

# Full Stream Ahead

## News and highlights from Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management

January/February 2004

### Creeks and Communities Strategy Implementation Meeting, Riparian Coordination Network – November 18-20, 2003, Phoenix, AZ BLM National Training Center

The purpose of this meeting was the development of state/province work plans outlining specific actions for implementing the recently revised strategic plan for the Creek and Communities initiative. In an effort to foster full participation, memos were sent to the field from the Washington, D.C. offices of the BLM and Forest Service encouraging and supporting attendance of Agency Riparian Coordinators and Riparian Cadre Members. Email memos were sent from the Riparian Service Team to Agency Riparian Coordinators and Cadre Coordinators with follow-up phone calls. Cadre Coordinators were asked to call all cadre members to talk to them about the importance of the meeting and the benefits of attending. This effort resulted in a good turnout that included representatives from the eleven western states Interagency State Cadres, as well as the British Columbia Cadre. We had Agency Riparian Coordinators from D.C., Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming.

John Christensen, BLM National Soils & Riparian Program Leader, Jim Gladen, Forest Service Director of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Watershed Staff, and Dennis Thompson, NRCS Headquarters Grazing Lands Ecologist spoke to the group about agency support. The main message from all three was that this effort is supported at the National level, and it is up to us to communicate with local, state, and regional managers to get the resources needed for successful implementation. For example, if you need more support from the NRCS in your state, then it is important to set up a briefing with the State Conservationist to let them know who we are, what we are doing, and what we need. We were also advised to work through local Resource Conservation and Development Councils as well as people associated with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

By the end of the meeting, each Cadre had a multi-year work plan based on the goal and objectives outlined in Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy to Accelerate Cooperative Riparian Restoration & Management (<http://www.or.blm.gov/nrst>). The work plans include action items that Cadres/Agency Coordinators will accomplish in the next two years, as well as items they would like the Riparian Service Team to work on.

The Riparian Service Team work plan and state/province work plans were shared with everyone who attended the meeting, and all the Agency Riparian Coordinators who did not attend. If you

are interested in getting more information about the work plans you can contact the Riparian Service Team or your State/Regional Agency Riparian Coordinator.

### **Collaboration Training Follow-up**

During our recent meeting in Phoenix, network members expressed interest in collaboration training. The NRST is planning to begin work on a training session to be offered sometime in 2005. In the meantime, there are a number of training programs already being sponsored by the agencies and other organizations.

- (1) Alternative Dispute Resolution/Innovative Conflict Management, OPM, April 12-16, 2004, Shepherdstown, <http://www.leadership.opm.gov/content.cfm?cat=ADR> or call (304) 870-8008.
- (2) A Basic Course in Natural Resource Negotiation, USGS, April 13-15, 2004, Fort Collins, <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/products/training/P101.asp>.
- (3) Advanced Negotiation Course, USGS, September 21-23, 2004, Fort Collins, <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/products/training/P201.asp>.
- (4) Dealing with an Angry Public, MIT/Harvard, date and location unknown, <http://www.pon.execseminars.com/?seminar=ap>.
- (5) Various training sessions (basic, advanced and user sessions) listed at US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution website (click 'Training Opportunities' link), <http://www.ecr.gov>. The list is updated occasionally, so check back. The current course offerings are as follows:
  - a. Group Facilitation Methods [www.ica-usa.org](http://www.ica-usa.org), or call (800) 742-4032.
  - b. Basic Plus Mediation Skills Training, <http://www.confluencecenter.com>.
  - c. Advanced Course on Mediating Land Use Disputes, <http://www.lincolnst.edu/education/education-coursedetail.asp?id=140>, or call (888) 845-8759.
  - d. IAP2 Certificate Course in Public Participation: The Perspectives Group, <http://www.theperspectivesgroup.com/PG/training.html>, or call (703) 837-1197.
  - e. Mediating Land Use Disputes, <http://www.dola.state.co.us/smartgrowth/>, or call (303) 866-2156.
- (6) Creating Effective Partnerships and/or Facilitation Skills, date & location unknown, <http://www.ntc.blm.gov>.
- (7) Contact the BLM's National Training Center and bring their course - Community-Based Stewardship and Ecosystems: Ensuring a Healthy Environment – to your staff and community, <http://www.ntc.blm.gov/partner>.

The BLM is also in the process of creating a new environmental conflict management course. Laura VanRiper recently attended one of their two experimental courses hosted by the BLM in order to evaluate different instructors for future use. The first course, held in Boise, was taught by CDR & Associates out of Boulder, CO. The second course, which Laura attended, was held in Reno, NV and taught by Matt McKinney (formerly from MT

Consensus Council, now with the Public Policy Research Institute at the University of Montana) and Patrick Field (Consensus Building Institute Cambridge, MA).

Overall, the course provided a good overview of both theory and practice regarding collaborative decision-making. The problem is that it is very difficult to teach collaboration, because it is as much an art as a science. While there are a number of principles underlying successful collaboration, one of the keys to success is that these efforts are flexible and continuously evolving. It is important to recognize that training sessions cannot provide you with the one 'silver-bullet' technique for effective collaboration. Rather, you will simply get more tools for your toolbox. As a facilitator, the larger your toolbox – the more likely you are to successfully move a group through conflict.

### **Program Accountability and Reporting**

We've talked a lot about program accountability and reporting relative to this initiative. This has stemmed from a desire and need to know if we are meeting the objectives of the interagency strategy and if so, to find some way to report this in a system that has no institutional mechanisms to record this information. Earlier this year we learned of an opportunity to do this through the Forest Service 2003 Performance and Accomplishment Report. This is another reporting avenue beyond the traditional budget related formats, the results of which will go to OMB, USDA, and Congress relative to program expenditures and results. The NRST provided 3 submissions 1) a general description of Creeks and Communities strategy with 2003 activity summary, 2) an example of a specific service trip, and 3) a synopsis of the program evaluation, and. There is a growing realization that much of the work that is done to foster collaboration will need newly developed ways to fully address accountability and reporting. Below are the three submissions that we provided:

#### ***Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management***

FY 2003 marks the seventh full year of an interagency effort now known as Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management. It is an approach led by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, that fosters collaborative, local decision making concerning riparian issues, principally in the western United States. It is designed to give people the tools to confront and manage the conflict that is often a barrier to restoration and improvements in management. Through teaching fundamental concepts, using common methods, terms, and definitions, this initiative is helping to build an essential foundation for effectively solving the problems surrounding this important resource.

This strategy is implemented by a diverse group of individuals called the Riparian Coordination Network (National Riparian Service Team, State Cadres, Agency Riparian Coordinators). Objectives are achieved through outreach and educational activities as well as providing assistance with specific situations which include issues ranging from concern about endangered species and water quality, to communication and participation of interests. Relationships, trust, and a common vision are created by providing respectful listening and learning environments. In FY 2003, the Network completed 34 training sessions, 14 service trips, and 20 briefings/presentations, reaching over 1800 people.

## ***Creeks and Communities Approach on the Beckwourth Ranger District, Plumas National Forest***

Because of a shared concern for watershed health and a desire to resolve the ongoing issues surrounding grazing on public lands, a partnership was formed between California Trout, Five Dot Cattle Company, Plumas National Forest, and University of California Extension Service. They identified the Squaw Queen Creek portion of the Jenkins Allotment as a place to work together for improvement of riparian and stream conditions through livestock management, and monitoring of the grazing system and riparian area. The National Riparian Service Team (NRST) was asked to help the group meet the following objectives:

- Build trust between the parties
- Develop a cooperative grazing plan with no permanent reductions in AUM's
- Establish a no penalty, adaptive management situation
- Develop a monitoring plan

The NRST assisted the group with a riparian assessment and the development of management options and an appropriate monitoring strategy. A community workshop was also conducted for others in the area. Follow-up will be necessary to know how much progress the group has made, but a good foundation was established. Members of the partnership hope this project builds trust between the participating groups and serves as a foundation for their continued collaborative efforts in other areas of the Sierra Nevada region.

## ***Can Agency-Led Initiatives Conform to Collaborative Principles? Evaluating and Reshaping an Interagency Strategy***

In order to comply with the requirements and spirit of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the first phase of an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved evaluation of this strategy was recently completed. Data was gathered through mail-back surveys of training session and service trip participants, and in-depth interviews with initiative implementers. Findings show that the initiative has successfully reached 20,000+ people, and most survey respondents were 'extremely' satisfied with the instructors and services provided. Training session participants felt their knowledge regarding the assessment of riparian-wetland function had increased. However training sessions were typically characterized by a lack of diverse participation and limited long-term improvement in cooperation. This is of particular concern because the majority of respondents identified social factors as 'extremely serious' barriers to success.

In comparison, service trips demonstrated considerably higher levels of success than training sessions in terms of facilitating on-the-ground cooperative restoration and management. Lower success rates were linked to a lack of up-front participation by diverse stakeholders, insufficient opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning, and limited follow-up activities. In an attempt to address evaluation results, the strategic plan has been revised (Creeks & Communities) to incorporate these findings and more adequately balance the social and technical dimensions of this work.

## **Lewis and Clark National Forest**

The team was asked to participate in a situation that can best be described as an impasse between the Forest Service and permittees relative to applying utilization and bank alteration standards into allotment management. In this particular situation, the Forest Service Interdisciplinary (ID) Team and the permittee's consultants ID Team each completed PFC assessments on a number of stream reaches. The NRST was asked, by both the Forest Service and the permittees, to help them together review some sample reaches and the PFC assessment results in order to reconcile any differences. The team was also asked to make management and monitoring recommendations which followed after the reach review discussions.

As it turns out, the differences in the assessments were very minor and did not really affect the summary ratings. By reviewing the attributes that were rated "no" on the check list and evaluating the comments substantiating the reason, the Forest Service, permittees and their consultants, and the NRST all agreed that there was too much bank disturbance and that management would need to be adjusted to reduce the pressure from livestock. Upon review of the present grazing system, the NRST recommended that the duration in the pasture be reduced and that off stream water be developed. They are already experimenting with use of supplements to aid distribution and have the opportunity to change pasture configuration. The good thing about the riparian areas reviewed, is their potential for improvement due to the right plant species being present.

During the visit, the NRST did not make a specific recommendation as to the method for monitoring bank alteration, but encouraged the FS and the consultants to decide together what will give them adequate results for guiding management decisions. It was also emphasized that the monitoring be done together and to focus on year by year improvement at first. This is the foundation for successful adaptive management.

## **Madera, Chihuahua, Mexico -- Creeks and Communities Activities**

by Janice Staats

I was thrilled to be able to go to Mexico with Mike Lunn and Wayne Elmore in October. Spanish is a hobby of mine, and what better way to practice than to go to a Spanish speaking country! We worked with Gina Uribe and Cliff Mathies, Environmental and Cultural Resources Consultants. This is the third time the National Riparian Service Team has worked with Gina and Cliff on riparian issues in the state of Chihuahua.

First, we had a Creeks and Communities Workshop in Madera. Madera is at the foot of the Sierra Madres about 6 hours south of El Paso. Cliff and Gina had coordinated with USDI Fish & Wildlife Service, and the non-profit organizations Pronatura, Fuerza Ambiental and Sierra Madre Alliance for funding, and to fill the class with people from six indigenous communities, a number of non-profit organizations, neighbors, and the local high school ecology class. We had a simultaneous translator who helped us put our Powerpoint presentations in Spanish, and translated everything we said via headsets to the audience. Alfredo Portillo also translated for us in 1998 when we had a riparian function workshop in Creel, and later in our 1999 workshops for Cañon Santa Elena, so he has the translation of riparian lingo down very well. The audience was impressed with the "before and after" photos. They kept asking if anything was planted to

get to the “after” photo. They asked so many times I could tell they didn’t believe that no plantings occurred.

We couldn’t have asked for a better field site on the second day of the workshop. Several landowners had constructed fences, and without really planning it, one small area of the creek had been excluded from livestock grazing for 3 years. This area looked very different from all the rest of the stream that was being grazed season long (Photo 1). I asked the group if anyone had planted the vigorous colonizers and the black willow stabilizers we saw, and they answered no. I could sense that they finally understood that riparian improvement could happen in their area too. We ended by putting the different communities represented in circles and they had a facilitated discussion on what the next steps for their communities should be to put into practice what they had learned (Photo 2). Mike had students from the ecology club facilitate each small group. The December 4, 2003 Sierra Madre Alliance Updates Newsletter reports that eight riparian improvement projects are being planned as a result of this workshop. !Que bueno!



Photo 1. Workshop field site showing 3 years of rest from livestock grazing.



Photo 2. Community members from Madera discussing next steps.

The third day we did a Riparian Proper Functioning Condition Assessment on el arroyo Sirupa in the Rio Papigochi catchment. This canyon has the cliff dwelling Barranca de Sirupa. We walked about 3 miles up and had our lunch at one of the ruins sites. The archeological resources were stunning and largely unprotected. El arroyo Sirupa is a creek that requires the large woody material of black willow, cypress, and sycamore to function (Photo 3). Sometime in the past, large woody material was probably removed, and season long grazing has suppressed the growth of new riparian trees. Many groups are working with the landowners to develop management plans for this watershed, and the PFC assessment will be used to help understand the physical function and guide objectives and management.



Photo 3. El arroyo Sirupa requires large woody material for function, and rated functional-at-risk with a downward trend.

What would help Mexico is if they could get their own Spanish speaking team who could teach Creeks and Communities Workshops, and act much like the National Riparian Service Team and State Riparian Teams. We recommended that Gina and Cliff, working with the Mexican government and non-profit organizations explore this possibility. A follow-up activity that has been requested is a Train-the-Trainer for Mexico. Hasta luego.

### **Supervisor's Knowledge and Support**

It is important that each member of the Riparian Coordination Network talk with your supervisors and others in your agencies within your zone of influence to help gain the support you need. You can include the State Cadre work plan action items within your regular plan of work to schedule, implement, and account for your accomplishments. Along with your supervisors, also keep your Agency Riparian Coordinator up-to-date on your activities. If you need a copy of the Network Directory just let us know.

You could also incorporate your work with the State Cadre in your individual performance plan by including a performance item something like this: *Provide support to the Creeks and Communities Strategy and Riparian Coordination Network by serving as a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Riparian Cadre. Responsibilities include planning and providing riparian expertise at Creeks and Communities workshops and problem solving sessions, and attending Riparian Coordination Network meetings every other year.* Agency Riparian Coordinators may include something like: *Support the implementation of the Creeks and Communities Strategy by providing salary and travel expenses for members of the Riparian Coordination Network and working toward integration of the approach within agency programs.*

## **Riparian Network Conference Calls**

Conference calls with each Riparian Cadre, Agency Riparian Coordinators and the Riparian Service Team were set up during the Riparian Coordination Network meeting last November in Phoenix. A discussion guide for each state has been sent out. The subjects are follow-up from the Cadre work plans. We'd like to invite all Cadre members and Agency Riparian Coordinators to join us on these conference calls.

Below are the times that each Cadre Coordinator signed up for during the workshop.  
Conference Call sign up times (all times are PST)

April 6, 2003

8:30-9:30 Arizona  
10:00-11:00 Nevada  
11:30-12:30 Washington  
1:30-2:30 Oregon  
3:00-4:00 California

April 7, 2003

8:30-9:30 Utah  
10:00-11:00 New Mexico  
11:30-12:30 Wyoming

April 8, 2003

8:30-9:30 Idaho  
10:00-11:00 Colorado  
11:30-12:30 Canada  
1:30-2:30 Montana