

July 18, 2003

**San Juan River Basin Recovery  
Implementation Program  
Biology Committee  
June 9, 2003  
Conference Call Summary**



**Members Present: Representing:**

Ron Bliesner U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Jim Brooks U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Tom Chart U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Paul Holden Jicarilla Apache Nation Vince Lamarra Navajo Nation Chuck McAda U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Bill Miller, Chairman Southern Ute Indian Tribe Tom Nesler State of Colorado Dave Propst State of New Mexico Tom Wesche Water Development Interests

**Others Present: Representing:**

Marilyn Greenberg, Program Assistant U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Dale Ryden U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Welcome and Review of Agenda**

Bill Miller welcomed participants, who then introduced themselves.

**New Start Scopes of Work**

Bill Miller explained that the main purpose of this call is to clarify the new scopes of work in order to open them up to bids (RFP). He sent out a paragraph for the new starts on March 7, 2003. The scopes need to detail what product we are looking for, state the Program objective that we are trying to meet, and indicate the geographical area that we want to look at. There needs to be enough detail and consistency in the proposals to allow us to compare and rank them.

The Coordination Committee has approved the use of the draft contracting procedures (attached) for the FY04 new starts. It will require developing detailed scopes of work for the new starts listed in Shirley Mondy's email. Those are:

1. Pikeminnow augmentation and retention
2. Entrainment of fish at Hogback
3. Evaluate the need for fish passage at Fruitland
4. Evaluate the need for fish passage at APS weir (Brent Uilenberg added this one).

The pond management was put on hold, pending findings by Vince's and Ernie's study.

Bill Miller stated that these items need to be detailed enough to compare multiple proposals. Dave Propst commented that specifics are needed in the RFP's, but we do

not want them to be so narrowly defined so that we won't get some diverse proposals.

Paul Holden asked what is needed for detail and how soon would Reclamation be able to have these ready to go? Shirley Mondy stated that the general RFP package is ready to go. Once the descriptions are ready, Reclamation can have them ready to post (for 45 days) within a few weeks.

The Coordination Committee agreed to try this contracting process out using these scopes of work as a test, and may approve this process at the July meeting depending on how this process works.

Pond construction would be a FY04 scope of work at the earliest. Pond management is not an issue for this RFP.

Paul Holden suggested that one or two people work on each scope to pull the RFP together, including the technical details, and to then send it out to the Biology Committee to approve or improve. Then it can be sent to Shirley Mondy to get the bids out. [Applicants/interested parties can be directed to the San Juan website and the background information that is already there.]

Bill Miller inquired about having this wrapped up by the end of June to get to the Coordination Committee by their July meeting. Shirley Mondy stated that we just need to get these in the cycle to be funded for FY04. This contracting procedure does not necessarily need to go back to the Coordination Committee; they have approved these scopes in whatever way the Biology Committee feels it is appropriate to word them.

Fish Passage There is a need to identify the criteria that will be used to evaluate each proposal. Scopes 3 and 4 need a description of the current structures in place now, background information, what our concerns are: determine whether a fish passage is needed. We do not know what all the issues are regarding those two structures. Does this function as an impediment to fish passage now, or do we need a selective fish passage?

It was suggested that the peer reviewer look at the proposals that are received and whatever passes technical merit from the peer reviewers will be sent to the Biology Committee for selection. Some members feel that the above process would not be effective, and that the Biology Committee and peer reviewers should look at the proposals together, rather than having peer reviewers serve as a filter. Bill Miller suggested that each Biology Committee member pass this comment along to their Coordination Committee member.

A one page description with some background information is needed. It will need to describe why the evaluation is needed and that these are the questions that need to be answered. Similar studies can be referenced. Jim Brooks volunteered to write this up (with Ron Bliesner's assistance). One background can cover both, so these proposals can be written together. ***Jim Brooks will get this/these out to the Biology Committee by June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Biology Committee should comment by June 30<sup>th</sup>.***

Hogback entrainment Bill Miller volunteered to write this up with Paul Holden's assistance.

Retention of Stocked Pikeminnow This scope is to evaluate the need, or how, to grow the pikeminnow to a larger size and then stocking them to see if we have better success. There is a need to find a way to raise larger fish to evaluate if larger fish have better retention. The question is “can we grow them larger”? The next question would be “what is the optimal size to stock?” Is the question feasibility or actually growing the fish? Who has the facilities? It has become a rearing issue Does the Service have the facilities? The question will be how Reclamation can contract these out. We can ask Dexter National Fish Hatchery how long it would take to raise pikeminnow to 150mm, and can we have them to stock by October - November 2004. The Program goal is to stock 300,000 YOY, not to necessarily raise them to 150mm.

Regarding the question of putting pikeminnow in the current ponds, Dale Ryden stated that it is better to keep the pikeminnow and razorback efforts separate. It is easier to raise pikeminnow in a hatchery setting rather than in a pond setting where they are constantly eating each other. He recommended keeping the razorback ponds as razorback ponds for now.

Tom Wesche thought that the first step would be more of an internal feasibility study. His constituent's concern is that we will get so far down the road with 150mm fish and then find that they are not surviving or retaining in the system.

Tom Wesche volunteered to assist someone in developing a page on the current knowledge regarding the feasibility of rearing pikeminnow to a larger size. The Committee asked that Dale Ryden work on this also.

Paul Holden volunteered to help with this SOW as well. Dale Ryden will incorporate the questions that have come up in his work with stocking pikeminnow in the river.

**All drafts will be out to the Biology Committee (not to the listserve) by June 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

Pond Management Per Dale Ryden's e-mailed summary, the existing ponds were evaluated, and five nursery ponds were suggested rather than the general grow-out ponds which had been discussed at the last meeting. Nursery ponds may be less susceptible to merganzers and salamanders until the fish are big enough to escape the salamanders. The larger fish will not have to be managed as intensively in the second growing season.

This sounds more like pond management rather than pond construction. No, the proposal is to build the nursery ponds. Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP) lands are an ideal place, but the RFP could be rated based on proximity to the current growout ponds so they will be easier to manage by one person. If they are built far away, there will need to be someone on staff to manage the nursery ponds.

This proposal needs to assess the management costs in order to compare the various facilities. Nursery pond construction and management costs need to be factored separately.

Ron Bliesner, Dale Ryden and Vince LaMarra will draft this scope of work and will circulate it to the Biology Committee as close to June 23<sup>rd</sup> as possible.

***The Committee is asked to get comments on the draft contracting procedure to Bill Miller or Shirley Mondy so they can pass the information along to the Coordination Committee. Feel free to pass your comments to your Coordination Committee representative as well.***

### **Meeting Dates for Integration and Population Model Demonstration**

Suggested dates for upcoming meetings are:

June 25 & 26: Physical subcommittee - Logan, UT(confirmed)

The Physical subcommittee will have a presentation of the physical data.

July 15 & 16: Combined integration meeting - Farmington, NM

The Biology Committee agreed to meet at 10am on July 16<sup>th</sup> and on July 17<sup>th</sup> until 3pm in Farmington. The main participants would be the researchers who did the monitoring. Paul Holden will have a draft out of the monitoring summary report; it could be added to the agenda.

These dates need to be checked with Steve Platania and Utah (UDWR). Paul Holden will check with the peer reviewers regarding their availability to attend this meeting. It was requested that Bill Miller include what types of details that the researchers should be prepared to present when the agenda is sent out.

July 21 & 22: SJR population model meeting - Fort Collins, CO

August 18: Physical subcommittee meeting - Fort Collins, CO

August 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> were selected for this meeting.

The Committee agreed to schedule a conference call for 8:30 am on September 15<sup>th</sup>, in case it was needed.