

Draft Summary



San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program Biology Committee Conference Call 3 September 2013

Attendees:

Biology Committee Members:

Bill Miller, Chair – Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Jacob Mazzone – Jicarilla Apache Nation
Brian Westfall – Bureau of Indian Affairs
Jason Davis – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Mark McKinstry – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Benjamin Schleicher – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Vincent Lamarra – Navajo Nation
Harry Crockett – State of Colorado
Eliza Gilbert – State of New Mexico
Tom Wesche – Water Development Interests
Dave Gori – Conservation Interests
U.S. Bureau of Land Management – absent

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

David Campbell
Sharon Whitmore

Interested Parties:

Dale Ryden – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Carrie Lile – Southwestern Water Conservation District
Katie Creighton – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Stephen Saletta - PNM

Changes to agenda:

- Miller added an agenda item to discuss conducting BC meetings via webinar (e.g., GoToMeeting)

Approve draft summary for 2 July conference call:

- Durst incorporated earlier edits.
- Wesche motioned to approve and Westfall seconded. Approved unanimously.

Update on 2014 AWP (PO):

- The CC had a conference call on 31 July to discuss the 2014 draft AWP. They had a number of comments and changes so did not approve it at that time. Their changes were mostly related to quality checking all SOWs to make sure they were up-to-date and had proper product deadlines/dates. They also wanted more detail in the data integration SOW.
- Whitmore explained that the two-year data integration SOW had not been updated from 2013 when the project was still being developed. P.I. Nate Franssen has since updated the SOW for 2014 and it is in the current version of the AWP sent to the CC and on the website. She checked all the SOWs

and updated some outdated product deadlines. The CC is expected to approve the 2014 AWP during the conference call 4 September.

- Gori asked if the 2014 SOWs include all of the original activities. Whitmore said because the Program Office found enough other budget cuts, all of the SOW's were kept whole.
- Whitmore will send the updated data integration SOW to the BC.

Update from the 31 July 2013 CC conference call (PO):

- Whitmore reported the CC decided not to forward the BC's recommendations on Ridges Basin Dam fish escapement to the Service Region 6 at this time. They questioned if it is appropriate for the Program to be involved in a sec 7 consultation but recognized that the BC recommendations are in the public record and available. They also asked that Reclamation enter into discussions with the Service Region 6 on biological opinion compliance. The CC reaffirmed that all such requests to technical committees need to go through the Program Office for CC approval.
- Tom Pitts questioned the time line and process for updating the Colorado River endangered fish recovery plans. Only the Colorado pikeminnow plan is in progress. He is urging the Service to get the plans done sooner than later so any new measures can be accommodated within the recovery program timelines. He also wants to see the plans include benchmarks and accountability.
- The CC discussed fish passage at APS weir. That location was taken off the list of possible sites for a Navajo Gallup lateral so a fish passage at APS weir will need to be a stand-alone project. For 2014, no fish passages are on the list of capital project to be funded.
- The BC decided to revisit San Juan River Basin fish passage needs (e.g., APS weir, Animas River, etc.) and will include the topic on agenda for the November BC meeting.

Update on 2013/2014 budget (McKinstry):

- McKinstry and Dave Speas put in a request into their budget office to get a better estimate of what the 2014 budget will be but they have not gotten a response. The budget estimate in the draft 2014 AWP is the best and only estimate we have at this time.
- Reclamation has been proactively taking measures to make up for budget shortfalls due to government sequestration. They bought all PIT tag equipment for 2014, partially funded some of TNC's habitat work (SOW 10-4), and found some other savings and reductions. All 2013 San Juan River contracts have been awarded except Dexter and Grand Junction and Albuquerque fisheries offices. Those contracts are almost completed and should be done before the end of the fiscal year. All 5-year contracts are now in place so the process should go more smoothly in the future.
- McKinstry already submitted the 2014 SOWs to get them into the system before Reclamation budget office has a 3-month black out period to switch to a new budget system. This puts the Program's SOW's on the top of the list to be funded first.

Update on the 21 August 2013 BHP Billiton Phase II Habitat Restoration Site Selection meeting (TNC):

- Gori reported the August 21 meeting was held at the Service office in Albuquerque and 16 people attended from TNC, Program P.I.'s, USGS, Navajo EPA, Reclamation, and BHP Billiton. Bob Findling, TNC's project manager, and Gori facilitated the meeting. The goals for Phase II are to restore four linear miles of secondary channel and treat six acres of exotic vegetation treatment.
- Prior to the meeting, TNC identified 38 sites with potential for secondary channel restoration using GIS information, data available from earlier restoration related studies, and analysis by the Recovery Program. For lessons learned, the group looked at the site performance of the Phase I RERI sites using aerial photos as well as photopoints provided by Westfall. The group systematically reviewed sites along the river using Google Earth and time lapse photography and identified about 12 sites for further investigation.

- The estimated timeline is initial field reconnaissance of the sites by Keller-Bliesner (for feasibility, access, etc.), site visits by interested team members (September), final site selection (October), and design work to initiate the permitting process (this winter). Permitting is expected to take 4-6 months. Construction is probably about a year away, maybe late fall 2014 or winter 2015. TNC has three years to complete the project. Gori said the field reconnaissance trip will be the week of 30 September and asked that if anyone on the call is interested in participating to let him know.
- Gori plans to put together a report after field reconnaissance and asked how the BC would like to be kept informed of progress. Gori, Findling, and Westfall will provide updates to the BC similar to how it was done during Phase I. Gori will provide a status update at the November BC meeting.

Update on reduced target base flows, the 22 August 2013 Shortage Sharing meeting, and the 27 August 2013, Navajo Operation meeting (PO/BR).

- Susan Behery's August minimum probable forecast was sent to the BC14 August.
- On 22 August, Reclamation held a meeting of the shortage sharing partners and informed them that the minimum probable forecast shows reservoir levels will drop below 5,990 feet, the level that initiates shortage sharing. According to the shortage sharing plan, Reclamation would declare a shortage on 1 January and shortage measures would begin. Each entity has options for how they will take their shortages (e.g., delay taking irrigation deliveries, stop irrigating early, take their shortages at the beginning of the irrigation season or the end).
- The August forecast typically drops because the models start including the next year (a wider net is cast). The forecast is based on a 24-month study and, in August, does not include much actual data (e.g., snowpack) so is not that predictive of what conditions will be. As a result, the current projections will change between now and 1 January and as more actual data is available; the forecasted shortage may not materialize.
- The Program Office will distribute notes from the shortage sharing meeting when they are received. Gilbert asked to have Behery put the active storage graph back into forecast projections the BC receives.
- The BC discussed voluntary base flow reductions. If the target base flows are reduced, will the fish get credit for the water savings? Whitmore will ask Reclamation for an explanation about credit.
- Target base flow reductions could occur after the field season ends in September or after stocking is done at the end of November. Davis said reduced target base flows would probably not affect Colorado pikeminnow stocking much since it involves a one trip/one day release but it could affect RBS stocking that involves several trips through November and soft release sites. Ryden said 50 cfs can make a huge difference for stocking so, regardless; a plan needs to be in place for making hard releases. Also, low flows usually mean clear water which is not good for bird predation on small fish. There was some agreement that if target base flows are reduced, it should wait until after stocking. Wesche said a schedule is needed for coming up with BC recommendations.
- Davis will look into the implications of lower base flows during stocking for BC review. Based on this, the BC will decide if a conference call is needed before the scheduled meeting in November. Otherwise, this issue will be discussed in November.

Conducting BC meetings via webinar

- In light of tight budgets, Miller suggested some BC meetings should be conducted as webinars (e.g., GoToMeeting). The Program Office will check into doing this.

Action Items:

- The budget did not allow for a workshop in 2014 so the deadline for the BC to review TNC's e-flows SOW was extended from 30 August to mid-September, prior to the November meeting.

29 October 2013

- BC members interested in participating in the habitat restoration field reconnaissance trip the week of 30 September, let Gori know.
- Gori will provide a Phase II habitat restoration status update at the November BC meeting.
- Whitmore will send out Franssen's revised 2014 SOW and distribute notes from the shortage sharing meeting when they are received.
- Whitmore will ask that Behery put the active storage graph back into forecast projections.
- The Program Office will check into webinar programs for conducting future BC meetings.

Next meeting at Public Lands Center in Durango, CO 19-20 November 2013, 8-5 and 8-5:

- Agenda items - 2014 LRP and priorities, data integration results and needs, SJR fish passage needs, and Phase II habitat restoration update.

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 3 July 2013)

Item No. *	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination 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		

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Item No. *	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
8	Annual Data Delivery		Pls to Program Office	Annually by June 30		
9	T&E Species Data		BC to Program Office	Annually by 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	

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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	
16	Develop a detailed outline for San Juan River Recovery Program case history manuscript	11-5-08	Propst/Miller			On hold
17	Pursue Non-native fish stocking procedures	11/5/09	Crockett and Gilbert	12/1/09	1/2/14	
18	Pursue effects study on Hg/pikeminnow with other groups/programs	1/14/10	Program Office lead	ongoing		
19	Discussion of what is the appropriate number of fish to stock	3/23/10	BC	ongoing		
20	Southern Ute funding of Population Model	5/10/10	Miller	11/2010	ongoing	
21	Work with I&E Coordinator to determine feasibility of brochures and signs	11/10/10	PO	2/24/11	Ongoing	
22	Prepare memo to CC conveying BC recommendation to conduct a feasibility study on removing fish barriers in the lower Animas River	7/9/12	PO	8/20/12	5/7/13	

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(Updated 3 July 2013)

Item No. *	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
23	NNF workshop recommendations to Davis	2/21/13	BC	3/18/13		
24	Pros and cons of moving non-native removal trips from lower to middle sections of river	5/7/13	Davis	6/28/13		
26	Finalize memo on Ridges Basin recommendations, CC review, forward to FWS-R6	5/7/13	Miller, PO	5/31/13		7/31/13
27	Revise SOWs based on recommendations from February and May meetings	5/7/13	PIs	5/31/13	6/21/13	9/3/13
28	Complete Threats Assessment draft	5/7/13	TNC	6/28/13		
30	Provide written comments on TNC SOW reviewing and revising flow recommendations	7/2/13	BC to PO	8/30/13	9/20/13	11/1/2013
31	Evaluation of effects of lower target base flows during stocking	9/3/2013	Davis to BC			9/20/13

* 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			