

USACE ERDC

Moderator: Julie Marcy
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Julie Marcy: Let's go ahead and learn a little bit more about our speakers today. We have a very diverse trio of speakers with us today. First, we have Dr. (Bryan Taylor). (Bryan) works for the Tulsa District as an Environmental Biologist and Civil Works Project Manager in the Programs and Project Management Division.

He's the Program Manager for Tulsa District's General Investigations and Planning Assistance to State authorities. And he also serves as a Section 408 coordinator for dredging requests.

(Bryan) coordinated facilitated activities for the Instream Flows Advisory Group, and activities associated with the Water for 2060 initiatives in cooperation with CH2M Hill, and Carollo Engineers. He will be assisted by Dr. (Anna Childers), a Senior Environmental Scientist and a project manager with CH2M Hill.

(Anna) has 20 years of experience in water related research, studies, permitting and planning. She specializes in water resources projects, ecosystem planning, and services, NEPA process, stakeholder involvement, public meeting facilitation and development of public involvement plans.

She's managed the technical studies for the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan implementation with the Corps Tulsa District and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board since about 2012.

The third member of our speaking team is (John Rehring), a Vice President and Project Manager with Carollo Engineers. (John) has been in the industry for about 25 years, and he's focused on water resources, and infrastructure planning including regional and statewide water supply and reuse plans in Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona.

(John) managed the technical studies for the 2012 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan with the Corps Tulsa District and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Since 2012 he's supported implementation of the plan through facilitation of the Oklahoma Instream Flow Advisory Group discussions, facilitation of the Water for 2060 Advisory Council process, and managing detailed analysis of local conservation, reuse, and public water supply regionalization opportunities across western Oklahoma.

Additional information about our speakers may be found in their bios posted on the Facilitators Exchange page, along with a copy of the Power Point they'll be sharing today.

So (Bryan), (Anna), and (John) we're so happy to have you with us today and we look forward to hearing your different perspectives of this initiative.

Now (Bryan) I'm going to give you presenter rights and then I will apply the listen only feature to our program. Just one moment.

Operator: All participants are now in listen only mode.

Julie Marcy: Okay and remember you may need to do Star 6. (Bryan) let's share your desktop. Okay, we see your slides.

(Dr. Bryan Taylor): Okay. Thank you Julie appreciate the introduction. Good afternoon everyone. We do appreciate this opportunity to discuss and dialog with you all about the role that facilitation has played in update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan. And also how it continues to play a role in implementation of some of the recommendations and findings within the plan.

And more specifically we're going to key in on how facilitation has been a key technical tool that we've used for efforts to better examine instream flows.

This is our lineup for today. I'm going to give you a brief background of the project and how facilitation is being used on the Oklahoma Water Planning efforts. And my discussion will then be followed by both (John) and (Anna) - they're going to highlight facilitation efforts for development of our Water for 2060 Advisory Council, the Instream Flows Advisory group, and our Instream Flow pilot study efforts that are currently underway.

Just briefly in terms of the project background -- our district here in Tulsa -- we partnered with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board and we partnered to provide them technical expertise, cost share funding, as well as some input with regards to update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan during the initial phase.

That water plan update contains a wealth of technical data, information, policy recommendations, and all of this is combined together in the Executive Report. An update of that plan also produced 13 companion water shed planning regional reports as well as other technical studies, findings, and information.

Facilitation and public involvement were key during update of the plan, during the first phase. That first phase was completed in October of 2011. And we've now moved on to the second phase and we call this phase the implementation phase because this is where we can conduct, site specific investigations to address some of the priority recommendations within the Oklahoma Water plan.

These can include, NEPA documentation, recommendations for congressional authorizations, and lots of other tools that we can now use now that we have a plan.

As seen here there are eight recommendations for phase one. Of these eight, conservation, reuse and recycling as well as the instream flows - these are going to the current priorities that we're going to focus on during the implementation phase.

With regards to facilitation -- again the facilitation piece right now is centered around those two aforementioned priorities.

Again that first priority was conservation efficiency, recycling and reuse. This phase eventually identifies some of the innovative solutions to forecast water shortages that are in line with our Water for 2060 initiative. The Water for 2060 initiative acts to set a statewide goal of consuming no more fresh water in 2060 than we consume today.

And the advisory council they're there to make the recommendations that are involved with that initiative. And facilitation again is a critical component of that process.

And with instream flows there's an advisory group that's put in place to help further define how instream flows will be examined through facilitation. We're going to look at how an Instream Flow program might be implemented in Oklahoma.

And we do have an Instream Flow pilot study scope of work and that's prepared under some earlier work and that's currently being utilized to guide the advisory group.

And again the object of that pilot study is to gain a better understanding of the implications of a process to deal with instream flows consistent with overall goals managing water resources within Oklahoma. And that pilot study will look specifically at the upper Illinois River and Tenkiller Reservoir here in Oklahoma.

Most of this work has been supported under our Planning Assistants to States program. We've also created some pretty innovative funding strategies to leverage resources from other studies to combine so that we can provide assistance each year towards this effort.

So far we've been able to provide upwards of about \$3 million in federal funding towards update of the water plan and some of the implementation phases.

The need for facilitation during this effort was identified by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board along with our input and it was determined that the project would probably benefit more from utilization of contractual firms that specialize in facilitation expertise.

So we decided that outsourcing would be the best bet and both CH2M Hill and Carollo Engineers were among those firms and they've both played an integral role in development of the facilitation strategies that we're currently utilizing to date.

So you all will hear first from (John Rehring) with Carollo and Julie did a great job of introducing him already. And then secondly you'll hear from (Anna Childress) with CH2M Hill. So I am going to pass the mic to (John).

(John Rehring): Thank you (Bryan). I'd like to echo (Bryan)'s thanks to everyone for the opportunity to share some of our experiences here.

I'm going to talk first about the Water for 2060 Advisory Council, and we'll touch on this just briefly because it is an interesting example of some group dynamics, in a really collaborative kind of approach that the group took.

Now as (Bryan) mentioned the Water for 2060 Act was set in 2012 by the Oklahoma legislature with a goal of consuming no more fresh water in 2060 than we consume today.

There was an advisory council appointed to recommend incentives and voluntary initiatives to the Governor and Legislature later this year. Now that's a pretty aggressive goal and there's no real precedent for how to achieve such a goal. But the focus here really was on incentives and not on mandates for accomplishing this very aggressive goal.

Now the advisory council members represent all regions of the state and some very diverse water use interests. And then that group was supported by the group that you're hearing from here today.

But the types of interests that we had actually ranged all the way from crop irrigation in the panhandle, up in northwestern Oklahoma, all the way out to recreation and tourism interests in eastern parts of the state.

Now the group that we had had some interesting dynamics. Most of the folks on the advisory council were pretty quiet and it was difficult for us at times to draw them out and get their input. We did have one or two members that were very vocal and that presented sort of the opposite challenge for us.

So with those group dynamics we really had to give some structure to engage the group in the discussion and really get their feedback and input on this. And so what we developed and ended up using was a push/pull approach to information sharing and decision making.

And the way that worked was like this - we took initially a push approach where we provided expert information with presentations and different water users to provide examples of water efficiency that are going on not only across Oklahoma, but also throughout the nation. And some good examples from other states like California and some others.

We then asked the group to give us feedback on ways to incentivize best practices. From there we took it upon ourselves as the facilitators of that group to really group and organize those recommendations and provide those as draft recommendations back to the group.

And then ask for their feedback and their buy in, and ultimately the details of how we implement those recommendations for these efficiency incentives. And ultimately this is going to lead us to the 2015 Advisory Council report that will go back to the Governor and the Legislature later this year.

Now shifting gears to Instream Flow Advisory Group - a very different type of group and a very different topic and a very different dynamic. Much less consensus on this particular topic that this group tackled.

Now the Comprehensive Water Plan as (Bryan) mentioned that was developed in 2011, published, and put out in 2012 - that document set out a charge to look at an instream flow program for Oklahoma. There is no formal instream flow program in place now. And so the Comprehensive Water Plan set out a collaborative process to determine whether to adopt an instream flow program in Oklahoma, and if so how we would structure such a program.

Now the Instream Flow Advisory Group shown by the different members here have represented some very, very diverse viewpoints. We had both consumptive users and non-consumptive users of water and various interests representing each of those groups of users.

For example we had public water suppliers, we had industrial users such as oil and gas producers, we had crop irrigators, we had tribal interests represented on the group. And then from the non-consumptive users we had tourism and recreation interests including some environmental nongovernmental organizations.

It wasn't exactly 50/50, but the group was pretty split into two different camps and not much in between. We had one side of the room that essentially said, you know, "We really need a formal instream flow program for Oklahoma." And the other side of the group saying, "Things are essentially fine as is."

With that group dynamic then we took the charge that was laid out in the Comprehensive Water Plan in 2012 and started implementing the six specific

steps that that statewide plan laid out for considering an instream flow program for Oklahoma.

Now the first one shown with a checkmark there was to preserve the instream flow work group. And so we did that, carried over members from the initial planning effort into this new advisory group.

Initially though we realized that we had to tackle the first challenges. There were questions from the initial work about the basic authority, whether there was such an authority already in place to implement an instream flow program in Oklahoma - some very basic questions about that. And then questions about existing programs in the state that might already in effect provide an instream flow.

And so we took a look at those and dug into those first two questions. And we realized that we did not have clearly defined questions and thus they were very difficult to answer.

So we reframed the questions to get both sides to listen, to understand, and to appreciate the other side's viewpoint. Now this doesn't necessarily mean that they would agree with one another, but it's critical that we got folks to understand where the other side of the discussion was coming from.

And so we tackled the questions sort of systematically as you see here. First looking at the authority, whether statutory changes would be needed for such a program, the purpose, goals, and need for an instream flow program. In fact that led us to the bottom set of questions here - to really better define perspectives on this issue.

For example, what would happen both good and bad if we did have an instream flow program, and what if we did not have an instream flow program, what would be the consequences of that?

We used some strategic questioning to reframe those questions and again get both sides' input in such a way that they could understand and appreciate the other side's point of view.

Now we pushed the group to use information and data to really get away from positions and uncover the underlying interests behind those positions. We set forth with a series of three workshops that built on each other and supported the dialog.

We started with an overview, just overall goals and issues that we knew were out on the table, and to better use the group's input to flush those out further. And then supported that in the next workshop with supporting information about existing stream water availability calculations, ways that we calculate available water and surplus water in the state, and also look at how other states handle instream flow programs to give some context to ways that this might come together if Oklahoma were to implement such a program.

And the third workshop then we brought it a little bit closer to home and looked at some previous studies that had been done on a creek up in the northeast part of the state.

What we really drew from all of that was that there were some certain themes emerging through this dialog. We certainly recognized that there was no pure consensus among the group, you can probably imagine that with the diversity of viewpoints that we had there.

But we started seeing some common understanding of some of the themes here. Things like existing consumptive water rights should have priority over instream flows. Most, but not all, agreed on that.

We also very clearly heard that “one size fits all” will not work across Oklahoma, across the diversity of watersheds and water uses that we have across the state.

Third was that we need solid science to support the policy decisions that this group was charged with analyzing and making. And lastly it became very clear that our questions can't be answered hypothetically, we can't do this in the abstract, but rather had to have some specific context to those questions.

This led then to a need to delve into the remaining three steps in more detail. To develop a draft methodology for instream flow studies in Oklahoma and to use the group's insights and expertise to help us get there. To conduct a study on the economic impacts of instream flows in Oklahoma if there were such a program, and even if there were not, the benefit that we already realize from instream flows and non-consumptive uses. And then lastly to perform in instream flow pilot study in scenic rivers in the eastern portion of the state.

Some tools and strategies that we employed to make progress through this group, and again this very diverse set of interests and opposing viewpoints that we had prevalent in the group were as follows. First of all we needed to very clearly define the questions.

We started out the discussion with some very vague, arguably some road blocking questions that were almost unanswerable in the form that they were presented to us. And so it took us as the facilitators of the group to really turn that around and turn those into some questions that we could analyze and

could discuss, and could put some sound science behind those policy questions.

Secondly we had multiple avenues for input. We had the in-person workshops as I walked you through. We used a Web based questionnaire to provide an opportunity for folks to give us a little more thought an in-depth detail about their positions and their interests that were behind those positions. And then third, we always offered the opportunity for offline feedback through phone or email. We had a very open door policy for providing feedback back to the facilitator and the planning group.

As far as the one size fits all concerns, one way that we tackled that was to understand and very clearly then define that it was not the results of a pilot study that would apply to dissimilar watersheds, there was concern about if we set a certain flow regime in eastern Oklahoma where their hydrology is much different than western Oklahoma or the Panhandle, that those flow numbers, those flow regimes might apply.

That really was not the intent. Rather the intent was to provide a process that would reflect local conditions and that process could be used anywhere in the state with differing results that were tailored to the unique conditions in each watershed.

Lastly both sides really agreed ultimately that we couldn't answer questions in the abstract. And so when we had these big road blocking questions, the way that we addressed those were to turn those into questions that could be answered if we delved into specific site conditions in a specific watershed.

We really realized that we needed real conditions in a local basin to assess the pros and cons - things that couldn't be answered in the abstract on a statewide level.

That then led us to the need for the Instream Flow Pilot Study and (Anna) is now going to cover that.

Dr. (Anna Childers): Well good afternoon and thank you (John), thank you (Bryan). Can everyone hear me, I hope so.

Julie: Yes (Anna).

Dr. (Anna Childers): Thank you. (Bryan) discussed the project background and (John) detailed the two main projects here - those being the Water for 2060 and Instream Flow Advisory Group support. In my presentation portion I will be discussing about the current phase of the instream flow work that was recommended by the Instream Flow Advisory Group to be able to better address some of the legal and policy questions that surfaced during the facilitated advisory workshops during the 2013- 2014 study frame.

During those workshops in 2014 the Chairman of the Advisory Group, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board Executive Director, a Mr. (JD Strong) suggested that the advisory group should be more concerned about developing a process of assessing instream flows rather than developing a specific instream flow number.

He suggested developing a process for a pilot study which incorporates a process of addressing any outstanding concerns and issues including those economic impacts associated with the setting of instream flow requirements in Oklahoma.

The process should be geared toward assessing the list of benefits, issues, and concerns identified in the previous meetings by the Instream Flow Advisory Group. As a result an instream flow incremental methodology known as IFIM process was proposed by the advisory group as a process or a decision support system to assess an instream flow program in Oklahoma.

The total of four workshops, advisory group workshops that (John) highlighted, during 2013 and 2014 consisted of providing information about various instream flow issues, clarifying ideas and concepts, and learning within the group itself.

As part of the informing the advisory group, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and the consultants supporting the effort, presented various technical and policy related topics to the advisory group.

The advisory group was engaged throughout the workshops through facilitation by soliciting their input on the topics they wanted to learn more about, as well as by soliciting their comments, this group's comments on the study approach that was proposed for the Scenic River System in Oklahoma.

In this slide you can see the covers of some of the main reports that we prepared to inform the advisory group. Despite the wealth of information that was proposed and prepared for this group during the quarterly workshops, the advisory group members agreed that the remaining instream flow legal and policy questions could not be answered in the abstract. And as a consequence a pilot study in the Scenic River System using the IFIM method was identified in furtherance of the implementation measures of the comprehensive water plan.

So to better address the previously unanswered questions on the legal and policy issues, the emphasis of the dialog has shifted from the statewide approach to a local basin approach. And with that primary study goals include developing seasonal instream flow recommendations for the Illinois River including Barron Fork and Flint Creeks to gain a better understanding of the implications of the process to deal with instream flows issues consistent with the overall goal of managing water resources in Oklahoma for multiple users. And the study would help define a conceptual framework and study process that could perhaps be used elsewhere in the state.

The map here shows the Oklahoma designated scenic rivers in northeastern Oklahoma. The study area in question is the Illinois River Watershed located in northeastern Oklahoma, close to Arkansas border in Adair County. Specifically the two tributaries of the Illinois River, Barron Fork, and Flint Creeks, were selected for the Oklahoma Instream Flow pilot study.

One might ask what makes a scenic river a suitable candidate for an instream flow program pilot study approach in Oklahoma. Firstly, stream flows are less altered in scenic rivers. Secondly, unique state law emphasizes the protection of flows. Also scenic rivers are already, or they already have the precedent for regulation of flows.

In addition, scenic rivers have a significant flow based recreation and ecological value. Furthermore, scenic rivers have extensive existing available data and modeling. And finally and most importantly, I would say, a scenic river was recommended by the Instream Flow Advisory Group.

As mentioned, the pilot study approach for the Illinois River Watershed is modeled after what is known as IFIM - Instream Flow Incremental Methodology, which is a decision making process consisting of five sequential, integrated activities, or phases.

It's important to note that this particular study that we're involved in is not being done in response to a proposed water development project by impounding a river, for example. The first phase includes Institutional analysis and Summarizing Existing Information that comprises of defining the study goals and objectives, and analyzing the institutional setting for the proposed study area.

During this phase one we synthesize existing data and information on the study streams. This process helps in the study plan formulation. Some of the specific considerations may include legal considerations, potential effects on current and future water use holders., and that sort of thing.

The second phase of the IFIM method includes Study Planning, which is the design of the study. The output of this phase includes a study plan, identifying what data need to be collected based on the outcome of the first phase.

The actual implementation of the study results in Phase 3 when field data actually is being collected based on the study plan prepared in phase two. The third phase is called the Study Implementation. At the bottom of the IFIM chart are the Phases 4 and 5.

The fourth phase includes an alternative analysis, also called Data Interpretation and Integration. And the final, the fifth phase of the IFIM is the Issue Resolution of Flow Recommendations.

In my previous slide I showed the five different integrated study phases of the IFIM process. Here I want to emphasize engagement of different groups during those different study phases.

The three distinct yet interconnected groups that are included in this study are the Instream Flow Advisory Group, (John) talked about that group quite a bit. And then a second group that we have gotten engaged in the studies is called the Illinois River Stakeholder Group, or Illinois River Watershed Stakeholder Group and the third group is called the Illinois River Technical Study Workgroup. .

These three groups have the same goal: to support the IFIM process in the scenic river system. To engage the right groups or people to this study, the study phases are broken up and these groups are connected to the different phases of the study.

The Illinois River Stakeholder Group is involved during the Phases 1, 4, and 5. This group is not a formalized group, but an ad hoc of the potentially affected and other interested parties within the study area.

The Illinois River Stakeholder input is solicited during the public meetings during Phase 1 to better understand the institutional setting and obtain additional information.

Later in the study, this group is informed on the study implementation and they will have an opportunity to comment on the data analysis and interpretation of the recommended flow regimes. This happens during Phase 4.

During the final phase of the study, the Issue Resolution, the Illinois River Stakeholders are informed on the instream flow implementation. The second major group engaged in the study is the Illinois Technical Study Workgroup. This group's primary role is to provide technical support and peer review. They are also study the partner agencies of the study.

This group is a formalized group, contrary to the Illinois Watershed Stakeholder Group, with a distinct charge, vision, and mission at hand. This group is engaged in Phases 1, 2 and 3. And they are very important in Phase 2 which is the study planning phase, and they provide assistance in the study plan formulation that outlines the specific technical tasks for data collection and modeling.

The Technical Study Work Group will provide oversight during the Phase 3, which is the study implementation which is conducted according to the study planning that they helped to prepare in Phase 2.

The Technical Study Work Group supports the three phases by providing technical support as I said, and data and flow regime evaluation and issue resolution to assess how different regulatory guidelines can be implemented through collaboration between different agencies and water use groups.

The final, or the third major group involved in this study, is the Instream Flow Advisory Group. Its active involvement is limited during the actual pilot study phases, however; the group is informed and engaged periodically throughout the study.

In my previous slide I discussed breaking up the work, and engagement of those three different stakeholder groups. As I mentioned the Illinois River Watershed stakeholders are an integral part of the Phases 1, 4 and 5 of the study.

The Watershed stakeholders input is needed in the early stages of the study to gain a better understanding of the resources from different water use groups' perspectives.

Our task is to identify those stakeholders, and the affected parties. Then we will conduct outreach to those parties through stakeholder meetings, or public forums. We will identify and document different concerns and issues of the affected parties and provide responses to those.

As an output of series of workshops of those public forums, we will outline the preliminary decision process to be used to recommend an instream flow criteria.

We are also going to inform these stakeholders of the previously identified institutional issues and legal considerations and any needs for statutory changes.

In the initial phases of the study, the most important functions during the Watershed Stakeholder facilitation include informing the group through the following – we provide information by presenting facts, resources, knowledge, and data.

We solicit information by asking questions, surveying ideas, and gathering information. We clarify these concepts by making sure everyone is on the same wavelength. We might be conceptualizing using new knowledge to better understand the group, and learning within the group, by gathering information about the group itself.

As part of the soliciting information from the Illinois River Watershed Stakeholders we provide them demonstration and sample questions, we ask leading questions and by avoiding open ended or closed questions.

Stakeholders' comments during the meetings are documented, typically in flip charts. They will also have an opportunity to provide written comments on note cards during the meeting, and or mail or email comments to a point of contact after the meetings.

At the beginning of the public forums, it is important to state the objectives of the study and meetings to avoid the stakeholders being carried away to side issues.

Throughout the process of stakeholder facilitation, the facilitator needs to focus on encouraging healthy communication, and fostering trust among different water use groups. And the skill sets that are required from the facilitator include accepting that not everyone shares the same perspective because we have different water use groups, ability to invite participation and interaction and bounce back to the group, recognize commonalities, and promote consensus and support cooperation.

The second major group that is involved in this study is the Technical Study Workgroup. This group is more formalized. It's by invitation only group specializing in specific aspects of river flows such as stream ecology, aquatic systems, fisheries and hydrology and that sort of thing. The charge for the group is to provide technical support and guidance associated with the Illinois Instream River Flow pilot study.

At the end of the Phase 2 of the process, the programmatic work plan will be prepared with this group and reviewed with the main study sponsors to determine the timeline and level of effort to implement the necessary data collection for IFIM study.

The individuals of the group represent different state and federal agencies, the partner agencies of the study. And they are given distinct “job descriptions” for the course of the project.

Some of the Technical Study Workgroup members are also the Instream Flow Advisory Group members. To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest within the advisory group roles, the participating organizations will be emphasized rather than the individuals.

The most important functions during the Technical Study Workgroup facilitation include engaging the group thoroughly. We have a defined leadership, letting the group know who’s in charge. We create an open environment, inviting people to be part of the group, encouraging connections, helping people to get acquainted and connected.

We will build group rapport, facilitating a sense of teamwork and unity and defining group identity, establishing the group purpose and personality.

The facilitator needs to be able to foster an environment that is inviting to the members to be part of the group and informs that there is a technical study lead for this, and who takes a defined leadership with this group.

The facilitator encourages members to feel included and valued with the group context to avoid apathy or posturing by different individuals. These skills help individual make the transition from their past experiences or their roles into the new context. They help group members reflect on what they already know, and prepare them for collaboration. Engaging skills are used to create curiosity, interest, and energy.

And here are some of the study partner agencies the Technical Study Work Group, and just wanted to show you that.

Once all the phases of the IFIM process are completed we will be able to develop a seasonal instream flow recommendation for the Illinois River including Barron Fork and Flint Creeks.

The final flow recommendation will be a negotiated process involving regulatory agencies with input from different stakeholders. All phases of the study process will require negotiation where facilitation will be required.

Our current funding will take us through Phases 1 and 2, and initiate the Phase 3 of the IFIM process.

We just recently kicked off the Stakeholder and Technical Study Workgroup meetings were in January 22, and are in the process of synthesizing the output from those meetings and folding the information, the output, into the data collection effort. In this coming summer we will be starting our first field data collection effort.

And that is the end of my presentation, thank you very much.

Julie Marcy: This is Julie, give me just a moment and I'm going to open up our lines once again.

Operator: All participants are now in interactive talk mode.

Julie Marcy: Okay I opened our lines although you may still need to press the mute button or Star 6 on your phone so that we can hear you. At this time I will open up

the phone to questions. You can ask either verbally or using Chat for any of our speakers.

I can see looking from our list that we have a variety of attendees. We've got people all the way from coast to coast, from Alaska, from California, to New York. And from north to south as well. Quite a diversity in backgrounds as well. And we have one individual from EPA joining us. So please feel free to share any questions or comments that you may have with (Bryan), (John), and (Anna).

While folks are thinking - I was curious, what's an example of one of those vague road blocking questions that you all encountered during the earlier workshops? Can you recall one of those or something that's similar to one of those questions that you encountered?

(John Rehring): Julie this is (John) one was a very basic question of do we have the authority to do an instream flow program. The authority of course can take many different forms - statutory, regulatory, and so forth. And so that kind of question was pretty tricky to answer until we really started looking at the specifics of individual watersheds and delving into the details of existing programs that are in place already.

Julie Marcy: Okay. Thank you.

(John Rehring): And Julie we also had some very broad statements about -- not just questions but also statements and positions offered -- like for example instream flow program would either prevent or be some kind of an impediment to further economic development in Oklahoma.

Julie Marcy: I see.

(John Rehring): And that of course is jumping to a number of conclusions about, you know, the type of priority that an instream flow program would have, and how it might be administered. So we had to sort of back up and get to the understanding of the interests of making sure that as we did this program, if we were to implement one, that we would do it in such a way that was sensitive to those needs and not become a big impediment to economic development.

Julie Marcy: Certainly. And we've got a couple of questions coming in on Chat. The first one - could you speak a little more about the techniques that you use to engage the more quiet individuals while not discouraging the vocal people? It could be for any of the three of you.

(John Rehring): Sure this is (John) again. Part of it is understanding sort of their background and their interests and where they're coming from, and getting to know them personally was helpful in some regards along those lines.

But a lot of it came down to calling on people individually as we were having this dialog and actually asking their opinion, drawing them out. Not putting them on the spot necessarily, but providing them sort of a forum or giving them the mic if you will to provide that input. And asking them their opinion, or how the particular question or topic might influence their interests that they were representing at the table.

Julie Marcy: Okay.

Dr. (Anna Childers): This is (Anna). Just from the IFIM process and those stakeholders of course, the Illinois River Watershed stakeholders since it was an open forum we did not know the participants. So we had some preconceived thoughts and

questions that we were going to be asking. There always seems to be one or two very vocal and dominate personalities, temperaments, who drive the meeting to certain direction.

So asking questions that - first of all we thought about questions to help engage the stakeholders prior to - for example what is the most important priority to you individually for the Illinois River? And thinking maybe handful, ten or so questions, or two handfuls of questions that we could be asking to help encourage more introverted people to participate.

But also giving them a chance to comment after the meeting by writing.

Julie Marcy: We have another question that came in on Chat. Wondering if the use of IFIM affected stakeholder input and process development? Was the selection of this already established process met with resistance or enthusiasm?

Dr. (Anna Childers): I would say that there was no resistance nor enthusiasm. Because of the phased approach, the Advisory Group blessed the approach, thus it was the best approach to adopt due to the fact that it actually folds the stakeholder input into the process.

To jump into a recommendations of minimum instream flows, or to implementation, as it is one of my favorite phrases that “technology is always easy”, .but to get to some end result to implement technology, the IFIM has an opportunity built into it if you like that stakeholder input is first incorporated into the process and then to implement the technology that is an output of the decision making process where the stakeholders are included.

So the IFIM as a process itself has an incredible platform for stakeholder involvement.

Julie Marcy: And (Bryan) this is Julie again. This might be a question directed more for you. I know many of the Southwestern Division districts of the Corps and many of the western states have been working on statewide and regional water issues for many years.

What has the feedback been that you've received from some of your stakeholders and other participants in this process in terms of using facilitation as opposed to how you might have handled getting feedback in the past?

Dr. (Bryan Taylor): Hi Julie, thanks. It's been varied depending on the stakeholder and what their interests are. For example with instream flows, majority of the feedback is pretty positive. They're interested in what's being done more or less. Really interested in an end result in terms of making some final decisions of how those instream flows will be utilized.

But yeah for the most part it's mostly positive. You have a lot of public interests, people who are interested and especially with the pilot study in that particular area, there's a lot of people interested in the outcome of the study. So there's a lot of positive feedback in general with people being happy that the project is even underway, or that it's even being evaluated.

Julie Marcy: Okay. And I have another one but I'm going to hush for a moment to make sure we don't have any of our other attendees that may want to ask you something.

Now remember you might be on mute, so you may need to unmute yourself. Or you can use Chat if you're feeling shy.

Well while they're thinking I'll ask you another one. I noticed that much of your work has been, iterative, you've done a series of meetings, and some of the meetings have involved different participants. But my understanding is that some of them involve some of the same participants. Sometimes we have a challenge with getting the same people to come back to a second or a third meeting. Did you have any of those challenges? And if so how did you address that?

(John Rehring): The Water for 2060 Advisory Council was appointed by the Governor and the Legislature so I think folks felt a pretty strong obligation to participate and see it through - through the full process, all the way out to the report that we'll submit this year. So we really didn't have challenges there.

There was one member that did not attend any of the meetings, and we did do some outreach to him to try and see what was going on there. But by and large we didn't have that challenge with either group.

The Instream Flow Advisory Group is people that are pretty vested in the issue either from a supportive or questioning the need for it and implications of it perspective. So those people I think were pretty engaged right from the get go. And there was a lot of carryover from the initial group that lead up to the recommendations that were in the Comprehensive Water Plan in 2012. A lot of those same people carried over.

So I think they - we didn't have to encourage them to participate. They wanted to make sure they were there.

Julie Marcy: Great. Any other questions or comments from our participants? Or any general facilitation questions that you may have about any of the processes that they used, or any other challenges that you're facing?

Okay. Well if not (Bryan), (Anna), and (John) thank you so much. You've really done an outstanding job of sharing the extensive work you all have done with the Oklahoma Instream Flow Advisory Group. It's just remarkable what you've been able to accomplish. Seeing that the effort's ongoing we're all looking forward to seeing what your end products are going to be and wish you great success with that.

I think the work that you've done is certainly applicable to many of our other Districts and Divisions and I think the archived products we'll capture from this presentation will be of great benefit to many others across the Corps and to our partners outside of the Corps as well.

So I thank you for taking time to share your work with us. I really do appreciate it.

And participants, thank you for tuning in and joining us. Be watching your email and our quarterly facilitation newsletter for our next planned webinar. I am working on a topic right now but I'm still trying to finalize our speaker so I won't jump the gun and announce that yet. But I think it'll be equally interesting to you.

And with that, speakers thank you once again and I hope everyone has a great afternoon. That will conclude our Webinar.

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