



**Approved Summary
San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program
Biology Committee Meeting Summary – Durango, CO
10 May 2011**

Attendees:

Biology Committee Members:

Bill Miller, Chair – Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Paul Holden – Jicarilla Apache Nation
Keith Lawrence – Bureau of Indian Affairs
Jason Davis – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Mark McKinstry – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Dale Ryden – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Vincent Lamarra – Navajo Nation
Harry Crockett – State of Colorado
Andrew Monié – State of New Mexico
Greg Gustina – U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Tom Wesche – Water Development Interests

Peer Reviewers:

Steve Ross – University of New Mexico
Ron Ryel – Utah State University
Mel Warren – USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station

Program Office – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2:

David Campbell
Sharon Whitmore
Scott Durst

Interested Parties:

Eliza Gilbert – New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Carrie Lile – Southwestern Water Conservation District
Steven Platania – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
James Morel – Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife
Darek Elverud – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Michael Farrington – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
Steve Austin – Navajo EPA, Water Quality Program
Brian Westfall – Keller-Bliesner

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Jim Brooks – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Weston Furr – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brandon Albrecht – Bio-West
Bobby Duran – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Chart – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patrick McCarthy – The Nature Conservancy
Brent Uilenberg – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Tuesday 10 May 2011

Introductions; changes to agenda:

- Discussion of habitat workshop and Pitlick's status on the peer review committee added to agenda.
No changes to agenda

Approve draft summary of 24-25 February 2011 BC meeting and review Action Item list:

- Unanimous approval of revised summary following Holden motioned to approve and Davis seconded.
- Revised Action Item list at the end of the summary reflects updates.
- States are still working on non-native fish stocking procedures. There was some uncertainty regarding the most recent version of this document. Monié will re-circulate changes made by New Mexico. Crockett will provide Monié with what Colorado has been working with to be sure everyone is on the same page.

2012 Preliminary scopes-of-work:

Update on preliminary results from Lake Powell work – Elverud:

- Sampling to date has been conducted in Neskahi Wash (lake mile [LM] 22) and Spencer's Camp (LM 38). The 14 lake miles upstream of Spencer's Camp has not been available for sampling due to low water levels. First sampling trip was conducted from 21 March to 1 April. Second trip was from 11 – 29 April. Sampling includes a combination of trammel netting and electrofishing. Mostly collecting non-native fish but have captured a total of 11 razorback suckers, 6 Colorado pikeminnow, and 14 flannelmouth suckers.
- Razorback suckers ranged from 491 – 619 mm TL. Five had PIT tags when they were captured and 8 were implanted with sonic tags prior to release. Fish that had stocking records exhibited good growth since stocking. So far only 2 of 7 hatchery fish implanted with sonic tags have been detected. Tracking a sonic tagged razorback resulted in the capture of one additional razorback. No razorback sucker larvae have been detected and only one ripe razorback was collected.
- Colorado pikeminnow included juveniles and adults. Four had PIT tags when they were captured. Three of the six Colorado pikeminnow that were captured died in trammel nets. Efforts such as shorter net sets or smaller mesh size will be made to reduce the risk of future pikeminnow mortality.
- Flannelmouth sucker ranged in size from 260 – 444 mm TL.
- There are two more sampling trips, three weeks in May and two weeks in June.
- How should we move forward with this project based on what has been learned so far? What are the management implications of this project? Safety is an important consideration if this project is to continue. The boats being used are meant for rivers and not lakes?
- No BC member is opposed to this project continuing for a second year (2012). Because the sonic tags that were implanted this year will last into the 2012 field season, overall manpower in 2012 can be reduced by spending more time targeting these fish to capture other razorback suckers rather than using blind trammel net sets.

Discussion of moving forward with habitat and temperature monitoring:

- The monitoring protocols call for habitat monitoring that has not been funded due to recent contracting problems with BIA.
- \$80,000 was carried over from 2010 to 2011 and is still available this fiscal year. This funding is sufficient for temperature monitoring and basic habitat mapping. Need to determine the habitat data necessary to revise the flow recommendations.
- What options does the Program have to continue temperature monitoring? One temperature monitoring station was lost to vandalism. Since temperature is a major physiological driver in the system, it should be continued.
- Any monitoring necessary for the RERI project will be covered by existing monitoring program (small-bodied and larval monitoring).
- Campbell and McKinstry will work together to develop a RFP for habitat and temperature work by October.

Status of long-term authorization and funding:

- Uilenberg indicated that the new cut-go legislation (where the budget remains neutral) has created lots of uncertainty. Hydro-power revenue authority runs out with the current fiscal year. If there is no new legislation, there will be a \$3 million shortfall for both recovery programs. In the event of a shortfall, BR is working with the states on a MOU to cover this deficit.
- Monitoring can be defined more broadly to cover other program activities (especially non-native fish management) but will need to be able to pass GAO review.
- A full budget will be submitted to the CC.

Discussion of 2010 results and moving forward with integration tasks:

- Holden suggested that during the review of annual reports there is the opportunity to identify additional questions related to integration.
- Recent questions that have been identified include: factors affecting YOY Colorado pikeminnow retention, razorback sucker recruitment, and Colorado pikeminnow reproduction. But how are specific questions for integration identified? Questions could be identified in May and June and worked on through the summer.
- Durst could serve as the integration specialist by moving from his current position.
- There are different levels of integration: (1) specific annual questions and (2) questions that are repeatedly answered each year as new data is collected.
- There is some level of integration already occurring in annual reports. A specific “integration” section heading could be added to annual reports to highlight where this is occurring during the course of annual reports.
- Platania will circulate what has been developed by the integration sub-committee.
- Holden will circulate questions he has developed.
- Ryel suggested some kind of mechanism to capture these types of questions. A running list could be developed during the February meeting with questions added or subtracted through the year.

Habitat workshop scope-of-work:

- The Program Office developed a scope-of-work for a habitat workshop but the continuing resolution put it on hold. The Program Office will revise and distribute the scope. The workshop could be funded in early FY2012 using money set aside from FY2011.
- The purpose of the workshop will be to determine if flow recommendations can be evaluated and revised based on the data collected with habitat monitoring project and to also determine if the habitat monitoring protocols are appropriate to meet flow management and fish recovery goals.

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- A preliminary list of experts has been identified and McKinstry will start contacting these people. In order to have a broad perspective, 3-5 experts will be invited to the workshop.
- The workshop will be two days in Albuquerque over the week of 5-9 December or 14-18 November.

Peer review:

- Pitlick has had some problems with availability participating with the Program. He is still interested in participating with the Program but needs to know when he is needed at meetings.
- Westfall indicated that Pitlick has been helpful in the RERI project planning.
- Consider having a second on-call habitat expert. Identify one of participants in the habitat workshop as a possible second habitat peer reviewer.
- The role of the peer reviewers should be defined each year so they know the tasks required of them and what meetings they should expect to attend. The peer reviewers work for the entire program. Likely regular tasks would be attending the annual and February meetings, providing comments on annual reports, and assisting with integration analyses.

2011 Stocking updates:

LMBv at Dexter and fish health issues:

- Second test was negative so the facility is clear to stock Colorado pikeminnow. California was opposed to this accelerated testing and asked for a 5-year moratorium on stocking. But as of the day before the BC meeting, California was no longer objecting to stocking from Dexter but the Program should be prepared in the event of a change in California's position.
- The Program would not be able to make sufficient progress if there was a 5-year stocking moratorium. The Program will move forward with stocking in the San Juan River irrespective of California's position.

Stocking plan for Colorado pikeminnow held over at Dexter:

- The 5,000 age-2 and 250,000 age-1 Colorado pikeminnow will be stocked over 17-18 May 2011. The final stocking location will be in an area high in the system that will be determined in the next week. All fish will be acclimatized.

March broodstock meeting at Dexter:

- Many of the endangered species at Dexter do not have a back-up source of broodstock and Dexter is the only source of fish for Colorado pikeminnow. There is a 5-year process to develop new broodstocks.

Uvalde razorback sucker and 6-Pack Pond rehabilitation:

- Plans are set for the FWS regional engineer to visit 6-Pack Ponds on 25 May 2011 and an update will be provided to the BC by the end of summer.
- There are two years worth of razorback suckers at Uvalde so efforts will continue to rectify the situation there while those fish are present, especially moving away from the RDU and hauling lower densities of fish with more trips. It would be more cost-effective to fix any problem at Uvalde than bringing new facilities on-line.

Horsethief Ponds:

- The contract should be awarded this fall/winter and the project should be completed in spring or summer of 2012. Six acres of grow-out ponds will be constructed.
- There are some issues with whirling disease. Utah objects to stocking these fish. Uilenberg will work to get this sorted out.

- A written plan will be developed that details how this facility will be operated.

Update on resolution of 2011 funding issues – McKinstry:

- The continuing resolutions are over and the 2011 budget has been finalized at 2011 levels. Non-Federal partners and the Lake Powell Projects that were funded earlier in the year were funded at 2010 levels. There will not be an effort to update budgets to those projects because the amount of funding is relatively small (1.1%).

Program Office updates:

Lake Nighthorse:

- A spring release is being planned to test the outfall structure. Fine mesh seines will be placed in the outfall area. There is a plan to stock kokanee salmon in the lake but there is pressure to make a warm water fishery, however, no lake management plan has been developed to date.
- The issue of how white sucker became established in the lake has not been resolved. Mortality through the sleeve valve should increase as reservoir level increases.

2012 Preliminary scopes-of-work:

- There is support for continued Lake Powell work. However, what are the priorities of other scopes? Are there on-going projects that should not go forward? Should funding for habitat and integration be made available?
- A recovery biologist could replace the Program biologist with little change to the Program management budget because of FWS contribution.
- Holden suggested funding all projects at various times and consider changing the frequency of some projects.
- What do we want habitat monitoring to tell us? The proposed habitat workshop should be used to tell us how habitat monitoring can be used to revise and evaluate the flow recommendations. It is possible to use fish response to direct any revision and evaluation of the flow recommendations.
- The non-native fish management project and adult monitoring should be included as part of a broader T&E fish monitoring effort. The endangered fish monitoring portion of non-native fish management should be specified in the budget.
- Consider shifting to mark-recapture population monitoring for endangered fish monitoring.
- A possible integration question would be what level of monitoring is necessary to track endangered fish populations?

Revisions to monitoring protocols:

- There is no progress to report. The protocols will be finalized by the end of June when integration and non-native fish portions are completed.

Non-native removal workshop summary:

- Completion date delayed until the end of June

Update on tributary work – Crockett:

- CDOW has taken the lead monitoring tributaries in Colorado, especially those where Tom Fresques (BLM) has found Colorado pikeminnow.
- So far McElmo and Yellowjacket have been sampled and one pikeminnow (298 mm) was collected in McElmo upstream of Yellowjacket Canyon. This fish was previously tagged in Yellowjacket Canyon. Most species collected were native suckers but some white sucker hybrids were present.
- There are plans to put in a PIT tag reader in McElmo.

- McKinstry, Gido, Morel, and Durst developed a proposal for a graduate student to do additional work in these tributaries

RERI update – Westfall:

- KB is moving forward with permitting. Campbell and Durst completed the wetland delineation for 404 permitting in early April.
- Navajo Nation EPA has concerns regarding sediment mobilization. So sediment will need to be moved out of the floodplain.
- The idea of using channel sluicing to clear out the channel is largely a test-of-concept. But the in-river work to create the berms necessary for this would cause the Section 7 consultation to move from informal to formal. The BC recommended not conducting work in the river.
- The restoration work at all sites should be self-maintaining.

Trinity River database presentation – Eric Peterson (via conference call and WebEx):

- The Trinity River Recovery Program is using an online data portal and an integrated information management system. This is an interagency program that is using adaptive management to restore habitat. The database acts as an information repository, library, relation database, and map that partners can access online. Complex biological data is difficult to deal with and require case-by-case customization.
- For further information see odp.trpp.net; ebpeter@usbr.gov.
- The group will table this idea until sometime in the future.

Presentation of Conservation Action Plan for the San Juan River Basin – McCarthy:

- This plan is broader than the Recovery Program and includes a basin-wide perspective. The process included Program participants. Maybe this kind of process could help the group with integration.
- TNC is looking for the BC to provide a feasibility assessment as the CAP moves forward.

Discussion of new interpretation of demographic recovery criteria – Chart:

- The 5-year species reviews are being worked on out of Region 6. This process includes an assessment of threat abatement, and incorporates timelines and new information into the Recovery Goals.
- Constant positive recruitment is not necessary because these populations naturally fluctuate.
- Stocked fish “count” in terms of recovery when their progeny recruit to adult status. This interpretation will be clearer in the revised Recovery Goals.

Outstanding discussion:

- See Action Item list for new items and revised completion dates.
- The next meeting will be a conference call to discuss SOWs and habitat workshop on Wednesday 27 July from 9:00 – 12:00. Use some kind of WebEx interface to share budget details online.

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 27 July 2011)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/Origination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
1	Provide RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data		P.I.'s to the Program Office	Annually before Jan. 1		
2	Provide Preliminary Draft Report Presentations		Project Leads (authors)	Annually at Feb. meeting		
3	Review LRP		BC	Annually at fall meeting		
4	Review Peer Review Comments from the February and May meetings		BC	Annually at fall meeting		
5	Provide Draft Reports		Project Leads (authors) to Program Office	Annually by end of March		
6	Scopes of Work		Project Leads to Program Office	Annually by end of March		
7	Provide Final Reports		Project Leads (authors) to Program Office	Annually by end of June		
8	Annual Data Delivery		Pls to Program Office	Annually by June 30		
9	T&E Species Data		BC to Program Office	Annually by		

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 27 July 2011)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/Origination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
				Dec. 31		
10	Annually compile T&E data and Program progress into summary to address overall Program recovery goals/objectives for presentation at annual meeting		Program Office/BC	By Annual Meeting in May		
11	Distribute Consolidated Data and list of annual data collected and available in the Program's database		Program Office to BC	Annually by Jan. 31		
12	Recapture analysis on PIT tagged fish		Durst	Annually by March		
13	Coordinate CPM stocking closely with Reclamation to avoid negative impact due to high flows/releases		Project Leads	Annually		
14	Waterfall Inundation Whitepaper – review past meeting summaries, determine what is needed, and provide report at the next meeting.	05/18/07	Program Office	12/07/07	Not a current priority	
15	Revise RBS Augmentation Goals (based on the outcome of experimental stocking)	5/10/10	FWS Fisheries/Program Office	5/2011 – provide update and extend as needed	ongoing	

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16	Develop a detailed outline for San Juan River Recovery Program case history manuscript	11-5-08	Propst/Miller			On hold
17	Non-native fish stocking procedure to States and Tribes	11/5/09	Monié and Crockett will work together to determine where this stands	12/1/09	ongoing	
18	Pursue effects study on Hg/pikeminnow with other groups/programs	1/14/10	Program Office lead	ongoing		
19	Blank database structure for data integration	1/13/10	Durst	3/23/10	2/24/11	
20	Discussion of what is the appropriate number of fish to stock	3/23/10	BC	ongoing		
21	Finalize monitoring protocols and integration analysis document PO will incorporate Wesche's comments and PIs will complete NNF section, incorporate TOC	3/24/10	PO, Davis, Elverud, and Ryden	5/10/10	8/16/11	
22	Evaluate stocking locations upstream of Animas confluence	3/24/10	Davis, Furr	6/30/10	7/29/11	

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Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/Origination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
23	Develop final product from non-native workshop that incorporates notes and Peer Review report – revision based on Nov meeting	5/10/10	Whitmore	11/2010	8/16/11	
24	Southern Ute funding of Population Model	5/10/10	Miller	11/2010	ongoing	
25	Work with I&E Coordinator to determine feasibility of brochures and signs	11/10/10	PO	2/24/11	Ongoing	
26	Prioritized integration analysis – Platania will distribute to group	11/10/10	Integration sub-group	1/31/11	8/12/11	
27	Comments to Program Office on LRP	2/25/11	BC to Whitmore	3/31/11		3/31/11
28	Distribute Annual Meeting presentations for review and comment	2/25/11	Pls to BC and Peer Reviewers	4/15/11		4/15/11
29	Annual Meeting agenda	2/25/11	PO	4/15/11		4/15/11
30	Presentation guideline for Annual Meeting	2/25/11	PO	4/15/11		4/15/11
31	Outline of Annual Meeting synthesis analysis and presentation	2/25/11	PO	4/15/11		4/15/11

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 27 July 2011)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/Origination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
32	Tributary monitoring plan	2/25/11	CDOW	5/10/11		5/10/11
33	Evaluate feasibility of bringing 6-Pack Pond back into production	2/25/11	Davis (working with Dexter)	5/10/11	8/25/11	
34	Update from Uvalde concerning razorback sucker stocked from that facility	2/25/11	Uvalde NFH	5/10/11		5/10/11
35	RFP for habitat and temperature monitoring	5/10/11	McKinstry and Campbell	10/1/11		
36	Circulate integration question	5/10/11	Holden	7/27/11		

* Items were re-numbered after changes were made

Yellow highlight indicates annual action items

Green highlight indicates new action items

Red highlight indicates completed action items that will be removed from the next iteration of the Action Item Log

Annual SJRRIP Cycle (Oct. 1 –Sept. 30)

January 2011 version

Date	Annual Tasks	PO	CC	BC	P.I.
Oct.	Reclamation administers contracts	X			
Nov.	BC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify questions for annual data integration • Review data integration results from previous year • Discuss Program priorities • LRP review and provide recommendations (pros and cons) to Program Office 	X		X	
Dec. 31	RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data to Program Office				X
January	Notification/update of Program rosters/ mailing lists	X			
January	Executive meeting (Program Office; Reclamation Fund Manager; CC and BC Chairs) to do preliminary planning for upcoming year	X	X	X	
January	Updated LRP to BC and CC for review	X	X		
Jan. 31	Distribute consolidated PIT tag data and post other data	X			
February	BC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for Annual Meeting • Provide preliminary results; draft report presentations • Review updated LRP • Review annual data integration priorities 	X		X	X
February	Final updated LRP to CC (with explanation of input included/not included)	X			
Feb/Mar	Approval of yearly LRP		X		
March	Annual guidance/solicitation for SOWs based on LRP/list of prioritized projects	X			
March 31	Draft reports due/SOWs to Program Office			X	X
April	Preliminary draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
May	Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program overview • P.I. presentations • Review preliminary draft AWP • Committee reports 	X	X	X	X
June/July	Draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
June 30	Provide final reports and data sets				X
August	Tech review of draft AWP; recommendations with pros and cons to Program Office			X	
August	Revise AWP based on input and transmit final draft to CC with documentation of all input	X			
Sept.	Review and approve final AWP		X		
Sept.	Post final AWP to website	X			