



River Corridor Working Group Meeting Notes

July 27, 2016
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Sierra Room, Carson City Community Center, 850 E William St.
Carson City, NV 89701

Contact: Brenda Hunt, 887-9005

Attendees:

- Jackie Bogdanovich, Lahontan Conservation District (LCD)
- Craig Burnside, Carson Valley Conservation District (CVCD)-
- John Cobourn, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE)
- Erielle Cushing, NDWR
- Robb Fellows, Carson City Public Works (CCPW)
- Shane Fryer, Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD)
- Dan Greytak, private citizen
- Rob Holley, Dayton Valley Conservation District (CVCD)
- Brenda Hunt, CWSD
- Ed James, CWSD
- Keith Johnson, NDWR
- Toni Leffler, CWSD
- Shyla Lemons, CCPW
- Steve Lewis, UNCE
- Ed Quagliari, NDWR
- Jean Stone, NV Div. of Environmental Protection (NDEP)
- Chris Thorson, NDWR
- Nancy Upham, Churchill County Mosquito, Weed & Vector Control
- Mary Kay Wagner, NDEP
- Courtney Walker, Douglas County
- Rich Wilkinson, Carson City Parks, Rec., & Open Space

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

2. Discussion regarding Carson River Clearing and Snagging projects and the possible creation of a Best Management Practice (Jean Stone) (1.5 hours)

- What is a Clearing and Snagging project and what is its purpose? Discuss on how participants would describe/define –
 - The area between Lutheran Bridge to Hwy 88 was viewed on Google Earth and given as an example of a recent clearing and snagging project.

The removal of three sandbars along the Virginia/Rocky Diversion was conducted to address clearing and snagging needs.

- Clearing and snagging is defined as selective clearing and removal of vegetation or debris in the river channel or other waterways
- Clearing and Snagging examples given:
 - Removal of beaver dams
 - Removing obstructions actively causing erosion
 - Removing snags or debris considered to be a significant threat to infrastructure (e.g., bridge, diversion)
 - Removal of sediment needed to maintain flow capacity around diversion to obtain water rights.
 - Clearing and Snagging should not be used for flood control.
 - Maintaining a navigable channel
- Discussion
 - A determination needs to be made on the highest priority areas to clear and snag upstream of Lutheran Bridge.
 - Clearing and Snagging shouldn't be used for flood control.
 - Flood control requires surveys, engineering and permits, and is much more complex.
 - Most irrigators look at keeping the river channel clean and open as the standard rather than looking at the impact on individual structures.
 - Many times it individuals who build close to the river that call Carson City with concerns about channel choking.
 - The Carson River flood model could be used to determine whether the area would truly flood or not.
 - Sandbars established after the survey was complete for the flood plain model won't show in an impact analysis.
 - Perhaps a survey of a specific area needs to occur before removal of a sandbar.
 - Removing sandbars is different from clearing and snagging. Natural ecological functions need to occur in the River. Clearing and snagging is for removal of woody debris to prevent blockage of a structure
 - Removing sandbars should be directly related to the function of an irrigation structure.
 - Local jurisdictions have authority over local projects and should request a formal survey before the projects are done.

- NRS532.220 Section 4 is the section that talks about who does the work and that it is for civil liability.
- There needs to be education for conservation districts and commissions,
- The living river concept allows for natural river clearing.
 - A living river is the goal of the Floodplain Management Plan; the river is going to create meander. Maybe we need to allow the river to meander.
 - A riparian buffer is needed for the river to move/meander through.
 - Maybe some kind of education for county commissioners and conservation boards is needed to further the living river concept.
 - It's possible to anchor trees instead of removing them to keep the ecosystem.
- River projects are bank stabilization projects, not flood projects.
- There is no formal application process has caused a problem for approving funding. For additional clearing/snagging funding by the Legislature, there will be more structure for the process, including an application and before photos.
 - Documentation is important for maintenance work in the Waterways Permits.
 - Then a post-project report and photos needs to be submitted.
 - There needs to be two categories, one for clearing/snagging and the other for river bioengineering projects.
- The opportunity to really help is after a flood, but a structure can only be restored to what it was previously, which may not be the best design. Clearing and snagging projects in the past haven't needed Army Corps of Engineer (ACOE) permits. Once you get into needing other permits, it goes into a different category.
- Contractors need to have a reasonable plan of action; where they are going in and out of the river and where they are going to put the debris removed.
- Clearing and snagging falls under temporary 5-yr. river maintenance permits. The ACOE becomes involved with discharge of dredge and fill. State Lands issues a Right of Entry Permit for each project to enter the river corridor which is State property. Private landowners are supposed to report their river/diversion projects to conservation district to report annually.
 - A violation occurs when contractors deciding to fill in meanders. There is a problem of destabilizing the banks without restoring them.

- vegetation contributes to water quality, habitat, and maintaining the quality of the ecosystem. There is a need to bring habitat scenarios into the equation.
 - There is a need for clearing and snagging when trees/debris are an eminent or obvious threat to clogging bridges, etc. 60-90 days to get a permit for an “eminent” threat is too long when the project needs to get done right away.
 - The criteria of a “significant” threat may allow enough time for the permitting process that exists.
 - Smaller sums of money, which allow preventative channel maintenance may make the clearing and snagging fund sufficient, but when the work is an emergency it can cost much more.
 - Politics and personalities are involved so you need criteria to refer to. How do we create that criteria without changing the intent of the legislation? How will the criteria be administered? The State can establish criteria. They could judge projects on what’s important to various factors. The application process also need a submission date.
 - Historically clearing/snagging fund was used to clear huge trees near diversion structures, etc. In evaluating the project questions can be asked. How eminent is the threat? Is this part of another project?
 - Churchill County the Emergency Manager works with the Sheriff’s Department and conservation district to remove debris and give the firewood to the land owner.
 - That is their best way to maintain the river corridor and keep communication open.
3. What should/could be considered in a BMP when working on Clearing and Snagging (C&S) Projects for Carson River?
- Discuss BMP examples (e.g. See NRCS Practice #326 Attached) –
 - Call it a “Guideline” rather than a “BMP.”
 - Form a subcommittee for defining guidelines based on principles we already have.
 - We need to develop an education program which explains the benefits of a Clearing and Snagging project.
 - Removal of sandbars and streambank vegetation may make future problems.
 - The limited regeneration of cottonwoods needs to be considered.
 - The NDWR has a new 2016 process which can be incorporated.

- **A request to have a presentation on the current BMPs by NDWR at the next RCWG meeting.**

- There needs to be a guideline for taking trees out of channel and protect stream bank.
- The NRCS Conservation Practice Standard for clearing and snagging may be for meeting EQUIP grants to the state.
- **Jean will send out the guidelines she already has started for comment by the group.**
- Discuss dredging of meander bars and ways to mitigate the loss of vegetation that increase conveyance and could cause destabilization
- Discuss removal of riparian vegetation that would destabilize banks –
- What is an “undesirable” sand or gravel bar (from NRCS 326)?
 - Sediment removal above or around irrigation diversion OK to access water right.
- How to safely remove large trees/logs without damaging banks –

4. What type of information should be gathered when doing a C&S project?

- Site photos & brief description of activities prior to implementation -
- Permitting approvals if needed –
- Post project photos/reporting -

5. Discuss developing a Fluvial Geomorphology 101 Presentation to be given to local officials/boards

- What to include – why we have the guidelines.
 - Revive the NEMO program in the non-point source (NPS) pollution group.
 - We need to determine how to revive the program and how to involve the various boards. Can the State hire someone to do it and use NDEP’s EPA money.
 - The NEMO website is still functioning on the UNCE website.
 - NEMO task could be listed in the Outreach and Education portion of the Watershed Literacy Grant that CWSD is administering to fund hiring an expert.
 - Started on the guideline now using in-house geomorphologists. Reviving NEMO can come after. We need to reduce power of water by allowing flood overbanking.
 - Who should present? – Sherman Swanson, UNCE riparian expert

6. Announcements (Everyone) (25 min)

- Events, Programs and/or projects, etc. –
 - Brenda reported that CWSD is applying for two grants:
 - For the Environmental Education Program by River Wranglers in June of 2017
 - For Phase 3 of the Watershed Literacy Implementation for a new outreach and education campaign to increase residents' watershed literacy.
 - Fluvial Geomorphology 101 Presentation could be a secondary task associated with this grant with a 1:1 match. Because we have the EPA-qualified Stewardship Plan, a large portion of the \$1 million funding will go to those entities.
 - Carson City is working on the Golden Eagle Lane erosion control project.
 - DVCD might pursue additional funding for project maintenance funding.
 - CVCD is still mulling over projects. Brenda put in a pre-application due on Aug. 15.
 - Douglas County put in an application for areas not covered under MS4 permit.
 - **Brenda will send link to the application and is talking with each county individually about projects for the next 5-7 years for Stewardship Plan.**

7. Schedule Next Meeting – **Brenda will send out a Doodle Poll to set the next meeting around the beginning of September or end of August** (prior to 319 applications going in). It was suggested that we change name from River Corridor Working Group to Floodplain Management Working Group. **Brenda will put this on the next agenda.** If the name was changed, the focus could include alluvial fans. Shane noted that some of the topics that came up are good research topics, so we can ask university master students to address questions. UNCE may be able to make some of the UNR contacts.