COOPERATIVE riparian RESTORATION

Full Stream Ahead

September/October2006

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

More than a Word: collaboration is a commitment

Just knowing that collaboration is needed doesn't make it easy and doesn't make it work. Although more and more people are attempting to work collaboratively to achieve water and riparian–wetland improvements, too often the results are disappointing. The confounding problem, suggested Van Riper, is that people often don't have the commitment, skills, support, information, and/or desire to think and behave collaboratively. And, as University of Wyoming researcher Deborah Paulson pointed out, "no amount of facilitation [or collaboration] can bring about success if the participants are not ready and able to participate in good faith in the process" (Paulson 1998).

Defining collaboration

One reason collaboration can be a challenge is that it means different things to different people. A simple dictionary definition of collaboration is "to work together." In the resource management context, collaboration often means more specifically the pooling of funds or other resources (such as information or labor) by two or more "stakeholders" to address some issue that no individual or group can handle alone (Gray 1989).

Some general attributes used to characterize collaborative efforts are:

- People who may be strangers, casual acquaintances, or even adversaries.
- Diverse voices.
- Mutual learning as participants share knowledge and skills.
- Origins in the community, outside of government (although agencies may participate as equal, working partners).
- Concern over process as well as substance.
- Place-based concerns (local or regional depending on scale of project).
- Openness and transparency.
- Trust in the good faith of other participants.

Excerpt taken from *Wildland Waters. Wildland Waters* is a publication of the USDA Forest Service. The National Riparian Service team were contributors to the Spring 2006 issue. If you would like copies of the entire publication email nrst @or.blm.gov.

Save the Date: November 5-9, 2007 has been identified as the week for the next Riparian Coordination Network Biennial Meeting. The location has not been determined. More information will follow in the next few months.

PFC Training at Kerrville and Corsicana, Texas

The NRCS, through State and Field Office personnel and key partners, are actively working to facilitate awareness and understanding of the importance of riparian resources in Texas. The NRST has been supporting this effort with training and other assistance. This year the team was asked to provide 2 PFC sessions, one in Kerrville and another in Corsicana. Local coordinators, Steve Nelle and Ricky Linex, pulled together diverse groups for both sessions adding up to almost 100 people in attendance. Sponsors included NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), Navarro Soil and Water Conservation District, and Dunaway Consulting.

The NRCS has expressed a desire to increase their capacity to provide leadership for stewardship of riparian resources in Texas while improving effectiveness relative to their conservation programs. To address this further, members of the NRST met with State and Zone Office staff about the possible development of a Texas Riparian Team and how they might use the PFC assessment method in a way that is compatible with their Steam Visual Assessment Protocol in order to meet key agency objectives. There is also interest in pursuing additional training based on the new interagency technical reference *Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian-Wetland Areas* (TR 1737-20). The team will be exploring these opportunities over the coming year.

Janice Staats answering hydrology questions from the group in Kerrville, TX.

Cypress provides large extensive root systems vertically and horizontally to provide streambank protection. (near Kerrville)

Steve Nelle, NRCS Biologist, showing the Kerrville students riparian-wetland plants.

Corsicana work group discussing the potential for Mill Creek.

Plumas National Forest

PFC Assistance

The National Riparian Service Team (NRST) and members of the CA State Riparian Team traveled to Graegle, CA, July 11-3, 2006, at the request of the Plumas National Forest, to provide assistance addressing several needs. First, the forest has implemented a strategy for completing allotment NEPA to meet the requirements of the Rescissions Act. They are doing this in accordance with guidance found in the 2004 Sierra Nevada Framework that calls for using the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment method relative to consideration and management of riparian and aquatic resources. The principle objective was to teach the forest interdisciplinary teams and others the PFC methodology with paticular emphasis on the context of its use. A one day session was followed by a one day field session applying the principles and procedure. Considerable attention was given to addressing the importance of using the method as it was intended to be used, i.e., done by an ID Team with participation of interested stakeholders. Also stressed was the importance of understanding capability and potential, doing adequate pre-work, including use of aerial photos. The distinction was made between a key area and a reach, their purposes and what was appropriate for each was discussed. Participants were given guidance on how to address the checklist attribute of adequate vegetation present, as well as how to use the PFC assessment results to focus monitoring efforts.

Examining Fens

In addition to the PFC training, the NRST was asked to accompany agency staff and others in examining fens in the Mt. Pleasant Research Natural Area that were also in the Bucks Lake Wilderness. They are gearing up to complete management plans for both the RNA and the wilderness area and are concerned with the condition of some of the fens. The overall objective for the day was to synthesize as much information as possible to make informed decisions concerning restoration, management and monitoring, as well as possible research options on fens. The forest had also invited David Cooper from Colorado State University, who works extensively with many different kinds of fens, including those in the Sierra Nevada ecosystem. As an introduction and orientation to the NRST, the group was given a brief explanation of Creeks and Communities including a fundamental dimension of the approach that stresses the relationship of function and values. David Cooper gave the group a good primer on fen ecology. A strong emphasis was made on how important hydrologic function is to their development and maintenance.

Two sites were examined: 1) an inundated fen with associated E channels, (see photo 1) and 2) a large fen with a big gully and running stream cutting through it. (see photos 2a &2b) Vegetation characteristics were observed and discussed including species present, quantity and vigor. The concepts of potential, capability and changed potential were covered as some of these sites may have changed dramatically due to lowered water tables and peat literally takes thousands of years to form. The importance of identifying legacy effects from those of current management was also emphasized as effects of livestock grazing and surrounding stand densities were considered.

Recovery processes were also talked about leading to discussions on restoration and management for which the options may be dictated by the capability issues or choices relative to restrictions due to RNA and wilderness status. Key questions were identified and addressed to a certain degree such as; Can this area be restored, and if so, how? What will happen if nothing is done? If a decision is made to do something, what are the choices? Can grazing practices be changed with fencing, stocking, timing? For the recovery potential and cost, should the forest be working here or investing elsewhere? Answering these will be critical for determining appropriate objectives in development of the upcoming management plans.

Photo 1: This portion of Fen inundated with water dominated by spikerush (Eleocharis)

Photo 2a: Fen next to gully dominated by Carex

Photo 2b: Gully through Fen

Martin Basin, Humbolt-Toiyable National Forest

In spring of 2005, the NRST was asked to assist agency personnel and interested stakeholders involved in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and subsequent Record of Decision (ROD) for the Martin Basin Rangeland Project, a group of allotments on the Santa Rosa Ranger District of the Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forest. The NV State Team was instrumental in organizing a well attended one day meeting in June of 2005 to bring all the parties together for the purpose of building a foundation for moving forward in a collaborative manner. This was followed by two days in August with a "Field Days" format designed to develop some specific processes for the group to use in order improve communication and begin to see the riparian resources in a way that would lead to an increase in agreement. The group began by assessing several sites using the Proper Functioning Condition (FPC) assessment method as well as relating the findings to the forest's Stream Group matrix. Time was spent on setting objectives and describing desired condition based on site potential and went through a "root cause" analysis asking and answering the question "Why isn't the site at desired condition and what must be corrected to move it towards desired condition? This led to determining both short, mid and long-term monitoring indicators. Finally, three work groups addressed: 1) consultation for Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), 2) EIS and Record Of Decision (ROD) contents, and 3) definitions.

The ROD for the Martin Basin Rangeland Project was signed in June of 2006. The Biological Opinion (BO) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service describes specific standards for livestock management for streams that contain LCT, although the requirements can be modified based upon completion of site specific ecological assessments. Thus, there is a need to assess and monitor specific streams to gather data for determining if the terms and conditions in the BO for LCT are being met to be effective and meet the intent of the ROD. This must be done in a collaborative manner with various interests involved. Both the process and the information gathered should support adaptive management and subsequent decisions and the development of appropriate standards. Determining the specifics of what will be done when, and by who surfaced as the next step toward meeting agency requirements relative to the Martin Basin Rangeland Project.

Primary objectives for the NRST and NV State Team assistance included:

- Assist the Forest in completing Proper Functioning Condition (PFC as defined in TR-1737-15 Prichard et. al. 1998) assessments on 2 occupied LCT streams in order to provide physical function condition information in support of the ecological condition assessments being conducted by the Forest.
- Establish the linkages of the physical function attributes and processes assessed in the PFC method with the Stream Group attributes in the Matrices in Alternative 2.
- Facilitate the determination of monitoring objectives as well as indicators, locations, timeframes and protocols that will meet the intent of the implementation (short term) and effectiveness (mid to long term) monitoring as outlined in Alternative 2 of the FEIS.
- Possible preliminary discussion of management options tied to interim and long-term objectives.

The outcomes expected were:

- A collective understanding of site potential and capability.
- Baseline information on the physical function condition of the 2 streams assessed as well as specifics and rationale for the components of a monitoring strategy.
- Understanding and agreement relative to both physical function condition and ecological condition and how they are linked.
- A sense of how to deal with the elements of uncertainty including initial use of the matrices as guidelines, the time it may take to determine change in the stream systems, and both the human and financial capacity to do adequate/required assessment and monitoring.

Guided by the framework established during the August 2005 Field Days, the group was able to meet the expected outcomes. Participants developed a firm understanding of the linkages between basic physical function and long term conditions described in the Stream Group matrix. Agency personnel expressed concurrence with the process, as did others, including the permittees. A practical monitoring strategy was developed involving both Forest Service and permittee monitoring considered achievable within the parameters of current funding and workforce. The Forest Service, permittees and other affected parties now have a ROD, accompanied by an implementation plan, including monitoring strategy, which should allow true adaptive management to succeed.

Lake County, Oregon

Lake County is located in the south central part of Oregon. The communities there are proactive in addressing natural resource issues and their successes can be attributed to effective working relationships established through the years. In this case, the National Riparian Service Team and the OR State Riparian Team were asked to assist a diverse group representing the Lake County SWCD, Fremont-Winema National Forest, J-Spear and other ranches, SE OR Resource Advisory Council, several Watershed Councils, Lake County Resources Initiative, Ducks Unlimited and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). Their request was for advice in developing a common vision for restoration supported by options designed to minimize risk and maximize investment. Three days were planned to examine sites on both public and private land.

To prepare the group for looking at the field sites, the first day began with a morning presentation covering the Creeks and Communities approach and key concepts relative to function and in particular, the role of vegetation. One field site was assessed each day using the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) checklists to guide the observations and frame the discussions on all three sites. As always, the group participated in a way that builds understanding and capacity for improved decision making relative to riparian resources. Even though there was a somewhat different mix of people each day, most began to understand and recognize the indicators of the recovery processes, which allowed them to begin drawing their own conclusions with more confidence.

TR-1737-20 Coming Soon

Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian-Wetland Areas (TR 1737-20) is currently at the printers and should be available early next year. The technical reference will replace the *Grazing Management for Riparian-Wetland Areas* (TR 1737-14) as the riparian grazing reference used by the Riparian Coordination Network (RCN). Copies will be sent to the RCN and more copies will be available through the Denver Service Center.

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 November/December 2006 issue is January 4, 2007.

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