

December 19, 2001

**San Juan River Basin  
Recovery Implementation Program  
Coordination Committee  
November 2, 2001  
Meeting Summary**

**Members Present:**

Joy Nicholopoulos

Susan Jordan

Bob Krakow

Scott McElroy

Tom Pitts

Stanley Pollack

Randy Seaholm

Brent Uilenberg

John Whipple

**Others Present:**

Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator

Marilyn Greenberg, Program Assistant

Ron Bliesner

Steve Harris

Paul Holden

Dave King

Bernadette Tsosie

**Representing:**

Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

Jicarilla Apache Nation

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Water Development Interests

Navajo Nation

State of Colorado

Bureau of Reclamation

State of New Mexico

Fish and Wildlife Service

Fish and Wildlife Service

Biology Committee

Hydrology Committee

Biology Committee

Hydrology Committee

Hydrology Committee

**Welcome and Introductions:** Joy Nicholopoulos welcomed everyone to the meeting and those in attendance introduced themselves. A list of attendees is shown in Appendix A.

**Review and Approve Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and several items were added, including the status of the razorback sucker rearing ponds, the status of the agreements with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and an update on the Navajo Environmental Impact Statement.

**Approval of June Meeting Summary:** The June 19<sup>th</sup> meeting summary was reviewed and approved as amended.

#### **Discussion of 2002 Work Plan:**

In response to questions, Shirley Mondy described the process of developing the work plans. Since the June 19<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee meeting, the Biology Committee took the suggestions and comments, reviewed them during a conference call, and modified their work plans as necessary.

#### **Monitoring**

##### **Water Temperature and Water Quality Monitoring**

Water Development Interests questioned the necessity for continuing the water temperature modeling. If the data is already adequate to do the temperature model, why continue to do water temperature modeling? The Biology Committee responded that it is inexpensive to continue to collect the water temperature data, and it continues to verify the current modeling. As far as water quality monitoring (12 quarterly samples), it is a requirement of the monitoring plan. There are many changes ongoing in the basin. This level of monitoring is needed to continue to track the changes. If something were to happen to the fish, the monitoring data could give information as to whether it is a chemical problem or not. The water quality is currently being evaluated for a three year period, and it will be evaluated every five years after that.

***Ron Bliesner agreed to add due dates associated with products for his proposals (pages A-31 through A-43).***

##### **Standardized Monitoring Integration Report**

Some believe that the standardized monitoring integration report should be a high priority item and wondered if this can be completed more quickly. This report is due in September 2002. The Biology Committee members explained that this is a fairly short schedule compared to other reports that have been done. The Biology Committee has been setting aside time for this for three years now and already considers this a high priority. Additional money cannot make this happen more quickly. Small groups will be

meeting to handle data collection and to hammer out the details of consolidation. The reports that have already been completed will also facilitate moving this along. ***A time line was requested by the Coordination Committee.***

Currently, there is \$235,000 budgeted for the integration report in FY 02, and no monies budgeted for FY 03. The final report will be issued by September 30, 2002. There will not be a request for FY 03 funds.

There was a request that money and items in the budget be associated with specific tasks. It was suggested that this report can be cross referenced with the budget and to what individual researchers are doing, and that perhaps additional breakdowns in the budget were not needed. The Biology Committee felt that doing a cost breakdown would be a very large task. The Coordination Committee agreed to approve the integration budget, contingent upon the Biology Committee providing delivery dates to coincide with Figure 1 on page A-47 and the products listed. Miller Ecological consultants will be putting the document together.

### **Peer Review**

Paul Holden informed the Coordination Committee that Dr. Stephen Ross, University of Southern Mississippi, was selected as the new fisheries biologist peer reviewer and Dr. John Pitlick, University of Colorado - Boulder, was selected as the geomorphologist peer reviewer. There was some discussion about whether these candidates had already been involved in peer review for the San Juan River Program. Dr. Pitlick had acted as an internal reviewer for the San Juan Flow Recommendations. He was involved in a scientific review of the methodology, but he did not develop it.

If someone is familiar with the basin or the issues, they don't have to start from scratch and get up to speed on the San Juan and the fish. Dr. Pitlick has functioned like a peer reviewer in the past (similar to Dr. Dave Galat). Tom Pitts, on behalf of Water Development Interests, raised an objection to selecting Dr. Pitlick due to his previous peer review role in the development of the San Juan Flow Recommendations because the peer review panel is supposed to be looking at the flow recommendations again in light of new data.

The Biology Committee commented that it replaced two peer reviewers and kept two - both of whom had similar previous involvement in the basin. The State of Colorado stated that peer review is a great concept and we need to try to select people who have had no previous experience in the basin to bring in a fresh, new, and objective perspective. It is counterproductive to work with people who have always worked in the same circles. Does that mean that each year the people who were used last year become invalid? Dr. Ryel and Dr. Galat helped to guide the process initially. Dr. Pitlick

reviewed the methodology/data collection and the data analysis before the flow recommendation report was completed. Dr. Pitlick was the most qualified candidate who was available. If someone participates in the peer review process, does that make him or her part of the development? Then does that exclude them from any further involvement/peer review?

Some issues that need to be addressed by the Biology and Coordination Committee members include: Does the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) have criteria appropriate for this situation and, if so, were the criteria followed by the Biology Committee? Can peer reviewers be used year after year or should all current peer reviewers be replaced? Dr. Ron Ryel is a statistician and was involved in data analysis on the integration report, not in writing the report.

Some of the criteria that the Biology Committee used to select Peer Reviewers included time/availability, credentials, and familiarity with similar issues - perhaps in other basins. There were no criteria for either being or not being familiar with the San Juan Program.

The Biology Committee will determine whether the NAS criteria apply in this instance and whether the selected peer reviewers fall within these guidelines. If so, the Coordination Committee concurs with the selected candidates. ***The Coordination Committee wants to hear back from the Biology Committee on the final determination of Peer Reviewers. The Peer Review work plan needs to be updated with the selectees.***

## **Research**

### **San Juan River Population Model Refinements**

Randy Seaholm commented that the population model should be a high priority; and requests that more specifics be added to the deliverables. ***Items to be included are: dates when the products will be completed; examples of specific applications that can be run as model tests with specific dates; when can a final report, versus a draft, be available; and what the final out year costs will be.***

There will not be a user manual with the model. The model will be run by members of the Biology Committee. It was not intended to be turned over to anyone else to run. Documentation and methodology will be included in the final report.

The Coordination Committee indicated that it wants to see what the model can do and the documentation before more money is put into it. ***The work plan needs additional descriptions in the scope of work to indicate that this stage of model development will end when the final report is delivered to the Biology Committee.***

When the final report is delivered, the Biology Committee will evaluate any future use and implementation.

### **Characterization of Razorback Spawning Bar**

Objective 1: It was suggested that the wording be changed to characterize “probable” (rather than suspected) razorback spawning sites. Do they use the same habitat as in the Upper Basin? How distinct is their habitat? Do they tend to go back to the same area year after year? This data needs to be obtained and verified. The spawning sites need to be characterized to determine if monitoring should continue and where. The Biology Committee has not found many other spawning sites/locations. The first year of monitoring is to assess the site(s) at specific times and flows. The second year of monitoring is to expand the study and analyze the conditions.

### **Water Temperature Analysis**

It was suggested that the chub should be characterized as possible prey in the work plan, rather than leave it open to appearing that the chub is endangered also. The money is to determine how the water temperature affects all prey fish, including the chub. ***In the objectives and methods (pages C-9 and C-10), change the roundtail chub to “other species”.***

### **Determination of Occurrence of Hybridization**

Is hybridization a threat to the razorback sucker? It is not mentioned in the Draft Recovery Goals. If they are hybridizing with flannelmouth suckers, then what? The results will be taken back to the Biology Committee to determine further actions, if necessary. There is no wild population for the razorback to follow to spawning sites, as in other places. Are the adult razorbacks that are being stocked staying together and spawning together, or are they grouping with flannelmouth and spawning? This study is what is needed to give the Biology Committee a baseline. This question will have to be addressed and answered at some point. This is a very inexpensive time and place to do this.

Water Development Interests objected to the hybridization study on the basis that this study will not change what we are doing - adding more razorback to the system. The Biology Committee responded that there is the potential that we might stop stocking if we were not recovering the razorback, but were recovering/creating flannel-razorback hybrids. This study must be completed to determine the outcome first.

### **Recovery**

#### **Razorback Sucker Augmentation**

The Biology Committee used the recovery goals to determine the numbers of fish

outlined in the augmentation plan. A draft of the augmentation plan is currently being reviewed by the Biology Committee. It is unknown whether the survival rates match the recovery goals. The survival rate that was used in original augmentation plan is what is used to determine the number and size of the ponds being built.

How many razorbacks can actually live in the San Juan? In the recovery goals, 5,800 is the desired goal. That may change as the Program gets fish population estimates. The target date for achieving these goals was originally five years. Stocking would then continue for an additional five years. Six hundred razorback suckers were stocked on November 1, 2001.

### **Augmentation of Colorado Pikeminnow**

The pikeminnow augmentation plan is under Biology Committee review, and is likely to be discussed at their February meeting. The recovery goal is a self-sustaining population with over 800 adult pikeminnow. It will take 22 years to get to 800. The Program has the capital funds to overcome the 800 limit if the FWS Dexter Fish Hatchery can produce the fingerlings for stocking. The stocking has increased to 200,000 fingerlings and the Biology Committee is concerned about overstocking pikeminnow, especially when we are unsure about the prey base and survival rates.

### **Roundtail Chub**

Tom Pitts, on behalf of Water Development Interests, asserted that the chub is not an endangered fish and that it is not appropriate to use recovery funds for chub. Water Development Interests contacted the Biology Committee to offer to locate other sources of funding and the Committee responded that they did not need help and that they would find additional funding. The New Mexico Department of Game & Fish provided an additional \$10,000 in funding, and Colorado provided funding as well. Senator McClousky's committee and public law 106.392 states that ... "will also provide benefits to other native fishes and prevent them from becoming endangered in the future." The Biology Committee sees this as clearly allowing us to provide benefit to and evaluate other native species and their impact on endangered species. Is the chub augmentation proposal necessary to the recovery of the pikeminnow? Or will the chub simply displace other forage fish that are also necessary for recovery of pikeminnow? Is the chub important in getting the pikeminnow to the point of recovery? The Biology Committee considers the chub to be another potential food source. The chub is part of the native community that existed historically.

This Program is also for native fish. It is good to return conditions to those that are supportive of endangered species. There is strong evidence that historically there was a very strong roundtail chub population. Discovering conditions that are conducive to the chub may also contribute to the recovery of the pikeminnow. If enhancing the chub contributes to the recovery of the pikeminnow, then it is within the realm of our funding. In the budget (page D-27), it appears that the chub is a focus, rather than the

pikeminnow. The chances of recovering pikeminnow is better with a good population of chub. How do you study whether chub will help, if there are no chub there? There are few other fish that coexist in the same conditions as chub and pikeminnow. Chub and pikeminnow have historically coexisted in these areas. How much benefit to recovery, in terms of years, would this proposal contribute? This proposal would make it more likely for us to reach a goal of 800 pikeminnow because of food availability. It may not occur faster, just make it more doable.

The Biology/Coordination Committee could evaluate the research next year to determine whether to continue as we are. There is a need to get fish back in the system so that we have something to study. The river has changed. The Program is trying to restore conditions to be supportive of the pikeminnow. The Coordination Committee recommended that the proposal specify that the chub is being looked at to assist in the recovery of the endangered fish. **The Coordination Committee would like to see the role of the roundtail chub relative to the recovery of the endangered fish addressed, with answers on the prey base included.**

**The Coordination Committee will consider chub augmentation as a part of FY 02 funding if and when they receive a new proposal, as a *research* proposal, with a clear link shown between chub population augmentation and recovery of pikeminnow; and answering the following questions:** Does the chub have a role to play in recovery and what must be done to determine that? What must be done to create that assistance, how necessary is it, and what is the price to achieve it? The Coordination Committee will assist in obtaining additional funding if the Biology Committee cannot answer the above questions. The overall work plan will be approved today without this proposal. ***A new proposal must be approved by the Biology Committee before it is resubmitted to the Coordination Committee.***

### **Colorado Pikeminnow Fingerling Production**

The proposal is based on Biology Committee discussions on how many pikeminnow could and should be stocked, and is consistent with the draft pikeminnow augmentation plan. This is the Biology Committee's recommendation of the best stocking plan at this time. At this rate of stocking, it will be 22 years before recovery goals are met. Out year costs will depend on how many fish are needed in future years. Hatchery space was limited in 2002. Available space may increase in future years. (See discussion under Augmentation of Colorado Pikeminnow.)

### **Hydrology**

The Hydrology Committee has approved only a proposal for \$454,000. The additional \$80,000 is due to increased operating costs, the purchase of a new work station, and

includes \$15,000 for 2001 and \$15,000 for 2002 RiverWare improvements. ***The Hydrology Committee needs to project beyond 2002 for maintenance, refining the model, etc. The Coordination Committee agreed to approve this work plan conditionally, subject to approval by the Hydrology Committee. Dave King will get a revised scope of work out to the Hydrology Committee prior to their next conference call.***

### **Program Coordination and Management**

The money from FY 01 has just been received. The Program will carryover the money for exhibits into FY 02.

Objective 1: Research accomplishments and problems report to be submitted by the Program Coordinator has not been done yet. It will be compiled into a database and put on the San Juan website.

Objective 20. \$50,000 is now in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation section 7 funds from the City of Durango for rearing pond construction. This money could be used for private pond construction.

***Out year costs are needed in Program Coordination and Management.***

### **Capital Projects:**

In FY 01, \$828,000 was spent. \$546,000 was transferred to BIA to repay Navajo Nation for the razorback sucker rearing ponds. New Mexico and Colorado have not sent their funds to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

For FY 02, the Program is expecting \$1,814,000 from appropriated funds, \$160,000 in contributions from Colorado, \$406,000 in contributions from New Mexico, and \$940,000 in power revenues. This gives the Program a total of \$3,220,000 available for capital expenditures. Operating the PNM Fish Passage will cost approximately \$42,000 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year only (April 1 - October 31), based on whole season operation. The native fish will use it primarily during July, August, and September. Out year expenses will be less. It is hoped that it can be constructed in June, July, and August 2002, and be operational by late summer, ideally by late August.

Another possibility for future capital expenditures is fish passage at the Four Corners Power Plant. Reclamation will develop a scope of work for a feasibility design for the project.

There was a question on the 20% overhead charges that the FWS charges in their scopes of work. Shirley Mondy pursued this before and exemptions are on a case by case basis. Committee members would like to see this pursued again. ***Shirley Mondy will look into this.***

Review of Action Items from June 19<sup>th</sup> meeting

### **Minor depletions**

Shirley Mondy requested assistance in determining which depletions need to be removed from the minor depletions table. How was 3000 af handled in the model? Of the first 3000 af of minor depletion water, 50% was considered to be in the baseline numbers. The other 50% is already taken out and has been accounted for. The second 3000 af is all new depletions. Shirley Mondy will follow up with Randy Seaholm for further information on baseline depletions. ***There will be a clear accounting by the next Coordination Committee meeting.***

### **Program Evaluation Report Disclaimer**

Several disclaimers for the Program Evaluation Report were passed out and discussed. It was decided that the following disclaimer should be added to the website:

“The September 2000 Program Evaluation Report for the 7-Year Research Period of the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program was prepared by the Program’s Biology Committee. This report is intended to provide information and recommendations to the Coordination Committee. The report is not intended to change, nor does it change, any Program policies or goals.”

### **Revised Program Document**

No work has been done at this point to print a revised Program document. ***The Program Coordinator will revise the document and have it printed in FY 02.***

### **Hogback and Cudei Reimbursement Discussion**

Neither of these sites had a functioning dam and suitable rock had to be hauled in from the Bluff area. BIA requested some assurance that they will be getting reimbursed by a specific time. They believe that they are entitled reimbursement of \$5.5 million out of a total cost of \$6 million. ***Agenda item for the next meeting - How much should BIA be reimbursed?***

John Whipple questioned whether any replacement due to structural failure would fall on BIA or Reclamation, rather than on the Program? It is uncertain at this time what would happen if failure occurred. It would depend on what type of failure and when it occurred.

## **Recovery Goal Update**

The comment period on the Recovery Goals has been extended. The notice will be published sometime soon. The comment period will be extended 15 days beyond the publication date. Shirley Mondy will send an email to the committee with further details once she receives the notice.

## **Navajo/Gallup Pipeline**

Reclamation is evaluating five alternatives and the evaluation should be completed by December 01, 2001. The intent is to select a preferred alternative by January 2, 2002. It is anticipated that NEPA compliance will be completed by October 3, 2002.

## **Turley-Manzanares Ditch Technical Assistance**

The citizens of Turley-Manzanares Ditch agreed to a cost share of 7.5% (\$32,000 out of \$430,000 total) and are exploring the option of getting a New Mexico low interest loan to cover that portion.

## **Long Range Plan**

There is no progress thus far. The Long Range Plan will be discussed at the February Biology Committee meeting. ***The Coordination Committee would like to see a draft by February.*** The draft could solve a lot of work plan discussion. ***It is requested that Jim Brooks get the catfish removal portion done and assign the rest to other Biology Committee members.***

## **Razorback Pond Status**

The construction of the razorback sucker rearing ponds is 85% complete. All of them have water. Three ponds are full, the fourth is  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{2}{3}$  full. There are four ponds with enough water to be seeded this year and fully functional by next year.

## **Update on Navajo EIS**

Randy Seaholm would like to look at the low flow test results before offering final comments on the Navajo EIS. The low flow test report has not been finalized yet. There is a meeting on the Navajo EIS on Nov. 28 & 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss concerns and comments.

## **Other:**

***If anyone has good pictures (from Hogback, etc.) that could be used for the Congressional Briefing Book, and for the website, please send them to Shirley Mondy.***

**The Coordination Committee recommended and approved Shirley Mondy to attend the Congressional briefings in Washington, D.C. in March 2002.**

On December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, in Ft. Collins, Colorado, there will be an Upper Basin Workshop on using population estimates to develop recovery goals. The San Juan Biology Committee is invited to attend.

There is an Upper Basin Researchers meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> in Moab, Utah. The Coordination Committee recommends that the Biology Committee members attend.

The meeting was adjourned without the next meeting date being set.

**Appendix A**

<b>Others Present</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Justin Carter	Public Service Company of NM
Rob Clifford	Four Corners Power Plant
Cindy Murray	Public Service Company of NM
Steve Platania	University of New Mexico
Bill Rohwer	Bureau of Reclamation
Zang Wood	Public Service Company of NM

June 19, 2001 Action Items

Appendix B

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Status</i>
Sort out what depletions are in the baseline and where we actually are in terms of the 3,000 acre feet of minor depletions.	Shirley Mondy, John Whipple, Randy Seaholm, Ron Bliesner	September 5, 2001	Incomplete
Add minor depletions to the agenda for next meeting.	Shirley Mondy	September 5, 2001	Completed
Draft a disclaimer paragraph for the Program Evaluation Report for the website.	John Whipple, Tom Pits	September 5, 2001	Completed
Incorporate the Hydrology Committee changes and reissue the Program document.	Shirley Mondy	September 30, 2001	Incomplete
Discuss the cost of Hogback and Cudei and bring a proposal for reimbursement back to the Coordination Committee.	Representatives from BIA, the Navajo Nation and Reclamation	September 5, 2001	Completed
Request that Bob Muth, Program Director for the Upper Basin, give an update on the status of the recovery goals.	Shirley Mondy	September 5, 2001	Completed
Have the Navajo/Gallup pipeline as an agenda item for the next meeting.	Shirley Mondy Bob Krakow	September 5, 2001	Completed
Add the Turley-Manzanares Ditch technical assistance item to the agenda for the next meeting. Someone from the Water Development Interests will help explore funding possibilities.	Shirley Mondy  Water Development Interests	September 5, 2001	Completed
Coordination Committee comments are due on all scopes of work.	Coordination Committee Members	July 3, 2001	Completed
All revised scopes of work and missing ones are due	All Principle Investigators	July 24, 2001	Completed
Compile the scopes of work and get a revised draft Work Plan back to the Coordination Committee for discussion at the September 5 meeting.	Shirley Mondy	August 1, 2001	Completed

## November 2, 2001 Action Items

## Appendix C

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
Ron Bliesner agreed to add due dates associated with products for his work plans.	Ron Bliesner	11/30/01	
The Coordination Committee wants to hear back from the Biology Committee on the final determination of Peer Reviewers. The Peer Review work plan needs to be updated with the selectees.	Biology Committee Paul Holden	1/1/02	
Population Model: Items needed include dates when the products will be completed; examples of specific applications that can be run as model tests with specific dates; when can a final report, versus a draft, be available; and what the final out year costs will be. The population work plan needs additional descriptions in the scope of work that this stage of the model ends with the final report and then the Biology Committee will evaluate any future use and implementation.	Bill Miller/Vince LaMarra	1/1/02	
In the Water Temperature Analysis Objectives and Methods (pages C-9 and C-10), change the roundtail chub to "other species".	Shirley Mondy	11/30/01	
The Coordination Committee will consider chub augmentation as a part of FY 02 funding if and when they receive a new proposal, as a <i>research</i> proposal, with a clear link shown between chub population augmentation and recovery of pikeminnow.	Biology Committee		
A new proposal must be approved by the Biology Committee before it is resubmitted to the Coordination Committee.	Biology Committee		
The Hydrology Committee needs to project beyond 2002 for maintenance, refining the model, etc. Dave King will get a revised scope of work out to the Hydrology Committee prior to the conference call.	Dave King Hydrology Committee	1/1/02	

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
Out year costs are needed in the Program Coordination and Management, Pikeminnow Fingerling Production.	Shirley Mondy/ Brent Uilenberg	1/1/02	
Question on the 20% overhead charges that the FWS charges. Shirley Mondy will look into this.	Shirley Mondy	4/1/01	
There will be a clear accounting on minor depletions by the next Coordination Committee meeting.	Shirley Mondy		
The Program Coordinator will revise the Program document and have it printed in FY 02.	Shirley Mondy	4/1/02	
Add agenda item on how much to reimburse BIA (for Cudei & Hogback).	Shirley Mondy	4/1/02	
The Coordination Committee would like to see a draft of the Long Range Plan by February. It is requested that Jim Brooks get the catfish removal portion done and assign the rest to other Biology Committee members.	Biology Committee Jim Brooks	2/1/02	
If anyone has good pictures (from Hogback, etc.) for the Congressional Briefing Book, and for the website, please send them to Shirley Mondy.	All	1/1/02	
Develop a scope of work for feasibility/design of fish passage at the Four Corners Power Plant.	Brent Uilenberg	1/1/02	