

***Ground Water Inventory, Monitoring & Assessment***

***Technical Guide Development***

**Date:** March 14, 2013 (Draft)

**Subject:** Core Team Conference Call

**Participants:** Allison Aldous, Chris Carlson, Trish Carroll, Kate Dwire, Joe Gurrieri, Andy Rorick, Linda Spencer, Troy Thompson, Steve Solem, and Casey Giffen

**Unable to Join Call:** Devendra Amatya and Megan Lang

**Discussion Topics and Action Items**

**Next Core Team Call on June 13, 2013 @ 2:00 ET/12:00 MST**

# ****Project Overview****

**Steve Solem discussed key tasks coming up in the project schedule and their status:**

* **Concurrent review of v3.0 of the Technical Guide by the Technical Evaluation Group (Task 4.40) and the Core Team (Task 3.20) is underway and reviews are due March 29, 2013. One Technical Reviewer has submitted comments.**
* **Evaluation and Reconciliation of Technical Review Comment (Task 4.50) will serve as the basis for discussions on the June 2013 Core Team call and will identify needs for the final publication.**
* **Outreach and Communication (Task 6.70) with user community to improve their awareness and understand of the TG and the Technical Notes for GW inventory, monitoring and assessment.**
* **NRM Application/GMO Assessment (Tasks 6.20 and 6.30) work is underway. We hope to benefit from procedures and “lessons learned” from the Existing Vegetation Technical Guide when this work starts later this FY.**

# ****Groundwater IM&A Technical Guide Development****

**Evaluation and Reconciliation of Technical/CT Comments (Task 4.50)**

**Steve Solem described the process to evaluate and reconcile comments on the Technical Guide. Both the Technical Reviewer group and Core Team were asked to review and comment on the Technical Guide (v3.0).**

**Technical Reviewers will provide written responses to the questions outlined in the *Evaluation and Review Plan* (v3.3 – 4/25/12), which include the following:**

1. Is the overall structure and flow of information presented in the Technical Guide well-conceived? Are there any major flaws?
2. Does the introductory section adequately describe the relationships between agency business requirements and the purposed methods described in the Technical Guide?
3. How well do the sections on classification, mapping, and inventory flow?  Are there any major flaws in presentation or approach?
4. Are there changes to the Technical Guide that should be considered? Are there missing components?
5. What effects to your organization may result from using the technical guidance?

**Members of Technical Reviewer group and Core Team were also asked to provide technical suggestions and document edits.**

**Responses to questions and individual technical comments will be reviewed to determine the major issues or concerns with the Technical Guide content. Reconciliation of comments and recommendations to address major comments should be completed by May 2013.**

**Editing Assistance/Assignments**

**Core Team members may be asked to address edits and technical comments.**

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| **Action:** | * **Core Team members to need to complete their review of the technical guide by March 29, 2013.** * **Core Team editing assignments will be made on the next call in June 2013.** |

# ****Implementation – Database Interfaces****

**Chris Carlson shared that GDE Data Management was originally on NRM’s Program of Work (POW) for this fiscal year. However, in an effort to recalculate NRM’s capacity to do work the priority project list has been redefined and GDE Data Management is no longer on the priority project list. Chris will meet with NRM to assess what was in the original POW and try to determine when the GDE Data Management work might be accomplished.**

**Steve Solem asked if it would be to the Core Team’s advantage to lump groundwater in with the GDE Data Management now that project is delayed? Chris Carlson indicated he preferred not to complicate the current POW process or slow efforts to move GDE forward.**

**NRM Application Assessment (v1.0)**

**The assessment process has been designed to capture the scope of potential interfaces and changes that might result from implementation of the Technical Guide. The assessment work needs to be completed before March 29, 2013. Steve Solem emphasized, however, that the Core Team’s first priority is to complete their review of Technical Guide then move onto the NRM Application Assessment.**

# ****Implementation – Communication and Outreach****

**Communication and Outreach Plan**

**Steve Solem noted that in the long term coordinated outreach is needed to engage leadership, user communities, and partners. Chris Carlson is not clear what type of template/model best meets the needs of leadership and user communities. The development of an outreach plan is deferred until he has more time to devote to this effort. Chris also indicated that the Office of Communications is not supporting internal rollouts.**

**Steve Solem indicated the Existing Vegetation or Watershed Condition Framework Outreach Plans might serve as useful models for the GW Technical Guide Outreach Plan. These templates will be available at the end of April 2013.**

**Linda Spencer asked whether a news blast to agency partners informing about the upcoming Technical Guide might be a useful tool. Chris Carlson responded that a written letter from Ann Zimmermann will probably be the most useful communication tool. Chris felt that Ann will likely support a letter (sent out to partners) if there are ties to a larger effort.**

**Kate Dwire asked if there has there been any shift in Forest Service thinking related to the emphasis on climate change considerations. Chris Carlson said that agency is considering whether the groundwater policy document should be republished to integrate climate change considerations into the document.**

**User Community Outreach and Communication**

**Steve Solem asked each Core Team member for an update on outreach/communication efforts with their respective user communities.**

**Allison Aldous: The main communication tool Allison is using to inform users is a back-to-back fact sheet. The Fact Sheet needs to be updated. Allison’s Fact Sheet has been added to Dropbox/6.0 – Implementation/Outreach and Communication/Communication Tools.**

**Core Team member comment: There is need for a fact sheet for partners with good photos and current information. The CT should develop a collection of materials (e.g., photos) that are current and can be handed out at meetings.**

**Troy Thompson: No formal communication to date; communication has been more information sharing.**

**Linda Spencer: She compiles messages from materials developed by Chris Carlson and Joe** Gurrieri **to inform NRM about changes. No formal briefing on specific topics, but Linda presented a PowerPoint on GDE protocols at the SRM Meeting in February 2013. The presentation is now posted on SRM website and is filed in Dropbox/6.0 Implementation/Outreach and Communication/Communication Tools.**

**Joe Gurrieri: Joe mentioned the Regional Air/Soil/Water meetings provide the best opportunities to inform users about the upcoming GW Technical Guide. Joe will be working with Polly Hays at the to develop a training session for R2 Regional Office employees. Joe asked Core Team members to let him know about upcoming regional meetings that provide an opportunity to brief users.**

**Kate Dwire: missed comment about field guide content. Kate suggested that smaller Society meetings (e.g., Fisheries Society) also provide good opportunities to inform communities. Kate will present a high-level overview at an upcoming meeting. Name of meeting?**

**Chris Carlson: He recently presented two briefings on the GW Technical Guide. The first briefing was for the Region 6 Regional Forester and TNC Vice-President. Chris indicated there was a high level of enthusiasm about the Core Team’s accomplishments as well as a new awareness about groundwater. The second was a briefing for NFS Directors on the Core Team’s progress and an overview of upcoming tasks. Chris said there was interest in the room, including questions from the Deputy Chief. Overall, Chris felt the briefing was good opportunity to provide increased awareness.**

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| **Action:** | * **Casey Giffen added a “Communication Tools” folder to Dropbox for Core Team members to add communication and outreach materials on the GW Technical Guide.** |

# ****Environmental Flows/Levels Pilot Test Update****

Allison Aldous provided an update of the **Phase II Pilot Test involving:**

* + **North Dakota/Sheyenne NG-Dakota Prairie NGs**
  + **Oregon/Oregon Dunes NRA-Siskiyou NF**

**The field crew is on track to wrap up the two pilot sites this field season.**

**On the** Sheyenne Grasslands in ND, **the snow cover to date is fairly good and results indicate that the year was not a dry as the prior year. A review of the vegetation data, even with drought conditions, indicates a clear trend in plant species and various groundwater parameters being monitored.**

**Within the Oregon Dunes, the ecosystems in this area have been extensively studied for many years (some date back to 1945) however obtaining the data has been an enormous challenge. TNC has been able to retrieve archived, hand-written notes, and translate these into spreadsheets. The primary issue with these legacy data is a lack of raw data for the sites and she hopes to obtain data from the Water Commission Board. Once the datasets are available, proper data storage will be critical.**

**The remaining work for this field season involves vegetation monitoring and measuring the symmetry of independent-groundwater lakes. To develop a relationship between groundwater pumping from the dunes, lakes, and adjacent wetlands there needs to be fine-resolution data about the symmetry in the lakes, which is not currently available. A university group will measure symmetry for the pilot. Acoustic data will be used to measure symmetry.**

# ****GDE Field Guide Implementation****

**Joe Gurrieri and Steve Solem provided the Core Team with an update on:**

**Training Status and User Feedback – A recording of a webinar that provides an overview of the GDE Inventory Field Guides is available at** [http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/groundwater.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/groundwater.html" \t "_blank)**. Troy Thompson indicated he would like to do a webinar for the Eastern Region (R9). Joe will present training at joint BLM/FS meeting in Carson City, NV and provide an overview at a Region 4 fisheries hydrology meeting.**

**GDE Database/Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) Update – We are continuing work with the migration of data in the GDE Database to the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), but there is an issue with loading images. This issue is being resolved with an update to the GDE database.**

**Chris Carlson indicated that Linda Spencer strongly encouraged that no further adjustments be made to the database following completion of version 5 (v5). If NRM picks up the GDE project, a new version of the database will likely confuse the field.**

**Springs Restoration Framework – Steve Solem is working with a team including Abe Springer (NAU) and Burton Pendleton (RMRS) on the Spring Mountains NRA in Nevada to develop a linkage between GDE Level 1 data and a condition rating for GDE’s. The use of GDE Level 1 data and other data sets to determine site conditions using the Watershed Condition Framework indicators/attributes will provide a linkage between GDE sites and the WCF process. This information may be used in updating the watershed condition assessments in 2014-15 when the 5-year reassessment process begins. It also provides a basis for developing restoration program requests on the Humboldt-Toiyabe NF for Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act funding or appropriated funds. The goal is to move beyond individual site restoration proposals to development a restoration program that can represent total restoration needs and provide a basis for annual program budget requests.**

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| **Action:** | * **Data to be entered into the database should be forwarded to Chris Carlson and Joe Gurrieri who will work with Steve Solem/Jeri Ledbetter on priorities and schedules.** |
|  | * **Requests for proposal for changes to the database should be forwarded to Chris Carlson and Joe Gurrieri.** |

# ****Close-out:****

**Joe Gurrieri thanked the Core Team for their continued engagement.**