Revised Minutes Of The

SAN JUAN RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
COORDINATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 1998
FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO

The meeting of the Coordination Committee was called to order by Chairman Renne Lohoefener at 9:00 am. Coordination Committee members or their delegated representatives present included:

Renne Lohoefener	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Frank Pfeifer (for John Hamill)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Patrick Schumacher	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Bob Krakow	U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
John Whipple (for Thomas Turney)	State of New Mexico
Randy Seaholm (for Peter Evans)	State of Colorado
Bill Miller (for Scott McElroy)	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Stanley Pollack	Navajo Nation
Jessica Aberly (for Les Taylor)	Jicarilla Apache Indian Tribe
Tom Pitts	Water Development Interests
Joe Dowhan	Program Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

Coordination Committee members representing the Bureau of Land Management and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe were not in attendance.

Members of the Biology Committee included:

Ron Bliesner	U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Frank Pfeifer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Jim Brooks	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Larry Crist	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
David Propst	State of New Mexico
Bill Miller	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Paul Holden	Jicarilla Apache Indian Tribe
Tom Wesche	Water Development Interests

Biology Committee members representing the Bureau of Land Management and the Navajo Nation were not in attendance. The attached roster indicates all committee members and private individuals present.

The final summary of the December 16, 1997, meeting was distributed and approved by the Coordination Committee. The agenda (attached) was reviewed and requested modifications to scheduled discussion topics agreed upon.

Update of Flow Recommendations Analyses and Modeling Runs

Ron Bliesner provided the Coordination Committee with a discussion of the Bureau of Reclamation's and Bureau of Indian Affair's progress in modeling of flows in the San Juan River. A synopsis of the progress is provided in the attached report and tables of the Biology Committee. The difference in the table between current and baseline figures reflects those projects consulted on but for which depletions have not yet occurred. The additional water shown depleted in the baseline also includes water viewed as potential demand from fallow acreage in Colorado and New Mexico and mitigation and irrigation water for future demand in Colorado. The baseline figures do not include water rights on record that have not been proved up and do not include all fallow or idle lands for which water rights are decreed.

° These "baseline plus amounts" reflect the following model assumptions and were used strictly for illustrative purposes:

Baseline + 60,000 AF	Two additional blocks of NIIP
Baseline + 124,000 AF	Full NIIP development
Baseline + 225,000 AF	Full NIIP and Full A-LP (A-LP depletions of up to 57,100 AF are already included in the baseline)
Baseline + 295,000 AF	Full NIIP, Full A-LP, Jicarilla Apache Water Development, Gallup-Navajo Pipeline, Ute Tribes Settlement Full Acreage Development
Baseline + 494,000 AF	All the above, plus full Compact development by Colorado.

These additional depletion assumptions are estimates and may not necessarily reflect the positions or priorities of the states of Colorado and New Mexico or any other participant in the program.

° The model was set for target base flows of 500 cfs in summer and 600 cfs in winter. These target base flows cannot be met at all times in runs of the Baseline + 225 or higher due to water shortages in the 1950's.

° In the Baseline + 494 scenario, the modeling team needs input from the State of Colorado as to where and how Colorado would develop its full compact apportionment before the scenario with this highest level of depletion can be realistically modeled to examine impacts of full compact development on stream flows and on Navajo Reservoir operations and water supply the storage would be provided to ensure such flows. Based strictly on water availability, most of the additional depletions would likely occur on tributaries to Navajo Reservoir or from the Animas River.

A number of conditions governing the model runs require further discussion and review by the Biology Committee. These include:

- Although there are a minimum number of days set for each of the flows and their anticipated frequency, there also needs to be some agreement on the maximum allowable length of time intervening between the flow releases; i.e., if there is a 1 year in 5 requirement for any given flow, there may also be a requirement for not extending the time period more than say three times that number of years before a mandatory trigger point is reached.

- Size of water releases also require a link to water availability. If a spill is expected from Navajo Reservoir, then it is logical to assume the spill water will be used to deliver a high flow release. However, if there has been no high flow for an extended period of time, say within the past 3 years, it may require the spill water plus some additional storage release.

- The Biology Committee is still reviewing the minimum length or duration of releases. Model runs have currently been run on 5-day releases for flows greater than 8,000 and 10,000 cfs. The Biology Committee needs to run the models with the 10-day minimum release requirement.

The management of flows will also be reviewed within the context of other non-flow recovery actions that can and will be implemented within the Basin.

The Biology Committee will continue working on the modeling runs; the committee will meet March 30. A draft of the Flow Recommendations Report will be provided for internal Biology Committee review by April 30.

Definition of Baseline The Biology and Coordination Committees discussed the use of the term "baseline," and the potential for confusion as more efforts refer to this term to describe different meanings of levels of water use. As used in the 1991 and 1996 Biological Opinions prepared for the Animas-La Plata Project, the term baseline refers to the definition provided in the regulations promulgated under the Endangered Species Act, those Federal projects that have undergone section 7 consultation and those State and private actions contemporaneous with the project currently under consultation. Within the context of review of the baseline depletions for the Animas-La Plata Project both Regions 2 and 6 of the Fish and Wildlife Service requested the States of New Mexico and Colorado to provide updated information concerning depletions within their respective portions of the San Juan Basin in order to accurately quantify amounts of water being depleted from the river. This review of the Animas-La Plata Project environmental baseline identified an increased level of depletions most of which was determined to be the result of better information. This updated information was considered and appears to have been incorporated in the Modeling Group's work on the San Juan Basin Hydrologic Model.

Fish Rearing Ponds

There are two rearing ponds under construction on NIIP for use in rearing razorback suckers: Ojo Pond and Avocet Pond. Ojo Pond is completed and will be stocked March 15 with 5,000

razorbacks approximately 125 mm long. The pond will then be trapped in October and, if the realized growth of the razorback sucker is sufficient, the fish will be put in the river. If not, they may be overwintered there and released the following spring.

An additional 10,000 razorback sucker will be hatched this year by spawning wild adults in Lake Mojave. These will either all be taken to a pond in Grand Junction, Colorado, or else half will be placed in the second NIIP Pond (Avocet Pond) and half will be taken to Grand Junction. The Colorado pond is available now because it currently is not needed for Upper Basin fish. However, because the pond is needed next year, the razorback suckers would then have to be moved back to the San Juan Basin, either to the ponds or the river.

Long term Monitoring

Although long term monitoring was planned for more discussion and consideration by the Biology Committee during its last two meetings, the priority for progress on flow recommendations has not allowed for sufficient time for consideration by Biology Committee members. It is anticipated that the discussion of long term monitoring will be addressed by the Biology Committee in March at its upcoming meeting and in May during a field trip by the committee.

Synthesis Report

Paul Holden will provide a list of research reports, and their status with respect to meeting the planned June 1998 due date. This report synthesizes seven years of research projects on the San Juan. Tom Pitts indicated his concern that report writing should be made a priority and that no additional field work or research projects be done until the reports were completed. The states' representatives on the Coordination Committee supported Mr. Pitts' opinion. However, the Biology Committee did not share that opinion and expressed the importance of doing both. Tom Pitts then requested that the Biology Committee establish due dates for technical reports, provide that list to Joe Dowhan, and that Joe Dowhan monitor completion of the technical reports. The Coordination Committee agreed to this latter procedure.

Durango Biological Opinion

In response to a request for status of the opinion, Frank Pfeifer informed the committee that the Service had received the comments provided by the State of Colorado and the City of Durango and that the opinion had not yet been finalized. Randy Seaholm referenced the resolution of the Colorado Water Conservation Board on the matter. He stated it was Colorado's position that if the depletions are part of the A-LP project, they should not be subject to a $50,000 depletion charge. However, if they are considered a new depletion and charged the $50,000, then they should not be deducted from the depletions allocated to A-LP. To assess both is unfair. Frank stated that he did not know if or how the comments of the State of Colorado would be addressed.

Long Term Funding Legislation

Water development interests have recently requested the introduction and sponsorship of the legislation, following a lengthy hold-up period by those interests until certain controversial issues could be resolved. Although there are still questions to be resolved from a number of interested parties concerning allocation of funding sources and the split of resources between the two existing Recovery Implementation Programs, it was felt that these discussions could occur concomitantly with the introduction of the bill, rather than delay it further.

Audio System

In response to a request by the Coordination Committee at the last meeting, Chairman Lohoefener and Program Coordinator Dowhan have researched the type and attendant costs of an audio system to assist audience members in hearing the discussions and presentations of the Coordination Committee. Estimates ran from $1500-$2600, and none were readily portable. However, it was agreed by the Committee that such an expense need not be incurred if the Meeting Rooms C and D would be reserved for all committee meetings.

Coordinator's Role

The outline of the San Juan Recovery Program Coordinator's role was distributed by the Chairman to and approved by the Committee.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Coordination Committee is scheduled for July 8, 1998, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Farmington, New Mexico.

Attachments: Attendance rosters
Agenda
Biology Committee's Synopsis of Flow Recommendations
Colorado's comment letter on the Draft Durango Biological Opinion
Program Coordinator's Role