Mancos River Restoration Project

Meeting Notes

Mesa Verde N.P. Visitor Center

5/27/15

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# Attendees:

Paul Morey (Mesa Verde N.P.), Stephen Monroe (NPS- Southern Colorado Plateau Network), Marcie Bidwell (Mountain Studies Institute), Bob Becker (Mancos Conservation Distirct), , Jack Burk (Montezuma Land Conservancey), Emily Thorn (ERO Consultants), Tom Hooten (Colorado Extension), and Shawna Jensen (USFS).

# Action Items

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action Item | By: | Due by: |
| 1. Research funding sources | Marcie, Paul, Emily | June 15 |
| 1. Minutes and Action Items | Paul, Marcie | June 5 |
| 1. Website set up as document portal | MSI | June 30 |
| 1. Science Meeting to review plans (Mancos Plan, Rapid Assessment) | Science group- Paul, Steve, Chris, Emily, Marcie, Jack | July 6 (week of) (invite out by June 5) |
| 1. Contact Peter Stacy re: availability, talk in September, compile past survey/resurvey | Steve Monroe | July 6 |
| 1. Reserve venue for September meeting- date, location | Bob, Jack | June 15 |
| 1. Develop email list and invite list for outreach efforts | Jack (MCD), Ann, Paul (recruit help) | July 6 |
| 1. Contact Plan Stakeholders and new stakeholders re: invite to participate, Fall meeting, December meeting. | Jack and Gretchen (District manager) (MCD), Ann, | End of June, or as ready |
| 1. July Tour for Connecting Conservation to showcase Mancos | Paul, Russell (Jack and Bob) | June 5 |
| 1. Draft stakeholder survey and circulate to the group for input | Emily, Marcie | July 6 |
| 1. Plan September meeting agenda, invite speakers | Science Committee | July 6 |
| 1. Send out 2010 Mancos River Plan to group | Paul | June 11 |

# May Meeting Minutes

# Introduction- Paul Morey: Recap of the First Meeting & Initiation

Paul Morey reviewed the previous minutes for the April 15 meeting for the benefit of the new members of the group and to receive feedback on the species.

Paul would like to assess the viability of restoring current or extirpated species to the Mancos River drainage within the park. This assessment would include restoration options that account for the effects of drought and climate change? Species of interest include round-tail chub, beavers, bighorn sheep, southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, riparian birds, cottonwoods, riparian vegetation. Paul suggested using the Climate Smart Conservation cycle and assessing the vulnerability of species and physical attributes of the riparian corridor to climate change, create options to restore species and riparian systems in the light of climate change. A collaborative approach involving the various land owners, managers, and stakeholders in the drainage would benefit the species and partners. Paul suggested using MSI to work/take the lead on this project. See Paul’s handout from May meeting.

Questions and discussion:

1. What resources have been completed that support climate assessment? What resources would we want to update or expand upon?
   1. Vulnerability assessment for species of importance not currently covered.
2. What is included from Mancos River Plan regarding water rights, water efficiency?
   1. Salinity report and the resulting projects is newer information.
   2. Several water efficiency projects have been completed, putting water in pipe.
   3. Several fencing projects were implemented and changes to grazing patterns were attempted with mixed results
   4. Wildlife use of the riparian corridor may be exerting increased pressure.
   5. Areas where grazing practices have changed may take several years before the results are visible, especially because of the recent droughts.

# Species and Topics of Interest:

Following the introduction, we reviewed the species of interest that were part of Paul’s initial concept (MVNP interest) and other key issues that were likely the common denominators that connected the broader, full list generated at the last meeting. The following issues/species were discussed:

* Round tail chub- Mesa Verde restoration- MVNP understands that they need deeper pools, but not sure if current efforts are helping the population.
* Cottonwoods- MVNP, UMU without the range of flows, they are not seeing the regeneration of the cottonwood galleries
* Fish Species- three warm water species of interest, cold water fisheries
* Beavers- both as an obligate and as a tool for restoration
* Agricultural interests
* Connecting science to practices
* Invasives

# Potential stakeholders (updates in red):

We updated the stakeholder list from the last meeting. Additions are listed in red text below.

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 Land Trust

San Juan Citizens Alliance

Water conservancy districts

Division of water resources

Town of Mancos

Montezuma County

Montezuma County Weed Program

Water Districts

San Juan RC&D

Fire managers- USFS, BLM, and emergency response

Montezuma Valley Navajo Watch

Bureau of Rec.

CDPHE - WQ

EPA

USACE

Tamarisk Coalition

Southwest Water Conservation District

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Colorado Water Trust

Southwest Round Table

SR + CP LLC

Climate science centers

FLC – professors/students: Dr. Cynthia Dott

Peter Stacey – University of New Mexico (UNM)

George Catlin/ (BLM) Jay Thompson (contact)

Firewise Communities of Southwest Colorado

Colorado State Forest Service

# Mission Statement Review and Goals Discussion:

Paul brought the mission statement drafted at the April meeting for discussion. The group discussed how to add “punch” and direction to the broad statement from April.

*Initial Proposal Mission-* “To increase Mancos River resilience through collaboration to protect, reconnect, restore, and sustain Mancos River values”

May Discussion-

We want to add some specific goals to support the mission to show direction. After a round of discussion, it was proposed that perhaps the mission could be broad, but that the work statement would follow that would introduce the concept of phases of the project. We are seen to be in an Assessment Phase as a very exploratory phase to establish a baseline and existing data resources in order to plan for further actions by the group or partners. The following steps were suggested:

1. **Assess current and future conditions**
   1. *Review and utilize the baseline information (plans and projects) supporting the Mancos Watershed Plan*
      1. Mancos Watershed Plan
      2. Source Water Protection Plan
      3. Forest Service Management Plan
      4. Mancos Watershed Rapid Assessment (Stacy et al)
      5. Mancos Watershed Rapid Assessment Training (2 years, 5+ sites updated, Stacy et al)
   2. *Incorporate future projections of climate, social, and ecological change in the region*
      1. Southwest Colorado
   3. *Identify information gaps, areas to be updated, and areas to be improved.*
   4. *Survey the implementation of the Mancos Valley Watershed Plan- what has happened and what were the results.* 
      1. Diversions
      2. Water conservation- piping projects
      3. Riparian Restoration
      4. Grazing and fencing projects
   5. *Map the current connections* within the system and where the connecting resources and resource issues bring people together.
2. **Survey stakeholders to understand their concerns, priorities, and values for the watershed (Sept- Dec).**
3. **Evaluate the vulnerability of the key systems**
4. **Identify the priority umbrella issues, species, and intervention points.**

# Next Steps

1. We discussed the reality of the group being at risk of not being effective if it’s too broad- survey stakeholders.
2. Conservation District- Jack and Bob volunteered to ask the District if they would lead or assist with outreach to the group of stakeholders involved in the Mancos Plan
3. Seek funding-we discussed a need to find funding to coordinate efforts and integrate data sources. See below list of possible funding sources. Specifically, immediate needs are:
   1. Peter Stacy- present his results and update
   2. Facilitator- guide discussion
4. Build website for providing information to group and stakeholders. Includes:
   1. Plans
   2. Past and current research and monitoring projects
   3. Group’s meetings minutes
5. Create Science subgroup
   1. Meet week of July 6th
      1. Paul will send out Doodle Poll
   2. Review existing data and plans
   3. Plan September science/management workshop (1/2 day?)
      1. Possibly at Mancos Community Center or Grange
      2. Set date and agenda
      3. Recruit speakers
6. Complete survey of stakeholders to identify the current issues, concerns, and level of interest in this effort.
7. Host Connecting for Conservation luncheon in Mancos and showcase Mancos projects and discuss Mancos River group on June 30th.
8. Resurvey RSRA

# Funding- potential sources

1. DRMS- potential funding for reclamation and clean-up for water quality
2. Non-point Source Pollution
3. Mesa Verde National Park year end funding
4. Mesa Verde Foundation
5. Trout Unlimited
6. ERO Foundation- may be able to support some time or efforts