

**Final Summary of the
San Juan River Basin Recovery
Implementation Program
Coordination Committee Meeting Summary
June 14, 2000
Farmington, New Mexico**

Welcome and Introductions: Renne Lohofener, Committee Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members and the audience introduced themselves. Members in attendance included:

John Cauley, for Bob Krakow	US Bureau of Indian Affairs
Joel Farrell	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Dan Israel	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Susan Jordan	Jicarilla Apache Tribe
Christine Karas	US Bureau of Reclamation
John Leeper, for Stanley Pollack	Navajo Nation
Renne Lohofener, Chairman	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Scott McElroy	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Frank Pfeifer, for Carol Taylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Pitts	Water Development
Randy Seaholm	State of Colorado
Pat Turney, for John Whipple	State of New Mexico
Brent Uilenberg	US Bureau of Reclamation

Review and Approve Agenda: The Southwest Strategy representative was unable to attend the meeting, but will be at the next Coordination Committee meeting. The report on recovery goals for the Fish and Wildlife Service was placed on the agenda after the Biology Committee report. San Juan River flooding issues will be discussed after capital projects.

Approval of January 19, 2000, Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes were approved with the stipulation that Tom Pitts' changes on page 6 be incorporated. Changes based on comments from John Whipple were made earlier.

Old Business:

-Coordination Update: Shirley Mondy reviewed past action items.

Congressional Tour: She will be working with Lisa Morrison, Congressional Liaison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on setting up a Congressional tour of the Program area for this Fall.

Action Item: Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) staff need to send her suggestions for the tour.

Listservers: Program listservers will be kept separate. Within the next few weeks, a listserver will be set up for the general public and interested parties. Hopefully, this will be accomplished by the end of July.

Outreach Plan: The Outreach Plan was sent out to Program members. However, only one comment has been received to date.

Action Item: Please send comments to Shirley Mondy by August 1.

Cudei Diversion Structure: The BIA needs to send Coordination Committee members a list of incurred expenditures. This was requested at the last meeting.

404 Permit: Negotiations are ongoing with the Corps of Engineers. The Corps wants to include flooding (bank stabilization) issues in the permit, as well as issues on threatened/endangered fish. The Fish and Wildlife Service may have trouble with a permit that deals with more than fish issues.

Reimbursement Rate: The Denver Finance Center refuses to reduce overhead charges assessed on the Program.

Website: In the near future, 1998/1999 reports will be available to all interested parties. The Seven-Year Research Reports are already available on the website.

Seven-Year Research Reports: A card was sent to everyone on the Program's mailing list to see which reports they needed. Hopefully, printing will begin in July or August. It was re-emphasized that all libraries and colleges in the Program area will receive copies of the reports.

-Biology Committee Update: Jim Brooks

The Monitoring Plan has been completed. It will undergo further review by the Biology Committee.

Alternatives for fish passage at the PNM weir were reviewed. The preferred alternative is Alternative 1. The report will be finalized soon.

The results of the Seven-Year Research Reports were reviewed.

Work on the Long-Range Plan is at a standstill until the Biology Committee receives feedback/comments from the Coordination Committee. Direction is needed from the Coordination Committee in order to finalize the Plan.

Approximately 100,000 pikeminnow larvae were stocked within the last few days. They are being monitored. The stock was from Dexter National Fish Hatchery in Dexter, New Mexico.

The genetics report on San Juan fish stock for the Upper Colorado River Basin is finished. Genetics management is something that the Program needs to deal with. Further discussion is needed.

The Biology Committee discussed the Work Plan submission schedule for Fiscal Year 2001, and subsequent years. The schedule for this year is as follows.

1. August 16-17, 2000: Meet in Durango, Colorado, to discuss the Long-Range Plan and Work Plan for 2001.
2. September 1, 2000: Give the Coordination Committee a copy of the Work Plan for their review and subsequent approval.
3. October 1, 2000: Deadline for approval of the Work Plan by the Coordination Committee.

-Recovery Goals: Rich Valdez/Frank Pfeifer: The Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6, has the lead for the recovery of big river fishes in the Colorado River Basin. Every 5 years, recovery plans need to be re-examined to see if any revisions need to be made. After review, Region 6 decided to revise the criteria for the Recovery Plans on the big river fishes. Region 6 is working with contractors Ron Ryel and Rich Valdez to develop new criteria as supplements to existing Recovery Plans.

In modifying existing Recovery Plans, they will review the goals and criteria for recovery under the Endangered Species Act. Such areas as modification of habitat, nonnative depredation, and regulations regarding the release of nonnative fish will be reviewed. Site specific management actions will also be established and will include provision for flows to assist in fish recovery. (The San Juan River Basin Program has flow recommendations that have been developed.)

Criteria will include such items as fish passage past barriers, the regulation of the release of nonnative fish (the states are setting up agreements), and controlling nonnative fish to prevent competition with **or** the depredation of native fish. In order to declassify, objective measurable criteria will be developed; i.e., how many fish are needed in the river and where will they be.

In the Colorado River Basin, there are three management units for the pikeminnow and the razorback sucker: the Upper Colorado River Basin, the San Juan River Basin, and the Lower Colorado River Basin. In terms of recovery units, it was decided by the Biology Committee that 800 adult pikeminnow is the estimated carrying capacity for the San Juan River. Based on genetic and demographic considerations, 5,800 is the estimated carrying capacity of razorback suckers.

A Notice of Intent will be put in the Federal Register (early August) in order to let the public know that new criteria are being developed to downlist and subsequently delist the big river fishes. The public will be able to make comments at that time.

Action Item: An announcement regarding the Notice of Intent will be placed on the website and sent to Committee

members.

-Hydrology Committee Proposal: Randy Seaholm, State of Colorado representative, distributed the final proposal for the formation of a Hydrology Committee. The Hydrology Committee would combine the functions of the Ad Hoc and Navajo Dam Committees. The motion to accept the concept of a Hydrology Committee was approved.

-Motion: The Coordination Committee moved to form a Hydrology Committee. Coordination Committee members will appoint members to represent them. The Hydrology Committee will propose a budget, a work plan, and changes to the Program Guidance Document and Long Range Plan.

Specific details regarding the Committee will be developed further and discussed with the Coordination Committee before final approval. Once the Hydrology Committee is formed, it will need to prepare and submit a budget and work plan to the Coordination Committee. The Program guidance document and Long-Range Plan will need to be modified to include the Hydrology Committee. Formal revision of the Program's documents will require a two-thirds vote of the Coordination Committee.

Members suggested that the Hydrology Committee ensure that the Riverware model is up-to-date and kept current. It was further suggested that the Program invest in the model to refine and increase overall confidence in it. Model documentation and further development is the responsibility of BOR. Concern was expressed by Frank Pfeifer regarding the funding needed to keep the model current and for specific projects.

Membership on the Hydrology Committee would be the same as the Biology and Coordination Committee with the suggestion that members have a technical background. Funding for the Hydrology Committee would come from the Navajo Dam Committee. The Biology Committee will work closely with the Hydrology Committee on habitat and recovery issues.

Action Item: The Hydrology Committee will develop specific language to insert in the Program Guidance Document and Long Range Plan. Members of the Coordination Committee will receive an advance copy of the proposed amendments to the Program Guidance Document and Long Range Plan.

Action Item: The BOR will furnish information on the Adaptive Management Process.

Action Item: Coordination Committee members will ensure that members are appointed to the Hydrology Committee.

-Section 7 Update: Comments on the revised draft Section 7 document were sent in by the State of New Mexico, Fish and Wildlife Service, and BOR. A conference call was held regarding comments received from the State of New Mexico and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Another conference call has been scheduled to discuss BOR

comments.

Action Item: Another draft proposal will be ready by the next Coordination Committee meeting with advance copies being sent out to Committee members.

-Funding Legislation Update: Legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate in

August 1999. It was reintroduced by Senator Allard in January 2000. Legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Hanson, Utah, in October 1999. The bill will finally go to markup June 15, 2000. The legislation has growing support.

Senator Allard and staff were taken on a tour of the Upper Basin by Frank Pfeifer. They were able to get a better idea about funding needs.

-Work Plan Process: Brent Uilenberg, BOR, stressed the need for a Work Plan process similar to that of the Upper Colorado River Basin. General guidance needs to be sent to the different Committees by January. In April, the different Committees would submit their respective Work Plans to the Coordination Committee for consideration and review. In September, the Coordination Committee would vote on a final Work Plan. He emphasized the need to make sure that funding in the Program is available to get the work done.

Action Item: Brent Uilenberg will work with Shirley Mondy to develop a timeline/plan for Work Plan submissions and approval.

-Navajo Reservoir Operations EIS Update: A BOR newsletter on the Environmental Impact Statement timeline was distributed. The proposed BOR low flow test of 250 cfs proposed for July 10-14 has raised concerns among the general public, especially among rafting and other recreational users, as well as farmers who are irrigating at this time. Over 80 people attended a meeting on June 12, 2000, in Farmington, New Mexico. Over 700 people signed a petition expressing concern regarding the test. During the testing, aerial photography will be done to record conditions on the river. Biology Committee members requested copies of the photographs.

-Capital Projects:

PNM Fish Passage: Peggy Bailey of Tetra Tech is working on development of three alternatives for building a fish passage at the PNM weir. The three design alternatives are currently being revised. The cost for the fish passage will cost between \$600,000 to \$1 million. Alternative 1 would involve a traditional fish ladder on the river right and cost approximately \$974,000. Alternative 2 would be a traditional fish ladder placed on the river left and costing around \$605,000. Alternative 3 would use rip/rap and cost \$429,000. These figures do not reflect costs for sediment removal and sealing the channel in flood stage to prevent nonnative movement.

The Biology Committee preferred Alternative 1 due to its design and easier access. Frank Pfeifer was selected to be on the design team. The BOR is hoping to award a construction contract in 2001. BOR staff will meet with representatives from PNM and see if they are comfortable with Alternative 1 and ready to move forward on control specifications and construction of the fish passage.

Hogback/Cudei Fish Passage: The BIA is proceeding with the removal of both dams. A fish ladder will be built around the Hogback. The Cudei structure will be breached and a pipeline will replace it. Total costs are placed at \$5.5 million. The cost for the fish ladders is placed at \$3 million. Members discussed fair and just compensation for BIA, as well as wondering why costs were so high.

The BIA needs to give the Coordination Committee an itemized list of their expenditures. This information was requested earlier in the year. The BOR has \$1 million available this year which could be transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. However, before any transfer takes place, the BIA needs to furnish the requested information.

Action Item: By the end of June, the BIA will furnish a breakdown of costs to Bob Moore with BOR. This will also be sent out on the listserver by Bob Krakow to Biology and Coordination Committee members.

Action Item: A conference call will be held on June 30, 2000, at 10:00 a.m. Mountain Standard Time to discuss the Hogback and Cudei projects. Further information on the call will be sent out by Shirley Mondy.

Fish Augmentation Facilities: BOR representatives expressed concern over the lack of a long-term plan for fish augmentation. Are further fish refugiums or grow-out ponds needed? The only work being done so far to assist population numbers are the fish passages planned at the PNM weir, and Hogback and Cudei Diversion Dams.

The Program has a clearer idea of the number of fish needed now that actual numbers/carrying capacities are being established. The biologists present preferred to not spend a large amount of money on hatcheries. Razorback suckers were stocked in Avocet and Hidden ponds. If the fish do well, there will be enough fish available for augmentation. A major problem in the past has been obtaining adequate numbers of razorback larvae. Larvae could be collected at Lake Mohave and put into grow-out ponds as well as aquariums at the University of New Mexico. Further grow-out ponds might be needed in the future such as at Bluff, Utah; a proposal for those ponds should be developed soon. Space could also be leased in the future for the Program. Regarding the pikeminnow, Dexter National Fish Hatchery might be able to meet Program needs. The Program's long-range specific needs for the pikeminnow currently are not known.

Tom Pitts stated that the Work Plan for 2001 should reflect a specific pikeminnow number for fish augmentation. In about 3 months, the Program will have a better understanding of the need for additional growout ponds.

San Juan River Flooding Update: The BOR met with the State of New Mexico, irrigators, and the Corps of

Engineers regarding flooding on the San Juan River. The BOR is devoting \$30,000 (in kind service) to study the flooding problem. They are looking at what structures are effected by the flooding, and how and what can be done to protect structures. Each structure may need to be evaluated. They are also looking at what sources are available for obtaining State and Federal funding to correct any problems that are found. Hopefully, they will have some answers by fall of 2000. At that time, they should at least know where the problems are.

New Business:

-Program Evaluation Report: Members should have their comments on the Program Evaluation Report to Paul Holden by July 30, 2000. The Peer Review Committee has already reviewed the document with Paul Holden and Jim Brooks.

Chapter 3 is the heart of the document. It is a summary of what was and was not found. Chapter 4 is a summary of the information organized by categories shown in the original Long-Range Plan. Chapter 5 discusses how the Program will work in regards to the new Long-Range Plan. This will help Program members decide what new directions the Program should move in now.

Chapter 5 will be revised based on comments received from the Biology Committee. Coordination Committee members should send their comments to Paul Holden. Goals 1, 2, and 3 were discussed.

Some questioned showing the recovery of the roundtail chub as a goal of the Program at this time. Paul Holden pointed out that the roundtail chub has always been considered by some to be a target species of the Program-but this has been forgotten. The BOR has almost completed a status review of fish for the Upper Colorado River Basin. Funding for the roundtail chub could be obtained possibly from other sources if a four-state effort could be mounted.

Action Item: The Fish and Wildlife Service, Regions 2 and 6, need to look at conservation efforts for the roundtail chub and how the Program fits in.

Action Item: Coordination Committee members should have comments on the Program Evaluation Report back to Paul Holden by July 30, 2000. He will then send out a revised document.

-Long-Range Plan: Revision of the Long-Range Plan is on hold until the Program Evaluation Report is finalized. Ron Bleisner has the lead on redrafting the Long-Range Plan. The format has also changed. The Biology Committee will continue to work on the Long-Range Plan incorporating additional information and requested changes. The Long-Range Plan revision will carry the Program through the year 2007.

Action Item: Once the Hydrology Committee is in place, Jim Brooks will furnish its members with copies of the Long-Range Plan.

Action Item: The Hydrology Committee will provide comments/input for the Long-Range Plan by August 15, 2000.

-SJRIIP Business with Non-Federal Cost Sharing: Over the next 7 years, the Program will receive \$17 million in non-reimbursable cost sharing funds according to Brent Uilenberg. Members had concerns over how this money would be handled. It was suggested that the money could be given to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation who would in turn pay all bills. Currently, with the Upper Colorado River Program, the State of Colorado gives the Foundation an estimate of expenditures. The Foundation then handles all payments.

Action Item: Brent Uilenberg will develop various proposals for handling non-Federal cost sharing funds. Members will be sent the information over the listserver, and will discuss this subject at the September 2000 meeting.

Other Business:

Review of Action Items Update:

Action Item: The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) staff need to send Shirley Mondy suggestions for a Congressional tour of the Program area.

Action Item: Please send comments on the Outreach Plan to Shirley Mondy by August 1.

Action Item: An announcement regarding the Notice of Intent will be placed on the website and sent to Committee members.

Action Item: The Hydrology Committee will develop specific language to insert in the Program Guidance Document and Long Range Plan. Members of the Coordination Committee will receive an advance copy of the proposed amendments to the Program Guidance Document and Long Range Plan.

Action Item: The BOR will also furnish information on the Adaptive Management Process.

Action Item: Coordination Committee members will ensure that members are appointed to the Hydrology Committee.

Action Item: Another draft Section 7 Principles Agreement will be ready by the next Coordination Committee meeting with advance copies being sent out to Committee members.

Action Item: Brent Uilenberg will work with Shirley Mondy to develop a timeline/plan for Work Plan submissions and approval.

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Set New Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Program Coordination Committee will be held September 19, 2000, in Farmington, New Mexico. It was suggested that the meeting be held at the Community College or in a room with better acoustics.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.