



**Approved Summary**  
**San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program**  
**Biology Committee Conference Call**  
**20 April 2015**

**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  
Darek Elverud for Benjamin Schleicher – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6  
Vincent Lamarra – Navajo Nation  
State of Colorado – absent  
Mike Ruhl – State of New Mexico  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management – absent  
Tom Wesche – Water Development Interests  
Dave Gori – Conservation Interests

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

David Campbell  
Sharon Whitmore  
Scott Durst

**Interested Parties:**

Chris Cheek – Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Susan Behery – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Howard Brandenburg – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers

**Approve 25 March 2015 draft conference call summary and review Action Item list:**

- Durst received comments. Wesche motioned to approve the revised summary, Westfall seconded, and summary was approved unanimously.

**Discuss latest Navajo Reservoir inflow forecast – Behery:**

- Whitmore forwarded previous forecast from Behery. There is a more recent forecast but recent storms in the San Juan Basin did not result in any appreciable inflow increase to Navajo Reservoir. The recent decrease in storage is so low that it would result in no release under previous decision tree (previously storage was sufficient for a one-week release).
- Miller motioned that the BC recommend to the CC that there be no peak release in 2015 while target baseflows are maintained in the San Juan River. Lamarra seconded and was approved unanimously. Miller will draft a memo to the Program Office that will be forward along to the CC for their approval.
- Flows below 500 cfs have resulted in field crews abandoning or rescheduling their efforts in 2014. Behery has the schedule of sampling trips and she will make an effort to keep flows above

500 cfs so crews can complete their work. Campbell suggested she err on the higher side of the 500-1000 cfs target baseflows so crews can conduct sampling on the river. Target baseflows are based on the running average of more than one gage so the target baseflows can be maintained while flows in the lower reaches drop below 500 cfs.

- Flows greater than 500 cfs at Bluff would likely result in flows that would allow crews to conduct work in the lower river. Perhaps the running average should be set to 600 cfs during sampling season to ensure work can be completed. This discussion should continue during the May meeting once that final forecast has been received.

**Finalize previously reviewed draft Colorado pikeminnow augmentation plan – Davis:**

- This augmentation plan has been in draft form since 2009 but has continued to guide operations. Davis recommended that approval of the draft Colorado pikeminnow augmentation plan was a procedural matter and it should be considered final. The augmentation plan should be reviewed revised as necessary in 2016 since 2016 is the mid-point of the plan. Wesche supported this recommendation and BC agreed unanimously. The LRP should be updated to ensure the augmentation plan is reviewed in 2016.

**Address Westfall's concerns regarding inaccuracies in environmental flow workshop notes and finalize record of that workshop – Westfall and Whitmore:**

- Whitmore is planning to do an executive summary of the workshop summary and incorporate edits she's received to date. Whitmore will complete this and work with Westfall to summarize any points of disagreement and correct inaccuracies in the original summary.

**Clarify field preservation and analytic needs for muscle plugs (selenium and mercury) – Campbell and Westfall:**

- Westfall previously sent an email on the size of muscle plug needed for analysis. Campbell also provided Westfall with sampling protocols developed by Joel Lusk.
- Since BIA will be funding this work the focus should be on razorback sucker and selenium. Efforts to analyze mercury in Colorado pikeminnow should be a separate effort.
- Keeping samples on ice appears to be adequate. If necessary, BIA staff could meet field crews along the river to hand-off muscle plugs for freezing. Only a single muscle plugs is required for analysis.

**Update on deadline to comment on draft Colorado pikeminnow recovery plan – Campbell:**

- Whitmore sent update to CC. There was a webinar on 7 April 2015 and a follow-up webinar is scheduled for 6 May. Campbell indicated that Program partners should make an effort to attend the webinar. BC members should coordinate with their CC representative because invitations to join that webinar will only be sent to CC members. Comments on the recovery plan will be due 6 June but the details of how those comments are to be submitted will follow the 6 May webinar.

**Status of maintenance work on the PNM Fish Passage – Cheek:**

- Due to a manufacturing delay the equipment has not been delivered. It was supposed to arrive last week. A contractor is available for installation. Hopefully this will be completed in May. Cheek will provide an update during the May meeting.
- The passage has been operating since early March. Fish have been using the passage and the earlier operation appears to be beneficial. PIT tag antennas in the passage indicate fish are moving into the passage but only a small proportion is being captured. More details can be provided in May.

**Outstanding concerns or questions on the LRP – Whitmore:**

- Whitmore will complete another draft of the LRP soon.
- Also most SOWs have been received and Whitmore will have a draft AWP in time for the May meeting. The AWP will include some new SOWs for consideration including sampling below the waterfall and developing San Juan River specific larval growth curves.

**Recap decision points and review assigned action items:**

- Miller will write a memo regarding 2015 flows to the Program Office.
- Davis will finalize the current draft Colorado pikeminnow augmentation plan. The plan will be reviewed again 2016.
- PIs should be aware of time limits for the Annual Meeting and also focus their presentations to the audience.
- Westfall asked about guidance on capitalization and abbreviations for reports. This should be added as a discussion item during the May BC meeting. The SJRIP does not necessarily need to be consistent with the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program or the American Fishery Society.

## BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 21 April 2015)

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		
8	Annual Data Delivery		PIs to Program Office	Annually by June 30		
9	T&E Species Data		BC to Program Office	Annually by Dec. 31		

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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 and analysis by Franssen and Durst)	5/10/10	FWS Fisheries/Program Office	5/2011 – provide update and extend as needed	5/12/15	
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 Ruhl	12/1/09	5/12/15	

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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	Schedule maintenance work at PNM	8/5/14	BR, NN, PO	12/31/14	5/12/15	
21	Plan workshops to determine an end of season reservoir elevation for revised available water calculation and develop a protocol to implement replacement for "decision tree" to make releases from Navajo Dam	9/15/14	Program Office	ongoing		
22	Follow up with CC regarding memo on feasibility study to remove barriers in the lower Animas River	12/5/14	PO	2/20/15	5/12/15	
23	Include benchmarks for recovery in LRP	12/5/14	Whitmore	1/5/15	12/1/2015	
27	Review and comment on LRP	12/5/14	BC	1/15/15	4/15/15	4/15/15
30	SOW to conduct population estimates for Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker	2/20/15	PO	5/12/15		
31	Position paper summarizing the effects of the non-native fish removal program	2/20/15	PO	5/12/15		
32	Possible alternatives to current non-native removal program	2/20/15	PIs	5/12/15		

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34	Written proposal to BC for feedback on McElmo Creek spawning study, fish sampling below waterfall, and remote PIT tag antennas	2/20/15	Cathcart	3/25/15	5/12/15	
36	Clarification on field preservation and analytic needs for muscle plug samples	3/25/15	Westfall and Campbell	4/20/15		4/20/15
37	Finalize environmental flow workshop notes and summary	3/25/15	Whitmore	5/12/15		
38	Comparison of ETS and Smith-Root electrofishing units	3/25/15	Schleicher	5/12/15		
	Finalize e-flow workshop summary	4/20/15	Whitmore	5/12/15		
	Memo to PO on recommended flow releases for 2015	4/20/15	Miller	5/12/15		

\* 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

Date	Annual Tasks	PO	CC	BC	P.I.
Oct.	Reclamation administers contracts	X			
Nov.	BC Meeting (peer reviews typically do not attend this meeting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review data integration results from previous year</li> <li>Identify questions for annual data integration</li> <li>Discuss Program priorities</li> <li>LRP review and provide recommendations (with pros and cons) to PO</li> <li>Appoint new BC Chair (every two years)</li> </ul>	X		X	
Dec. 31	RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data to Program Office				X
January	Notification/update of Program rosters/mailling 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		
January	Reclamation provides a determination of perturbation for BC Review.	X			
Jan. 31	Distribute consolidated PIT tag data and post other data	X			
February	BC Meeting (peer reviewers are expected to attend this meeting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for Annual Meeting</li> <li>Provide preliminary results; draft report presentations</li> <li>Final review of updated LRP</li> <li>Review annual data integration priorities</li> </ul>	X		X	X
Feb/Mar	Final updated LRP to CC (with explanation of input included/not included)	X			
March	CC approval of LRP				
March	Annual guidance/solicitation for SOWs based on LRP/list of prioritized projects	X			
March 31	Draft final reports and SOWs due to Program Office			X	X
April	Preliminary draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
May	Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program overview</li> <li>P.I. presentations</li> <li>Review preliminary draft AWP</li> <li>Committee reports</li> </ul>	X	X	X	X
May	Annual hydrology meeting to review and solicit information regarding the San Juan River Basin Hydrology Model	X			
June/July	Draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
June 30	Provide final reports and data sets to Program Office				X
July	Final reports posted on website	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			