

100th Meridian Initiative
Rio Grande River Basin Meeting
October 25, 2007
Toas, NM

Meeting opened at 9:00 am

Brian Lang: Introductions

Goal is to bring together water users in the Rio Grande Basin. Rio Grande is now one of the most at-risk basins.

Bob Pitman: Led individual introductions (around the room).

David Britton presentation on Zebra/Quagga Biology

Bob Pitman presentation on impacts and movements with background
Nonindigenous and Control Act of 1990 (reauthorized later) established the ANSTF and provided coordinated control responses to aquatic invasive species at national, regional, and local levels.

- Primary Vehicle to fund control efforts will be state ANS management plans
- Regional Panels were developed
- Most states with ANS plans (as of 2005) were northern states
- Many southern and western states have plans under development

Education and voluntary compliance will only go so far. We need tougher prevention strategies. We'll have to make some tough choices that will be more impactful with those that many of us serve.

Lacey Act is Federal Legislation that can be used.

Voluntary compliance was not successful for the Colorado River. Quagga mussels made it to Lake Mead anyway. Colorado River Team members recognized the risk and agreed with concerns, but the zebra/quagga problem did not merit top priority. Other priorities for standing issues were dealt with first.

Bob recently visited Lake Mead. He found two boats at two different marinas, both with serious quagga mussel encrustation underneath. These boats were being put on a trailer for transport to other waters.

Boater surveys have been performed since 1998 to see how boaters move from location to location. These have helped us focus resources to prevent invasions at high-risk areas.

Compliance and regulations are in place in all states. Hunting and fishing regulations are implemented. We need to include invasive species regulations with the implemented regulations. We need to enforce our laws.

Risk never sleeps. Bob toured the Rio Grande. He looked at boats and asked boaters where they go and where they come from. Sailboaters at Lake Heron, for example, are concerned that their lake may become infested. They want to help do their part to prevent zebra/quagga mussels from getting to their lake.

Standard messaging has been developed. We do not want to go out on our own and develop a new message. A standard message is better because it becomes it is easily recognized. The Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign is already underway and is getting traction. We want to continue the momentum. We do not need separate signs for snakehead, zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and Eurasian watermilfoil. These are all invasive hitchhikers. We should use a single sign that targets boater behavior rather than individual species. The Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! sign does just this.

Bob found a diversity of boaters at Navajo Lake coming from out of state as far away as Georgia.

We can reduce risk by strategic planning. Let's put together a list of strategies that we can start doing now, education, law enforcement, and others.

General Discussion

Ron Gilworth: There is a link between Lake Mead and Elephant Butte by way of a bass angler tournament that is held at Lake Mead, but qualification comes from Lake Butte.

Education could be facilitated through fishing regulations.

Department of Motor Vehicles is another avenue by which we may reach boaters.

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is a good group to use to reach boaters at ramps.

Bob: Would BASS support stricter regulations on boaters?

Ron: the BASS members are already behind environmental conservation and will do their part to protect our waters.

Toby: Boaters have received notice about new boater education rules. So, envelopes are already being stuffed. There will be production costs, but we may be able to reach approximately 30,000 people that way. Boater registrations in NM are good for three years.

Trout Unlimited now has an Albuquerque office and they may be a good connection to make.

Agency Reports on In-Place Prevention and Plans

Vicki and Elizabeth has an unofficial program teamed with USFWS. Has done watercraft inspection and decontamination trainings and there are two set up for next

year. There will be a Denver training and a Grand Junction training. Vicki is conducting state-wide survey of aquatic invertebrates and plants to have a baseline idea of what aquatic resources are available. This will be cataloged at Colorado University's museum. Navajo Reservoir is a primary concern because it is a shared water body and has boater connections with those who visit the lower Colorado River. They have installed monitoring devices (about 10) in Navajo. Vicki has ordered plankton nets and will be working with BOR to do veliger larvae analysis using PCR. The state is promoting HACCP to all of their hatcheries and want to provide it to all fisheries biologists. They are addressing regulations for the bait fish industries. They are particularly interested in preventing VHS. Elizabeth has a Colorado Aquatic Nuisance Species (CANS) group that is working on the State ANS plan, and has developed a watch list. They meet bi-weekly. CO has NZMS and many aquatic weeds. The priority is to contain infestations and prevent new ones, including zebra and quagga mussels. Trying to get funding for boat washing stations but have not received legislative approval. Most CO boaters (according to their surveys) are in-state and they do not get detained. Elizabeth wants to get advice on how to use washing stations and such without inconveniencing boaters. Elizabeth suggested a Boater Passport that would be stamped at each water body when the boats are inspected.

James Powell, BOR: No mussels yet at Elephant Butte. He needs to be able to operate his water. He needs to be able to control his gates. Cleaning intakes structures are done every five years and may have to do it every year if mussels get in. All boat ramps at Elephant Butte are controlled by NM and CO state parks.

Nancy Umbreit, BOR: There is a money problem and a lack of a consistent approach to monitoring. Lower Colorado river is being monitored for veligers in Lake Mead. They are also measuring secchi disk depths and water quality data. Suggests that lakes might want to take reservations for who can launch on any particular day instead of allowing anyone to launch at anytime.

James Powell, BOR: Budget considerations have to be addressed three years in advance. It is difficult to convince those who make decisions that we need to do something.

Danille Galloway, USACE: They don't have many concessionaires with marinas anymore so this is a plus. They have put up an interpretive sign at Cochiti. Water bodies that do not have signs will get signs (SAH!) this year. Ranger trainings will get a 45 minute presentation of this issue. They spend a lot of time on the ramps. Much of the law enforcement is handled by the state. The corps supplements the state enforcement, mostly making sure that boats are safe and that boaters are not drinking, etc. The corps will never be able to cite a boater for not complying with invasive regulations. They can ask boaters not to launch but cannot force them not to launch.

Toby: NM state parks can prevent boaters from launching. They can also issue citations.

Bob: Passed out ANS Hotline cards and explained why we have them. These cards can be used to give rangers, law enforcement officers and marinas so they can get in touch

with someone quickly to get advice or get a hold of someone with authority to do something.

Brian Lang, NMDGF: Contracted with UNM to do research on Worldwide Aquatic Invasive Species. NMDGF is incorporating his work into a state plan. Thirteen action items are in the plan. They will have a steering committee of stakeholders. NMDGF will hit up state legislature for money to support the plan. They will also try to get a full time state ANS coordinator.

Monitoring starting in May of 2008. Focus first in high risk areas but sample other areas too if possible. We need to support further technological development to get the cost of PCR analysis down while improving resolution.

Both CO and NM need legislation to allow local authorities to stop boats at launches. As it stands now, tickets be issued but boats cannot be stopped under current law.

Action Items:

- Put PowerPoint Presentations on 100th MI web site
- Sign info for SAH! on web site
- Develop SAH! Signs in Spanish
 - Check with NPS who may already have them
- Make sure there is an ANS message in the NM Fishing Regs
- Add PCR sampling in NM info to 100th MI web site
- Monitoring Volunteers for PCR Analysis
 - Jason Davis is Point of Contact for New Mexico
 - Steve Sanders NM Fisheries Division is already doing plankton samples all over the state and may be a resource we could use
 - Locations for PCR sampling should first focus on high-risk areas such as
 - Navajo, Elephant Butte, Abiquiu, Heron, and Cochiti in New Mexico
 - Navajo, Blue Mesa, Homestead in Colorado (need to verify)
 - Navajo Lake should be the primary concern
- Look into the possibility of looking into having the state navigation buoys
- Billboard team will look into getting Billboards for NM and CO near Navajo
 - Bob Pitman, Brian Lang, Elizabeth Brown

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