

Gravel Tech Team Mtg
Feb 1, 2008, 10-12
COE office, 8th Floor Regulatory Branch Conference Room

Call in number 503-808-5198 passcode 3295

Agenda and Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Larry Evans, Judy Linton, Lori Warner-Dickason, Patty Snow, Alex Cyril, Yvonne Vallette, Janine Castro, Jim O'Conner, Glen Hess, Rose Walick, Bill Yocum, Chuck Wheeler, Robert Elayer, Chris Lidstone, Jay Charland.

1. Exec Team expectations draft document

Larry gave a description of how the document was created. The Corps of Engineers will begin the process for developing a regional general permit (RGP) for gravel mining on the Chetco River. He told the group the Corps will issue a public notice for the RGP by Feb. 8th. The RGP will include all of the operations on the Chetco. The objective of starting the RGP process is to begin the endangered species consultation which could take 1 year to complete. The February public notice could include DEQ, DLCD notice as well. A permit decision must be reached by the in-water work period for 2009 for the Chetco projects.

Larry also indicated the Tech Team needs to begin to look at information needs for the Umpqua River system so data can be collected during winter 2008/2009 if necessary. We need to become proactive and not reactive in our evaluation of river systems.

a) Discussion of permit vehicle (RGP/GP), generally.

Judy discussed the timeline for the RGP. The public notice will be very general and will include all the operations for the Chetco. Another public notice will be conducted after specific project details are determined. The group suggested that the public notice include a background piece. Chuck acknowledged NMFS may respond to the public notice by sending a letter requesting additional information, but at least the notice will get the consultation process started.

b) Interim permit processes.

Lori mentioned the list of active DSL permits. The master list of DSL permits, with status of COE action is forthcoming. It was suggested that DEQ also provide a status of 401 certification on the master list. Lori and Judy will provide the master list of permit status soon.

Lori asked that other agencies try to be consistent in commenting on DSL renewals. Other agencies have work load constraints that prohibit them from

providing comments on all renewals. The group suggested that the Exec team follow up with their respective staff with regard to commenting on DSL renewals.

c) Timelines for RGP/GP development. (Discussed above)

2. Public participation-public information meeting in March?

The group discussed the need for outreach. Judy recommended conducting a public meeting close to the public notice-March or April. A decision on when to hold the public meeting was not made.

Bill Yocum suggested that the group conduct a site visit at the same time of the public meeting. There may be an opportunity to revise the current operating conditions based on what they think is working well and what isn't.

3. Additional data needs for development of the RGP/GP for the Chetco operations.

Jim O'Conner mentioned that the work Janine did for the phase I data collection was very reasonable. Depending on the type and amount of existing data for the other rivers it seems like an effective approach for determining whether a river is aggrading or degrading. USGS did not have any suggestions for improving the phase I analysis. For the future rivers, if phase I data indicates the system is incising, phase II may not be needed. Need to establish phase I protocol for use on other rivers.

The group discussed the timing constraints and the need to manage the Exec team expectations regarding the limits of what can be accomplished in such a short time frame. The group may want to consider a phased approach to data collection that would allow for the permit decision and adaptive management of the project using longer term evaluation.

The group also discussed opportunities for permittees to improve their data collection. Surveys should use permanent monuments with known elevations and conduct full channel surveys. Lori thought that all DSL permit conditions were updated to require this and will check on it.

The cost estimates provided in the summary document are extremely rough and are listed only to provide insight to the costs of the methods relative to each other. The actual costs may vary on an order of magnitude and could be refined when a method is chosen and the amount of existing data is determined.

The group discussed the need to get funding for this effort, as we cannot continue to rely on USGS doing this work for free.

The pros and cons of each method were discussed. (More detail was provided in the approach documents provided by Jim and Janine.)

Method 1: Direct Measurement.

Not really plausible for the S. Coast. They are flashy systems and far away. This method is very labor intensive with high annual variation. Valuable in conjunction with other methods.

Method 2: Empirical.

This method could be used in conjunction with existing data or other methods to ground truth. The efficacy of this method is dependent on assumptions regarding sediment supply and threshold mobilization. It could be done within the timeline. Could use the GIS approach to refine data from the empirical method.

Method 3: Morphologic Transport Estimates.

This method uses mapping area and thickness of actual gravel deposits. Can use longer term historical information and could provide information related to effects of gravel mining. Good for coastal systems where there is no gravel outlet.

Method 4: GIS based empirical.

This method would use basin characteristics to create a relationship between transport rates and watershed characteristics. Used in conjunction with bedload transport equations or the morphological approach, this method would be more effective.

Method 5: SIAM.

This method would be used to evaluate flood risk. It would be very quick, 3-6 months, but by itself may not provide the information we need. It would be most effective in conjunction with other methods.

The group discussed the need to address the estuary site separately. The empirical methods do not address tidal systems.

The group did not decide on an approach to recommend to the Exec team. Jim and Janine will create a comparison table for the Exec Team to review. The table will be completed prior to the Exec team meeting on Feb 27.

Next Steps:

1. Lori and Judy will complete the master list of gravel permits for distribution to the team so that they can be aware of permit and renewal timelines.
2. Janine and Jim will create a comparison table of the methods by 2/15 for distribution to the tech team. The group will meet again on 2/25 at 3:30 by conference call. By Feb 27, we will outline the options and create a recommendation for the Exec team to discuss at their next meeting.

3. Janine will create a list of data needs for the phase I work. (In preparation for evaluation of the Umpqua River system.)
4. Lori will look at survey conditions of the DSL permits to confirm that permittees are collecting data we will be able to use.