

Restoration Fund Roundtable Meeting

CVPIA Program Activity Review

March 16, 2006

Meeting Announcements

- Serge Birk, Restoration Fund Roundtable chair, extended a special thank you to Patricia Rivera of Reclamation who has provided valuable assistance the Roundtable.
- The Roundtable is an open forum and the public is invited to attend. Those who attend are invited to bring others with them. Participants of this group are invited to share the information to a larger group.

Overview of CVPIA PAR and PART Process – Allan Oto and John Engbring

Allan and John provided a presentation of the history of the CVPIA Program Activity Review (PAR) and the PART process. It described activities and reports that document accomplishments and milestones of CVPIA. One major distinction between the PAR and PART is that PAR is an open public process. PART is an internal agency evaluation tool for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Questions & Concerns

Question: Is there written documentation of the management guidance regarding the expectation for engaging the public in the Program Activity Review?

Answer: No. There was an expectation after the Water Users conference in Reno that interested stakeholders would be invited to participate.

Serge reiterated that the Working Group has been engaged in an outreach effort to bring in other groups. He asked the Roundtable to support inviting additional stakeholders.

Question: How was the schedule determined for these reviews?

Answer: PART is a non-negotiable directive from OMB. All programs have the same April 14, 2006 deadline for completing the first draft. Preparing the Program Activity Review by July is an Interior directive. There still may be a need for additional work and discussion after July.

PART Presentation – Susan Hoffman

Susan provided an overview of the four sections of PART questions and process for completion. Sources for sample PARTs are located on www.whitehouse.gov or www.expectmore.gov. PART is a performance review process for government programs consisting of 25 questions in four sections: Program Purpose, Strategic Planning, Program Management and Program Results.

PART is the latest government performance improvement effort, building on GPRA (Government Performance Reform Act) and ABC (Activity Based Cost/Management) accounting. PART is designed to create accountability in the budget process.

Questions and Concerns

Question: What percentage of government programs will be “PARTed” each year?

Answer: The remaining 20 percent of Federal programs not evaluated are being “PARTed” this year. After this year, Reclamation will need to report annually on accomplishments for the fiscal year. Periodically programs are “rePARTed” where the questions, evidence and performance may be refined and the results, or PART score, recalculated. PART is an opportunity for the agencies to clarify programs, assess work plans, and evaluate budgets and other programs changes to improve their effectiveness.

Question: How is it determined which programs will be “PARTed” each year?

Answer: OMB identifies the Federal programs and notifies the Agencies accordingly.

Question: What is the difference now with PART than with past performance reports?

Answer: The intended focus of PART is on outcomes. Are beneficiaries receiving the goods and the services they are supposed to be getting? PART asks questions about program management and the budget process. For example, are the program goals clearly defined?

Question: Is this PART tied to any consequence for an agency? For example, is it tied to funding or a legislative response?

Answer: Yes. PART results are linked to agency managers’ individual performance objectives. The budget process for each program also considers the PART results, although there is not a clear pattern of budget actions for PART results (e.g., some high performing programs have received budget cuts).

Question: What are the ratings?

Answer: Effective, Moderately Effective, Adequate, Ineffective, and Results Not Demonstrated.

Question: Supporting evidence is mentioned. What will that be?

Answer: Supporting evidence includes published documents and information and records associated with the specific effort. For CVPIA PART, this potentially includes the PEIS, ROD, annual work plans and reports, the 10-year Accomplishment Report, the AFRP Plan and other information.

Question: Is there a point where you will share 5-8 performance measures before the OMB review?

Answer. No. PART is a tool for internal review with OMB. The PART review and budget information will be embargoed until the 2008 presidential budget is released.

Question: If you have sections with high ranks and others that score lower, could it lead to legislative changes, even though some things may not be within the control of water users or the agencies?

Answer: If any agency has barriers to implementation, it will be revealed through the review process, so changes can be made when necessary.

Question: What is the interaction between PART and the CVPIA PAR?

Answer: Any helpful information developed in the PAR can be woven into the PART process either before April, 14th when the first draft PART is due to OMB, by September when the final PART version is completed with OMB, or with the annual accomplishment reporting to OMB thereafter.

Question: Since CVPIA is jointly managed, who is responding to questions?

Answer: Reclamation is the lead, because the program is budgeted through Reclamation. The Fish and Wildlife Service is coordinating with Reclamation on all of the responses.

CVPIA Program Activity Review (PAR) Presentation – Shana Kaplan

Shana explained that the provisions being evaluated are limited to the ecosystem restoration provisions of CVPIA in sections 3406 and 3408. This includes 38 program activities. PAR does not include water transfers, contract renewals and other non-ecosystem related provisions.

The agencies have established a Working Group to provide public input on the Program Activity Review. The Working Group consists of a broad base of stakeholders, primarily from the Restoration Fund Roundtable, including power, water, environmental, tribal, state and Federal agency interests. The group continues to expand.

The function of the Working Group engagement is to share information. The agencies will be documenting results of the review process in a report in July. The Working Group is using similar terminology as in the PART documentation. A Matrix spreadsheet is being completed to document existing performance goals as provided in the CVPIA and defined by the Agencies.

The Working Group has also helped draft a communication and outreach strategy, which includes briefings for Restoration Fund Roundtable meeting participants.

Questions and Discussion

There was discussion regarding outcomes of the PAR Review and the use of the report in July.

Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife Service Comments

- We expect the report to reveal information that will be used by the Agencies to improve program management. If change is required, this report may provide some guidance.

- The report will capture information reviewed up to July and will likely result in changing how we manage programs. It could also change how we work with management in the field, among other things.
- Since the PAR process is a top down directive to implement, it is expected that the report will be provided to the Secretary of Interior. We are not pre-supposing what happens to the report after it has been reviewed.
- CVPIA PAR is the opportunity for making changes as needed. Since the passage of the law in 1992, we have seen a lot of implementation. It makes sense for agencies and stakeholders to evaluate the Act. Reclamation is asking 'where are we in terms of meeting our goals?' Can we make the situation better?

Working Group Member Comments

- There is an expectation that if there are problems, they will be identified as well as the solutions.
- We are not trying to influence legislation. This is simply an evaluation where we are looking objectively at the Act to see what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done.
- I acknowledge the agencies for working to broaden agency participation. We still need to recognize that the process originated with a request to reduce Restoration Funding. We are concerned about the reduction of funds. Looking at the Act objectively and seeing what needs to be done is an important process.
- We are optimistic so far about the process for the fair evaluation of the Act. If we can get a good assessment, I think it will demonstrate that we still have a lot of work to do. I anticipate that Interior will make the decisions with the inclusion of stakeholder perspectives in the report and recommendations.
- My interest has always been clarifying objectives and the process. I am not advocating for any position or outcome. Some fundamental concerns continue to be unresolved since May 1996 (when the Garamendi process was in place). The key is to identify the process for filling in the voids where outcomes are not specified.
- Section 3407 is the focus of the reduction of funding. It considers for example, if certain objectives are met, performance goals are met, then that may trigger the 3407 process.
- CVPIA is unique because it provides more details than is usually done in Federal legislation. In some ways it specifies actions and in other ways it is vague. The Working Group is meeting to give clarity to the Act.
- The Restoration Fund Roundtable is interested in accountability for the Act to effectively allocate the level of spending. The Roundtable wants to know how Interior is obligating the funding. How are decisions made about funding?
- We are very pleased with the people involved and the receptiveness of both agencies to get something done.

Questions and Answers for Working Group

Question: What is the status of coming up with goals for activities?

Answer: Some activities have goals. The program manager in most cases will be providing additional definition. Where the Act or an agency hasn't specified goals, those are the gaps that

are uncertain, and will require filling. The Agency does have goals for more than half of the programs

The report (on CVPIA PAR) will compile the goals and assess the programs based on the goals. In previous reports, we have reported on tasks, activities and actions, instead of asking ‘what does that mean in the context of reaching our goal?’

Goals have been documented in pieces over the years. The goal of PAR is to create one concise document that can be shared.

Question: How are you going to assess program level accomplishments? How does it come to the Working Group for review?

Answer: Dale and Shana are working with the Program Managers to compile the information for each program. Ultimately, the agencies will be defining the outcomes and creating the reports. We need to identify “What is the objective for the provision?” “How far have you come to meet the provision?”

Actions on the ground and what is really happening is often not predictable. Ecosystems are not predictable. Crossover provisions of the Act make measuring implementation and accomplishment challenging.

Question: Will a draft report (CVPIA PAR) come to the Restoration Fund Roundtable?

Answer: Yes. We expect to have more information at the next meeting of the Roundtable, tentatively set for May 18.

Additional Comments

- Working Group meeting notes, fact sheets and other informational materials will be posted on the website beginning next week for review.
www.usbr.gov/mp/cvpia/docs_reports
- Stakeholders are invited to bring concerns to the Working Group.

Meeting Schedules

Restoration Fund Roundtable Thursday, May 18 – tentative

- Update on PART progress and CVPIA PAR review

Working Group meetings Monday, March 20, 10 am to 4 pm
Tuesday, March 28, 10 am to 4 pm