constant focus on the vision and purpose of the Creeks and Communities approach has supported years of activities aimed at accelerating cooperative riparian restoration and management.

Susan began working for the Forest Service as a temporary employee on the Nez Perce National Forest (Idaho) while attending Washington State University, majoring in range management. After graduating, she started her permanent career on the Ochoco National Forest (Oregon). Other appointments took Susan to the Tongass National Forest (Alaska), the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (Oregon), and eventually to the Pacific Northwest Regional Office (Oregon) before helping form and become part of the National Riparian Service Team. Susan will be remembered for, and missed because of her dedication and insights, her ability to connect people and programs, her organizing, writing and editing skills, and for the best elevator speeches ever! She leaves us with a reminder to keep our eyes on the prize and continue to be effective catalysts for advancing cooperative riparian stewardship. Congratulations Susan on your upcoming retirement.



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Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM) of Stream Channels and Streamside Vegetation - 2013 Updates to the MIM Data Analysis Module

The MIM Data Analysis Module has not changed during the past few years; however, in 2013, a number of improvements were made. Following is a summary of those updates:

- A. Previous versions of the Data Analysis Module used weighted plot calculations, giving greater weight to those plants dominating the site. The updated module provides both the average composition and plot-weighted composition ratings.
- B. The updated version also provides for transfer of data from all previous versions of MIM, including: (1) data from a post-2009 Data Entry or Data Analysis Modules; (2) pre-2009 data and data for dominant and subdominant plants which can now be converted to percent plant species composition, allowing for older, pre-2009 data to be evaluated against current data; (3) imported data from the Data Entry – Grazing Use Only Module; and (4) data collected using the continuous greenline method (Winward 2000). The updated module provides a method for converting the older continuous measurements to plots and percent composition, and for converting community types to percent composition.
- C. Data validation and correction procedures have been updated to improve the quality of the data being evaluated. There are four Data Correction Macros in the module: (1) the “Correct Plant Code” macro remains the same as in previous versions; (2) additional checks for possible errors have been added to the “Check for Errors” macro; (3) a new “Correct Plant Composition” procedure has been added to ensure that the plant composition in each plot equals 100 or 200 depending on whether woody or herbaceous species are in the plot (not both) or if both herbaceous and woody species are present, and (4) a check to ensure that woody species height was added in the appropriate cell.



D. Plant species ratings have been updated to reflect changes made in the USDA National Plants database and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Wetland Plant List which includes recent changes to the geographic regions used to define the wetland indicator status ratings. In addition, both scientific and common plant species names were added to the plant list to make them easier to use.

E. A significant improvement was made to the PFC validation table. New metric values and links to external data sources have been added. In addition, a table for ID Team Ratings was added to provide users an opportunity to record quantitative data to support the PFC assessment.

Before analyzing trends, users are encouraged to convert previous MIM data into the 2013 module (using the “get data” macro or the “get pre-2009 MIM data” macro) to ensure maximum accuracy. The updated Data Analysis Module is available at <http://www.blm.gov/nstc/library/techref.htm>. It is also available at <http://rmsmim.com>.

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San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area

The Winter 2012 issue of Full Stream Ahead included an article that outlined the purpose and activities, to date, of the National Riparian Service Team's (NRST) assistance to the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA), at the request of the Arizona BLM. Activities were focused on blending scientific and social perspectives and promoting better coordination among individual efforts to support development of a shared strategy moving forward. Overall, the Creeks and Communities approach within the SPRNCA was an opportunity for the BLM to work with stakeholders in a different and more collaborative way.

A situation assessment was conducted in March of 2011 and the findings were used to design the following activities that extended through April 2012: 1) a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the situation assessment findings and recommended next steps, 2) a two-day workshop where technical specialists from BLM and partner agencies and organizations reviewed existing information and identified what other information would be gathered, 3) community based riparian workshops to help participants gain a better understanding of riparian function and its relationship to important values, 4) development of a comprehensive, reach-based report defining the potential and capability of the San Pedro River followed by a technical review meeting open to the public, 5) a four-day Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) for Resource Professionals training course, 6) a one-day pre-assessment community workshop introducing the PFC assessment, and 7) 10 days conducting PFC assessments, with agency and stakeholder participation, covering approximately 51 miles of the San Pedro River.

Due to the onset of field season and the size and complexity of the task, the PFC assessment report was not finalized and distributed to participants until mid-November. The assessment was implemented as a joint fact-finding activity and the report documents the first integrated assessment that synthesizes existing information and provides current on-the-ground conditions as compared to potential, on a reach by reach basis, throughout the SPRNCA. This information will help the BLM in determining compliance with Land Health Standards and it establishes baseline conditions in advance of the Resource Management Planning (RMP) effort. In addition to reach-based information, the report also documents insights into larger ecological processes and management issues affecting the San Pedro River through the SPRNCA such as:

- The importance of continued groundwater and surface water in relation to riparian vegetation and channel characteristics;
- The role of water and sediment in relation to channel evolution;
- The contribution of cottonwood and other riparian vegetation in relation to the recovery of the San Pedro River system; and
- The negative effects of continued trespass livestock grazing on riparian recovery, and other issues such as tamarisk, fire and fuels, beaver, OHV and pedestrian trails, a railroad bed, agricultural dikes, and groundwater augmentation.

Documented studies state that groundwater depletion in excess of recharge is a major threat to the future health and sustainability of the San Pedro River and models display both current and predicted future growth of the groundwater cone of depression. While the team was aware of existing declines in groundwater, they did not see an obvious and widespread reduction in plant vigor, high plant mortality, or replacement of wetland plants by drier species in a pattern that would indicate advanced groundwater decline. However, this does not mean that groundwater is not declining; rather, it means that more sensitive quantitative measures are needed to determine if soil water and vegetation are being effected. The future of the San Pedro River is threatened by ongoing groundwater depletion; however, the PFC assessment did not provide evidence that the riparian area is past the point of no return in terms of currently being affected by groundwater depletion. On the contrary, more than 70% was determined to have attributes and processes in place to further improve as long as the groundwater deficit issue is addressed now while the river still has the ability to take advantage of the water it receives from both surface and groundwater flows for system recovery.

Moving forward, the NRST recommends that the BLM: (1) complete the RMP process and designation of an advisory committee, both of which are currently underway; (2) collect and interpret baseline information and develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring strategy including quantitative measures to better understand the groundwater situation; (3) expand opportunities for community engagement, education and service relative to the management of riparian resources; and (4) pursue the perfection of water rights for instream flows and groundwater levels.

During the week of December 3rd, the NRST hosted two community workshops and met individually with various agencies and organizations to explain assessment findings and the recommended management and monitoring actions, and to explore next steps, both in terms of (1) how the BLM can best use the information and stakeholder interest that has been generated as they move forward in their RMP revision process, and (2) how the larger community can use the assessment results, coupled with resultant BLM decisions regarding desired future riparian condition, to inform watershed scale efforts.

Lessons Learned

1. Early on in the process, a local reporter became a key contact and participated in nearly every activity, including the PFC assessments done on 50+ miles of the San Pedro River. Because of her engagement and increased understanding of the issues, she provided a critical link to the general public in terms of outreach and communication. She authored individual articles associated with each NRST-led activity and completed a 20-page circular describing the SPRNCA, issues relating to riparian health, and ideas for how the general public can play a more active role in saving the river.
2. The community surrounding the SPRNCA is unique in so far as they have a very engaged group of stakeholders with a lot of technical and collaborative capacity and also a large general public that is critical to the long-term health of the San Pedro River and the SPRNCA (i.e., they are the users of groundwater). In order to be effective, NRST assistance had to identify appropriate ways to engage all of these different groups. As a result, a number of venues were employed including technical meetings coupled with community briefings and report outs. The technical meetings brought together specialists from various government agencies and NGOs and were always open to the public. However, knowing that most community members would not want to be engaged at this level, shortened community workshops and briefings were also offered with every activity.
3. A key focus of the request for NRST assistance was to help the SPRNCA staff, in particular, and the Field, District and State Offices in general, to develop better relationships with their external partners. As a result of NRST involvement in this effort, and many others, it has become increasingly clear that in order to be good partners, a certain level of organizational capacity and internal culture of collaboration must exist. It is unrealistic to think that a unit will be better able to collaborate (communicate, coordinate, and collect/share information) externally than they are internally. Thus, at least as much (and often times more) attention and assistance, must be directed inward as it is outward.



April 2012

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SRM Symposium Panel – Women as Collaborative Leaders on U.S. Rangelands

Laura Van Riper, NRST Social Scientist, led a panel session during the 66th annual meeting of the Society for Range Management (SRM) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The 80 minute panel entitled “Women as Collaborative Leaders on U.S. Rangelands” was part of the day-long symposium “Women as Change agents in the Worlds’ Rangelands.”

The symposium reviewed the changing roles for women in the world’s rangelands. Rangeland populations have historically been marginalized in terms of their access to public services and lack of exposure to the outside world. Social, economic, and technological forces are rapidly altering this situation, however. Women are now having larger profiles as community leaders, range managers, and professionals in research, extension, and agency administration. These trends were examined and discussed in terms of what these gender dynamics imply for new frontiers in rangeland research, outreach, education, and rural development strategies, both overseas and in North America.

Rangeland management within the western United States is changing and women, through their effort and example, are informing this process. Women’s capacity and inclination for collaboration and cooperation in business, academic endeavors, community development, natural resource management, and other areas has drawn increasing attention and scholarship in recent years. In contrast to more traditional (and masculine) leadership styles and problem solving approaches, which typically privilege individualism, competitiveness, and command and control or top-down decision making, emerging (and distinctly more feminine) approaches focus on advancing relationships, community, and communication that fosters extended dialogue as a way to engage, understand and develop solutions that address people’s differing perspectives and needs. Using an interactive format, the panel Laura assembled drew upon the stories and experiences of women ranchers to: (1) highlight and describe their role as innovators and community collaborators; (2) explore their backgrounds, motivations and tactics; and, (3) describe the unique challenges and opportunities they have faced, as well as lessons they have learned.

To begin, Laura introduced the topic of leadership and then summarized what are typically described as masculine and feminine leadership styles. She noted that the idea that gender determines leadership style is by no means a unanimous view in leadership literature. Those who posit that a gender difference does indeed exist, note that the differences are not so much the result of biology, but rather are a matter of cultural relativity and social relations. As a result, many successful male and female leaders have a command of both styles.

Laura also talked about women as activists in social movements concerning the environment, describing activists as people who take some public action to promote, impede or direct social, political, economic or environmental change. Activism can take a wide variety of forms, including organizing or participating in local, grassroots, community-based organizations. Social movements are broad alliances of people who are connected through their shared interest in blocking or affecting social change. They can take many forms and operate at various scales; they do not have to be formally organized. Social movements are, by their nature, a challenge to the conventional practices and institutional patterns in society.

The panel introduced collaborative rangeland management organizations as a type of social movement. The presentations given by the four women rancher’s Laura asked to participate provided a number of things for considering the characteristics and motivations, as well as the social and societal impacts of women as leaders and activists in a nascent but growing social movement on western rangelands. All four women have helped create, promote, and participate in organizations that:

- Focus on cooperation, building and advancing relationships, and communication that fosters extended dialogue as a way to engage, understand and develop solutions that address people’s differing perspectives and needs;
- Consider issues from a holistic perspective and recognize that the social, economic and ecological dimensions are interconnected pieces of the whole; and
- Redistribute power through: (a) the use of democratic processes, (b) a concern for equity and an ethic of caring, and (c) a focus on public education, participation in traditional science and broad acceptance of alternative ways of knowing.

Interestingly, though, the accounts provided by the women themselves generally discount the importance of their gender and instead label their efforts as ‘business as usual’ or nothing special. In describing their individual motivations for becoming community activists, the four women ranchers mirrored other women activists involved in community-based movements focused on environmental and other issues. Additionally, these four women share similar characteristics and qualities among themselves and with others regarding their approach to leadership and problem solving or conflict management.

When considering the influence of gender on the four women ranchers, their accounts echo the findings of other contemporary researchers and scholars; that it is not so much that gender doesn’t matter, but that the degree to which it matters and its impact on outcomes may not be as great as once thought. Rather, it is tempered by context, circumstance and personality; and experienced differently by each woman. For a variety of reasons, these women are less constrained and

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confined by gender roles; and, thus, pay less attention to them. This tendency to highlight commonality over difference is likely a contributor to their success as bridge-builders, networkers, organizers, leaders and peace-makers within their communities. The panelists were:

- **Robin Boies** (Contact, Nevada): Shoesole Collaborative Management Group; Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko; Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition;
- **Wink Crigler** (Springerville, Arizona): Ranching Heritage Alliance; Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition;
- **Becky Hatfield-Hyde** (Beatty, Oregon): Country Natural Beef; Yainix Ranch Partnership; Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement; Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition; and
- **Caryl Elzinga** (May, Idaho): Central Idaho Rangelands Network; Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (CIRN members)

The panel was supported by:

- Society for Range Management Oklahoma Annual Meeting Program Committee
- Society for Range Management Pacific Northwest, Arizona and Nevada Sections
- The National Riparian Service Team
- The Brainerd Foundation
- Sustainable Northwest

A video of the panel session will be available on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) event page at <http://agrilinks.org/events/symposium-women-change-agents-worlds-rangelands>. If you want to register to join Agrilinks, it is free and only takes a few minutes.

Also, USAID has agreed to fund a special issue of Rangelands to capture the learning from the symposium. In addition to authoring an article capturing the salient points from the panel session, Laura will be co-editing this special issue, which has a publication date of December 2013.

The Rangelands Partnership, a Global Information Resource

The Rangelands Partnership refers to a collective effort by 19 western land-grant universities collaborating with international partners to provide the following websites: Global Rangelands; Rangelands West; and the state rangelands sites. The Rangelands West site focuses on information pertinent to North American rangelands. Global Rangelands includes all of the documents and resources found in Rangelands West plus resources from around the globe. These websites represent a unique interaction among rangeland specialists and librarians that have come together to provide a comprehensive and specialized collection of materials and resources including current research, decision-making tools, and training materials. The Rangelands West and Global Rangelands portals and database provide public and private land managers, researchers, extension professionals, educators, and the public in the United States and worldwide, with the information and tools needed for sustainable management of rangelands, informed decision-making, professional enhancement, and educational activities.

The Rangelands Partnership is a worldwide, multidisciplinary collaboration that provides resources needed to inform public debate and decision-making regarding today's challenges of food security, climate adaptation, public health, environmental impacts, and economic development as they relate to rangelands around the world. There are links to more than 12,000 journal articles, websites, images, databases, videos, maps, reports, and decision making/educational tools. <http://globalrangelands.org/rangelandswest>

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 cconnoll@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. For the Summer edition, all submissions must be received by September 19, 2013.

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Documents Available

To order the materials listed below, email jstaats@blm.gov with the title(s) and quantity you would like and also provide your mailing address and phone number..

Riparian and Streams

CD – **Managing for Enhancement of Riparian and Wetland Areas of the Western United States: An Annotated Bibliography**, compiled by David A. Koehler and Allan E. Thomas (2000). USDA Forest Service Gen. Tech. Report RMRS-GTR-54-CD.

Brochure: **Riparian Areas – Their Benefits and Uses** by Oregon Watershed Improvement Coalition
Even though these are older brochures, they would make great handouts for schools to introduce the definition and importance of riparian areas.

Riparian Community Type Classification for Humboldt and Toiyabe National Forests, Nevada and Eastern California by Mary E. Manning and Wayne G. Padgett (1995). USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region R4-Ecol-95-01.

CD – **Stream Corridor Restoration – Principles, Processes, and Practices** by the Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group (1998).

Roads

Management and Techniques for Riparian Restorations, Roads Field Guide Volumes I and II. USDA Forest Service Gen. Tech. Report RMRS--GTR-102 (2002).

Soil Bioengineering, an Alternative for Roadside Management, a Practical Guide by Lisa Lewis (2000). USDA Forest Service, San Dimas Technology and Development Center.

Soils

DVD: **An Overview of Riparian Soils** by National Riparian Service Team (2000).

Watersheds

Brochure: **Watersheds – Their Importance and Functions** by Oregon Watershed Improvement Coalition
Even though these are older brochures, they would make great handouts for schools to introduce the definition and importance of watersheds.

People Power: the Social Side of Watershed Restoration by Mary Carr in Wildland Waters (2000). USDA Forest Service FS-848.



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