

## Interview Guide for National Riparian Service Team Site-Specific Riparian Assistance Participants

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### Introduction (~10 mins)

1. Introduce yourself
2. Remind the interviewee about the study, its purpose, and the applicable Federal statutes.

The purpose of this study is to assess the satisfaction of past participants involved in Site-Specific Riparian Assistance offered by the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) as part of their “Creeks and Communities Strategy”. In addition, you will be asked questions about your experience with the delivery, quality, value and usefulness of the products, information and services provided by the NRST during this particular assistance. Specifically, we will seek to understand how NRST assistance has influenced participants, organizations, groups, communities and riparian resources in your area (i.e., usefulness).

At the end of this interview, we will fully disclose information about applicable Federal statutes. At this stage of the interview, we want you to know that:

- The public reporting burden for this survey is estimated to average one hour per response.
- The OMB control number for this information collection is 1040-0001. The expiration date for the control number is March 31, 2012.

3. Remind the interviewee about the NRST’s purpose, goals, vision, and specifically the Creeks and Communities Strategy and the purpose of the Site-Specific Assistance. Creeks and Communities Strategy is an approach aimed at building the capacity of land managers and stakeholders to address complex and often contentious issues inherent in managing riparian-wetland resources. It is a continuation of the interagency ‘Initiative for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management’ begun in 1996 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (FS), in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Strategy’s mission is ‘Healthy Streams through Bringing People Together,’ and the focus is on addressing the technical dimensions of riparian-wetland related issues while at the same time recognizing and addressing the social context within which these issues exist. Site-specific riparian assistance activities are typically a combination of training and place-based problem

solving targeted to a particular location and specific riparian issue (often with some component of Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) Riparian Assessment Training, Grazing Management for Riparian Areas Training and/or conflict resolution incorporated).

Furthermore, the assistance often occur over a series of phases and emphasize incorporating and facilitating respectful communication across a diverse range of stakeholders while also involving the appropriate mix of natural resource specialists.

4. Present interviewee with consent form, go through briefly, answer any questions, and have them sign it, noting whether they agree to be recorded. Then hand them the OMB form, go through briefly and answer any questions. [If conducting a telephone interview, both of these documents would have already been mailed to the participant.]
5. Ask the interviewee if they have any time constraints (and remember to check in at about an hour and see if they're OK with continuing if you haven't finished yet).
6. Provide a brief overview of what you're going to cover
  - a. Your experience with the NRST's assistance in your area
  - b. Your perceptions of *the delivery, quality, and value* of the NRST assistance in your area, both the technical training aspects and the group facilitation aspects (effectiveness of products, information and services)
  - c. Your perceptions of *the usefulness* related to the NRST's assistance in your area—how what you learned or experienced during the assistance changed *you, your community, and the overall health of riparian areas* (usefulness of assistance in terms of achieving on-the-ground outcomes)
  - d. Your thoughts on what might have stood in the way of you implementing the tools and techniques that you learned during the NRST assistance
  - e. Suggestions for improving NRST Site-Specific Assistance
7. Get settled, set up recording equipment or preparing for note taking if participant declines to be recorded.

### **Experiences with the NRST (~5 mins)**

1. Please tell me about your experience with the National Riparian Service Team in the area.
  - a. (show timeline of NRST involvement in the area) Which of these events did you participate in?
  - b. When, where, how many interactions?
  - c. What types of activities?
  - d. Why did you participate in a NRST activity/workshop?
  - e. In what capacity did you participate?
    - i. Part of your job, permittee, interested citizen, other?

## Effectiveness of Activities (~10 mins)

2. How effective were the technical aspects of the trainings in which you participated in the area? (Do you recall which training activities you participated in?)
  - a. Did the facilitators use a variety of teaching techniques to help you understand the concept of Proper Functioning Condition, Grazing Management and the principles of stream restoration?
  - b. Which teaching techniques were most/least effective?
    - i. In the field, in the classroom, joint fact-finding exercises, visuals, etc.
3. How effective was the National Riparian Service Team at dealing with the social component of riparian management?
  - a. What did you think of their overall approach to conflict facilitation/resolution?
  - b. Was it a diverse group? (Were tribal members included? EnviroS?)
  - c. Were the facilitators able to secure the up-front involvement of **all** relevant stakeholders?
    - i. Those most affected by the situation
    - ii. Those needed to implement the solutions (those in positions of power)
    - iii. People typically considered uncooperative
  - d. Did the facilitators demonstrate a good understanding of the particular ecological, economic and social needs of your community's specific situation?
  - e. Did the facilitators maintain a neutral position?
  - f. Did they create a "safe" atmosphere characterized by non-threatening, respectful communication?
  - g. Did they successfully facilitate relationship-building and networking?
  - h. Did they help establish more trust between and among participants?
  - i. Did they create an environment of mutual learning?
  - j. Were they able to build a common understanding and agreement around the nature of the situation (problem definition)...and necessary actions (solutions)?
  - k. Did they help increase coordination between Federal agencies working in the area?

## Outcomes (~20 mins)

4. How do you think your interactions with the NRST affected **you**? Please be specific about which aspects of the NRST experience had the most/least impact.
  - a. Knowledge
    - i. Did it impact your understanding of riparian function?
    - ii. Did it impact your understanding of restoration?
    - iii. Did you have any "aha" moments?
  - b. Skills
    - i. Did you gain skills that help you restore your riparian areas?
    - ii. Did you gain skills to help you solve problems?
    - iii. Did you learn skills that help manage conflict?
  - c. Approach to Management

- i. How have your riparian management actions changed as a result of what you learned during the NRST assistance? Specific examples?
        - 1. Use of PFC to assess your stream?
        - 2. Monitoring?
        - 3. Grazing management?
          - a. What role does timing, intensity, duration, and frequency play in your grazing practices? Did this change as a result of NRST?
      - ii. Have your interactions with other users/owners/managers of your stream changed as a result of the NRST activities you participated in?
5. Has the **community's** interactions changed as a result of NRST's assistance? Please be specific about which aspects of the NRST experience had the most/least impact.
  - a. Do you feel like there is a shared vision of recovery and how to get there?
  - b. Better coordination between government agencies?
  - c. Better coordination between agencies and private property owners, permittees, stakeholders, etc?
  - d. Can you think of any examples of how problems with creeks have been solved collaboratively?
  - e. In what ways, if any, did the community's interactions with the NRST affect political conditions in your area?
    - i. New partnerships/alliances?
    - ii. Better relations between agencies and permittees and public?
    - iii. Fewer lawsuits or threat of lawsuits to solve problems?
  - f. In what ways, if any, did the community's interactions with the NRST affect its ability to mobilize resources?
    - i. Skills, money, labor, materials, time
    - ii. Examples of grants won due to new community capacity to mobilize?
6. Do you think the overall stream environment has changed as a result of NRST involvement in your community?
  - a. Trends in functionality? Moved closer to PFC? DFC? Evidence?

### **Barriers/Constraints (~10 mins)**

- 7. If there have been no changes in any of the above, why not? What do you think might be standing in the way?

### **Conclusion (~5 mins)**

- 8. Do you and/or your community still interact with the NRST and/or use them as a resource?
  - a. If so, for what?
  - b. If not, why not?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the NRST's effectiveness?
10. Are there any other relevant topics related to the performance of the NRST in your area that we haven't covered that you'd like to discuss?
11. Wrap up the interview with the PRA compliance language.