

Discussion of future cooperative actions and closing remarks

Patricia L. Pettit¹

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge shared and the energy generated by this symposium should not be lost as we leave for our homes and our jobs. We have a great wealth of experience, knowledge, and energy assembled. How can we continue to communicate with each other, share information, involve others, and influence decision makers? The steering committee for this symposium in hopes of stimulating continued cooperation and collaboration included the "Commitment to Action and Feedback Form" with the agenda. Our hope is you will fill out the form and leave it with the steering committee. We will also spend a little time brainstorming ideas together using the feedback form as a guide. The results of these two efforts will be published with the proceedings. The coalition of sponsors for this symposium will work together to implement those that seem the most promising and effective. Your ideas on characteristics for desired future conditions, monitoring, research, outreach and education will be published for all interested groups and agencies to use when planning for further collaborative actions.

RESPONSE AND FEEDBACK

The result of the two response and feedback efforts are listed below. Ideas listed under (A) are from the interactive session with the audience, those listed under (B) are from the commitment to action and feedback form.

1. What key characteristics should be used to describe desired future conditions for Southwestern Riparian Ecosystems?

- A. Geo-morphology of stream. Bio-diversity. Fluvial processes. Ecological condition of vegetation. Continuity or connectedness. Role of disturbance. Sustainable use. Society's long range goals.
- B. This is an on-going process involving constant interaction of all factions. Set 5 to 10 year goals and hope for sensitive people close to the land who will sound an alarm when damaging decisions are made. Constant surveillance is essential. Sustainable use and minimal modification, with an emphasis on maintaining natural flows in adjacent streams and rivers. Healthv, functional characteristics such as native vegetation, hydrologic conditions, wildlife communities, and human uses. Vegetative cover and composition, vegetated banks verses raw banks. Hydrograph should be as close to natural as possible. Water quality including turbidity, channel bottom conditions. Landscape setting as a reflection of ecological potential, based on geomorphic, fluvial, and ecological processes. Ecological condition of vegetation. Functioning of ecological processes. Species composition, connectedness, and regeneration.

2. What parameters should be monitored to measure progress in moving toward the desired future conditions? How frequently should they be monitored?

- A. Water quality, surface and ground water, macro-invertebrates, nutrient cycling and productivity, 4-5 year frequency. Water quantity. Changes in vegetation species, composition, cover, and structure. Vegetative productivity. Vertebrate response to change, aquatic and terrestrial. Soil produc-

¹ President, New Mexico Riparian Council, Albuquerque, NM

tivity and condition. Functional processes. Hydrograph. Landscape scale setting. Human population changes and changes in land use. Livestock use. Monitoring parameters must be prescribed using cost as a criteria.

- B. Species diversity, density, and abundance. Master planning and ordinances in communities containing riparian areas. Vegetation composition, regeneration and utilization - 2 to 5 years. Bank cover and stability, and channel conditions - 2 to 5 years. Water quality including nutrients, and turbidity, and water quantity. Surface soil erosion - 2 to 5 years. Hydrograph every 5 years. Water table height and chemistry - 4 times/year. Soil structure, texture, moisture, nutrients, and biological activity. Surface litter buildup. Productivity of woody and herbaceous vegetation. Activity of key animal populations. Monitor everything that time, personnel, and skills allow. Emphasis will change as processes in the system change over time. Ecological status and processes. Management actions that impact or restore riparian conditions. Percentage of native vegetation and exotic vegetation. Current verses desired ecological condition.

3. How can we bring people and groups together on a common vision for Southwestern Riparian Ecosystems?

- A. Poster display at the balloon fiesta. Actively solicit involvement from people not currently involved. Publish newsletter more frequently and with wider distribution. Integrate contrasting views, find links and commonalities. Public forums. Key demonstration projects involving collaborators. Tours for the media, public, and legislators. Educational brochures for primary and secondary educators. Person to person contacts. State fair exhibits. Poster or exhibit for public places. Outreach through other professional organizations.
- B. Keep the issue of riparian values constantly before the public. Actively solicit input from people and groups who are not currently involved. Pick up the phone and call them, ask them why they are not

involved and what it would take for them to be involved. Place reasonable agency people within the communities and let them work at that level. Networking via publications and dialogue groups. Involve elected officials especially at the local, county, and tribal level. Develop demonstration projects to educate laypeople and recruit support for riparian preservation. Provide a neutral forum such as the N.M. Riparian Council or local watershed coalition. Develop outreach programs. Have meetings/workshops in different parts of the state. Publicize activities. Develop good press relations. Encourage an inclusive membership from all public/private sectors. Cooperate with other groups in monitoring and information exchange. Start with individual groups, so they can express their concerns before trying to integrate.

4. What are additional research needs for Southwestern Riparian Ecosystems?

- A. Basic ecology. Big game and other game effects. Fire effects. Development of defensible monitoring protocols. More on climate fluctuations. Rate of invasion by exotics, and their impact. Historic and pre-historic conditions. Protocol for research and management to work together on solutions. Effects of land use and management problems. Comprehensive literature review of research in Southwestern Riparian. Develop restoration ecology techniques, implement and monitor response. Instream flow requirements. Social valuation.
- B. How to manipulate surface and subsurface flows to restore wet meadow conditions. Track how long it takes riparian areas to recover when cattle are totally and partially excluded. Grazing strategies compatible with desired future conditions. Functional roles of invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles. Role of disturbances such as fire, drought, big game, and exotic species. Effects of urban growth on riparian function. Age assessment of fluvial deposits/erosion cycles to better judge conditions in terms of natural fluctuations. Effects of un-

mitigated overland flows from roads and developments. Linkages of soil, water, vegetation, fish and wildlife.

5. What suggestions do you have for making information on Riparian Area Management more available?

- A. Clearing house for information. Field trips for the general public. More widely published information. Integration into the N.M. Water Camp agenda. Logistical help for workshops. Funding school buses for field trips. Speakers bureau. Education for elected officials. Informational videos.
- B. Publicize more widely, and keep costs down. Involve locals, involve communities, allow laypeople to gather data. Sacrifice a little scientific rigor for the opportunity to work with the people in the specific area. Periodic updates of the Riparian Bibliography, include other media. Monthly publication announcing events, meetings, status reports on research, contact people and funding sources. Distribute information to grassroots people and organizations, educate the politicians within your area. Create a riparian video for Public Broadcasting System. Use available tools such as the livestock weekly which reach target audiences. Work closely with the editor of "Dialogue". Multi-use data base and Internet connection. Have positive field trips. Hands on workdays.

6. How can you help bring diverse interests together on a common vision and action plan for Southwestern Riparian Ecosystems?

- B. Active membership and participation in N.M. Riparian Council activities. As an author of articles for publication. Call people who are not actively participating now, but, who should be. Work on a day to day basis locally. Use the people who help you to develop good local plans, then involve them in seeking broader coordination. Form a dialogue group to bring together diverse stakeholders to share information. Focus on the clean water, air, and land that we all need to live. Get together with local conservation/environmental groups and government agencies with riparian concerns. Listen to those around us. First establish a range of visions, assess where the majority lies, manage for the majority's vision. Develop local coalitions. Make information about watershed associations available. Provide incentive money and/or technical assistance.

7. What suggestions do you have for an action plan?

- A. Tie in with existing resources, experts and knowledgeable, concerned groups. Re-introduce a New Mexico Riparian Conservation Bill in the 1997 Legislature. Prepare Riparian brochures. Develop a Riparian Lesson Plan. Prepare a public display.
- B. Get involved with environmental education. Promote dialogue between resource users, environmentalists, agencies, and legislators. Develop a multi-agency/ international action plan for the Rio Grande Riparian Ecosystem.