

Approved May 17, 2007



MEETING SUMMARY
June 25, 2007
Biology Committee Meeting
Farmington Civic Center
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Members Present:

Paul Holden
Mark McKinstry
Chuck McAda
Jason Davis
Gregory Gustina
Ron Bliesner
Tom Wesche
Bill Miller
Vince Lamarra
David Propst
Steve Ross (Peer Reviewer)

Representing:

Jicarilla Apache Nation
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Water Development Interests
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Ecosystems Research Institute
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
University of New Mexico - Museum of Southwestern
Biology

Members not in attendance:

Tom Nesler

State of Colorado

Program Management:

David Campbell

Program Coordinator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2, NM Ecological
Services Field Office
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2, NM Ecological
Services Field Office

Anne Davis

Interested Parties:

Bill Liebfried
Viola Willetto
Dale Ryden
Steve Harris
Darek Elverud
Weston Furr
Michael Howe
Steven Platania

Representing:

SWCA
Navajo Fish and Wildlife
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
Soil and Water Conservation District
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6, Utah
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2, NMFRO
Bureau of Indian Affairs - NIIP
University of New Mexico - American Southwest
Ichthyological Research Foundation
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2

Kevin Winter

Introductions: Changes to Agenda

- Response to Reviewer's comments: The researchers/authors need to develop standard format for commenting on reports and a standard way of responding to comments. When the final 2006 report is submitted (due date June 30), the author should also submit a separate response addressing how all of the comments were addressed. Due date for comment responses this year is July 31.
- Discussion of San Juan flows – this year there is a longer period of high flow (extended peak). The spring release was earlier and longer this year, about 100,000 ac/ft more inflow than expected.

Approval of May 17-18, 2007 Minutes

- Approved with edits

Long Range Plan (LRP)

Bill Leibfried - Senior Scientist and Project Manager for SWCA Environmental Consultants

- SWCA contracted to fine-tune and add detail to the LRP to create a document that is quantifiable and measurable. The LRP is a living document to be updated every year. David Propst recommends updating every 2 years.
- Time frame for due dates: 1st draft: July 9; comments to Program Coordinator, July 23; draft of final report, August 6; meeting to discuss final document, September 11.
- Biology Committee (BC) went over the LRP and provided comments on revisions, metrics, etc.

GIS Database

Kevin Winter, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Computer & Geographic Systems Branch Chief, Fish & Wildlife Biologist, Expertise: Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Database Design & Development, Application Design & Development

- The main function of the San Juan database is as a repository for data with ease of input and export for researchers. The current database is in ArcGIS version 9.2 and only data up to 1996 is accounted for. The server that was located at UNM is now at the FWS, NM Ecological Services Field Office (Kevin Winter). It is requested that copies of updated data be sent to the Program Coordinator's office (Anne Davis). Legacy data dating from 1986 to 1991 is missing. Steven Platania will check on the whereabouts of this dataset. Kevin is currently restructuring the database files, documenting what is available in terms of databases on the hard drive of the server, and developing a plan and metadata standard to host the database.
- Ron Bliesner will send the most recent integrated data CD (from 2000) to Kevin.

Discussion of 2008 Work plan Priorities

Several projects were discussed and are listed below. Question brought up by the BC: should 2008 be for prioritizing current projects or developing new projects that address Program priorities and not fund some of the existing projects. Bill Miller suggested conducting a study to determine if monitoring data is sufficient to answer Program questions as well as reducing or not conducting some monitoring for a year to fund the study.

- What questions are we trying to answer:

Are the flow recommendations working?
Where are we in meeting the Recovery Goals?
What other limiting factors need to be looked into?

- Can we answer those questions with projects that are currently being funded and with the subsequent data?
- How do we process our current information?
- What are the effects of not funding various monitoring projects?

Priorities Discussed:

- Expansion of non-native fish removal
- Stocking and augmentation
- Monitoring
- *Evaluate and update Flow Recommendations
- *Determine our progress towards recovery
- *Identify limiting factors
- *Pre-plan for population estimates
 - Data mining; data integration
 - Updating/revising monitoring protocols
 - Risk assessment of non-native fish

**These priorities would be in lieu of funding various monitoring projects. Various projects include riverwide habitat mapping, large-bodied fish monitoring and small bodied fish monitoring.*

Bill Miller agreed to develop a scope of work for the proposed pre-planning/data-mining study; draft will be sent out to BC the week of August 2.

The BC and Peer Reviewers did not recommend Program Assessment as a high priority at this time.

Changes to Flow Recommendations Memo

- Postponed discussion until August meeting

NAPI Ponds Discussion

The BC discussed razorback propagation issues and various strategies for NAPI Ponds. NAPI ponds are difficult to harvest and the number and size of fish has been inconsistent. Retrofitting the 6-pack ponds would likely cost ~ \$1.0 mil to bring them up to a standard of working fish hatchery ponds. East Avocet needs to be retrofitted as well. Production at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is proceeding on schedule and they are working with Dexter NFH to produce the number of fish we have requested. Uvalde NFH could raise an additional 6,000 300mm fish for ~ \$50,000/yr. Costs to operate NAPI Ponds are spread across several contractors (Navajo Nation, USFWS R 2 and 6, and consultants) and is approximately \$180,000/yr.

Recommendations:

- Region 2 Fishery Resources Office (FRO) will manage the NAPI Ponds in partnership with the Navajo Nation.
- Six pack ponds will be taken out of production until (if and when) infrastructure issues are resolved. Production at NAPI will rely on East (with retrofit) and West Avocet and Hidden ponds.
- Program Coordinator's Office will work with FRO and Navajo Nation to develop management structure, define responsibilities and resolve any management issues.

- Program Coordinator's Office will work with Uvalde NFH to produce additional 4,000 - 6,000 razorback suckers.

Update of Capital Projects

Mark McKinstry gave a brief update of capital projects. Brent Uilenberg has been informed that Reclamation should pursue some type of "low-tech" fix for the Fruitland Diversion. The Hogback Diversion had a Value Engineering Team conduct a study and Jim Brooks reported that the favored design consisted of a weir that would allow approximately 3" of water to go over the top in order to divert the water. Fish and larvae would then continue to drift down and would not be entrained at high numbers. This design would involve no mechanical devices and would likely involve little maintenance. Mark will distribute the VE report when he gets it from Brent.

Mark will coordinate with Brent Uilenberg and provide full update on capital projects at next meeting.

Schedule Next Meeting: August 2; Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, NM, 8:00 AM

Adjourn

Action Items List

Item	Initiation Date	Due Date	Responsible person(s)	Completion Date
TCD memo	May 17-18, 2007		Paul Holden	
Flow recommendation procedures memo	May 17-18, 2007		Ron Bliesner	June 15, 2007
Waterfall inundation whitepaper	May 17-18, 2007	Dec 1, 2007	Program Coordinator's Office (Anne Davis)	
Comments on Constructed Backwaters report	May 17-18, 2007	June 11, 2007	BC to Ron Bliesner	June 11, 2007
Final Constructed Backwaters Report	May 17-18, 2007	June 30, 2007	Ron Bliesner	June 18, 2007
LRP Draft	May 8, 2007	July 9, 2007	SWCA to Program Coordinator's Office	
Comments on Draft LRP	June 25, 2007	July 23, 2007	BC to Program Coordinator's Office	
Final LRP (draft)	July 23, 2007	August 6, 2007	SWCA to Program Coordinator's Office	
2006 Final Reports		June 30, 2007	Project leads (authors) to BC	
2006 report comment responses		July 31, 2007	Project leads (authors) to BC	
Pit tag data exchange	June 25, 2007		Dale Ryden to Anne Davis	
Send 2000 integrated data CD to FWS	June 25, 2007	7/15/07	Ron Bliesner	June 26, 2007
Develop Razorback production and stocking plan for NAPI ponds	June 25, 2007	?	Program Coordinator's Office with FRO and Navajo Nation	
Develop work plan for upgrades to East Avocet Pond	June 25, 2007	?	Ron Bliesner to USBR	