

# ***"Dolores River Dialogue"***

Purpose, Function, Projects/Activities, Success Measurements and Tool Kit for Framework Proposals  
April 2011 to April 2012  
Recommendations to the Dolores River Dialogue

## ***Dolores River Dialogue: Purpose Statement***

*The DRD is a coalition of diverse interests, whose purpose is to explore management opportunities, build support for and take action to improve the ecological conditions downstream of McPhee Reservoir while honoring water rights, protecting agricultural and municipal water supplies, and the continued enjoyment of rafting and fishing. (11/09)*

## ***Dolores River Dialogue: Functions of the DRD***

- ✓ Serving as an ongoing forum to bring together various community members, conservation groups, water managers, recreationists, other interest groups, and federal, state and local governments and agencies to explore issues, develop common understandings and complete projects – towards the goal of defining and acting upon “do-able” actions which address the purpose statement.
- ✓ Linking with other groups working in the Lower Dolores area to communicate, coordinate, and share resources and information.
- ✓ Producing and disseminating relevant documents and other educational publications for use by DRD members, the DRD - Steering Committee and other DRD Committees, partners, and the community-at-large.

## ***Projects/Activities that the DRD is supporting in 2011 in order to work towards the Purpose Statement:***

1. The DRD-SC will carry out its functions and roles described in the document “Looking Back, Looking Forward” presented at the 3/10 DRD meeting (see Attachment 1).
2. Overseeing the implementation of the Framework Proposal Project that offers interested persons, organizations and coalitions the opportunity to develop “do-able” alternatives which are first vetted by the DRD - Steering Committee, and the Hydrology and Science Committees with recommendations then being made to the larger DRD (see pp. 4 -- 7).
3. Convening a **Science Committee** that comments on scientific aspects of Framework Proposals; conducts science efforts in the corridor; compiles and summarizes scientific information pertinent to Dolores River ecology and management; promotes communication and coordination among partners; and conducts technical and/or peer reviews of DRD science efforts. Convening a **Hydrology Committee** that provides and interprets hydrological assists in preparing, reviewing and commenting on the hydrological aspects of new Framework Proposals; educates DRD members and Framework Project proponents specific to hydrologic constraints, costs and opportunities.

4. Hosting full DRD meetings biannually or more if necessary as Framework Proposals are developed.

**The Ways Success will be Measured are \*by topic\*:**

Administrative/Meetings

- The Steering Committee will meet 11 times and the full DRD will meet twice. See attachment 1 for their roles and responsibilities.
- The DRD Science Committee and Hydrology Committee will hold five or six meetings in conjunction with the Steering Committee – each acting as a forum for broad participation.
- The DRD Web site will continue to be a resource for disseminating information. A plan will be established for upgrading the Web site in 2012.
- The budget of \$29,000 will be raised working with a variety of partners. This budget is for the core operations of the DRD. More funding can be secured for specific projects (e.g. through the Science Committee).
- The DRD will work with a volunteer graphic designer to upgrade its logo.

Do-Able Alternatives

- The Framework Proposal Project (see pp. 4-8) will continue to be carried out via discussions that lead to eventual recommendations to the DRD. A written record will exist for all proposals discussed.
- The intention of the DRD - Steering Committee is that at least two proposals will make it through the process and will go to the DRD recognizing that the DRD-SC's role is to thoroughly vet and discuss all proposals submitted. These proposals will either be generated by the DRD-Steering Committee or other interested stakeholder. It is recognized that whether or not two proposals successfully making it through the DRD is contingent on many factors. The important part of the Framework Proposal process is the collaboration; thought process; dialogue; education and discussion that occurs in the development phase.

Lower Dolores Plan Working Group/A Way Forward/Legislative Subcommittee

Note: The Lower Dolores Plan Working Group was launched by the Dolores River Dialogue in 2008.

- The DRD will continue to work with the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group and its Legislative Subcommittee around collaborative discussions and opportunities towards completion of the "Legislative Parameters" document.
- The DRD Steering Committee and full DRD will engage with the *A Way Forward* project with opportunities for input and shared discussion.

Linkages

- The Dolores River Dialogue and its various committees will continue to link with related efforts including the Biology Committee, Spill Committee, Lower Dolores Plan Working Group – Legislative Committee, etc.

Science and Hydrology Committees Activities (2011 to early 2012)

<p>Science Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 319 watershed study will be ongoing in 2011 and concluded in 2012. One or more Framework Proposals will be developed based on the 319 Watershed Based Plan.</li> <li>• The update (or Version 2) of the Big Gyp report (aka “Opportunities Report”) to the CWCB will be submitted by mid-summer and will incorporate DRD- Steering Committee, and Science Committee comments and final field work completed in the Fall of 2010.</li> <li>• Starting in the summer of 2011, the DRD Science Committee will be working under a \$50K grant related to Native Fish on the Lower Dolores River. The specific goals and work plan will emerge in the spring and early summer of 2011.</li> <li>• The SLOWs project (now called Downstream Temperature Model) will be completed. Key entities involved in water and fisheries management will determine, along with possible other partners, if the model is a tool that should be implemented for achieving management goals. (Note: validation of this model is the next important step to determine its utility for flow management below McPhee).</li> <li>• The Committee will serve as a resource to anyone wishing to submit a proposal through the “Framework Project/Process.”</li> <li>• Upon request, the Science Committee will work with the Legislative Subcommittee to develop and/or implement adaptive management proposals for recommendations developed under the <i>A Way Forward</i> process (i.e. recommended management action with desired outcomes, monitoring, and evaluation processes outlined).</li> <li>• Continue to work with the DRD-SC as necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Hydrology Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hydrology Committee will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- act as a resource for educating DRD participants about the hydrology of the Dolores River as well as important information about McPhee Dam and the Dolores Project operations and contracts as well as relevant Colorado Water Law;</li> <li>- serve as a resource to anyone wishing to submit a proposal through the “Framework Project/Process”;</li> <li>- lead efforts to improve Dolores River runoff forecasts, which may be met by the installation of possibly two new SNOTEL sites in the watershed; new or improved runoff forecast models; and improved communication to the public. Leading these efforts may include raising match money, taking input on where the sites should be located, reviews of new tools, and public education;</li> <li>- disseminate and discuss documents, data and information as requested – in keeping with the DRD intent of offering education across broad interests;</li> <li>- Periodically review and update hydrology-related DRD information; and</li> <li>- Continue to work with the DRD-SC as necessary.</li> <li>- Comment on specific proposals regarding the hydrologic 'costs' of proposals, (i.e, the perceived 'doability' as related to current operations).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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( Working Draft #3: 7/19/11 )

## ***Tool Kit for DRD Framework Proposals***

### **Principles for Success**

The DRD-Steering Committee has developed a set of principles for successful Framework Proposals and do-able alternatives that include (note: this list should be considered a helpful guideline in thinking about and completing proposals):

- All proposals will be fairly discussed by the DRD-SC
- Broad stakeholder involvement
- Sound scientific and hydrological information
- A recognition of the various “periods” of the river’s history (attachment?)
- They are “do-able” – meaning they are crafted within the known hydrological sideboards, Colorado water law, and Project contracts and input from the Hydrology Committee
- They are based on the most current scientific literature available
- The proposal recognizes that there are various diverse interests involved in the DRD and that buy-in is important. Successful proposals prompt and promote collaboration.
- The benefits of the proposal are well articulated
- The proposal may take an adaptive management approach recognizing that some ideas need to be tested and monitored for results and outcomes – therefore, the proposal may have a multi-year implementation component
- Educating participants of the DRD and the community is evident

### **Framework Proposal Outline (approved by the DRD, March 2010)**

## ***Dolores River Dialogue*** **Framework Proposal Outline for** **Considering Actions to Improve the Downstream Environment**

Names of Person(s) Developing this Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Contact Person’s Phone Number, Cell and Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete a proposal that addresses the questions below. Please be concise and attach any maps, hydrographs or supporting documentation. The process by which the proposal will be evaluated by the DRD-Steering Committee and the full DRD is on the Web site or available by request, and should be reviewed before starting.

### Overview of the Proposal

- What is the specific proposal and how would it be implemented? Details and/or brief examples are helpful.
- What is the geographic area of focus including which DRD reach or reaches that would be involved?
- Who are the partners involved? Please describe their roles and responsibilities. Do you propose a role(s) for the DRD? If so, please be specific.
- What is a proposed timeline for implementing this proposal?
- If implemented, how would “success” be defined and monitored?
- Why do you believe this proposal is “do-able”?
- Are there communication plans or agreements that need to be in place among key entities to make this proposal work? If so, please describe.

### Costs

- How much would this proposal cost (please provide a basis for the estimate)?
- What source(s) of funding are proposed?
- Would you be requesting any money or resources from the DRD?

### Ecology and Science

- Please describe the anticipated ecological benefits (note: these might be from comparable situations elsewhere). Please be specific about any anticipated outcomes for: native fish, trout, riparian health, river mechanics and/or other.
- Please describe any key technical or scientific assumptions you are making including an overview of scientific information relating to the proposal.
- Are there any anticipated unintended or negative ecological consequences or costs?

### Economic and Social

- What are the anticipated economic and/or social benefits and outcomes?

### Hydrology

- Would the proposal affect water supplies in the reservoir and water rights in the Dolores drainage? If so, describe.
- Would the proposal affect operations of McPhee Dam? If so, describe.
- Would the proposal affect the hydrology downstream of the reservoir? If so, describe.

### Sideboard/Constraints

- What are the current sideboards (i.e., constraints) and/or challenges that would need to be addressed (e.g., operational, contractual, legal, political, or other)?

### Other Questions

- Are there additional questions that need to be answered to “flesh out” this proposal?
- What is not known at the current time? Can it be known?
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

### **Dolores River Dialogue Purpose Statement (Revised 11/09)**

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There is no deadline for submitting proposals through the DRD. When completed, please submit eight copies of this proposal and any attachments to the Dolores River Dialogue - Steering Committee through the facilitator, Marsha Porter-Norton: [porternorton@bresnan.net](mailto:porternorton@bresnan.net), 970-247-8306. The process by which the proposal will be evaluated by the DRD-Steering Committee and the full DRD is on the Web site or available from the facilitator.

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### **DRD Framework Process**

The following steps describe how proposals for meeting the DRD's purpose statement are discussed and evaluated for action by the DRD-Steering Committee and eventually, the full DRD itself. This process is designed to be flexible, iterative, interactive and collaborative. The DRD-Steering Committee will serve as the central point for accepting and evaluating proposals, and will make recommendations to the full DRD related to each proposal submitted.

*DRD Purpose Statement: The Dolores River Dialogue (DRD) is a coalition of diverse interests, whose purpose is to explore management opportunities, build support for and take action to improve the ecological conditions downstream of McPhee Reservoir while honoring water rights, protecting agricultural and municipal water supplies, and the continued enjoyment of rafting and fishing.*

### **Phase 1: Initial Discussion with DRD-Steering Committee**

Proposals are discussed in concept at a meeting with the proposal developer(s) and the DRD-Steering Committee. Two ground rules will be used: no proposal is rejected outright and no decision is made in this phase. The purpose of this initial meeting is for the entity/person developing the proposal to have a conversation and exchange with the DRD-Steering Committee stakeholders; to receive and give initial information/feedback; and to learn where resources might be available for proposal development and information gathering.

### **Phase 2: Proposal Development**

The proposal developer uses the "Framework" questions (available on the Web site or by emailing the facilitator) and completes a proposal, and then submits it electronically to the DRD-Steering Committee. Proposals can be generated from many sources including:

- The community
- DRD members
- DRD - Steering, Science or Hydrology Committee Members
- Other

There is no deadline for submitting proposals.

### **Phase 3: Education and Common Understanding**

The DRD-Steering Committee works with the proposal developer(s) to hold an educational process or event. The goal is to have all parties involved learn about the proposal *together* in a detailed fashion. The outcome is a common understanding of what exactly is being proposed. This education step will include adequate meeting time for understanding complex information and may include a facilitated dialogue or debate about the proposal. There will be a write up of this education meeting(s) using a consistent outline so the process is transparent.

The educational step could take the shape of a “forum” or “symposia” or could be an expanded meeting between the DRD-Steering Committee with the proposal developer(s) and/or members of the Science and Hydrology Committees, and any other relevant stakeholders.

The exact format of this educational step will be designed based on what is necessary and helpful and of course, in partnership with the proposal developer. Again in this phase, the ground rules are: no proposal is rejected and no decisions are made.

### **Phase 4: DRD- Steering Committee Review and Recommendation-Setting Phase**

The DRD - Steering Committee then further discusses the proposal and makes a recommendation using consensus-based decision making. The DRD-Steering Committee takes their recommendation(s) to the larger DRD. Their recommendations could include any of following:

- a) The DRD should support the proposal and actively work to implement it.
- b) The DRD supports the proposal but it will be implemented by a combination of partners. (In other words, it’s not a DRD-led project but is supported by the DRD.)
- c) Some other action should be taken to be defined.
- d) There should be no action on the proposal at the present time by the DRD.

### **Phase 5: Full DRD Review and Recommendation Phase**

Then, at the next scheduled full DRD meeting, the DRD-Steering Committee presents their recommendations and requests the DRD evaluate and act on those recommendations. The full DRD aims to operate with a full consensus but will establish a super majority threshold for voting. The DRD contract staff will produce transparent meeting summaries and information related to each proposal. If the DRD-Steering Committee does not recommend a proposal be supported, the full DRD will be fully briefed as to the reasons.

If the DRD support a proposal, plans will then be made for implementation.

Approved by the DRD Steering Committee on 5/18/10

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**Additional Information:**

- 1) Each of the above steps will be fully documented through meetings summaries and/or production of other documents so that the process is transparent.
- 2) Contract staff with a background in relevant issues will be hired to help with the Framework Project.
- 3) These process steps can be reviewed for “do-ability” and the DRD-Steering Committee is open to feedback.
- 4) It is intended that the DRD Science and Hydrology Committees be intimately involved as the proposals are developed and evaluated.

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**Available Tools**

The DRD-SC has developed a list of tools that interested persons or organizations can refer to and/or use in putting together a DRD Framework Proposal.

- 1) The DRD-SC has funding for technical assistance in filling out a proposal (\$7,500 in 2011). Funds are approved by the Steering Committee.
- 2) The DRD Science and DRD Hydrology Committees as well as the Steering Committee are made up of experts and interested persons who can give feedback, data, information, bibliographies, etc.
- 3) The DRD Web site contains all DRD-published materials and reports including things such as: DRD Hydrology Report (draft); Core Science Report; Correlations Report; reports published by the DRD Science Committee; etc. , etc., etc.
- 4) The DRD – Steering Committee has established the following desired outcomes for improvement in the downstream environment related to the four scientific areas the DRD focuses on. For each, the DRD Steering, Science and Hydrology Committees can offer information about flow hypotheses (please refer to the Worksheet entitled , DRD Proposal Worksheet: Potential Outcomes, Potential Tools/Management Hypothesis, Hydrologic and Recreational Parameters, Contractual Obligations DRAFT 2)
- 5) hydrological considerations, costs and constraints as well as Dolores Project obligations plus the best scientific information and literature available. It is not assumed or desired that there is consensus among all players on each of these desired outcomes. Further, it is recognized that each of these potential desired outcomes may not be able to be achieved and/or some areas perhaps are in conflict with each other. And finally, successful proposals that are considered “do-able” need to consider and respect Dolores Project contracts, available hydrology and Colorado Water Law.

**RIPARIAN ECOLOGY**

- Floodplain scour/deposition
- Flood plain saturation (nutrient cycling)
- Cottonwood seedling establishment

**NATIVE FISH**

- Spawning
- Year Class Recruitment
- Adult fish survival
- Reduce non native fish population

**TROUT FISHERY**

- Combined biomass>30 lbs/ac (3 yr avg)
- Stocking recruitment-
- Maintain 10 trout/ac over 14” (3 yr avg)

**RIVER MECHANISMS**

- Scour fine sediment (flushing flows)
- Frequently mobilize channel-bed surface
- Periodic channel-bed scour/course sediment flux
- Infrequent channel resetting flow



## Attachment 1 – Roles of the DRD-SC

Establish a Steering Committee of the DRD made up of: DWCD, BoR, CDOW, MVIC, SJCA (also represents the Dolores River Coalition) and The Nature Conservancy. Each entity would appoint a representative and an alternate. The Steering Committee's roles and tasks are:

- Reports to the DRD and serves as a clearing house for all DRD activities
- Guides the *Framework* process; vets ideas and moves efforts forward; develops recommendations to take to the DRD; is a place where consensus is "hammered out" in great detail; frames opportunities for the larger DRD; takes recommendations to the DRD using detail work coming in from Hydrology and Science Committees
- Keeps the DRD from getting out ahead of the member groups
- Is not a final decision maker
- Ensures funding oversight
- Oversees the Science and Hydrology Committees
- Selects contractors and/or other staff
- Organizes work – develops annual goals, work plan, objectives and measurements for progress and monitoring of each and reviews requests for projects
- Ensures credibility and outside review of science efforts
- Continual communication with the DRD and committees; listens at all levels; works together to keep the diverse coalition of interests working in a positive direction; uses a "can do" attitude; stays flexible
- Can include other players as may be necessary