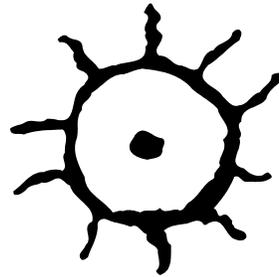


September 29, 2003

**San Juan River Basin  
Recovery Implementation Program  
Coordination Committee  
August 26, 2003  
Draft Meeting Summary**



**Coordination Committee Members**

Susan MacMullin (for Joy Nicholopoulos)  
Ray Alvarado (for Randy Seaholm)  
Joel Farrell  
Susan Jordan  
Bob Krakow  
Scott McElroy  
Tom Pitts  
Stanley Pollack  
Brent Uilenberg  
John Whipple

**Hydrology & Biology Committee Members:**

Steve Harris  
Paul Holden  
John Leeper  
Bill Miller, Biology Committee Chair  
Pat Page, Hydrology Committee Chair  
Randy Kirkpatrick  
Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator

**Others Present:**

Rob Ashman  
Mike Buntjer  
Carroll Crawford  
Cindy Murray  
Maria O'Brien  
Bob Oxford  
Liz N. Taylor  
Rick Trost  
Chuck Wanner  
Carl Woolfolk

**Representing:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
State of Colorado  
Bureau of Land Management  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Water Development Interests  
Navajo Nation  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
State of New Mexico

**Representing:**

Water Development Interests  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Navajo Nation  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Development Interests  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Representing:**

Public Service Company of NM  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Public Service Company of NM  
BHP Billiton

BHP Billiton  
San Juan Citizens Alliance

APS – Four Corners Power Plant

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Susan MacMullin, acting for Joy Nicholopoulos, welcomed the attendees, who then introduced themselves.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved with the discussion of extreme conditions for 2004 moved to the first part of the agenda.

## **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 26, 2003 MEETING SUMMARY**

The meeting summary was approved with no changes.

## **APPROVAL OF MAY 23, 2003 CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY**

The meeting summary was approved with no changes.

## **EXTREME CONDITIONS**

The Hydrology Committee responded to a request from the Coordination Committee that they develop criteria on extreme conditions. John Whipple indicated that based on what is happening now and the anticipated lower than normal runoff, there could be problems meeting water demands in 2004. The agreement on sharing shortages in 2003 was signed and is effect. Whether the same group or additional users can come together for a similar agreement in 2004 is yet to be seen. There is a need to conserve as much water as possible behind Navajo Dam. It was requested that Reclamation reduce their release to 250 cfs out of the dam even in advance of the release of the Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement.

***The Coordination Committee requested the Biology Committee to discuss the hydrologic conditions and fish needs at their upcoming conference call. By September 30, they should take the extreme condition determination and look at what kinds of flows are needed to sustain and maintain existing populations (below the 500 cfs in the critical habitat).*** This would be a maintenance flow rather than a recovery flow. The motion was

Bill Miller stated that the Biology Committee can start the discussion on the September 15 conference call, but they don't have all the science information right now. John Whipple would like the discussion completed within the month as there is a sense of urgency. The water users want to know what projections of flows are needed for the fish so they can figure out how it may affect the water demands. ***Coordination Committee members are urged to talk to their Biology Committee members so that this question can be answered by September 30. The Committee also wants the Biology Committee to tell them the appropriateness of the maintenance versus recovery flows. What are the impacts for future years? The maintenance flows would be for winter and summer.***

What other water conservation measures will be taken or is all of the water shortages supposed to be taken from the fish needs? Nothing has been done at this point.

Pat Page and John Whipple would like to be included on the Biology Committee conference call on September 15 for the discussion of maintenance flows.

Tom Pitts wants the Program to consider other options for getting water for the fish (forbearance agreements, cloud seeding, administer the San Juan River). These items are compatible with New Mexico water law and would provide water to the fish. The Coordination Committee **would like the Hydrology Committee to bring a scope of work for 2005 for looking at alternative ways of getting water for the fish. 1) In 2004, explore the existing cloud seeding program in the area and consider supplementing it with program funds. 2) Look at ways of providing a more reliable source of water through conservation methods.** If they are feasible, initiate a scope of work for 2005. Brent Uilenberg seconded the request. **The Hydrology Committee was tasked with looking at the cloud seeding by October 1 for possible implementation in 2004.**

#### REVIEW OF DRAFT 2004 WORK PLAN

The Population Modeling and Trophic Relationships modeling scopes of work (C-1 and C-9) have not been approved by the Biology Committee yet. They were included in the work plan as placeholders to save time in case the Biology Committee approves them at their next meeting.

Because of the shortness of time, the Coordination Committee agreed to review only those scopes of work that they had comments or questions on.

- **Monitoring**

**YOY Small Bodied Fish Monitoring** – page A-5. It was suggested that the principal investigators of this scope of work aren't currently following protocol. It was clarified that it appears that they didn't follow it in 2001 and 2002, but have committed to following the protocol in the fall (2003). The different collecting methods have caused difficulties in differentiating between habitats in those years. The principal investigators are also supposed to use electrofishing but haven't done much of that collecting technique yet. **Tom Pitts would like to see this approved contingent upon the Principal Investigators following recommendations of the Biology Committee.**

**Adult Juvenile Monitoring** – page A-1. The cost has gone up tremendously from 2003. This proposal has an extensive amount of supplies that increased the cost. In addition, data analysis has increased significantly. **The Committee would like a written explanation on why costs have increased so much over 2003 costs.**

**Update and Maintenance of SJRIP GIS Database** – page A-41. Tom Pitts is concerned about access to the data. He would like to make sure that the data should be available to all entities.

**Publication of Larval Sucker Guide** – page A-45. It was questioned why the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program was not paying for the guide? They approved \$10,000 and asked the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program to fund approximately \$6,000 of the cost. This product is used by the Biology Committee.

- **Peer Review** – page B1. In 2007, the proposal shows a doubling of the cost – why? Paul Holden responded that it is anticipated that there will be integration in 2007. The Peer Reviewers are much more involved during integration.

- **Research**

**Assessment of Pikeminnow Augmentation** – page C-23. The costs increase quite a bit in 2004 and go way up in 2005. The increased cost is because they will be stocking the pikeminnow earlier in the year and there will be extra effort to mark the fish and put them in the river. The National Park Service is funding \$14,000 in 2004. ***Shirley Mondy needs to modify the scope to clarify the total cost.***

- **Recovery**

**Razorback Sucker Augmentation and Monitoring** – page D-11. There is a big increase of funding – why? It looks like it is due to increased efforts and equipment. It is hard to distinguish between costs for monitoring and costs of the grow-out facility. ***For 2005, the principal investigator should show the costs of the grow-out facility separately.***

**Pikeminnow Production** – page D-19. The Biology Committee is relying on what is being done at the Mumma Fish Hatchery to determine if growing larger pikeminnow is feasible. The Biology Committee is waiting for a memo from Dale Ryden on the pros and cons of growing larger fish.

**Interim Holding Facility for Larval Razorback Sucker** – page D-27. This should be base funding instead of capital funds that is shown in the summary tables. ***Shirley Mondy will correct this in the summary table.***

- **Hydrology**

**Completion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Model** – page E-1. It needs to be understood by the Hydrology Committee that documentation and model completion needs to be finished within the budget and schedule that has been presented. This is completion of a modeling stage and there will be ongoing review and updating of data.

John Whipple would like agreement by the Coordination Committee that the model disclaimer attached to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation model be put on the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation model. Other members said they need to see language before they vote on it and that this issue should be addressed by the Hydrology Committee.

***The Coordination Committee approved the scope of work with the understanding that the model be completed before any money is spent on the maintenance and operation scope of work (items 1-4).***

**Maintenance and Operation of the Model** – page E-3. Pat Page pointed out that the out-year funding is higher because objective 5 is considered for a full year. This scope of work was accepted with the discussion above.

**Improve Stream Gaging** – page E-7. The funding projected in out-years is incorrect in the budget binder. ***Shirley Mondy will correct the scope of work.***

- **Program Coordination/Management** – page F-1. Marilyn Greenberg will be leaving at the end of August for a new job with the Office of Personnel Management. Her position will be advertised and filled.
- **Capital Projects** – page G-1. The total capital projects budget is \$690,000. There will be no money to reimburse the Bureau of Indian Affairs for their work on the Cudei and Hogback diversions. ***Brent Uilenberg will update the yearly cost-share expenditures chart and will send it to the Coordination Committee.***

***The Coordination Committee adopted the work plan with the placeholders for the scopes of work on the Population Model and Trophic Relationships.***

#### **STATEMENT FROM A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE**

Carroll Crawford provided the Coordination Committee with a handout and suggested that the Committee needs to look very carefully at large releases made for endangered fish habitat purposes. He was in favor of building a hatchery to maintain the endangered fish instead of releasing additional water from Navajo Dam. He felt that a much more conserving use of the water was needed. .

#### **REVIEW NEW STARTS FOR FY04 AND DRAFT CONTRACTING PROCEDURES**

Brent Uilenberg mentioned that the draft contracting procedures were reviewed by the contracting office for Reclamation and they think it is a good process to use. Tom Pitts gave an overview of the development of the draft procedures. The May 15, 2003 version of the draft procedures is the most current draft version. In the proposal, there is a commitment to have peer review, adherence to long range plans, ranking and rating proposals, and a bidding process through requests for proposals,

The Biology Committee identified in February reviewed the long range plan and identified additional work (new starts) that was needed to move the Program to recovery. From the tasks that were identified and further refined and developed, we need to put into a format that could be used for a request for proposal and develop evaluation criteria. It would work best if the tasks were identified by the Biology Committee and developed into a request for proposal by a technical committee. Bill

Miller said that the procedures are good, but the infrastructure isn't in place to do this now. We either need to get more Program staff or take more out of base funding for Biology Committee to do more of this work. The Peer Review budget approved today doesn't include peer review for the new starts; additional money would be required to do this.

There was a discussion on who has the capability to do this work, the Program staff, Reclamation staff or Service staff. Under this plan, the Program staff is responsible for reviewing the long range plan and developing program guidance. It was agreed that for now, the Service and Reclamation would review and develop the evaluation criteria for the FY04 new starts. ***Shirley Mondy, Brent Uilenberg and Susan MacMullin will have conference call on August 27 regarding the evaluation criteria.***

Brent Uilenberg updated the Coordination Committee on the status of the rearing ponds. \$41,000 worth of work on Hidden Pond will be done with this year's funds. The ponds have been drained and a salamander fence needs to be constructed. The ponds will be modified to increase the ability to harvest fish out of the existing ponds.

Ron Bliesner and the Biology Committee put together technical information for a request for proposal for pond construction. It will be ready to go in 2004. Both Ute Tribes and the Navajo Nation, as well as private owner are interested in bidding on pond construction. Brent estimates a total of \$500,000 will be needed for pond construction. ***Brent Uilenberg and Shirley Mondy will ensure that the request for proposals will be advertised in the local papers.***

#### **BIOLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Biology Committee has been dealing with integration over the last 12 months. The Physical subgroup finally met in May after being delayed due to lack of funding. The next meeting will be in November in Albuquerque and hopefully a draft integration report will be completed at that time.

The normal fall monitoring will take place in October and the winter meeting will be in February.

**PNM Fish Passage Safety Concerns** – The Biology Committee went to the fish passage structure during their July meeting. Some safety concerns were noted. The two cranes are equal height which causes problems maneuvering the baskets; the baskets can't make it out over the safety rails; and there is nothing to lock the booms in place. Their current power is a generator, not a permanent source. Two-way communication needs to be placed on site. For safety reasons, they need to make sure they have two people on site.

Brent Uilenberg recognizes the problems with the cranes as they are now. Reclamation can make the boom closest to the trap shorter which should solve the problem. There is a locking mechanism on the booms. The current generator is undersized to move the

booms. Reclamation has put in a new generator, and hopefully it will address the problems. Brent agrees that two-way communication is needed at the facility. The cell phone coverage is very weak. We need to get a phone line down there or a different cell provider. The baskets will be installed, but they can't be used until the new generator is installed and the beam is cut back.

It was noted that Albert Lapahie with the Navajo Nation is doing a great job. Ernie Teller from the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been a tremendous help in the operation of the fish passage.

#### **HYDROLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Hydrology Committee met five times this year. Ray Alvarado has donated a lot of his time getting the model working and it is appreciated.

A subcommittee is working on putting together the "triggers" for extreme conditions for future years.

#### **COORDINATOR UPDATE**

There still seems to be problems with contracting from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is stalled in the Albuquerque Regional Office. ***It was suggested that Joy Nicholopoulos call the BIA to get the contract moving.***

Shirley Mondy submitted a request for reduced overhead charges. It is now in the Washington Office for review and approval. We haven't heard if a decision has been made.

Tom Pitts mentioned that the Service Grand Junction Office will be deciding on whether the \$50,000 that the City of Durango deposited with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation can be returned. He expects an answer on September 4.

The Program website is still under construction. We are moving it to new software and because of this; some of the current links do not work. ***If anyone needs specific documents that they can't retrieve from the web, they should let Shirley Mondy know.***

The Committee was informed that Marilyn Greenberg was leaving for a job in Denver. Her position will be advertised soon.

New starts will be emailed back out to the Committee once they are complete.

#### **SET NEXT MEETING DATE**

There will be a conference call regarding flows on October 3, 2003 at 2 pm.

## Attachment 1: Extreme Conditions 2003 Memo from Hydrology Committee

August 11, 2003

To: San Juan RIP Coordination Committee  
From: San Juan RIP Hydrology Committee

Subject: Determination of Extreme Hydrologic Conditions in the San Juan River Basin for 2003

On April 1, 2003 the Hydrology Committee determined that “hydrologic conditions indicate that extreme dry conditions exist and that the Program should consider appropriate water conservation measures”. This memorandum describes the bases for that determination.

2002 was the driest year on record in the San Juan River with runoff approximately 50% of the previous driest year (1977). On April 1, 2003, the storage level in Navajo Reservoir stood at 6,009 ft (813,000 af). Elevation 5,990 (661,800 af) is the minimum design elevation or bottom of the active pool. Below this elevation, NIIP cannot divert its full water supply and there is no riprap protection on the face of the dam. All historical operation analyses have considered 5,990 as the minimum operating elevation for the irrigation season. Utilizing this minimum elevation there was only 151,000 af of remaining active storage on April 1st.

The forecast inflow and expected water use for the year placed the expected elevation on July 31 between 5,988 and 6,018 ft for the minimum and most probable forecast. Modeling completed for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) flow recommendations report for the San Juan River found that a minimum carryover storage level of 900,000 af (6,018.8 ft) on July 31 was needed to prevent shortages to water users and meet the flow recommendations for the San Juan River downstream of Farmington. This is a calibrated value for current depletion levels in the basin using the 1929-1993 period of record and a minimum Navajo Dam release of 250 cfs. Both the most probable and minimum probable forecasts placed the July 31 level below 6,018.8 ft. In fact, the minimum probable forecast predicted a shortage in the available water supply to meet all water demands, and water users in the basin agreed to a shortage sharing process for 2003. The determination of an “extreme condition” by the Hydrology Committee was based on the low reservoir elevation, the drier than normal predicted inflow and the probability of water shortage in the basin.

## Attachment 2: Extreme Conditions 2004

August 11, 2003

To: San Juan RIP Coordination Committee  
From: San Juan RIP Hydrology Committee

Subject: Extension of Extreme Hydrologic Conditions in the San Juan River Basin for 2004.

At the Hydrology Committee Meeting on August 5, 2003, the hydrologic conditions in the basin were reviewed. It was determined that the declaration of extreme dry conditions should be extended to 2004. Following is the basis for this declaration.

1. On July 31, Navajo Reservoir was at 800,000 af (6,007.4 ft). This is 100,000 af below the minimum carryover storage level specified in the operating rules for Navajo Dam, as described in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) flow recommendations report, and the lowest reservoir level since the reservoir filled. The minimum carryover storage level was determined by calibration as the level needed to prevent water shortages and allow the flow recommendations for the San Juan River below Farmington to be met under current depletion levels using 1929 – 1993 hydrology and assuming a minimum release from Navajo Dam of 250 cfs.
2. Inflow to Navajo Reservoir remains below normal in spite of recent storms and is forecast to remain below normal through October in the latest weather service three-month forecast.
3. Presently, a 6% shortage in water supply for the basin is anticipated for 2003, and demands will have to be reduced by this amount to prevent the reservoir from falling below 5,990 ft (minimum operating pool elevation) by the end of the year. This is 20 ft lower than December 31, 2003, and leaves no carryover storage for 2004.
4. A shortage was declared when there was a carryover of 165,000 acre-feet last year. With no carryover, a dry winter could result in a catastrophic water supply situation next year.

Due to the extremely high risk of substantial water shortage next year with no water in the bank, we encourage the Program to consider and take all possible measures to promote the conservation of stored water for meeting water demands in the basin in 2004. This determination of extreme dry conditions will remain at least until the minimum probable water supply forecasts indicate that no shortage will exist and the

minimum carryover storage level of 900,000 acre-feet can be attained. We will reevaluate the determination of extreme conditions when the first runoff forecast is available in March 2004.