Mancos River Restoration

Meeting Notes

4/15/15

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# Introduction:

Species vulnerable to drought and climate change? Assess effects of climate change on physical attributes of species. Conservation of species extends past the 5 miles of river in the Park. Paul is leaning toward MSI doing the work/taking the lead on this project. See Paul’s handout.

# Feedback on project’s concept:

*MEVE Objectives* – only perennial stream in the park, only place with fish. Important biologically. Park struggling with extremely low water levels.

*Ute Mountain Ute* – similar interests as MEVE because they are just downstream. Restore low-no water riparian environments.

*Matt (T.U.)* – Do the science to see the effects of the project without the water, understand your hydrology. Mancos River is variable, hydrology is variable, understand the hydrology we have to work with. May not be solvable in the Mancos. It’s a long shot to keep water in the river that far downstream. Be realistic about it. Don’t think it’s a viable option right away.

*Paul M.(MEVE)* – Climate smart conservation cycle as a method to use on this. Paul envisions doing a drainage based vulnerable species assessment. My original idea was to concentrate on restoration, but thinking about hat Chris said, that makes sense.

*Jack (Mancos river Landowner/ecologist)* – same conversation around irrigators tables. No water in the river. Thinks it is a waste of time to consider increasing the water. We need to learn to live with what us there. Think like a watershed—everyone should be involved. Land into conservation easements will help the problem. We are working on getting more

*Marty Moses (biologist)* – keep more water in the river, but we can’t establish an “us against them” mentality.

*Jim -* Identify the areas that are capable of holding water through the seasons- refuge areas for fish to hole up are places to try to protect. Genetically intact fish in the Mancos River. Chris’s view is really important. Assess connectivity, this is a good place to work with proivate interest, ex. Diversion structure that works well for landowners but provides fish passage, great.

*Chris R. (fluvial geomorphologist)-* this isn’t an isolated conversation, there may be larger pots of money that may increase the potential. Look to NM, nature conservancy, etc. Figure out where your gaps in knowledge are. Ex. On the Dolores we have a ton of data but we don’t have temps. Find your gaps. Protect, reconnect, sustain. Find out what you have, protect. Reconnect migration corridors or reestablish populations in places that need it. Finally, restore as a last resort. Look at it through that lens, in that order. Beaver dams are really good at holding water back for a few months. Could use them to keep water up high. You cant fix rivers without being able to talk to the people.

*Renée (CO Nat Heritage)* – Winters up high (>10,000ft) will be wetter according to climate scenarios, obviously not this year.

*Marcie (MSI)* – what something is named is really important with where you go with it. Use terms that are inclusive of both social and natural systems. How we frame this project ill make a difference in who come to the table and participates. We don’t want to unconsciously exclude them [people with other interests that have stakes in the situation]. Think holistically about who is in the watershed.

*Anne Oliver –* the Mancos is a difficult environment to work in because it is over appropriated. My hope is that the next effort twill go further than the last effort in engaging in really meaningful dialogue with water users. The challenge on the Mancos could be couched as meeting all water needs. If we come at it from strictly a biological perspective we immediately lose the people that really need to be at the table.

# Stakeholders:

MVNPS - Mesa Verde

NPS -

UMU – Ute Mt Ute

SCC – Southwest Conservation Corps

MR – Mancos Resident (Chris Rasmussen), Chama Peak Land Alliance (Emily Olson)

NRCS –

TU – Trout Unlimited (interested in cold water fisheries, not warm water)

MSI-

MCD –

MLC -

CNHP -

Tribal Park

Tourism

***Stakeholders not represented at this meeting (not necessarily included in “all” below) but do have stakeholder interest in the issues:***

USFS

BLM

USFWS

TNC

Navajo Nation

La Plata Open Space

CO Cattlemans landtrust

San Juan Citizens Alliance

Water conservancy districts

Division of water resources

Town of Mancos

Montezuma County

Water Districts

San Juan RC&D

Fire managers- USFS, BLM, emergency response

Montezuma Valley Navajo Watch

Bureau of Rec.

CDPHE - WQ

EPA

USACE

Tamarisk Coalition

SWWCD + CWCB

CO water trust

SW round table

SR + CP LLC

Climate science centers

FLC – professors/students: Cynthia dott

Peter Stacey – UNM

George Catlin/ Jay Thompson (contact)

# Resources:

* Multi state conservation agreement
  + “Three species”
* San Juan Conservation Action Plan
  + CNHP, TNC
  + Escalante Action Plan
* Mancos Watershed Plan – 2011
  + Mancos valley watershed group

# Issues /interests: stakeholders interested:

1. Fish Species: *All*
   1. Round tail chub: *Everyone except TU*
   2. The three species
   3. Flannel mouth sucker
   4. Bluehead
      1. Genetic integrity
2. Water supply/quantity: *All*
   1. Groundwater
   2. People
   3. Agriculture
   4. fish
3. Ecosystem health, watershed scale: *All*
   1. Cottonwood
   2. Headwaters
   3. Forest health, insects
   4. Fire risk
4. Riparian health: *All*
   1. Stream bank
   2. Cottonwood galleries
   3. Drought species
   4. Post-fire stabilization
   5. Cultural use
      1. Native plants/seeds
5. Fire Impacts + Preparedness: *all*
   1. Soil erosion
   2. Stabilization
   3. Fire plans
   4. Forest health, insects
   5. Fire risk
6. Aquatic health: *all*
   1. Macro invertebrates
   2. Water quality
   3. In-stream habitat
7. Beavers: *All*
   1. Interest
   2. Issue
8. Birds*: Everyone except TU*
   1. Riparian birds
   2. general
   3. SWWF
   4. Yellow-billed cuckoo
9. Range land health/ herbivory: *all*
   1. Elk, other ungulate herbivores
   2. livestock
      1. Horses
      2. Cows
10. Upper watershed health: *all*
11. Cold water shed fisheries: *all*
12. Invasive species in all regards: *all*
    1. Aquatic
    2. Terrestrial
    3. Flora
    4. Fauna
13. Big horn sheep: MEVE, CPW, CNHP, UMU
14. Soil health: *all*
    1. Nutrient mngmt
    2. Retention
    3. Erosion
    4. Amendments/pesticides
    5. BMPs
15. Recreation: CPW, TU: fishing,
    1. Access
    2. Traffic
    3. Fishing
    4. Impacts of camping use etc.
16. Agricultural/municipal use: *all*

# Objectives for the group:

*UMU* – website for current projects (could be google docs because anyone can upload)

*CNHP -* Assess current condition for these targets and develop a goal as to where we want to be in xxx# of years:

Conservation targets

1. Warm water fishes – \*3 species
2. Riparian and bird communities
3. Cold water fishes
4. Ag/human communities
5. Fresh water ecosystem health
6. Watershed ecosystem health
7. Beaver
8. Bighorn sheep

Impacts

1. Climate
2. Herbivory
3. Invasives
4. recreation

# Goals:

* Preserve genetic integrity of fish population
* Increase resiliency
* Increase abundance and distribution of fish
* Bring the right people (everybody who needs to be) to the table
  + See Anne and Marcie’s statements above in the ‘feedback on project’ section) for more clarification on this.

# Outcomes:

* Toolbox
  + Data, GIS, plans, options, BMPs
* Projects
* Leverage resources/funding
* Assessments
  + Evaluate existing efforts
  + Add environmental and cultural change
* Action plan
* MOU of support
* Monitor change and evaluate
* Funding assessment
* Outreach and engagement plan
  + Coordinate
* Formalized structure
  + Who’s doing what, how do we get stuff done?

# Data Needs:

* Drought refugia
* Future developments

# Actions:

1. Reconnect watershed group – *MSI, CNHP, CR, Mancos Conservation District (MCD)*
   1. Add climate change updates
   2. Target interests and species subgroup
2. Circulate resources *MVNP, Renee*
3. Collect data layers *MCD, CR*
4. Seek planning funding *MSI + all*

# Next meeting:

**Meet again in late May-early June**

1. Flesh out action items
2. Bring more stakeholders
3. Introduce groups and interests
4. Share resources
5. Assign tasks
6. Discuss funding opportunities

* What do we have?
* What do we need?
* What do we want to do?

**Sub groups**

* Funding:
  + *MSI, SCC (mike), UMU, Anne Oliver, Tamarisk Co., SWCD + roundtable*
* Data/planning/ information group:
  + *CR, Steve Monroe, CPW, Anne Oliver, MCD, CNHP, MSI*
* Outreach group:
  + *MCD, Anne Oliver, Ecological and social groups*
* Steering Committee:
  + *Paul Morey, Mike, Marcie, Steve, CR*
  + Plan next meeting - *Paul*
  + Consolidate notes
* Water needs and values:
  + Marty
  + Find potential examples

# NOTES:

TU is working on a project in Dolores to create a toolkit to enable on the ground field staff to assess any given stream or reach and determine if and where project work would be best done. Limiting factors approach, identified limiting factors to trout growth, survival, health, and they are creating a manual that walks people through which factor is limiting populations. Also using climate projections to determine when and does it become an issue in the future with climate change if its not now? Designing it as a process that can be used by lay people.

See: Rapid stream reach method. (UMU is using this methodology).

Renée: made a list of groupings of interests: (see her list targets/impacts above)

CPW – tackle low hanging fruit, don’t lose sight of implementation

DRAFT mission statement: **“To increase Mancos River resilience through collaboration to protect, reconnect, restore, and sustain Mancos River values”**

Dynamic in the face of change, science-based, available