

Draft Summary



SAN JUAN RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Coordination Committee Meeting

June 26, 2007

San Juan Water Commission
7450 East Main Street Suite B
Farmington, NM 87402

Coordination Committee Members:

Jim Brooks
Steve Lynch
Tom Blickensderfer for Randy Seaholm
Noelle Graney for Susan Jordan
Catherine Condon
Brent Uilenberg
Chuck McAda for Al Pfister
Tom Pitts
Adrian Oglesby
John Whipple
Brenna Clani for Stanley Pollack

Representing:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Water Development Interests
The Nature Conservancy / Conservation Interests
State of New Mexico
Navajo Nation

Hydrology & Biology Committee Members:

Pat Page, Hydrology Committee
Ron Bliesner
Mark McKinstry

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Keller-Bliesner Engineering/BIA
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Program Management:

David Campbell

Program Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service, NM Ecological Services

Interested Parties:

Tim Jones
Ernie Teller
Michael Howe
Bill Leibfried
Viola Willetto
Albert Lapahie
Andrea Lefevre

Representing:

PNM
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Indian Affairs-NIIP
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife
Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife
Jicarilla Apache Nation

Welcome and Introductions (15 min)..... ..Jim Brooks

Jim Brooks is acting committee Chairperson for Brian Millsap; He explained that Brian Millsap was pulled away on other business.

Introduction of TNC representative Adrian Oglesby who is the new Coordination Committee member representing the Conservation Interests.

Program Coordinator's Report

2007 Budget update – Dave Campbell and Mark McKinstry

2008 Budget Priorities - Dave Campbell

Committee Reports

Biology Committee (BC).....Chuck McAda

The Biology Committee is requesting a change in annual review meeting date from March to May. This request is based on the Biology Committees need for more time to synthesize and analyze the annual data prior to presenting it to the Program and the public. This request is supported by the peer reviewers who participated in the annual review meeting. The Coordination Committee requested that the Program Coordinator's office put together a revised schedule and recommendation for CC to consider.

The Biology Committee held a small workshop on developing population estimates at their May 17-18 meeting. The workshop was lead by a panel of three experts: Dr. Kevin Bestgen, Director, Larval Fish Lab, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; Lew Coggins, Fish Biologist, Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center, Flagstaff, AZ – USGS; and, Dr. Rob Dudley, Research Scientist, University of New Mexico; Ecologist American Southwest Ichthyological Research Foundation.

The expert panel explained that population estimates can be exhaustive and expensive, but successful with lots of planning and requires adequate resources to plan for success. The Program needs to identify exactly what they want (need) and what you are willing to spend to get the data. What level of effort is the Program is willing or able to provide? And the Program needs to consider the level of effort required to post-process the data acquired.

The Biology Committee concluded that they are not ready to begin population estimates. However, there is a need to analyze existing data (data mining) to plan for developing population estimates. The Biology Committee agreed to target FY08 for data mining and population estimate project planning?

The Biology Committee discussed the completed temperature studies and whether or not a Temperature Control Device (TCD) would benefit recovery of Colorado Pikeminnow or razorback sucker. The Biology Committee agreed on a recommendation against the construction of a TCD on Navajo Dam because the completed studies indicated that water temperatures below the confluence of the Animas River were largely controlled by the Animas River. A TCD would have marginal effect on the temperatures of the San Jaun River below this point and not significantly improve recovery efforts.

The Biology Committee and the Peer Review Panel question the need for the Coordination Committees request for a Program Assessment. Both the Biology Committee and the Peer Review Panel believe that a Program Assessment would not benefit the Program at this point and consider it a low priority compared to other Program needs.

The Biology Committee met with Bill Liebfried (SWCA) on June 25 and discussed revisions to the Long Range Plan. The Biology Committee went through the document element by element and provided input on timeframes and criteria for the development of quantitative goals.

The Biology Committee recommended that the Bureau of Reclamation pursue the development of a low-tech fix for Fruitland Diversion. The Fruitland Diversion is not a fish passage barrier the

majority of the time but becomes one when the water users rebuild the structure. The Biology Committee would like to see it improved but do not support a design that would be a concreted structure. Brent Uilenberg will have Reclamation address this issue.

The Biology Committee discussed the need for an artificial barrier on the lower end of the San Juan River to exclude predators from recolonizing the river when water level in Lake Powell rises to a level that the waterfall is inundated. Reclamation assessed the risk of this occurring and concluded that there is a 60 to 75% chance that the waterfall will be inundated for a total of 30 months (not necessarily continuously) between 2008 and 2030. Probabilities for longer inundation are available. If a barrier is determined to be necessary the Biology Committee believes that it should provide selective upstream passage for native species and should be built in a location where it can be operated, possibly at Mexican Hat? Anne Davis will prepare a white paper on the non-native fish risk associated with elevation of Lake Powell.

The Biology Committee discussed the process for developing priorities for the FY 08 work plan. The committee discussed the option of putting on hold portions of the fish monitoring program to provide money to begin data analysis in preparation for another integration report in FY 09. A scope of work will be prepared and discussed at the August 2 meeting.

Hydrology Committee (HC).....Pat Page

The Hydrology Committee has met twice since April. Presentations at the meetings included the state of Colorado use of State-mod. The Hydrology Committee is still analyzing depletion differences between Gen 2 and Gen 3 and is waiting on NM analysis of San Juan-Chama project depletions used in the model.

Tom Pitts has requested that an outline be developed for the process and relationship for updating the hydrology model, the flow recommendations, and Navajo Reservoir operation decision tree. Program Coordinator will work with the Biology Committee and Hydrology Committee to provide the information.

Navajo Dam Operation Update

March was forecast to be drier than normal and the spring release was reduced accordingly; however, the inflow turned out to be higher than expected (100,000 ac/ft) and inflow increased over the spring resulting in an extended release on the tail end of the hydrograph. Currently the release is at 1200 cfs but will be reduced to 750 cfs this week. Reclamation may need to plan on a fall peak reservoir release if reservoir levels remain high, which would need to be coordinated with stocking.

Old Business

Long Range Plan (LRP) update – Dave Campbell and Bill Leibfried

Action Item:

Draft LRP 7/9 Comments to Dave by 7/23; Draft final August 6; meeting to approve September 11.

New Business

Guidelines for contracting and sole sourcing Program work were discussed. The recommendations were developed at a May 16 Coordination Committee work group meeting, chaired by Cathy Condon (attachment 1).

Tom Pitts recommended that the Coordination Committee formally adopt the recommendations as guidelines for the Program. The Jicarilla Apache Nation objected because it does not see the benefit of formally adopting the work group's recommendations for contracting and sole sourcing since they are more restrictive than the guidance provided to the Program by the Department of the

Interior Solicitor's Opinions on the Program use of their finding. They Jicarilla Apache Nation agreed to accept the work group's recommendations for use guiding the FY08 budgeting process. The Navajo Nation would like time to review the guidelines.

Action Item:

The guidelines will be used for the FY08 Work Plan and budgeting process. The recommendation for adoption of the recommendations as a guidance document will be on the September meeting agenda for reconsideration.

Razorback Sucker Production at the NAPI Ponds

Mark McKinstry gave a PowerPoint presentation (attachment 2) providing an overview of razorback sucker production at the NAPI ponds. The presentation illustrated the difficulties and costs associated with the management and production of razorback suckers at unmanaged pond sites under the current management structure.

Dave Campbell provided the following recommendations to the Coordination Committee to address razorback sucker production:

1. Region 2 Fisheries Resource Office (FRO) will assume management and oversight of razorback sucker production at the NAPI Ponds in partnership with the Navajo Nation.
2. The Six Pack ponds will be taken out of production until (if and when) infrastructure issues are resolved. Production at NAPI will rely on East and West Avocet and Hidden ponds.
3. Program Office will work with FRO and Navajo Nation to develop management structure, define responsibilities and resolve any management issues.
4. Program Office will work with Uvalde to produce additional 6,000 razorback suckers.
5. East Avocet pond need the following retrofits:
 - a. Install kettle at East Avocet (~\$25,400)
 - b. Install drain at East Avocet (~\$28,000)
 - c. Purchase conveyor for fish harvest (~\$8,000)
6. The Program needs to purchase a storage container for equipment (~\$10,000)

The Coordination Committee approved the recommendations. A motion to approve to approve 75K for the retrofits needed at East Avocet pond and the purchase of a storage container. The Motion was approved.

Process for Amending an Approved Work Plan.

Brian Millsap asked the Program Coordinator to address with the Coordination Committee the lack of an approved and agreed upon process for approving a recommended amendment to a scope of work for an existing project in a work plan that had previously been approved by the Coordination Committee.

The committee discussed the issue but wanted to see a process outlined in writing before considering it for approval.

Action Item:

Dave Campbell to write-up process for amending work plan for September meeting vote.

Hydrology Model Issues

Brent Uilenberg explained Reclamation's decision and announcement at the April 17 Hydrology Committee meeting that reclamation would move away from maintaining and operating the

SJRRIP Hydrology Model after the completion of Gen. 3. Reclamation has withdrawn that decision and is developing terms and conditions under which they will continue to be the keeper of the model. Those terms and conditions are currently being reviewed by Reclamation.

Noel Graney wanted to know if some of the Biological Opinions had language that required Reclamation to maintain and operate the model for meeting the flow recommendations. Dave Campbell addressed her question by stating that Reclamation and the Service had discussed this issue and they were not in agreement on what the terms and conditions in previous Biological Opinions required.

Tom Pitts and John Whipple expressed concerns as to how the model is being used specifically as it relates to section 7 consultations and would like to have this issue addressed at a CC meeting.

Action Item:

- 1) Schedule a discussion on how the model is being used specifically as it relates to section 7 consultations for the September meeting.
- 2) Brent to provide the terms and conditions for Reclamation's continued role as keeper of the model to the Coordination Committee as soon as they are available.

Other Business

Jim Brooks discussed the Value Engineering Study (VE) process and recommendations for the fish Screens at Hogback Diversion. Primary area of concern was the ability to protect and maintain a highly technical facility at the Hogback location. The preferred alternative that the VE process developed is an angled concrete weir wall that allows a 4 inch sheet of water flow to spill over the top into the diversion. Fish are excluded because of the way water is removed from the top of the water column. It is an effective low tech approach to preventing entrainment of larval, juvenile and adult fish.

Next Meeting Date

September 7, Durango, U.S. Forest Service, 15 Burnette Ct., Hwy 160 W

Agenda Items:

Long Range Plan approval; FY 08 Work plan; Reclamation Hydrology terms and conditions; Program Guidelines for contracting projects; Hydrology Model section 7 issues.

Adjourn