

Socioeconomics Ad Hoc Group Meeting
SEAHG Conf Call (AZ and UT are in same time zone)
Tue Dec 16, 2014 3pm – 5pm Mountain Time
PH#: 1-877-932-7704
Passcode: 8410783

Attendees:

Leslie James - SEAHG Chair

BOR – Glen Knowles

NPS – Rob Billerbeck, Jan Balsom, Bruce Peacock, Phadrea Ponds

TWG – Ted Kowalski, Cliff Barrett, Jerry Myers, John Jordan, Jerry Cox, Jason Thiriot, Kevin Dahl, Vineetha Kartha

WAPA – Clayton Palmer

SRP – Jenika Raub

GCMRC – Lucas Bair, Helen Fairley, Scott Vanderkooi

SEAHG Review & Recap

Chair James provided a short recap of the Nov 13th SEAHG meeting, noting that action items had been met and Lucas Bair had sent to SEAHG members on December 1 the updated Table 1, response to public comments received on the recreational use study federal register notice of August 26, 2014, and also responses to August 24, 2011 questions from SIAHG to NPS.

NPS Update on Total Value Survey

Bruce Peacock gave a brief update on the Total Colorado River Value survey being undertaken for the LTEMP EIS. Information was provided on the study purpose, past communication on the survey, subject of measurement, past research, study design, survey review process, and current status and next steps.

Clayton Palmer mentioned that none of the current LTEMP alternatives have outcomes as described in the survey, and that during the 1995 Welsh study, there was a lot of input from the GCES team on the survey itself and that kind of iterative development process wasn't available to GCDAMP during the current process.

In response to questions Bruce mentioned that the survey is a conjoint survey and hence describes a range of potential impacts and not the alternatives themselves. Welsh's study used the contingent valuation method on the survey, which is one way of defining outcomes due to specific operational conditions. NPS is using a conjoint method on the survey which constructs a preference surface over a wide range of outcomes and a number of attributes that are wide enough to represent a range. This is a more flexible method. This survey will replace Welsh's study and is not a replication or extrapolation of the Welsh study. At one point, NPS was planning to replicate the study, but OMB asked them to drop it because it did not contribute to the EIS analysis which was the purpose of the survey. In other words, there was potential unnecessary burden to the public because the contingent valuation method survey would provide similar information to the EIS analysis as the conjoint survey.

As far as involvement, the Bureau of Reclamation, USGS (including GCMRC) and an expert panel reviewed the survey.

Action Items – Lucas to forward a study on conjoint analysis by BOR’s Dave Harpman to SEAHG (done 12/16).

In response to a question, Phadrea Ponds mentioned that comments on the 30 day federal register notice went to OMB, and did not go to the submitting agency, and hence the submitting agency cannot respond. As far as the 60 day notice is concerned NPS found commonalities in the comments and responded to OMB. Most changes were for clarification.

In response to questions from Jerry Myers, Bruce explained that the total economic value study is composed of direct recreational use and passive use study. But this is a national survey and only a small percentage of survey participants actually participate in direct recreation, and hence the emphasis is on passive use. However GCMRC is doing the recreation survey, which will look at direct recreation in depth by surveying angler and white water floater populations, expenditure incurred by them etc. The direct use work is in part replicating Bishop, but the non-use study is not replicating Welsh but using a different method.

Clayton asked that if NPS has used different methods on the contingent valuation method survey, would OMB have approved it? In response Bruce mentioned that conjoint survey methodology is state of the art and that they are evaluating outcomes because the public can then knowledgeably answer the questions on outcomes rather than understand the specific LTEMP alternative and respond intelligently. In addition OMB keeps the public from being bombarded with too many surveys. One purpose of the OMB review is to cut down on redundancy.

In response to questions from Ted Kowalski, Bruce mentioned that OMB has approved the pilot survey and the survey is out on the street.. Bruce is not aware of the timing of when the pilot responses will be due or when review of the responses will be completed. Once the pilot survey is completed, OMB will elicit comments on the main survey through a Federal Register notice. This will be the 3rd solicitation of comments.

Action item – Bruce Peacock to let everyone know when FR notice for solicitation of comments on the main survey is out.

RIN Updates (Table 1)

Lucas Bair gave an over view of the changes he had made to Table 1- Update to the Recommended Information needs and program elements for a proposed AMP socioeconomic program. Both RIN1 & 2 are being covered by various aspects of Project 13.1 and the LTEMP EIS economic analysis. CRIN1 is being covered by various aspects of project 13.2 and 13.1. H1N1, H1N2 and H1N5 are in part being addressed by LTEMP EIS analysis.

In response to Jerry’s questions regarding the values of blue boats or Colorado Discovery float trips, Lucas mentioned that they are not included in Project 13.1.

H1N3 and H1N6 are somewhat similar and are being addressed by the study being sponsored by CREDA and UCRC. In response to Jan Balsom’s questions, Clayton mentioned that a literature search and analysis of preliminary results and public opinion related to hydropower and water have been completed.

H1N4 is being addressed by Project 13.2. GIN1 is being addressed by the NPS passive use study. GIN2 is an ongoing effort. GIN3 is being addressed by Project 13.3 in the 2015-2017 TWP. GIN4 is an ongoing effort and funding is being pursued by GCMRC regarding this.

Action Items – Lucas to send the latest Table 1 to SEAHG (done 12/17).

Next Steps: Set meeting dates to discuss the completed Table 1 and report to AMWG .