

SAN JUAN RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM  
COORDINATION COMMITTEE  
3 NOVEMBER 1994

The meeting was chaired by Jim Young, Assistant Regional Director, Region 2. A list of those individuals in attendance and that signed the form is attached to this meeting summary.

All Coordination Committee members were in attendance and were:

Jim Young (for John Rogers)	Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Jim Lutey	Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Christine Karas (for Rick Gold)	Bureau of Reclamation
Leo Soukup	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Joel Farrell	Bureau of Land Management
Peter Evans	State of Colorado
David Vackar	State of New Mexico
Les Taylor	Jicarilla Apache Tribe
Scott McElroy	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Dan Israel	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Tom Pitts	Water Development Interests

Agenda

The agenda for this meeting (attached) was reviewed and resulted in requests for additions. Two items, razorback sucker experimental stocking and requests for future winter low flow for research, were already included. The meeting location(s) of the Biology Committee was added to the agenda. Previously, an item regarding draft CREDA legislation for long-term funding was added via mail request.

Review of Minutes

Review of the minutes from the 30 June 1994 meeting of the Coordination Committee included few corrections and centered around the necessary detail for meeting minutes. The general agreement was to eliminate detailed minutes since it is difficult to recreate discussions with complete accuracy. It was agreed by the Committee to develop a more generalized summary of meeting activities. That

format is produced herein.

#### Old Business

Review of potential participation by the State of Utah, Navajo Nation, and environmental community within the SJRRIP was again broached. Positions by the three groups remain the same, i.e. will not participate. The State of Utah has written the Fish and Wildlife Service a letter with conditions to be met in order for Utah to agree to participate. Those conditions were relative to special considerations for water use outside the purview of the SJRRIP.

#### Draft Long Range Plan Review (LRP)

Several concerns were expressed by Coordination Committee members regarding the current draft of the LRP. Primarily, uncertainties were expressed regarding the continued emphasis of the native fish community approach and the perceived vagaries of the sufficient progress definition and linkage to milestones.

One member still believed that the emphasis on the native fish community was too much and would result in an expenditure of funds on actions not beneficial to the endangered fauna. Another member offered that the Coordination Committee unanimously agreed to the native fish community approach at the 30 June 1994 meeting so long as it did not include actions not designed to directly or indirectly improve recovery efforts for the endangered fish. The current draft was revised from earlier versions to reflect a change

from 'recovery' to 'management' of the native fish community. It was also pointed out that the 'entire' fish community, including nonnatives, needed to be considered when developing recovery and management actions to achieve RIP goals and objectives. To further alleviate perceived fears of native fish management, wording suggested by one member was modified and included in the redraft to stipulate that there was no legal mandate within the SJRRIP to manage anything other than endangered fish species.

A few members were concerned with the current definitions for sufficient progress and milestones to determine achievement therein. It was iterated that sufficient progress determinations were the responsibility of the Fish and Wildlife Service, but would be based upon achievement of milestones as determined in the LRP. It was also expressed by one member that the exact definition of sufficient progress within the Program Document should be repeated within the LRP, but would not let the current LRP definition prevent acceptance of the current draft.

Other suggested wording changes discussed and accepted by the Coordination Committee included changes in nonnative species control (must to may) measures that should be taken. Also suggested and agreed upon was a modification of the list of 'progress' items in Section 5.0 which made modification of human activities and acquisition of property or easements as an alternative to be placed under habitat enhancement.

All Committee members expressed a need for a budgetary process to be included within the LRP. As part of the process, it will be necessary to include a gross estimate of the cost of the program by year and a description of the capability/feasibility of budget development as recovery actions are identified.

A motion to accept the current draft with suggested revisions was seconded and agreed upon unanimously by the Coordination Committee. As part of the vote it was suggested and agreed upon to annually review the LRP and update as appropriate. This will be particularly important for the budgetary process.

#### Draft FY95 Work Plan

An overview of the draft work plan for 1995 was presented to the Coordination Committee by the Program Coordinator and Biology Committee Chairman. In addition, most Biology Committee members and researchers were present to respond/defend project proposals. Included in the draft workplan were continuation of core funded research (part of 7 Year Research Program), addition of new proposals regarding integration of research findings to date and experimental removal of channel catfish from selected reaches, and increased work level and budget needs by the National Park Service. The amount of funds requested in the draft Work Plan were approximately \$73,000 greater than available funds could support.

A discussion of the integration of study results for the period 1991-1994 was deemed important by all members of the Coordination

and Biology committees. This work is intended to evaluate the kinds of information collected and analytical methods employed to arrive at current interpretations of research results. Completion of this integration report will include an evaluation of the current research program, including possible changes in research design and/or subjects to appropriately address RIP goals.

Selective removal of channel catfish was proposed to evaluate the efficacy of such an action in impacting nonnative species numbers and distribution and, to a lesser extent, overall fish community response. An important aspect of this work will be the ability to locally deplete nonnative predators prior to potential stockings of hatchery-reared endangered fish.

Changes were proposed for early life history research activities by the State of Utah. These changes included transfer of larval fish activities to University of New Mexico for continuation of larval drift sampling and increased emphasis of young-of-year sampling in the lower reach of the study area, but still including efforts in 'The Mixer'. The proposal to shift sampling emphasis to the lower reach was in response to the location of most captures of young Colorado squawfish in the lower reach.

As part of a continuation of the experimental stocking of razorback sucker in the San Juan River, it was proposed to take most of the remaining fish at the Wahweap facility, pit-tag them, and stock them along with the 15 radio-implanted razorback sucker scheduled

for stocking in October 1995. Based upon objections by Water Development Interests, this action was tabled by the Biology Committee to allow for discussion and action by the Coordination Committee. The review of the proposed action by the Coordination Committee included a determination by the Fish and Wildlife Service that the proposed action was within the original study design list of alternative actions and covered by NEPA review documentation.

The National Park Service proposal to increase study efforts of the native fish occurring in Lake Powell was also discussed. Previous discussions by the Biology Committee indicated that, while it is important to know about native fish in Lake Powell, the opportunity to do this work in concert with lower river work by Bureau of Reclamation and State of Utah biologists and decrease logistical and monetary expenditures would better suit RIP needs. It was decided that an effort to consolidate these efforts in lieu of funding NPS separately would be pursued within the framework of this work plan.

A motion was made and seconded by Coordination Committee members to approve the draft Work Plan and was unanimously agreed upon by the Committee. With the approval of draft Work Plan and deficiency of funds available, the Biology Committee was directed to reduce costs to make up the shortfall and/or not conduct one of the new projects (catfish removal, probably). The Bureau of Reclamation indicated that additional funds could be made available if other entities were willing to find additional funds and apply to the shortfall.

The Program Coordinator and Biology Committee were charged with resolving the budget shortfall.

#### Low-flow Winter Release from Navajo Dam

In order to determine the effects of winter low flows on habitats and potential implications regarding the fish community, flow recommendations were made by the Biology Committee to the Navajo Dam Operating Committee to plan for such a release. The request was for the period November 1995 - February 1996. Bureau of Reclamation requested that the Biology Committee, if considering this flow scenario, specify why, when, and how to implement the low flow. This information would then be used to complete a NEPA review of the proposed action. After a brief review of the history of the request and minimal comments by the Coordination Committee, this issue was tabled.

#### Draft CREDA Bill

Legislation was drafted by Congressman George Miller and Cliff Barrett of CREDA to provide long-term funding for recovery programs in the Colorado River Basin. A copy of the draft legislation was provided to each of the Coordination Committee members prior to this meeting. The ensuing discussion indicated that most of those present knew little of the process. It was agreed by the Committee that the Program Coordinator would attend applicable meetings and report back with more specific information on the background and specifics of the proposed funding legislation.

### Biology Committee Meeting location

Prior to an October 1994 meeting of the Biology Committee, the Water Development Interests representative of the Coordination Committee requested from the Program Coordinator that the planned October meeting and all future meetings be held in the San Juan River Basin. The Program Coordinator responded that the location was based upon the needs and logistics of the Biology Committee and researchers and that the location (Grand Junction, Colorado) for the October meeting was to make sure that specific biologists be present to discuss certain work plan issues. It was iterated that most Biology Committee meetings are held either in Farmington or Durango and will continue so. But, it was also pointed out that flexibility in meeting locations was necessary to allow integration into the busy schedules of the Biology Committee and researchers. A brief discussion by the Coordination Committee resulted in unanimous support for the Biology Committee to meet primarily within the Basin (Farmington or Durango), but to be able to meet elsewhere, as appropriate.

### Other

A representative of both the environmental community and agricultural water users along the Animas River questioned the status of the RIP since not all parties had signed the Cooperative Agreement and there was no protection of flows within the Navajo Nation. The Committee was asked what would happen to the RIP if the Animas-La Plata project is abandoned and responded that the RIP would continue, regardless. Criticisms were also levied against

the Water Development Interests representative on the Coordination Committee for not representing all water use interests. It was indicated that a Steering Committee comprised of a variety of water development and use interests was formed to select the representative and included representation of agricultural interests along the Animas River.

#### Meeting Actions

LRP - Revise based upon Coordination Committee comments.  
Public review of revised draft 7 November - 7 December  
Compilation and response to public comments mailed to  
Coordination Committee by 19 December  
Conference call of Coordination Committee on 3 January  
1995 to review comments, responses, and vote on  
final acceptance.

The Biology Committee will develop a budgetary process  
to guide future funding of LRP.

WP - Biology Committee to meet in late January 1995 to  
entertain project budget reductions, consolidation  
of projects in lower study area, identify  
additional funding sources.

Final Work Plan submitted to Coordination Committee in  
February 1995.

Next Meeting - 20 April 1995 in Albuquerque beginning a 9:30 AM.