Full Stream Ahead

March/April 2007

News and Highlights of Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration

Community Riparian Function Awareness Training or PFC Assessment Training – How to Best Meet our Mission and Meet Client Needs

Over the last several years, the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) has been asked to conduct workshops on riparian function for communities where the audience is a broad mix of agency and non-agency people. The main objectives are to present information about riparian-wetland function and management and to have everyone listen to each other's views on the topics discussed. In these situations, the workshop is *not* designed to teach interdisciplinary teams to "*do* " Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessments, yet because PFC is such a great communication tool, we use it to teach important concepts about riparian-wetland function. However, because a full PFC training has not occurred when doing these types of sessions, we have often wondered how best to handle the field sites. Can breaking up into small groups without proper training give the impression that PFC assessments can be done with just an abbreviated version of the regular course, and can this cause more harm than good, more frustration than learning?

At times, we've received feedback that our presentations and discussions on the checklist items, in both the classroom and field, were too in-depth for our audience, and they requested shorter more introductory material for future similar events (e.g., public field days). In the Creeks & Communities Strategy, we have our mission (*achieving healthy streams through bringing people together*), and our clients have their needs, and we work to meet both. We use the PFC assessment because it is a purposeful thought process; a synthesis tool that helps build capacity for communities to make better decisions on riparian-wetland management. While it is true that in communities only a few will actually "do" PFC assessments, many others need to understand it and have the common vocabulary in order to be a part of the discussions and decisions.

2008 Creeks & Communities Network Conference

****DATE CHANGE**** The 2008 biennial Creeks & Communities Network Meeting dates have been changed to **March 4-6, 2008.** This date change is due to the new Bureau approval requirements. We anticipate that approval may not come until early September, which would not have given us adequate time to arrange facilities, speakers, and travel for the November 2007 dates. The location will be determined based on the approval. This will be a working meeting designed to increase and enhance the ability of the Creeks & Communities Network to effectively implement the Creeks & Communities strategy. A portion of the meeting will be set aside for finalizing FY2008-2009 state work plans. For more information, contact Carol Connolly at carol_connolly@or.blm.gov or (541) 416-6892.

Training continued

A conference call between the NRST, State Riparian Team Leaders and retired NRST members occurred on February 1, 2007 in an effort to ensure we do not “boil down” workshop information too much and also to see how others in the Creeks & Communities Network have handled similar situations. Everyone gave their ideas on how to best present these types of workshops. The bullets below outline the discussion during the conference call. We learned that not all State Teams have been requested to do these types of workshops, but if they are, the following provides some helpful guidance.

ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

Consider your audience. In many cases, there is a mix of producers and agency people. What are their needs? What is their purpose? What is your purpose? Is there any conflict involved? What are the opportunities?

Have a plan to follow-up a shorter version workshop with the in-depth training session where needed.

If the need for the training is to train people to conduct PFC assessments, then no short cuts should be taken, and the session advertised accordingly.

If the need for the training is awareness and a common vocabulary, then talk more about how riparian-wetland areas function, and be guided by some of the bulleted ideas that follow but do cover all the PFC definitions and checklist items, just not as in-depth.

Effective Briefings Workbook (Cispus 2007) suggests your team discuss these questions when analyzing your audience:

Part I. ***Some questions that are important to ask include:***

- What do you know about your audience?
- Of what interest is your briefing to them?
- What past history do they have with the topic? With you?
- What is their attitude about the topic?
- What are your audience’s needs?
- In what way do you want to change their behavior?
- What does your audience need to know?

Part II. ***Analyze individuals with the following questions:***

- Their knowledge of subject: high, general, limited, none.
- Vocabulary understanding: technical, non-technical, high, low.
- Their opinion about the topic.
- Advantages or disadvantages of briefing objectives to them as individuals.
- Information and techniques most likely to gain attention: costs, technical information, demonstration, graphs, visuals, anecdotes, etc.,

Part III. ***Group overview:***

- Describe your audience in general (using Part I).
- What is their past history and association with the topic? With you?
- What does your audience need to know about the topic?
- How will they react to the briefing information and how much information should you give to the audience at one time to create a positive change (too much can create a negative reaction)?
- Describe some things to consider in tailoring your briefing to gain best understanding by the audience.
- Find out more about your audience prior to the Community workshop (look at literature of group, attend a meeting of group prior to your briefing, talk to someone who gave briefing earlier, talk to staff person who will be attending your briefing and ask them what will be important for them to know, talk to a member of the group).

Training continued

CLASSROOM SESSION

- Present the session as an *introduction* to riparian-wetland health.
- Be clear that they will not be trained adequately to successfully complete PFC assessments after only a briefing type-training format.
- Encourage them to pursue further in-depth training if interest is to perform PFC assessments. Provide guidance/ assistance on how to accomplish this.
- Use Creeks & Communities main messages that riparian-wetland function creates what we all value, even though we each have our own reasons for valuing the resource (i.e., healthy streams provide benefits (forage, water quality, fisheries habitat, bird habitat, etc.,)).
- In the classroom, establish the value of riparian function. For orientation type training, teach why riparian areas are important, and about PFC assessment. Explain the benefits of having this kind of an assessment, and how it will be used.
- Can use "before and after" photos and talk about attributes and processes that are changing without using the PFC checklist.
- For landowners and others, first showing the Bear Creek slide series and talking attributes and processes has been an effective stage setter.
- If an actual PFC assessment has been completed by a subset of the community (and those folks have already been well-trained), do an evening program afterwards that explains to the rest of the community an introduction to riparian-wetland condition, what was examined and what was found. Can follow-up with more in-depth PFC training if interest is generated.

FIELD SITES

- Go to field sites ahead of time and have the PFC assessment completed by your instructor team (interdisciplinary team). Take digital photos and use them in your presentation the next day.
- If you just cannot get to the field ahead of time to do the PFC assessment, a good compromise is to have some instructors who pay attention to the people in their small groups, while others concentrate on doing the assessment.
- Have an instructor start off the field site talking about what is functioning there. Move to the "no" answers and discuss why they answered "no."
- Have the interdisciplinary team quickly tell the larger group what they came up with for each checklist item and why.
- If the classroom session did not fully train participants to "do" PFC assessments, when you get to the field, stay as a big group, or have an experienced team member in each group. People do gain value being in a small group discussing potential, checklist items, and final rating.
- Explain the benefits for having this kind of an assessment, and how it will be used.
- Explain the limitations – experienced individuals need to be in an interdisciplinary team because of the complexity of riparian-wetland systems, and even an experienced interdisciplinary team can have difficulty answering each checklist item and need to use and interpret quantitative methods to better understand specific checklist items.

OVERALL

- Lead them to full PFC training if they want to get into it further and learn how it applies to different stream types.
- It was noted that after a day in the classroom, some people may be confused and unsure about riparian-wetland function and/or the PFC assessment method. We have found that by the end of the second day at the fields sites, the vocabulary and concepts are much more clear to people.
- The New Mexico Riparian Team has created an agenda for a 3-day training session, and they feel it has helped with their in-depth training needs and quality control.
- A longer format would also give more time for explanation of the quantitative methods used by an interdisciplinary team when needed.

As you can see, planning and execution of riparian-function awareness training can actually take more thought and resources than do the traditional 2-day PFC workshops. Going to the field sites the day before the classroom session and doing PFC assessments as an interdisciplinary team, will go a long way toward ensuring the success of riparian function awareness workshops.

Monitoring Stream Channels and Riparian Vegetation - Multiple Indicators Monitoring - (MIM) Revision

(Submitted by Tim Burton and Steve Smith, BLM, Boise, ID)

A number of improvements have been made as a result of 3 years of testing and application of the Technical Bulletin: Monitoring Stream Channels and Riparian Vegetation - Multiple Indicators (commonly referred to as "MIM"). The new version is now on the WEB site below:

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/publications/technical_bulletins/tb_07-01.html

Some of the significant improvements include:

1. There are now a total of 10 indicators measured at the same time and location on the stream:
   - **3 Livestock use indicators**: stubble height, bank alteration, woody browse;
   - **2 vegetation indicators**: greenline composition, woody regeneration; and
   - **5 stream channel indicators**: bank stability, greenline-greenline width, water width, thalweg depth, and substrate size distribution.

2. The Field Cards have been updated to clarify the field procedures and rule sets.

3. A new **Data_Analysis_Module** with step by step instructions of the 20 metrics (median and mean stubble height, bank alteration, woody use, bank stability, bank cover, % saplings+young, % mature, % dead, % hydric, erosion resistance index, ecological status, site wetland rating, greenline-to-greenline width, discharge, thalweg variation index, width/depth ratio, % woody veg, % hydric herbaceous veg, % fines, median particle diameter, roughness, and pool quality index).

4. There is a **PFC validation** table with quantified observations for many of the PFC checklist items.

5. A **Winward (2000) Calibration** for Ecological Status and Site Wetland Rating.

6. The module now contains several ***MACROS*** that allow for easy transfer of data from the Data Entry Module to the Data Analysis Module. There is a MACRO that searches out common plant coding errors and replaces them with correct plant codes. There is now a new MACRO that allows users to input new plant codes not currently in the existing plant list.

7. With data on precision and accuracy, the new version describes the ranges of variability inherent with several of the key indicators. The **Data Entry Module** still includes a sample size estimation to assure that spatial variability is adequately sampled.

8. There is now a **MIM Database**, in MS ACCESS format, that allows for quick queries and reports from the data, including photo images attached to each DMA. The Data_Analysis_Module contains an Export worksheet that allows for easy transfer of metric summary data to the Database.

Want to Request a Riparian Grazing Course for 2008?

Now is a good time to start initiating a request to sponsor a riparian grazing course for FY 2008. If interested, go to http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst/files/GrazCourseRequest8-28-06.pdf for a copy of the Call for Sponsorship letter which includes the course requirements and a sample of the course outline. As shown, the training is a 3-day format but it can be tailored to meet local needs. The new *Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian-Wetland Areas* technical reference (TR 1737-20) is the primary reference for this course. Please contact Sandy Wyman, (541)416-6886 or swyman@or.blm.gov for more information.

New Facilitation Network

In an effort to assist the Creeks and Communities effort by identifying individuals who are willing and able to provide facilitation and conflict resolution services, the NRST recently sent out a call for participation in a facilitator network to all of the individuals who have been trained in the Chadwick consensus building process. Approximately 40 people have agreed to be part of this network. If a state team would like to incorporate some consensus building techniques into their sessions, please contact the individuals listed directly. While some of the limitations on individual participation were identified, it is best to assume that the specifics will need to be negotiated with each individual on a case-by-case basis. Copies of this list are available upon request; please contact Laura Van Riper (541) 416-6702 or laura_van_riper@or.blm.gov.

Another source for identifying facilitators to assist with C&C efforts is the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution Roster (http://www.ecr.gov/roster/index.htm).

Website of Interest

Northern Arizona University's new Ecological Monitoring & Assessment Program & Foundation (EMA) website has just been completed. Please visit www.emaprogram.com to learn about all of EMA's programs including the San Juan River Basin Program, Ecological Oral Histories, Wind Energy Research and Development, Student Programs and more.

The new website contains information about the Board of Advisors, Science Advisory Panel, and staff, as well as links to all of the *Building Collaborations for Rangeland Conservation* and *The Importance of Grasslands in Northern Arizona*.

The site also contains a "news and events" section that provides information and links about upcoming environmental events, speakers and academic courses. The interactive GIS-based Arizona Wind Maps, Landownership Maps, and Southwest Ecological Information Center are accessible as well.

Full Stream Ahead

Is there something you would like to see in a future issue of *Full Stream Ahead*? If so, send an email to nrst@or.blm.gov. The NRST utilizes this newsletter to share highlights, news and hot topics that pertain to the Creeks and Communities Strategy. This newsletter is for the entire network and we encourage you to send in ideas, questions and articles for us to publicize. The deadline for submissions to the May/June 2007 issue is July 6.

The National Riparian Service Team can be contacted at:

COOPERATIVE riparian RESTORATION

NRST
3050 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
(541) 416-6700
Email: nrst@or.blm.gov
http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst/

"Healthy Streams Through Bringing People Together"