

MRCDC Coordinator's Meeting Report

Who:	Laurie Riley, John Chase and Karl Christians for MRCDC Stan Benes and Gary Slagel for BLM Janelle Holden for The Wilderness Society Lenny Duberstein for Bureau of Rec Scott Bosse for American Rivers (via speaker phone for part of the meeting)
What:	Cottonwood Regeneration Task Force for the Wild & Scenic Reach of the Missouri River
Where:	BLM office in Lewistown, MT
When:	March 11, 2011
Why:	<p>DRAFT Task Force Mission: <i>Develop a MOU/Agreement among agencies and interested parties to manage water releases in concert with periodic high spring flows, to generate increased sediment deposits, and to rebuild sandbars and deposit nutrients within the Upper Missouri National Wild & Scenic River Corridor.</i></p> <p>Laurie noted that this mission is in line with a MRRIC effort to develop emergent sandbar habitat for plovers and terns. Although the MRRIC effort is focused further down river.</p> <p>In Sept 2008 a 3-day workshop was held for agencies, permittees, NGOs and others by the Natl Riparian Services Team to discuss riparian issues and conduct a situation assessment. Four projects resulted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monument newsletter 2 times per year; 2. Permittee/Community weed effort (by Stafford Ferry); 3. Riparian exclosure (Ford Bottom below Judith Landing); 4. Explore possibilities of more natural spring flows by getting input from various groups (counties, scientists, flow modeling). Higher spring flows would only occur under certain conditions, right spring moisture event. For example, if 40K cfs is natural flow, maybe open faucet at Tibet and add 8K cfs to MO River for more traditional (natural) flow event. <p>A second meeting was held in April 2009 in Helena where Gary, Rob Hazelwood, and Janelle all spoke. A member of DOI was asked to bring the conversation among agencies. In December 2009 a meeting was held (in Great Falls?) where the legal and scientific aspects were considered. In May 2010 a meeting was held in Ft Benton. Now in March 2011 we are drafting project objectives.</p>
Accomplished:	<p>We discussed needing to understand the ramifications of past high flow years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1997 42,000 cfs at Virgelle 2. 1981 52,000 cfs at Virgelle 3. 1964 105,000 cfs at Virgelle <p>In 1964 80,000 cfs flowed through Great Falls and overtopped Gibson. 30,000 cfs came out of Canyon Ferry. Teton had 40,000 cfs. Several dams failed on Reservations. 12,000 cfs came out of Tiber. Historically flows of 45,000 - 50,000 cfs occur approximately every 10 years.</p> <p>Lenny said that 11,000 cfs is safe channel capacity, capacity below Tiber, bank-full. At 8,000 cfs people are complaining about pumps and sediment. Peak flows are just below 5,000 cfs without any damage. Maybe over time increased capacity will clean out the channel. Can only get up to 20,000 cfs at Ulm. 25,000 cfs is the target at Great</p>

	<p>Falls.</p> <p>Lenny pointed out that flow studies for sturgeon over the past 5 years show restoring a more natural hydrograph to the system will flush sediment and help create spawning habitat. However, we can't correlate levels for cottonwoods with levels for sturgeon (yet).</p> <p>Increased flows to simulate a more natural hydrograph would impact 4 counties; probably affect some pumps on Marias; bank erosion on Marias is a legitimate concern. Natural flows establish a seed bed after a few days to a week.</p> <p>Lenny stated the focus is on critical areas; identify flood damage above Great Falls and Loma area (back-water effects). Lenny and Karl will talk more about modeling and look at places where it typically floods and impact areas from high water.</p> <p>Scott Bosse from American Rivers came on a speaker phone to talk about modeling. In order for his group to consider undertaking the task he needs to know 1) what their role would be, 2) the timeline, 3) what does success look like? 4) the work plan. American Rivers advocates for changes in river management; they do what agencies cannot do.</p>
<p>Follow Up:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Janelle will prepare notes and distribute them to the group for review and edits. Laurie will send the final notes to Senator Hamlett. Everyone will consider others to receive the meeting notes. 2. Review and edit MOU by Jul 14 meeting. Discuss within group prior to soliciting organizational approval. 3. Karl and Lenny will look at maps for potential irrigation features and other features in low-lying areas. 4. Lenny will attend the MRCDC quarterly meeting in Glasgow May 18-19. 5. Laurie will solicit input from Council members and CDs regarding impacts from hi flow years 1964, 1981, 1997. Lenny will review archives/files for same. 6. Laurie will see how this effort might tie in with MRRIC Emergent Sandbar Habitat efforts. 7. All will look at potential alternatives and other studies. 8. Laurie will invite S&K Environmental to the Jul 14 meeting.