

ACOE / NMISC
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE WATER SUPPLY STUDY
Meeting of the Executive Steering Committee
October 24, 2003, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 pm

Presentation: S.S. Papadopoulos & Associates, Inc.

Current status of the Middle Rio Grande Water Supply Study, Phase 3 work, including completed tasks, remaining analyses, and proposed schedule.

Discussion:

1. Estevan Lopez: (during Debbie's presentation of first 2 phases of study): What do you mean by "present development conditions"
Debbie – it represents current consumptive use by crops, riparian vegetation, and M&I uses (based on data from 1990s).
2. Model as it stands now gives us significant net depletions – on the average of 64,000 acre-feet/year. Will use sensitivity analysis to verify. Karen indicated that these net depletions may be too high.
Frank Titus – "why do you think this number is too high" – if SSP&A makes any changes, he would like us to give reasons.
Karen – SSPA will do sensitivity analyses, but won't be changing the numbers.
Debbie – "I don't think we are missing anything big in our analysis. Some small adjustments could be made, particularly on the tail ends, but this shouldn't change these numbers much."
Frank Titus – "When you have satisfied yourself that you have done all analysis needed to justify your argument, this information needs to get out to the public Big Time."
3. Valda Terrauds: Correction for riparian at north basin (Elephant Butte) – shows consumption of 40,000 af/year, this is more than (some other) total consumption. Shouldn't we just concentrate on decreasing north basin depletions?
Debbie – The question really is how far can you lower water table in north basin? The basin is quite flat, and it's hard to manage salt cedar growth without lowering the water table.
Frank – all of these things need to be studied.
4. Nabil Shafike – questions on how we calculated comparison of consumptions for Socorro Sierra. Did we re-run the 10,000 iterations to come up with new curves under proposed alternatives? Karen clarified.
5. Mike Kernodle: Have we seen Laura Bexfield's model of the effects of the MRGPR groundwater management scenarios (based on the USGS 2002 model,

with a revised well package, and minor corrections to boundary conditions). SSPA will track this down; it could save us some time.

6. Discussion on the proposed drought model: Rob Bowman suggests contacting Cliff Dahm at UNM for information on riparian consumptive water use during drought. Debbie notes SSPA is in contact with researchers at SAHRA on this topic.
7. Frank Titus – that was a really good presentation.
Mike Kernodle – you should give it to Water Assembly.
8. Joe Quintana – you didn't mention Sandia Model
 - Karen – We've been in correspondence with the Sandia modeling group. We convinced them to extend their period of record to match ours – but our model and theirs do different things. The Sandia model is great for helping the public understand the impacts of alternatives, etc. But it's somewhat of a black box; our model will tease out more detail on the underlying causes and impacts.
 - Mike Kernodle – Howard Passell came to him last week and asked “how am I going to explain a 70,000 af/year deficit”.
 - Debbie – we haven't done a detailed comparison.
 - Nabil – Sandia has given model to ISC.
 - Karen – Sandia and SSPA have been working together recently to identify significant consumptive use differences between the models. Resulting modifications to riparian acreage in the Sandia model may be the reason they are now having larger deficits.
 - Mike Kernodle – too many models are showing deficits in this same range for this to be too far off.
9. Frank Titus – could SSPA make this presentation to the Water Assembly – they need to hear it. Debbie – we could do this under the current budget.
10. Debbie Hathaway – we encourage steering committee members to review the draft chapters and provide comments on anything we might have wrong or missing. The documents are online and the links are on the second page of the handouts. Our sources of information are very well documented, so if you have additional or conflicting data, please let us know so that we can incorporate it into our review.
11. Rob Bowman – will a joint alternatives analysis be fully documented in Phase3 study?
 - Debbie – Yes. We'll also document conflicts between plans. One of the MRG alternatives is import water from Socorro-Sierra into the MRG region; the Socorro Sierra plan specifies restricting export water out of the region. To address this conflict, we plan to model both approaches and discuss the implications of both scenarios.

12. Mike Kernodle – if we save water in Socorro-Sierra through riparian vegetation management, can't that water be used in MRG? Frank Titus – we can't break this into regional boundaries. Hydrologically this is one reach of the river. We can't have one subdivision tell the other what to do.
13. Blane Sanchez – is completion of this study contingent on the MRG planning region finishing their plan?
Karen – we will evaluate their alternatives and provide feedback – how the region uses this information is up to it. What we are doing is based on their submitted preferred scenario.
14. Joe Qunitana – The plan for the MRG region is essentially written, and is currently undergoing the review process. The plan incorporates different ways of carrying out strategy.
Mike Kernodle – the changes we are making now are primarily editorial.
15. Mike – I'll throw a rose in your direction – last year I would have thrown a rock.
Frank – “Thank you”

Thanks were extended to MRGCOG for hosting the meeting, and the meeting adjourned at 2:45.

Notes:

Technical revisions to the model included an agricultural consumptive use adjustment to account for the difference between potential and actual crop water use. A use factor of 0.75, based on comparison of potential ET and crop water reports, is applied to provide actual yield.

Socorro-Sierra region – about 2/3 of consumptive losses are riparian.