

Trip Report: Pecos Private Landowner Meeting

Date: 2/14/2012

Location: The initial meeting was at 0800 at Steve Patterson's home, followed by field visits to each owner's property.

Re: The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and locate staging area for private land access, also to discuss various landowner concerns.

Attendees: Melvin Gonzales, Juddson Sechrist, Steve Patterson, Phelps Anderson, and Ernie Lopez.

Landowner Questions (Narrative)-

The attendees met at Steve Patterson's home on the morning of 2/14/12. Juddson Sechrist (Reclamation) and Melvin Gonzales (Reclamation) both discussed that the desired outcome of the visit was to locate areas where project equipment could be staged, by landowner. Melvin mentioned that a typical staging area is 200 x 200 ft and typically has a Porta-Potty, a first aid station trailer, a fuelling station, and possibly a Conex storage box. Melvin wanted to know if the landowners had any specific need for the bank-line excavation spoil, or if it was to be hauled away. Both Ernie Lopez and Phelps Anderson mentioned they could use the spoil on their property, whereas Steve Patterson did not have any need for spoil.

The Landowners had several questions / concerns:

Steve Patterson-What will become of the salt-cedar that is removed and piled? Who does the burning on private lands? Is there another option of disposal to burning, such as incineration? Juddson Sechrist mentioned he would try to answer these questions, but needed some time.

Answer- It sounds like Melvin Gonzales can mulch the salt cedar with a drum chipper.

Steve Patterson- What is the nature of road improvements and what kind of damage could be expected during a rain? Melvin Gonzales mentioned that road damage would be minimized as much as possible, in general, and that access may not be possible on landowner roads during rains in order to prevent damage. Portions of the access road could be improved if needed. (Juddson Sechrist and Melvin Gonzales later discussed that the existing roads will likely need to be mowed with a brush-hog to reduce fire danger, and will likely be watered by a water-truck to keep dust down.) All the private landowners (Lopez, Anderson and Patterson) want to keep road improvements to a minimum to prevent the perception of public access (usually through Trespass).

Phelps Anderson and Steve Patterson- When will the Project begin, and what is the duration? Juddson mentioned he did not know if there was a date set. Melvin mentioned the project would be in stages, for example salt cedar removal is one stage.

Answer-We are anticipating that funding will be available in FY2013, so the project would likely start in late fall if all compliance is in place.

Ernie Lopez- What happens in the event that gates are too small to pass equipment? Melvin Gonzales answered that the gates that are too small will be removed, and then re-installed after the equipment is out. (Melvin Gonzales and Juddson Sechrist later discussed that most of the gates they saw were wide enough to pass equipment, but there are likely 3 gates on Ernie's property that would have to be removed to pass equipment.) Of the three private landowners associated with the project, only Steve Patterson has cattle.

Answer-This will likely be in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be provided to the landowners prior to implementation.

Both Steve Patterson and Phelps Anderson wanted more information about the CID water releases. Steve Patterson asked if there were any thoughts about what happens to areas that have had bank-lines lowered when they encounter these releases. Also, that the releases were causing undercutting in the river banks and affecting his fences. Phelps Anderson wanted to know if there was a release schedule, and what was the magnitude of the CID releases? Juddson Sechrist mentioned he would bring these issues up to the Albuquerque Area Office, and try to find out answers to these questions.

Answer - The release schedule is coordinated with USBR and CID. Other parties are notified. There will be no bank lowering or work done on Steve Patterson's property. However, it appears that there is already significant bank movement on the Patterson property just upstream of the state land. If there is a lot of concern we (Reclamation et al.) may want to consider eliminating the upper bank excavation area on state land. This is because the bank lowered areas are anticipated to stimulate movement of the channel and move the banks in the project area, and this is one of the main objectives of the project.