

DRD-Steering Committee (DRD-SC) Meeting
July 15, 2010
Meeting Summary -- Location: DWCD Board Room

Present: Randy Carver, MVIC; Patt Dorsey, Colorado Division of Wildlife; Meghan Maloney, SJCA; Peter Mueller, The Nature Conservancy; Don Schwindt, DWCD; and Vern Harrell, Bureau of Reclamation. Guest: Chester Anderson, DRD Science Committee.

The **agenda** was approved with these changes: 1) Marsha asked that a request by Trout Unlimited (TU) to be added to the Steering Committee be included; 2) Meghan asked that a request to fund the proposal by Chester Anderson be reviewed again related to funding; 3) the formation of a Hydrology Committee was also added; and 4) Don asked to discuss a concept around native fish being prioritized for spills and the fish pool.

Minutes: The minutes from the May 2010 meeting were approved. Changes were suggested by Don and agreed to. These changes related to providing more detail on the financial commitments and clarifying that the "Framework Project" may be a function of coordination, versus being one coordinator.

Spill: The spill was discussed. Vern said there recently had been a wrap up meeting to debrief this year's spill and that a total of 29,600 AF was spilled. The uses for this year are about at normal levels, Vern said. One recommendation coming out of the Spill Committee is better forecasting and more Snow Tels at low snow levels. Funding is being sought for two Snowtels. The forecasting this year was very difficult due to the nature of the spring (winds, dust, etc.), Vern reported. Vern was complimentary of the Spill Committee and said that he felt members are understanding the complexities involved in spills, and dam operations and working well together.

Lower Dolores: Marsha gave an update on the Lower Dolores Legislative Committee's effort. The Committee has decided to form a six- month inquiry around the native fish issues after realizing that the water section was stalling progress for the group. Various interests were trying to insert suggested language/actions around native fish issues and there was not agreement. Marsha reported that the Committee decided, by consensus, that the real issue is that a "do-able alternative(s)" for native fish needs to be found that includes solutions that work cross the various interests. Trying to formulate that "do-able" alternative via legislation, without a study process, was not working and again, making things stall out. So, a six- monthly inquiry process is underway at which time the available science will be reviewed and understood through a transparent, collaborative process. The process will hopefully result in common understandings of the native fish issues and then, recommendations will be made about actions, if any, that go in the legislation -- and actions, if any, that can be taken outside of the legislative process (such as by the DRD or entities involved). Marsha relayed a set of questions the Committee would like the six- month native fish inquiry to focus on as follows (these questions are not final and were relayed as the starting questions for the legislative group):

- *What is their current status (population, viability)?*
- *If we dry up the river periodically, will native fish do better?*
- *Can the trout and native fish populations both remain viable/increase at the same time?*
- *If the priority were the native fish, how would you manage the fish pool and the spills?*
- *Is it possible to maintain or increase native fish populations without harming other values?*
- *Will improvements to the riparian ecology potentially improve native fish habitat?*
- *What is the role of predation (whether fish, otters or humans), water quality, temperature and timing of flows?*
- *Are there other influences outside the river that affect the population?*

- *What could you do to benefit the native fish with an additional 6,000 acre-feet of water?*

Vern said these questions have been asked before and it seems like a repetition of past inquiries. He noted that the answers to these questions are known. Don said that the list of questions did not indicate any “side boards” around the hydrology. Marsha said that the Committee is talking about side boards. Marsha relayed that the group is working on a process document that will guide them through the six month process; this process create a way for the group not to re-do work that has already been completed but synthesize existing work. Marsha asked that the DRD – Steering Committee be open to all proposals and said this should be a collaborative process. She said that the Legislative Committee, she felt, should be complimented and thanked because they are doing some “heavy lifting” and asking really hard questions, and trying to arrive at a “do-able” proposal – which is the mission of the DRD. At this point in the meeting Chester arrived to give his Power Point on the SLOWs project. Chester’s presentation was given (see below).

After Chester presented, the topic was revisited. Peter said he didn’t interpret the questions raised as being non supportive. Marsha apologized and said she didn’t mean to offend anyone by her lecture. She said it just felt to her like the Steering Committee wasn’t being open to the Legislative Committee’s inquiry. To work the DRD process, there needs to be an open-ness to ideas coming forth, she relayed. Meghan said it would be better if the DRD – Steering Committee waited to get into the debate around native fish when an actual proposal comes forth. So far, she said, there is just the “idea” of a proposal being formulated, but not an actual proposal to talk about. Marsha asked if the group wanted to talk further. It was decided that the issue should be revisited and that this issue clearly needed more DRD-SC agenda time.

Presentation by Chester Anderson: Chester Anderson from the DRD Science Committee presented a power point on the SLOWs project (Selective Level Outworks). His work on the SLOWs effort is part of the science being done as part of the Big Gyp grant from the CWCB, it was explained. As he gave it, he answered questions. His Power Point will be made available on the Web site. The main points Chester raised are summarized below (please refer to the Power Point on the Web site or call Chester will questions: 764-7581 or chester@bugsconsulting.com):

- The theory is that the SLOWs can be used to meet management objectives for the fisheries.
- The two variables involved are water temperature coming out of the dam and dissolved oxygen.
- The ways the SLOWs are used (meaning which actual outlet work of three) can be changed to help either natives, trout or both. The DRD could suggest priorities.
- The model developed is combining all acquired temperature data on the river gathered to date and collecting more data in ‘10 on dissolved oxygen.
- High temperatures are not good for fish and low dissolved oxygen is not good for fish.
- Native fish require a warmer temperature regime that trout do.
- Using the most bottom one (3) would facilitate colder temperatures.
- SLOWs (1) would be used if the management goal were native fish (b/c the water is warmer because its from the top of the reservoir).
- Also the SLOWs work Chester is doing is also about collecting data in the reservoir in relation to temperature and dissolved oxygen.
- Phase II of the SLOWs project is proposed to set baseline data so if the SLOWs were used, the DRD Science commit could measure the changes in the affects of the river (this is what has been compiled. (Note: This proposal is being discussed by the DRD-SC in terms of the partners funding it, or helping with TA.)

Funding: The group continued to discuss the DRD funding. If each group on the Steering Committee (except the Bureau who cannot give funding at the present time) commits to \$7,500/year, the DRD will be fully funded for 12 months. The DWCD, TNC and SJCA have committed. MVIC is still making a decision.

Staffing: After discussion, it was agreed that the "Framework Coordination" element of the DRD staffing plan could be handled by Ken Curtis of DWCD and Ann Oliver, DRD Science Coordinator. These co-coordinators are responsible for helping "guide" proposals through the DRD Framework process.

TU on the DRD-Steering Committee: Marsha explained that Mely Whiting from TU had requested to serve on the DRD- Steering Committee. The group decided that at the present time that TU would not be added. The full DRD approved the model back in March 2010 and the Steering Committee members decided that it wasn't their role to add/change membership at this time. Marsha was asked to contact Mely and let her know, and also to let her know that TU is of course welcome to be part of the Science or Hydrology Committees. This decision will be revisited in one year.

Rafting: The DRD purpose statement was questioned by Bill Kees at a Lower Dolores meeting, Marsha told the group. The part about the "continued enjoyment of rafting" was questioned because Bill said he felt this isn't true because there is not a lot of "enjoyment" of rafting on the Lower Dolores. Marsha told Bill she would raise the issue with the Steering Committee. The members decided not to change the purpose statement because the concerns rafters have about rafting the Lower Dolores are well documented and there are mechanisms for working on this issue via the Framework Proposal process and the Spill Committee. Additionally, Meghan represents the Dolores River Coalition on the group and rafters/boaters can give input to her about DRD agenda items and projects, and priorities. She said that a proposal for the DRD from the rafting community is in the development phase. It was noted that this is a very important sector and outreach to rafters continues to be very important.

SLOWs Proposal: Monies are still being sought to fully fund Chester's Phase II for SLOWs request. DWCD, TNC and SJCA have committed money. Their proportionate share is dependent on what all partners will give. The Bureau is offering a lot of technical assistance Patt said she will check with CDOW but the amount would have to be under \$5,000. . This agenda items needs to be continued.

Hydrology Committee: Don announced that DWCD is offering \$2,500 of in-kind help from Ken Curtis for the Hydrology Committee. A meeting will occur this summer and everyone is welcome.

Submitted by Marsha Porter-Norton, Facilitator, DRD and Lower Dolores Plan Working Group
Final Version