

**Dolores River Dialogue  
Science Committee  
Tuesday, February 1, 2011  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
DWCD Board Room**

**Meeting Notes**

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*I) Introductions*

Attendees: Don Schwindt, Don Magnuson, Nathan Fey, Meghan Maloney, Jim Fisher, Dale Smith, Ken Curtis, Vern Harrell, Matt Clark, Ann Oliver

*II) Opening & Approval of the Agenda*

Vern requested a discussion of whether or not the Science Comm. wants March flows.

*III) Review and discussion: draft DRD "desired ecological outcomes"*

Ken suggested that the outcomes don't specifically address food supply for the fisheries. Macroinvertebrates as part of the ecology. Ann agreed; pointed out that food supply may be addressed indirectly through the channel function outcomes, e.g. channel bed scour, etc. Ken suggested that the outcomes should spell out habitat outcomes and that it would be helpful to add a column for explanations of each "outcome". Dale asked for which category? Natives or trout?

Matt asked how this list of "desired ecological outcomes" ties in with the A Way Forward process. Group suggested A Way Forward is more focused on the tools than the topics.

Don pointed out that we have yet to identify the costs associated with these outcomes, but acknowledged that the better identified the benefits are the further we can get.

Ann clarified the difference between the desired outcomes and the tools column. She suggests focusing on agreeing on desired outcomes first, and separately from the "how to get there" tools question. She recommends eliminating the tools column from this document, as it is quite incomplete. A more complete compilation of flow hypotheses can be found in the "Opportunities Report", which is currently under revision. Ann explained that the Steering Committee is reviewing currently, and also need to get review from the Science Committee.

Meghan added that it is valuable to have the hypotheses recorded even if divorced from the costs. Don and Ken agreed that more focus is needed. The Hydrology Committee is fleshing out information – not a focus on costs so much.

Dale reminded everyone that the word "Hypothesis" means an educated guess, and that we are trying to do the best we can. Anytime you are dealing with wildlife, it's very complicated, because there are so many factors.

Matt asked if the flow hypotheses reflect realistic possibilities, i.e. is the water there?

Ken agreed that this is a good question, adding that we need numbers for frequency and duration. Most are possible in some years – need to “balance the chips”, e.g. balance rafting needs with ecological needs. Ann mentioned that as part of drafting the “Opportunities Report” she put together some hydrographs showing the flow hypotheses graphed in relation to the actual hydrographs from recent “small”, “medium” and “large” spill years (as defined in the Correlation Report). Group agreed to take a look at these at the next meeting.

Vern: some of the flow hypotheses conflict with project purpose, so we need buy in from the rafting community. Also need a consensus on the needs of the rafting community. Meghan suggested adding the full catalogue of hypotheses (from “Opportunity Report” to the “desired outcomes” document, so they can better understand the hypotheses. Ann committed to send link, word document for their review and red-line comments.

Matt asked what the next steps are with the draft “desired outcomes.” Don answered that any suggestions should be incorporated, and would be welcomed by the Steering Committee. He suggested that it be up to Ken and Ann to incorporate macro-invertebrate/habitat outcome, and to incorporate hypotheses from Opportunity Report.

*IV) Discussion: 2011-12 Science Plans? Workplan? What are your ideas for science efforts in the next two years? Are there framework proposals we could develop? Specific questions/project ideas we should study/pursue? Bring your ideas and proposals!*

Agenda item deferred to a future meeting.

*V) Review of draft Dolores River Timeline*

Ann passed around handout of very initial draft timeline (attached).

Don explained that he envisioned a complete timeline as a joint product of the Hydrology and Science Committees. A version will be incorporated into the revised “Opportunities Report” and a version will be created as a standalone document. He views it as a critical piece of the DRD.

Dale added that everyone needs to see it. Such a timeline is an essential part of the total package.

Jim asked if anyone had looked at the San Miguel to assess differences and causes? Ken offered to flesh out this draft timeline more, with citations. Ann will send him the draft. Meghan offered resources for creating a useful visual timeline.

*VI) Discussion and decision: Future joint meeting with Hydrology Committee to provide technical review of draft Dolores Watershed-Based 319 Plan*

Ann will find out when 319 will be ready for review. Group decided that comments on the Opportunity Report could be sought separately from each committee and sent directly to Ann by March 22, 2010.

Added Agenda Item: March Flows

Ken said we are at 93% of inflow; it is shaping up like last year: a small spill year. The low snow levels are not as high as last year.

Vern explained how March flows would be managed this year, if they are to be released: the fish clock would not be “turned off”; the release would come from the fish pool, but would “overlay” any anticipated other releases; the release would not be designated as part of the “spill”. Vern requested that the science committee form a proposal. He will know by March 1<sup>st</sup> if such flows are possible based on the forecast.

The group pondered any potential impact to boaters. If 100cfs is the anticipated spill, and an additional 50 cfs of fish pool, then this amounts to 2 days of boatable flows. Suggestion was made that a stipulation could be developed such as “boaters agree only if impact us up to x%”. Meghan pointed out that the boaters would like to know from Vern what % of years has the Dolores Project met the mitigation requirements for recreational boating? The answer to this question might play into their willingness to sacrifice going forward. Matt asked, “Who are the boaters?”, pointing out that as a local boater himself, he doesn’t really know. Vern voiced frustration with the commercial non-local boaters, saying the local boaters understand. Meghan pointed out that non-local boaters are part of the community too. She explained that the effort to organize boaters has dropped off a bit due to Amber’s leave, but is likely to reenergize this year.

Don asked how a decision on March flows could happen in time this year, noting that individual players really make a difference. We should not just wait on the Framework Proposal process in such instances. Meghan agreed it is difficult to meet the new process. Vern: Spill Committee will meet on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ken pointed out that fish flows kick in toward late March, and that the Fish folks, Boaters need to get activated now.

Vern asked Meghan why she has not tried to dispel the question regarding the “meeting of mitigation requirements”. Meghan said that she does not have the data to do so, nor is it her job to gather and analyze that data. Ann asked whether the “mitigation requirements” are actually quantified? Ken clarified that no they are not quantified. The wording is something like “Manage excess water for the benefit of whitewater boating”.

Ken pointed out that American Whitewater has hired a hydrologist. Meghan added that American Whitewater and San Juan Citizens Alliance are jointly hiring a person to coordinate local and non-local boaters.

#### *VII) For Next Meeting*

- i. Review Big Gyp report*
- ii. Presentation of Downstream Water Quality Model, C. Anderson*
- iii. Desired presentations? (FLC, Graf, Anderson, etc.)*
- iv. Draft workplan*

Possible joint meeting with Hydrology deferred pending clarity on delivery date of 319 Watershed Plan.