

Approved February 22, 2006



**San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program
Biology Committee Conference Call
June 8, 2005**

Members Present:

Chuck McAda
David Propst
Bill Miller
Ron Bliesner
Tom Wesche
Vincent Lamarra
Paul Holden
Greg Gustina
Mark McKinstry
Tom Nesler
Jason Davis for Jim Brooks

Representing:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Water Development Interests
Navajo Nation
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Colorado Division of Wildlife
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Fishery Resources

Program Management:

David Campbell

Joann Perea-Richmann

Representing:

Program Coordinator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service
Program Support Assistant
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service

Other Interested Parties:

Mike Buntjer
Dale Ryden
Steve Platania
Michael Farrington
Sara Gottlieb
W. Howard Brandenburg

Representing:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
University of New Mexico
University of New Mexico
University of New Mexico
University of New Mexico

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BIOLOGY COMMITTEE MEMBER

David Campbell introduced Greg Gustina as the new committee representative for Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

FISH PASSAGE COMMENTS

Chuck stated that comments for the fish passage report are due within the next two weeks. He also mentioned that if there was enough time at the end of the conference call there were two other topics to discuss:

- Fish Passage
- Pit Tags

REVIEW AND INCORPORATION ON INTEGRATION REPORT

Bill Miller addressed the committee stating that the editorial comments which had been submitted have been incorporated. The focus would be on the recommendations and conclusions sections. The committee discussed the following changes for Larval Fish/ Adult YOY; Small Bodied; Habitat Monitoring and Flow Recommendations.

LARVAL FISH/ADULT

Recommendations are to keep the protocol in place. Keeping in larval seining which was modified earlier from drift netting, for both Razorback and Pikeminnow. Adult monitoring protocol would remain the same. Committee members felt that mention of a need to discuss including population estimates in the monitoring should be included in the results portion of the Integration report and included in the Long Range Plan.

SMALL BODIED

Recommendations were to continue with the: 1) current protocol which will have a target of 400-450 samples per annual monitoring effort: 2) continued evaluation of block and shock as a comparison to see if this needs to be permanently incorporated within the protocol, and 3) initiate "block and seine" for 3 years to evaluate this technique in the monitoring and use as a comparison analysis of the two methods. The committee asked that Dave Propst put some kind of report together after one-year study giving the results.

WATER QUALITY

Recommendations are that Ron Bliesner and Bill Miller work on the wording of this section to explain what's been done in the past (Bio), and that water quality is required of some agencies through section 7 consultations and that those agencies should be conducting the water quality analysis and not the SJRIP.

HABITAT MONITORING

Recommendations are to keep the river-run baseline monitoring stays in; adding two detailed reaches to deal with the issues of channel complexity and more detailed mapping in a finer scale in association with fish sampling; and mapping where stocked Pikeminnow and Larval Razorback are caught. Any other changes on protocol need to be submitted to Bill Miller.

The committee felt that Turbidity sampling needs to be included. This was stopped when Water Quality monitoring was completed. It was suggested that this be incorporated with Temperature or Pond SOW.

It was mentioned that any changes discussed and approved at previous meetings related to other physical monitoring also need to be discussed in the report.

FLOW RECOMMENDATION

The committee discussed a recommendation of investigating the 2500 cfs and 5000 cfs criteria in favor of providing more flows in the 8,000-10,000 range.

It was also mentioned that the Pikeminnow seem to do better in high flows and the Razorback suckers do better in lower flows and both seem to do better with clean cobbles.

Action Item:

Bill Miller stated he would do redo the conclusion portions of the Draft Integration Report and add comments given by the committee to, as well as working the with Ron Bliesner to fill in areas of the Physical Habitat and Water Quality and have to the BC for comments by June 30, 2005, and submit to CC by July 8, 2005 for their review and comments.

WATER TEMPERATURE (AMY'S REPORT)

Ron Bliesner informed the committee that the white paper on Temperature Modification is being done by Vince Lamarra and should be complete by the end of June. He also felt that comments and instructions were incorrectly given to Amy as to what the BC wanted in this report.

Ron stated that the BC committee needs to give better and clear instructions such as:

More information of data and cross sectional data

Timelines of the differences was through a run-offs cycle starting from April through August example - what difference would this have been using a temperature controlled devise and what would this look like pre-dam?

Other areas which need to be worked on are trend line for flows, how it affects spawning and key units.

Mark McKinstry said comments from the HC were sent to Amy yesterday and were reviewed but have not been incorporated yet. In the event the BC wants more model runs the cost would be about \$20,000 - \$25,000 and anything more than 10 days of running would be more expensive and not sure if the state-to-state model would benefit the research now.

Mark McKinstry is looking at the original contract to help determine what was requested and expected. Paul Holden expressed concern about the way this SOW was handled by the BoR.

Ron Bliesner said a lot of time was spent on trying to redevelop the hydrograph instead of focusing on the 1995-2000 data to determine baseline and that there were three areas which need to be focused on.

FISH PASSAGE (MELISSA STAMP - BIO WEST)

Mark McKinstry said Melissa Stamp (BioWest) asked when the BC wanted the final report on this, since the Draft was on schedule and they'd like to submit the bill for this project. The committee stated there are still areas which need additional work on such as measurement during a higher flow, such as is occurring now. Mark indicated he would talk with Melissa about adding this to the contract. Paul Holden stated part of the problems of not getting this done were due to budget and timeframe. With current high flow conditions, there is possibility

that additional information can be collected under the contract and SOW that BioWest is currently working under.

Mark McKinstry told the committee that there is about \$28,000 from the HC which was transferred over to purchase pit tags. David Campbell stated that the FWS will be making a 25% in-kind contribution for Program Coordinator and Program Support Assistant for FY2005 and 2006. This will change the budget which would allow some flexibility in requesting more runs to Melissa's study. The BC decided to add additional work to BioWest's contract to complete the measurements at the higher flows.

Actions Items:

1. The committee agreed to respond to the comments which Ron Bliesner sent to Amy to get a collective set of comments. Mark McKinstry and Chuck McAda will get this information to Amy.
2. Committee asked that Mark contact Melissa to see if this would fit in her schedule and how much more this would cost. The BC would then approve a contract modification for the existing contract. Chuck McAda and David Campbell will address this change with the Coordination Committee at their meeting June 16, 2005.

STOCKING STATUS FROM DEXTER

Chuck McAda informed the committee that he spoke to Manuel at Dexter and that they have about 500 age-one Colorado pikeminnow which will be pit tagged and stocked when the high flows are over.

PIT TAGS

Mark McKinstry informed the committee that in November of 2004 he began work to put out an RFP to purchase \$1M in pit tags during the next five years. The BoR's intended on sole sourcing this to Bio Mark but another company, EID expressed interest in this contract. Based on RFP criteria EID met all requirements. But since then BoR found that there were some legal issues pending. Furthermore, Mark is reluctant to purchase pit tags produced by a vendor that has not been used by the RIPs in the past. BoR will purchase about 2000 pit tags through a simplified acquisition and look into purchasing readers as well. The BoR is still looking into other company's and methods to purchase pit tags. Further discussion will be done at the July meeting.

BOR COMPETITIVE SOURCING PROCESS

Paul Holden asked if insight could be given on what the Coordination Committee's (CC) plans are on competitive sole sourcing. David Campbell addressed this saying that the CC met with the BoR at their last meeting to get a better understanding of how this will work. BoR's insight was that the SJRIP didn't have a Legitimate Cooperative Agreement which defines the program as a legal entity which would be as a recipient of funding. David indicated that he has elevated this up to Washington DC level within FWS review the source of funding (Congressional or Public source of funding). David also stated that he will be attending a meeting with BoR and FWS in Denver to discuss this topic more. The CC will be meeting June 16, 2005 to review the FY2006 budget to make their recommendations to the BoR on what they feel should be sole sourced.

Chuck McAda added that he thought the BoR was looking for two things 1.) better definition of single sourcing 2.) whether the CC would accept this.

Paul Holden asked if the CC would be picking specific projects to sole source or if they would be looking at this in a much broader range? David Campbell said the CC would be looking at all projects.

EARLY STOCKING STATUS

Paul Holden discussed the proposal for 2005 to stock a group of pikeminnow earlier similar to what was done in 1997. Dexter is concerned that high water temperature in August will result in high mortality of fish harvested from the ponds. He has not been able to get a hold of Tom Chart and this is the first time mortality due to early pond harvest has ever come up? He feels that some explanation on the mortality needs to be given to the BC. And the question to the BC is if they want to continue stocking earlier and risk the chance of mortality? The committee agreed that if mortality was high, we should not try to stock early.

Conclusion: Chuck McAda and Dale Ryden will address this with Dexter.

MONITORING RECONSTRUCTION

Ron Bliesner stated they've completed the design/report on the pond reconstruction but would like to have the committee provide feedback. Dale Ryden said he and Manuel Ulibarri would review the document and submit comments to Ron by the end of the week.

POND CONCERNS

Ron Bliesner asked the committee if they wanted to add aerators to the ponds as this would help improve DO levels. The committee discussed this and agreed it should be done. Chuck McAda replied he would contact Brent Uilenberg to see if Capital funds could be used. Ron Bliesner also asked if the BC should look into solar panels and costs for the ponds as well. Committee members felt this would be a good idea for the future.

Conclusion:

Ron Bliesner said he would research this and report to the BC.

NEXT MEETING:

July 18 & 19 meeting at Civic Center in Farmington, NM to discuss Program Document and Long Range Plan meeting times are as follows:

July 18, 2005 (1pm - 4 pm) and July 19, 2005 (8am - 3pm)

Adjourned at 11:30 am