

SAN LUIS VALLEY REGIONAL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday March 20, 2014
2:30 P.M.
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION CONFERENCE ROOM
Alamosa, CO 81101

Present:; Suzane Beauchane, USFWS; Terry Ireland, USFWS; Jenny Nehring, Wetland Dynamics; Cary Aloia, Wetland Dynamics; Stephanie Ferrero, CPW; Ruth Lewis, NRCS; Jerry Freeman, SLVEC; Jill Lucero, BLM; Sue Swift-Miller, BLM; Rose Vanderpool, Rio Grande County

RGWCD: Sandra Montoya, RGWCD; Ron Beane, ERO;

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Sandra Montoya welcomed all those present and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

MONITORING DISCUSSION AND OTHER

Ruth Lewis started the discussion on monitoring. She described the monitoring that she does on the Conservation Areas and WRP's. Ruth explained that she has used and continues to use acoustic monitoring on a few WRP's.

Discussion was held on wetlands focus group field tour and on restoration and conservation contracts.

Jerry Freeman asked if NRCS conservation areas and WRP's could count as mitigation credit. Ms. Montoya responded that no they could not because they are 100% federally funded.

Mr. Freeman raised the concern of how do we know if the birds are recovering without species monitoring. Discussion followed regarding the HCP's focus on habitat.

Mr. Freeman suggested other people could do full protocol surveys. Discussion was held regarding time and funding to do full surveys. Ms. Montoya brought up the sensitivity of private land considerations. Further discussion followed. Terry Ireland mentioned that presence absence surveys were not pushed for due to private landowner concerns about being identified as a place with the birds present. Mitigation habitat is maintained as additional protected areas in the event core habitat is degraded. Discussion followed on surveying both public and private land.

Cary Aloia mentioned the differences in habitat amongst the core areas and suggested a field trip to see all the differences.

Jill Lucero gave an update on the McIntyre/Simpson property. Discussion was held on the differences in monitoring techniques in the San Luis Valley and other areas.

Mrs. Lucero brought up the issue of ditch companies converting to pipelines. Discussion was held regarding the implications of pipelines, if a pipeline would be regulated by the Endangered Species Act definition of take, and whether they would be covered by the HCP.

Discussion was held regarding trespass animals and exclosures on BLM lands on the Rio Grande River in Conejos and Costilla Counties.

Discussion was held on the significance of flycatchers on small patches and smaller creeks.

Mr. Freeman asked if there was data on reproductive success. Discussion followed regarding monetary and biological costs to do reproductive surveys.

Mr. Freeman asked how other HCPs assess success. Discussion followed on why habitat and territories were used instead of nest success or population counts. Mrs. Nehring remarked that knowing if a nest is successful won't necessarily change management practices, considering that the birds decided that habitat was suitable to nest. Discussion followed on stochastic and other events outside the control of local management practices.

Discussion was held on how to incorporate surveys for presence/absence and/or nesting on HCP mitigation parcels.

Discussion was held regarding a field trip to define the variability of suitable habitat.

Discussion was held on who was doing surveys and where in 2014.

Discussion was held on training and certification to do surveys, as well as requirements to conduct training.

Mrs. Lucero asked about protocol done on easement #1 and how many birds were found. Discussion was held on differences between habitat and number of birds on public and private land. Ms. Montoya mentioned differences in HCP surveys and public land full protocol surveys. Discussion was held on flycatcher calling behavior.