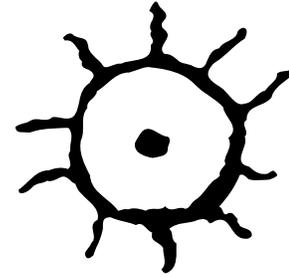


Approved June 16, 2005



**San Juan River Basin
Recovery Implementation Program
Coordination Committee
Minutes for
May 13, 2005**

Coordination Committee Members

Joy Nicholopoulos, Chairman

Chuck McAda for Al Pfister
Dan Israel
Randy Seaholm
Susan Jordan
Tom Pitts
John Whipple
Catherine Condon
Brent Uilenberg
Stanley Pollack
Bahe Billy for Ernest Teller
Joel Farrell

Hydrology & Biology Committee Members:

Pat Page, Hydrology Committee

Others Present:

Bill Miller
David Campbell

Joann Perea-Richmann

Mike Buntjer

Mark McKinstry
Mike Ward
Darryl Beckmann
Elaine England
Melynda Roberts
Amy Kraft
Raymond Smith
Timothy Jones
Andrea LeFevre
Joe M.
Charles Lawler

Representing:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico
Ecological Services Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Water Development Interests
State of New Mexico
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Stanley Stanley
Navajo Nation
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Representing:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Representing:

Miller Ecological Consultants, Inc.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico
Ecological Services Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico
Ecological Services Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico
Ecological Services Field Office
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Salt Lake City, UT
Water Development
BIA – NIIP
Public Service Co. of New Mexico
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Changes were made to include Contract discussion for FY05, Update on Integration Report and discussion on Minor Depletion Account.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APRIL FEBRUARY 23, 2005 MEETING MINUTES

The committee tabled the February minutes until the June 16, 2005 meeting. Status of action items were reviewed see attached with updated status.

RFP PROCESS GIVEN BY MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (BoR)

Mark McKinstry, Mike Ward, Darryl Beckmann, Elaine England and Melynda Roberts were in attendance representing the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) to discuss this issue.

Mark McKinstry opened the discussion by explaining that the BoR has recently begun to implementing procedures for administering grants and cooperative agreements (as defined by Federal grant and cooperative Agreement Act for discretionary grant or financial assistant programs) to the funding that the BoR administers for the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins pursuant to Cooperative Agreements. The BOR has stated that the recovery activities being implemented by the Biology Committee should be subject to competitive sourcing. Competitive sourcing of the Programs work plan would occur through the BoR's Request for proposal (RFP) process.

The Biology Committee is concerned that the competitive sourcing process will hamper the Programs' ability to accomplish the recovery objectives. The Utah Department of National Resources and Colorado Division of Wildlife have sent letters to the BoR expressing their concerns that the BoR interpretation and administration of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act procedure may circumvent the State's legislated authority to manage the wildlife resources within the respective states.

Representatives for the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Navajo Nation have expressed their concerns to the BoR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) via e-mails and phone conversations. Their concerns are that the BoR is overstepping their role as a participant and usurping the authority of the Program.

The BoR position is that Program Management is the only area that would not be subject to competitive sourcing.

Mike Ward addressed the committee stating that the directive to implement procedures for administering grants and cooperative agreements has come from the Department of Interior. There are three exceptions to competition per OMB M-04-01.

1. Programs which only publish funding opportunities for in the catalog for federal domestic assistance.
2. Announcements of funding opportunities for awards less than \$25,000.00 for which 100% of the eligible applicant's live outside the United States.

3. Single source announcements of funding opportunities issued by an agency which are specifically directed to a non-recipient. (example: if legislation specifically directs a particular program).

Mike Ward stated that he did not believe that the SJRIP qualifies for any of the above criteria.

Dave Campbell asked for clarification on exception #3 and why it did not apply to the SJRIP since this program was formed by the Department of the Interior and operates under the 1992 Cooperative Agreement⁴ which specifically states that the program is established under sections 2(c) 2, 4(f) and 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and sections 1 and 2 of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. et seq.). The Cooperative Agreement adopted the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program Document (Program Document) to govern the organization, operation and administration of the Program.

Congress enacted Public Law 106-392 that authorized and directed the BoR to fund the intergovernmental program established pursuant to the 1992 Cooperative Agreement to implement the Recovery Implementation Program for the Endangered Fish Species in the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program.

Mike Ward (BoR) stated that the Cooperative Agreement was not the type of agreement which is formed under the Financial Agreement Act and was not actually a Cooperative Agreement but more like a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

David Campbell asked for clarification regarding public Law 106-392 which directs the fund to the Program.

Elaine England stated that although the public law directs the funding to the program the funding is to be administered by the BoR, the BoR will oversee contracting and will apply the financial assistance guideline to the funding.

Susan Jordan (Jicarilla Apache Tribe) asked if the BoR would provide the Committee with the Directive or Policy which directs the BoR to implement the grants and cooperative agreement funding procedures. Susan Jordan also asked for the memo from the Interior that directs these procedures be implemented. Mike Ward said that the information would be provided for the CC and posted to the SJ web site. Mike Ward indicated that the letter from the Office of Management and Budget will be provided for the committee but there is no policy memo from Interior. Susan Jordan then asked if there was any precedent that indicated that these procedures be implemented on the SJRIP. Mike Ward replied there was no precedent that the BoR was following.

Darryl Beckman stated that this was in no way meant to single out the SJRIP, and this is not intended to preclude sole sourcing. He explained that an audit was done within BoR and it's to the point where everything and all program are being looked at in ways of saving money. It was also indicated that both the SJRIP and BoR can work together on RIP's to make sure justifications on Statement-of-Work (SOW's) are turned in correctly. Funding is getting tighter and the pressure for BoR to comply will get more intense.

Mike Ward reiterated that all Federal agencies are being viewed the same way and that competitive sourcing is being emphasized.

Susan Jordan asked whether this program or components of it would be eligible for 638 contracts to Tribes. In response to Susan's request for an example of a Cooperative Agreement that has been deemed to qualify under the exception to competitive bidding. Darryl Beckmann addressed the committee by saying that one area in which the committee might research would be under 10257-75 Title 16 (Waste Water Agreement-Cooperative Agreement).

Joy Nicholopolous asked the BoR representatives where this program goes from here. Darryl Beckman suggested that going through Legislation on the committee concerns. Mike Ward added that this program is unique and that it's important to address the following questions:

1. Is there good science for the cost?
2. What has been done for the money spent?
3. What the future objectives for this program?

This is particularly important for single sourcing.

The Committee will meet on June 16th in Farmington to focus on the issue of Program funding and addressing which components of the program could be single sourced and which should be open to the competitive sourcing process.

Dave Campbell and Mark McKinstry will prepare recommendations for the Committee to review and discuss.

FUNDING OF PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND FWS OVERHEAD UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Tom Pitts said that funding for the Program Coordinator and Program Support Assistant in the past had been funded by the FWS. He believes this still needs to be done. This was brought up in discussions in Washington that FWS would provide 25% of salaries for both positions in FY05, but the whole amount would not be funded due to budget constraints. Joy Nicholopoulos stated that she will continue to solicit for funding of the Program Coordinator and Program Support Assistant. If the Committee believes this issue needs to be addressed further the committee could request this in writing to the Regional Office.

Randy Seaholm stated that the Upper Colorado Basin has requested 100% funding for the Program Coordinator/Program Support Assistant. Joy Nicholopoulos said that the program document states "FWS would contribute either cash or in-kind contributions". Tom Pitts stated it also says "it will provide Program Staff and expenses for the Program Coordinator". Joy Nicholopoulos again stated that if a letter of request is to be submitted to the FWS Regional Office, she would step back on this issue and let the Committee address this with the FWS Regional Office.

FWS OVERHEAD UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Tom Pitts said that the Service has applied a transfer on funds from the BoR to the FWS of Service in the San Juan of 22% which runs about \$100,000 - \$115,000 per

year. He was unaware whether these funds show up in the budget or in a project? This was being done in the Upper Basin Program. In 1998 it was proposed that the Service eliminate the fee because that money was needed to fund recovery of fish. The Service did not want to do this so the issue was raised with Congress. At that time, the FWS proposed to reduce the standard rate of 50%. A letter was received from the Washington Office in agreement to do this. Tom Pitts has made a similar request (informally) to Region 2 asking that they do the same. He stated that Region 2 replied they would not do this. Tom Pitts stated they will continue to request that Region 2 reduce its overhead rate.

Joy Nicholopoulos mentioned that in 2002 or 2003 the former Program Coordinator drafted a letter requesting overhead charges and that request never made it out of Region 2. At a recent Regional retreat it was stated by the Regional Director that “they would not entertain reduction or removal of overhead costs due to dire funding constraints”. David Campbell said he followed up as to why the request never made it out and it was indicated to him that the amount of overhead were reduced it would not cover administration costs.

Joy Nicholopoulos indicated that there has been some discussion of Program Management funds being transferred from BoR to FWS to administer. Mark McKinstry stated that this was possible if the FWS could administer the funding for what the BoR is currently managing it for. The BoR’s total cost to administer funding is about 3.7%. The Economy Act would require costs be equal to or less than what is currently being charged now. The committee agreed that this is something to consider later on.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP

Tom Pitts had sent letter report to the committee. The trip to Washington, D.C. was done in April. Thirteen out of 14 members of the house delegations signed a letter of support was also presented to the appropriation committee for Reclamation of Service. Four of the eight Senators signed the letter supporting the program, but Senator Alarid and Senator Domenici don’t sign letters to the appropriation committee but help with this effort. Service funding of the Upper Basin in FY2004 was zeroed out of the Presidents budget the Service highlighted it. OMB then looked at this and earmarked it for FY05 and it was put back in, but then removed again. Tom Pitts said they met with OMB and Charlotte in the Budget Office at the Department of Interior to discuss this matter and that his interpretation was that it will eventually be corrected. An extension for the program was agreed too within the Delegation group with the Upper Basin receiving \$15M and a two year extension for the SJRIP program.

Recovery Goals Crosswalk

Bob Muth and David Campbell went through the program accomplishments, projects and activities and tied them to the Recovery Goals for the respective species for each program. This information was provided to OMB at their request. Recovery programs Nationwide are being asked to show how the money is being spent towards accomplishing the recovery goals.

FISH AND WILDLIFE CAPITAL UPDATE

Randy Seaholm said a list had been received for projects which need to be funded. They've worked with BoR to see which projects have received invoicing and outlines for progress made. As a result they were able to draft a contract for Colorado to cover additional expenditures which occurred and are hoping to have the contract in place within the next couple of months.

John Whipple expressed concern about the balance in Capital Funding account stating projects need to get done. Brent Uilenberg addressed the committee saying that during the last meeting the CC authorized expenditures of 1.) \$132,700 for the rehabilitation of Ponds and the Navajo Irrigation project which are under contract with Keller-Bliesner, using the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This project will take about 90-120 days for completion depending on delivery of materials. 2.) Reimbursing BIA for the outstanding money owed for the Hogback/Fish passage, they were previously reimbursed the sum of \$2M and negotiated an agreement for the work of \$3.350 and final payment would be the sum of \$1,350 this fiscal year. 3.) Working on the design work for the Hogback fish screen which has been problematic for some time now, the design is expected to be done in FY06 then under contract and project started in late FY06 or early FY07.

Brent Uilenberg said that the Program needs to move forward before the extension of time for construction of capital projects expires. Therefore the committee needs to make decisions on the following projects:

- Fruitland fish passage and
- Arizona Public Service (APS) Company Fish passage

Chuck McAda announced that a draft report had been received on APS, but that the BC has not reviewed or commented as of yet.

David Campbell said he read the draft report and believes that there is enough information for the BC to make a recommendation to the CC because the report does identify APS as a barrier to fish passage.

Brent Uilenberg stated we need to make a decision on whether these are problems or not? And do we need to fix this or not?

Stanley Pollack asked what the latest word was on the problems in the PNM fish weir, and wants to know what was going to be done with this problem. Brent Uilenberg stated the suggestion was to move the sand hydrologically. If this approach doesn't work they'd have to go out and use the tractor. High waters received this year may take care of the problem. Other members asked if Capital funding could be used for other methods if the waters don't wash the accumulated sand. Brent Uilenberg said an engineered solution had been looked at and there were none that would address the problem. It appears the only solution was to use equipment to remove the accumulated debris from the problem areas.

STATUS ON INTEGRATION REPORT

Bill Miller addressed the committee stating that the BC would be having a conference call June 8, 2005 to review and make all corrections and have finalized and to the CC by July 8, 2005.

UPDATE ON PROGRAM DOCUMENT

David Campbell reported he provided a copy to all committee members as well as all comments which have been provided to him. He provided changes he made on a separate sheet. Brent Uilenberg's comments were received but not included in this draft. David Campbell proceeded to go over the following:

- 1.) Page 27 within the Principles of Endangered Species which is on a document itself, to include the BC with CC to make decision move to update this section. It previously read the "Coordination with the CC will not alter the time frame for consultation" now reads "Coordination with the Biology and coordination committees will not alter the time frame for consultation". Tom Pitts suggested not changes the principles but to only change the Program Document.
- 2.) On procedures and organization the State of Utah was deleted because they are not a participant. A suggestion was made to contact Conservation to see if they want to be excluded or if there is some interest to participate at this point. The CC members agreed to this.

LONG RANGE PLAN UPDATE

David Campbell stated that he is waiting for the Integration Report before he can complete this. David will forward any comments he currently has to the CC and would like feedback as soon as possible. Tom Pitts suggested that David continue to make changes to this document as they come in and changing the date to reflect the revised date then send them to the CC. Rather than wait for Randy and Tom to review. David reviewed the following with the CC:

- 1.) On page 37-38 comments came out from the Hydrology formation documentation with Pat Page's version of how the HC wants it stated. In Chapter 6 there are specific areas where the CC, BC, HC and the Service need to be reviewed and marked carefully.
- 2.) The next major changes are under the annual work plan and the program funding. Program funding previously read reflected the organization of the program in 1992. Updates have been made to reflect current totals without comments from the BoR to reflect the current funding of annual base funds and the history of it from Public Law 106392 and the administration of those funds through the BoR. The Annual funding sources have been revised and identifies contributions from the organizations on an annual basis. The only comment received was from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

David asked that all participants review their sections carefully, stating this is not a revision of the Principles Document, but an edit up to that point.

NAVAJO DAM BIOLOGICAL OPINION STATUS

Joy Nicholopoulos announced that the Biological Opinion (BO) had been received and will be forwarded to the CC next week.

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE (BC) UPDATE (plans attached)

Chuck McAda said copies of the Augmentation Modification Plans were enclosed in

their budget packets. He mentioned that these modifications were requested by the CC to explain the delay in the starting date and why stocking of 11,000+ Razorback suckers won't be done until 2007.

- Chuck McAda said at the last BC meeting Tom Wesche expressed concerns with the current Pikeminnow Augmentation effort. The committee discussed ways to improve the size of Pikeminnow stocked and the conclusion was to contact Dexter to see if they could provide an annual production of at least 3000 150mm Colorado Pikeminnow to be ready for stocking by fall 2007. Tom Brooks contacted Dexter during a break to see if this could be done and at what cost. Tom Brooks reported back to the committee indicating Dexter could do this at a cost of \$15,000. The BC committee agreed to this.

Tom Pitts asked if a new SOW would need to be submitted for this process. Mark McKinstry stated that the current SOW could be revised.

A motion to approve the revised augmentation plans was done and the committee unanimously agreed.

- Chuck touched on the SOWs indicating that there were no new starts everything provided are ongoing projects.
- Chuck said that they have been successful in capturing larval fish. The BC is continuing to catch stocked razorback sucker and 3-year class Pikeminnow.

HYDROLOGY COMMITTEE (HC) UPDATES (COPIES OF THE MEMO & LETTERS WERE SENT TO THE CC)

- Pat Page stated they will not in be able to use all their expenditures for FY05. And both the HC and BC have agreed to transfer the money to the BC to purchase pit tags and recorders.
 - **The CC made a motion and approved the transfer of FY 2005 funds in the amount of \$28,000 from the HC to the BC. These funds would be used to purchase in advance pit tags and recorders that have been identified in the FY 06 Work Plan and Budget. The FY 06 \$28,000 for pit tags and recorders in the BC budget would be transferred to the HC in FY06. David Campbell agreed to draft a letter for this transaction.**
- The HC is getting ready to start work on revised flow recommendation suggestions given by the BC and having them completed by the end of the Fiscal Year.
- An agreement is in place among the 10 major water users on the Operation and Administration of the San Juan. The agreement has been accepted by the State Engineer and Mr. Gold, Regional Director of BoR.
- Reservoir releases are up to 4000 cfs as of May 12, 2005. They will be reviewing the releases next week to see if they can increase to 5000 cfs or maintain at 4000 cfs. By May 25, 2005 they should be at 5000 cfs and remain there for 21 days. Then ramp down by the end of June. Brent stated that there was some discussion to evacuate more space by the end of the season? Pat Page said they were going to review this further next week and feel they will be ok, then re-evaluate at the end of May. A late release was discussed within the HC and it may be necessary to release in late September and only

- if there is a wet summer.
- In 2002 an inflow of 160,000 acre feet was received. From October 2004 to January 2005 the inflow was already received. Lake Powell's elevation is around 45 feet which is at 50% capacity.
 - Brent Uilenberg stated that the BC needs to address issues on how to improve barriers in order to absorb capital funds.
 - David stated that the fish from Dexter won't be stocked until FY2006, but Mumma has an additional 3000 + two-year old Pikeminnows and when the flows go down they will be pit tagged and stocked this year.

MINOR DEPLETIONS UPDATE

David addressed the CC stating that he has updated the Minor Depletions Account with the help of John Whipple and Ron Bliesner using historical information and reviewing old Biological Opinions. The account is currently at 1400 acre feet. Tom Pitts asked if Colorado had provided any information to correct discrepancies in the depletion account. David Campbell stated not at this time, but needed Colorado's documentations on depletions which were included in the Minor Depletions Account that were also included in the baseline.

David addressed the committee asking if there are discrepancies they are concerned with to contact him and provide documentation to support it.

Randy Seaholm said keeping better track of the records on consultations is important since this hadn't been done after the last Program Coordinator left. He suggested keeping in touch with Patty Gaeletti-Schrader of the Upper Basin Program as she may have supporting consultations and letters.

John Whipple asked David to compare the 1st Minor Depletion Account with the 2nd Minor Depletions Account to make sure duplications haven't been made.

Next Meeting – June 16, 2005, Civic Center, Farmington, NM

Adjourned at 2:30 pm

Attachment 1

ACTION ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED

1. Henry Maddox will provide information to David in order to compose a letter to amend the BO to return \$50,000 to the FWS, Colorado Region 6. David will provide to CC at the next meeting.
2. David and Mark will put together a list of overhead costs and procurement and then present to the CC so a determination can be made at the next meeting.
3. David and Mark will put together a list of projects which will be terminating in the years to come and provide it to the CC.
4. David Campbell will follow-up with the Conservation office to see if there is an interest for anyone to participate.
5. David would like to have the final draft of the Program Document completed by September and needs to have inputs by June 3, 2005.
6. CC is to review SOW packages handed out at the May 13th meeting and be prepared to review and discuss at the June 16, 2005 meeting.
7. Joy will forward BO to David/Joann and route to the CC.
8. Pat Page will get electronic copies of the memos on Operations and Administration to Joann to forward to CC.
9. Pat Page will draft up a memo to the BC on planned times for releases.
10. Brent Uilenberg will submit SOW for design work on Hogback fish screen to Joann for the June 16 meeting.
11. Tom Pitts stated he would take this task of drafting a letter on 100% funding for the Program Coordinator/Program Administrative Assistant and submit to the committee prior to sending it to the Regional Office.

David Campbell will compare 1st and 2nd minor depletions accounts to check for discrepancies.

Next meeting – June 16, 2005, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm, Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, NM

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 pm

Attachment 2

**AN AUGMENTATION PLAN FOR
COLORADO PIKEMINNOW IN THE SAN
JUAN RIVER**

**ADDENDUM # 1:
STOCKING AGE-1 FISH TO SUPPLEMENT
ONGOING AUGMENTATION EFFORTS
Draft**

Submitted By:
Dale W. Ryden
Fishery Biologist
12 April 2005
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Colorado River Fishery Project
764 Horizon Drive, Building B
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506-3946

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, An Augmentation Plan For Colorado Pikeminnow in The San Juan River (hereafter to referred as the "Plan;" Ryden 2003) was finalized. This Plan called for annually stocking $\geq 300,000$ age-0 Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) into the San Juan River for seven years (2003-2009) in order to facilitate establishing a population of ≥ 800 adult Colorado pikeminnow in the San Juan River between the Animas River confluence and Lake Powell (i.e., within the riverine portion of Colorado pikeminnow Critical Habitat in the San Juan River). The first stocking that occurred under auspices of this plan actually took place in October of 2002, while the Plan was still in draft form. At the time the Plan called for 250,000 age-0 fish to be stocked annually (this number was increased to $\geq 300,000$ age-0 fish in final version of the Plan). In the summer of 2002, a contract was established with Dexter National Fish Hatchery to provide age-0 Colorado pikeminnow for stocking throughout the duration of this augmentation effort.

Between 2002 and 2004, a total of 666,346 age-0 Colorado pikeminnow from Dexter NFH were stocked into the San Juan River (Table 1). The Plan called for 850,000 age-0 fish to be stocked over this same time period. This represented a shortfall of 183,654 (21.61%) fish over the three-year period (Ryden 2004, 2005a In Prep).

In addition to stocking age-0 fish between 2002 and 2004, the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) obtained two lots of Colorado pikeminnow from the J. W. Mumma Native Species Hatchery (Mumma) in Alamosa, CO. These consisted of 1,005 age-1 fish (2002 year-class) stocked into the San Juan River on 6 November 2003 (Ryden 2004) and another 1,219 age-2 fish (2002 year-class) stocked on 9 June 2004 (Table 1; Ryden 2005a In Prep). These Mumma fish were excess fish from the Colorado pikeminnow augmentation efforts that were ongoing in the Upper Colorado River Basin. While the recapture rate among Mumma fish stocked in 2003 (i.e. age-1) is low, the short-term recapture rate among Mumma fish stocked in 2004 (i.e., age-2's) was relatively high (1.06% of all Mumma fish stocked in June 2004 were recaptured during the fall 2004 Sub-Adult and Adult Large Bodied Fish Community Monitoring trip; Ryden 2005b In Prep.). In total, 70 (5.74%) age-2 Mumma fish from the 2004 stocking were recaptured during all 2004 field studies (SJRIP Integrated Database).

Table 1. Stockings of Colorado pikeminnow in the San Juan River, 2002-2004.

Date	Number Stocked	River Mile Stocked At	Mean Total Length (mm)	Range Of Total Lengths (mm)	Responsible Agency
10/24/2002	105,209	180.2	51	32-127	USFWS
10/24/2002	105,209	158.6	51	32-127	USFWS
11/06/2003	175,928	188.35 to 148.5	58	38-100	USFWS & BIO/WEST
11/06/2003	1,005	180.2	180	125-280	CDOW
06/09/2004	1,219	180.2	218	144-278	CDOW
10/21/2004 & 10/28/2004	280,000	188.35 to 148.5	50	35-116	USFWS & BIO/WEST

a USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Colorado River Fishery Project, Grand Junction, Colorado; BIO/WEST = BIO/WEST, Inc., Logan, Utah; CDOW = Colorado Division of Wildlife, J.W. Mumma Native Species Hatchery, Alamosa, Colorado

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE TO AUGMENTATION PLAN

The SJRIP operates under an approach known as “Adaptive Management.” The Adaptive Management approach lets the SJRIP Biology and Coordination Committees make appropriate modifications to annual work plans, field studies, monitoring and augmentation programs, and guiding documents, as new information becomes available that would suggest that a change would be advantageous in helping to more quickly and efficiently achieve the recovery of the two San Juan River endangered fishes (i.e., Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker {*Xyrauchen texanus*}).

Several factors led the SJRIP Biology Committee to decide that it would be advantageous to pursue stocking a second group of larger juvenile Colorado pikeminnow in addition to the scheduled annual stockings of age-0 fish. First among these was the shortfall in numbers of age-0 fish being produced annually at Dexter NFH between 2002 and 2004. Second was the advantage of having Mumma fish available to the SJRIP that were big enough to be individually PIT-tagged before being stocked. PIT-tagged fish allow researchers to determine the exact date and location at which a fish was stocked, determine age and growth, document post-stocking dispersal and movements, etc. Third was the relatively high short-term recapture rates observed among the 2004 stocking of age-2 Mumma fish. The age-2 Mumma fish, stocked in June 2004, seemed to have survived in larger numbers than expected and these fish moved into several new habitats that were previously unexploited by stocked age-0 fish (e.g., five of these age-2 Colorado pikeminnow were recaptured in the lower Animas River in July 2005). Lastly, augmentation efforts among razorback sucker have shown a much higher post-stocking survival and retention rate among fish stocked at ≥ 300 mm TL than for fish stocked at smaller sizes (Ryden 2000a, 2000b).

At their 5 April 2005 meeting, the SJRIP Biology Committee decided to stock 3,000 age-1 Colorado pikeminnow annually, beginning in the fall of 2006. These 3,000 age-1 fish will be in addition to the $\geq 300,000$ age-0 fish that are still scheduled to be stocked, as per the 2003 Colorado pikeminnow augmentation plan.

METHODS

A total of 3,000 age-1 Colorado pikeminnow (150 mm TL) will be reared at Dexter NFH (as per their modified work plan, dated 6 April 2005) and will be delivered annually (2006-2009) to the San Juan River for stocking. These age-1 fish will be delivered at the same time as are the age-0 Colorado pikeminnow. After a slow (several hour) tempering process, the Colorado pikeminnow will be transferred to stocking rafts equipped with aerated live-wells. Age-1 and age-0 Colorado pikeminnow will be held in separate tanks both during transport to the river (i.e., in stocking trucks) and transport downriver via rafts, in order to help minimize the potential of cannibalism. Age-1 and age-0 Colorado pikeminnow will be transported downstream and stocked into appropriate low-velocity habitat types (backwaters, embayment, quiet low-velocity shorelines, brush piles, etc.) within approximately the first ten river miles (RM)

downstream of the delivery point. These stocking sections will consist of RM 180.2-170.0 (the “Farmington to Hatch Trading Post” section) and RM 158.6-148.5 (the “Hogback Diversion to Shiprock” section). Age-1 and age-0 Colorado pikeminnow will be stocked into sites that are mutually exclusive of one another, again to decrease the possibility of cannibalism. Stocking and follow-up monitoring of age-1 Colorado pikeminnow will follow guidelines set forth in the SJRIP’s long-term monitoring protocols (Propst et al. 2000) and existing work plans.

Other than this addition of 3,000 age-1 fish to be stocked annually, the work plans and guidelines governing the annual stocking of $\geq 300,000$ age-0 Colorado pikeminnow over the next five years (2005-2009) have remained the same and will be governed by existing work plans and monitoring protocols, barring further addendums to the 2003 Colorado pikeminnow augmentation plan.

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**AN AUGMENTATION PLAN FOR
RAZORBACK SUCKER IN THE SAN JUAN
RIVER**

**ADDENDUM # 2:
JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGING THE BEGINNING
DATE OF THE EIGHT-YEAR STOCKING PERIOD
Draft**

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INTRODUCTION

Experimental stocking of razorback sucker into the San Juan River began in 1994, as outlined in An Experimental Stocking Plan for Razorback Sucker in the San Juan River (Ryden and Pfeifer 1994). Between 1994 and 1996, a total of 940 razorback sucker were stocked into the San Juan River by personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Colorado River Fishery Project (CRFP) office in Grand Junction, Colorado (Ryden 2000). Based on the success of this experimental stocking study the decision was made to implement a full-scale augmentation program for razorback sucker in the San Juan River.

In August 1997, a Five-Year Augmentation Plan for Razorback Sucker in the San Juan River (Ryden 1997) was finalized. The five-year augmentation plan, recommended the stocking of 73,482 razorback sucker into the San Juan River between 1997 and 2001. Stocking of razorback sucker from various sources into the San Juan River began in early September 1997. However, between 3 September 1997 and 1 November 2001 a total of only 5,896 razorback suckers were stocked into the San Juan River (Ryden 2003). If razorback sucker stocked as part of the experimental stocking plan (1994-1997) are included, 6,836 razorback suckers have been stocked into the San Juan River since 1994. The 5,896 razorback sucker stocked as part of the five-year augmentation effort represents a shortfall of 67,586 fish when compared to numbers recommended in the five-year augmentation.

The inability to achieve San Juan River razorback sucker augmentation goals has been due to a suite of circumstances all of which ultimately result in a lack of fish. However, the main problem is that rearing facilities outside of the San Juan River Basin lack the capabilities to hold and rear razorback sucker for the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP). To alleviate this problem, the SJRIP undertook efforts to obtain or build grow-out ponds within the San Juan River basin that would afford a measure of self-sufficiency (for holding/rearing fish) to the San Juan River razorback sucker augmentation program. Beginning in 1997, a series of grow-out ponds were established on Navajo Agricultural Project (NAPI) lands southwest of Farmington, New Mexico. Presently there are about 25 surface acres of grow-out ponds (i.e., nine individual ponds) being used to rear razorback sucker.

Because of the large shortfall in numbers of stocked fish during the 1997-2001 augmentation effort, the San Juan River Biology Committee adopted an addendum to the 1997 stocking plan (Addendum # 1 -- finalized in February 2003; Ryden 2003) that extends the intensive stocking period for razorback sucker for an additional eight-year time period. This addendum called for stocking a minimum of 11,400 age-2 razorback sucker (i.e., ≥ 300 mm TL) per year, with the goal of establishing an adult population of 5,800 adult razorback sucker in the San Juan River. This eight-year stocking period was originally supposed to begin in 2004 and continue through 2011. However, in 2004, a total of only 2,989 razorback sucker were stocked into the San Juan River (Ryden 2005 In Prep).

While this represents the largest number of razorback sucker stocked into the San Juan River in any single calendar year since 1994, it is still well below the number specified in the 2003 augmentation plan addendum (Ryden 2003).

The ongoing shortfalls between target stocking numbers in the razorback sucker augmentation plan addendum (Addendum # 1; Ryden 2003) and numbers of fish being harvested from grow-out ponds and stocked into the San Juan River has numerous causes. First, grow-out ponds have yet to produce fish at the densities that were originally anticipated (i.e., 500 lbs. of fish per surface acre per year) when they were constructed. This is caused at least in part by very dramatic differences in both primary and secondary productivity, due to wide variations in water chemistry and nutrient loads, among the nine ponds. Second, the NAPI grow-out ponds harbor large populations of tiger salamanders. When larval razorback sucker (the only size-class currently available to the SJRIP for stocking into these ponds) are stocked into the grow-out ponds in the spring of the year, initial losses to salamander predation are very heavy. Third, avian predation upon young razorback sucker in ponds can also be heavy, especially during periods of bird migrations (e.g., mergansers), or in less-mature ponds where there is no emergent shoreline vegetation to prevent wading birds from prowling the shorelines (e.g., herons). Fourth, West Avocet Pond experienced a fish kill in May 2004 that took this pond completely out of production. Indications point to the presence of an artificial chemical (perhaps a pesticide) having been dumped into West Avocet Pond that likely initiated the fish kill. Three of the nine grow-out ponds currently have no perimeter, security fencing around them to prevent such dumping of toxic substances or other adverse activities. In addition, the SJRIP has only just recently contracted with the Navajo Nation to provide an “on the ground” pond manager to specifically oversee the day-to-day management, security, and maintenance of the razorback sucker grow-out ponds. In past years, the local Bureau of Indian Affairs office (BIA-NIIP) in conjunction with personnel from Keller-Bliesner Engineering have performed maintenance and very basic pond management activities (e.g., filling, draining, fertilizing) gratis. However, maximizing the success of these ponds will likely require the presence of a trained, locally-based, fish culturist/pond manager.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE TO AUGMENTATION PLAN

The eight-year stocking period specified in the 2003 razorback sucker stocking plan addendum (Ryden 2003) was originally supposed to begin in 2004 and continue through 2011. However, since corrective measures to remedy the previously-listed limiting factors have not yet been implemented, the San Juan River Biology Committee has decided to delay “starting the clock” on this eight-year stocking period (i.e., waiting until the SJRIP can realistically expect to meet the annual stocking goals of 11,400 age-2 fish, \geq -300 mm TL as specified in the 2003 stocking

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plan addendum; Ryden 2003) until all corrective measures are completed/in-place. The exact date when this eight-year stocking effort will officially begin is unknown, but it is hoped that it will be during calendar year 2007 at the latest.

METHODS

The SJRIP operates under an approach known as “Adaptive Management.” The Adaptive Management approach lets the SJRIP Biology and Coordination Committees make appropriate modifications to annual work plans, field studies, monitoring and augmentation programs, and guiding documents, as new information becomes available that would suggest that a change would be advantageous in helping to more quickly and efficiently achieve the recovery of the two San Juan River endangered fishes (i.e., Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker {*Xyrauchen texanus*}).

The SJRIP Biology Committee has developed, approved, and implemented work plans aimed at correcting the factors that are currently known to be limiting the production of sufficient numbers of razorback sucker to meet the annual stocking goals. These corrective measures currently include:

- 1) Getting West Avocet Pond back into production. Scraping, reshaping, and refilling West Avocet Pond is scheduled to be performed in 2005. In addition, a gravity drain will be added to West Avocet Pond. If these actions are completed in time, restocking the pond could occur as early as 2005, but will more likely occur in spring 2006. Security fencing will also be installed around the perimeter of the two Avocet ponds and Hidden Pond during 2005.
- 2) Finalizing a comprehensive pond management plan. A study designed to identify sound pond management strategies and ways to maximize razorback sucker growth in the NAPI grow-out ponds is currently underway. A pond management plan will be produced at the end of this study.
- 3) Hiring and training an “on-the-ground” pond manager. The Navajo Nation’s Department of Fish and Wildlife is being funded (starting in 2005) to oversee day-to-day operations at the NAPI grow-out ponds. The pond manager will be responsible for performing routine pond monitoring and maintenance, providing security, assessing the impacts of (and developing solutions to) avian predation, responding to critical events (such as fish kills), and implementing the strategies/actions outlined in the pond management plan.
- 4) Stocking grow-out ponds with razorback sucker that are large enough to avoid predation by tiger salamanders. Dexter National Fish Hatchery (NFH) has been awarded a contract to produce and deliver 200+ mm TL razorback sucker ($n = 20,000$) to be stocked into the NAPI grow-out ponds, annually. These fish will then be reared in the existing grow-out ponds until they have reached ≥ 300 mm TL, at which time they will be harvested and stocked into the San Juan River. However, since this contract was issued in early 2005, it will take some

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time for Dexter NFH to get “up to speed” in producing, rearing, and delivering these annual shipments of fish. In reality, the first full shipment of 200+ mm TL fish (n = 20,000) will likely occur in 2007.

Once these corrective actions have been fully implemented, it is anticipated that it will be feasible for the SJRIP to annually meet or exceed the target number of 11,400 razorback sucker (≥ 300 mm TL) specified in the 2003 razorback sucker augmentation plan addendum (Addendum # 1; Ryden 2003).

Other than “starting the clock” on the eight-year stocking period at a later date than was originally specified, all objectives, goals, and methods specified in the 2003 augmentation plan addendum (Addendum # 1; Ryden 2003) will remain unchanged. In the interim, the SJRIP grow-out ponds will continue to be stocked annually (in the spring) with larval razorback sucker of appropriate lineage. Harvest efforts (to remove, PIT tag, and stock fish that are ≥ 300 mm TL) will also continue during this interim period.

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