



Platte River Recovery Implementation Program TAC Meeting Notes – SDM Workshop

April 20, 2016

EDO Conference Centre, Kearney, NE

Meeting Summary

The TAC reviewed the new off-channel habitat alternatives and detailed analysis of nest initiation flow alternatives prepared by Compass/EDO. Key outcomes include:

- The TAC provided guidance on how to deal with different options for acquiring new off-channel habitat (e.g., using a combination of leasing new land, buying new land, and using existing Program land);
- The TAC supported the revised cost PMs;
- The TAC reached agreement on a set of conclusions / recommendations on nest initiation flows for the GC;
- The TAC provided direction for the GC meeting.

Action Items

#	Description	When
1	Compass to prepare pre-reading for the June GC meeting including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Clarify the method/ rationale for the revised Cost PMs;- Update off-channel habitat alternatives to reflect TAC input;- Summarize TAC conclusions about flow alternatives (nest initiation flows)- Prepare an alternative that exchanges MCA on-channel habitat for off-channel habitat (rather than adds to off-channel habitat)	May 24 (two weeks prior to June GC meeting)
2	TAC members to discuss outcomes and pre-reading package with their GC members prior to the June GC meeting.	Prior to June GC meeting

Participants

TAC Members	Other
TAC Members Mike Drain – Downstream Water Users (CNPPID) Mark Peyton – Downstream Water Users (CNPPID) Jim Jenniges – Downstream Water Users (NPPD) Mark Czaplewski – Downstream Water Users (CNNRD) Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Jeff Runge – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Tom Econopouly – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Kevin Urie – Colorado Water Users (Denver Water) Jeff Geyer – State of Wyoming Brock Merrill – Bureau of Reclamation Rich Walters – Environmental Entities (TNC) Suzanne Sellers – State of Colorado Andrew Pierson – Environmental Entities (Audubon-Rowe Sanctuary)	Other Observers n/a Compass Lee Failing Philip Halteman EDO Chad Smith Jason Farnsworth Dave Baasch Patrick Farrell

Summary/Outcome of Discussions

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
Off Channel Alternatives	Reviewed the habitat alternatives, including new habitat on Program owned land, plus new leasing options.	
Stable or Increasing	The FWS shared their perspective on the performance of the alternatives in the context of the draft plover recovery plan's emphasis on "stable or increasing populations". The FWS concludes that all of the alternatives except A1 meets the FWS criterion for stable or increasing	
Cost PMs	The TAC discussed the new cost PMs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some members find the methods of presenting the costs confusing - After discussion, they accepted the new PMs 	Clarify the method/rationale for the Cost PMs
Lease, Buy or Use Existing Program Land	The TAC discussed pros and cons of leasing versus buying versus staying on existing Program land. Key points of discussion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is some risk that leases would not be renewed; - These risks would be higher on some properties than others due to potential for redevelopment associated with different locations; - Staying on existing Program land is higher cost because low-cost options have already been implemented; - The overall cost efficiency of land acquisition and habitat construction is an important consideration. 	
	After discussion, the TAC proposes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A combination of lease/buy/stay on Program land makes the most sense; - The decision about which plots of land to acquire should likely be driven by other factors (see below); - The alternatives presented provide a realistic range of costs for acquiring 60 acres of habitat (a "combination" alternative will cost between \$0.6 and \$1.2 million); - The GC should prescribe a habitat acreage target and a budget within this range; - EDO, possibly with support of a working group, could then identify the best combination of lease/buy/program land within the specified budget. 	
	Additional factors/objectives to consider at this fine-grain analysis include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land conversion (minimize controversial conversions); - Spatial distribution (maximize spatial dispersion of habitat throughout the reach); - Site size (a few large sites are more effective than multiple small ones). 	
	The TAC recommends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That alternatives A1 (102 existing off-channel acres) and C1 (102 existing plus 90 new off-channel acres) remain on the table for the GC's consideration; - That a new combination alternative be presented that provides 162 acres of off channel habitat (102 existing plus 60 new) with a combination of lease/buy/use Program land. 	Update off-channel habitat alternatives to reflect TAC input
Flow Alternatives	The TAC reviewed the results of the nest initiation flow analysis. They accept the conclusions outlined in the pre-read package: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The benefits for plovers are small; - The detailed analysis did not reveal any clear winner (there are no alternatives with high benefits at low cost); 	

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The opportunity cost of plover nest initiation flows is high (in most years would preclude use of water for other beneficial uses). 	
	The TAC confirmed its understanding that the FWS makes final decisions about flow releases. The FWS noted that they would welcome input/guidance from the TAC and/or GC.	
	<p>The TAC agreed on the following conclusions/recommendations for the GC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the release of water for plover nest initiation flows is not generally justified on the basis of the estimated benefits for plovers; - That such releases should in general (in the absence of special circumstances) be considered a lower priority than releases for other purposes (no specific special circumstances were identified); - That the most efficient use of water for plovers occurs in years immediately after a flood year when there is new naturally-formed habitat; - That if water is released for plovers, even under the most favorable conditions, the benefits, if any, would not be measurable. 	Summarize TAC conclusions about flow alternatives (nest initiation flows)
MCA	<p>The TAC reviewed the incremental benefits and costs associated with the addition of MCA in-channel habitat to any of the off-channel habitat alternatives. Key points of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They agreed that this is an adequate summary of costs and benefits; - This decision is a value-based choice that the GC will make; - An additional alternative that the GC may wish to consider, in order to offset the cost of MCA, is to exchange 10 acres of off-channel habitat for the 10 acres of MCA on-channel habitat (i.e., instead of just adding 10 acres of MCA habitat) 	Prepare an alternative that exchanges on-channel habitat for off-channel habitat (rather than adds to off-channel habitat)
GC Meeting / Next Steps	<p>With respect to next steps, the group agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To review outcomes with their GC members; - That a half day should be sufficient for the GC to address these final decisions at the June meeting; - To review the TAC meeting notes to confirm they have accurately captured meeting outcomes. 	TAC members to review outcomes with GC members prior to June meeting