



## COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 9, 2013  
Doubletree Hotel, Durango, CO

### Meeting Summary

#### Coordination Committee Members:

Jim Brooks, Chair  
Catherine Condon  
Celene Hawkins  
Herb Becker  
Michael Howe  
Dale Ryden  
Tom Pitts  
Stanley Pollack  
Ted Kowalski  
Brent Uilenberg  
Kristin Green  
Patrick McCarthy  
Absent

#### Representing:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6  
Water Development Interests  
Navajo Nation  
State of Colorado  
Bureau of Reclamation  
State of New Mexico  
The Nature Conservancy  
Bureau of Land Management

#### Program Management:

David Campbell  
Sharon Whitmore  
Scott Durst

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2  
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#### Other Interested Parties:

Bill Miller, BC Chair  
Jacob Mazzone, BC Rep.  
Brian Westfall, BC Rep.  
Jason Davis, BC Rep.  
Tom Wesche, BC Rep.  
Mark McKinstry, BC Rep.  
Eliza Gilbert, BC Rep.  
Steve Ross, Peer Reviewer  
Carrie Lile  
Bruce Whitehead  
Susan Behery  
Heidi Hansen  
Chris Cheek  
Mike Greene  
Sarah Conn  
Steven Platania

Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2  
Water Users  
Bureau of Reclamation  
State of New Mexico  
University of New Mexico  
Southwestern Water Conservation District  
Southwestern Water Conservation District  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife  
PNM  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
ASIR

Three items were added to the agenda: debriefing on annual meeting, update on recovery plans, and Americas Great Outdoors award.

Brooks reported BLM's long time representative on the BC, Greg Gustina, has left the BLM. He and Campbell will work together to try to get more active BLM participation on both the CC and BC.

**Americas Great Outdoors Award (AGO)** – McKinstry nominated the RERI project for this award and Reclamation received it in May 2013. He nominated the project because it fit the premise of one of the five AGO initiatives of using partnerships with tribal, state, federal, and non-profit cooperators to restore rivers and waterways. The award states in part that: *“The San Juan River Habitat Restoration Project in New Mexico is designated a keystone conservation and outdoor recreation project under President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors program. Here, we celebrate the partnerships and collaboration that resulted in significant wildlife habitat restoration and species protection in the watershed.”* McKinstry said the award came with a large brass plaque and he asked what the Program would like to do with it. Davis suggested installing it at the Cudei Chapter House because the working relationship between Mike Isaacson, K-B Engineering, and the chapter house was instrumental in getting the project done. All present liked the idea. McKinstry, Uilenberg, and McCarthy will work with Justyn Hock, Public Affairs Specialist with Reclamation, to get a press release out and get the plaque installed.

**Approval of April 3, 2013 conference call notes** – Whitmore said the draft meeting summary included comments previously received from Condon but did not include comments just received from Pitts, McCarthy, and Green; however, those comments were sent to CC members prior to the meeting. Condon provided some additional comments at the meeting. The meeting summary was approved with all comments received.

**2013 Long-Range Plan** – Whitmore reported the version of the LRP sent out prior to the meeting was very similar to the version the CC saw at their last meeting. She did not receive any additional comments but did read through the whole document for quality control and made a few minor changes as a result. She thinks the document is in good shape for 2013 and has a list of items from comments and suggestions received to include in next year’s version. The Long Range Plan was approved for 2013.

**2014 Draft Annual Work Plan and Budget** – Campbell initiated a review of the draft 2014 AWP. Whitmore emphasized this is a rough first draft and the SOWs and budgets received went into the list as is. The blue text is where new numbers may be needed.

**Element 1** - McCarthy asked about costs for Horsethief Canyon Ponds. Ryden said the 2014 costs are for 1/6 of operation and maintenance of the facility and rearing and stocking in 2013 of 2,000-4,000 ( $\geq 300$  mm) razorback sucker. Brooks said the FWS made the decision to stop using Uvalde for rearing razorback sucker for various reasons. He said it is a good move and should be supported by the Program. Uvalde submitted a SOW for 2014 to transport and stock the last razorback sucker on station. They operate on a fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) so their 2013 SOW did not include costs for transporting and stocking fish this fall. Brooks and Ryden are working on transferring Program-purchased equipment at Uvalde to the NAPI and Horsethief rearing facilities.

**Element 2** – Hawkins asked what happened with PNM fish passage in 2012. Campbell said Navajo Nation had contracting and staffing issues which made it difficult to keep the passage open and fully operational. They were able to operate the facility for a short time as a selective fish passage where fish are manually sorted but then opened up as a passive passage where all fish can move up and down at will. The FWS made the decision to close down the passage if it could not be operated as a selective passage to prevent nonnative fish from moving upstream. Heidi Hansen, Grant Specialist with Reclamation, said Navajo Nation contracts should be done next week. McKinstry noted they had multiple issues with all NN contracts not just with the Program contracts (e.g., Navajo-Gallup). Whitmore asked if any capital projects should be listed since Hogback Fish Weir is completed and will be removed from the list. No other capital projects were identified for inclusion in the 2014 AWP. McCarthy will provide a 2014 SOW and in-kind amount for TNC’s Channel and Floodplain Restoration Project, Phase II.

**Elements 3&4** – Pitts asked about workshops. Campbell explained the workshop will be the first of a series of workshops on environmental flows in support of the upcoming flow recommendations revision. He said the Program Office is working with TNC on a SOW but it was not done in time for this meeting. Pitts asked about costs. Costs and an exact timeframe for the first workshop are unknown at this time. He will keep the CC informed on the issue.

Condon asked about the need to have five Program peer reviewers. Campbell explained there are five listed but Ron Ryel has health issues, John Pitlick is on sabbatical out of the country, and Brian Bledsoe still does not have contract in place so they cannot participate at this time. Mel Warren had a conflict for the week so only Steve Ross could attend. The peer reviewers only charge the Program when they are doing work for the Program and he thinks it is better to have more peer reviewers on the list to insure there will be at least a couple available when the Program needs peer review.

**Element 5** - Campbell explained the Program Office's 2014 budget is higher than 2013 because of carryover from 2012; however, because there is a good chance the 2013 money will come late in the fiscal year, there may end up being some carryover for 2014. Because of the sequester, the FWS R2 considered cutting the FWS contribution to the Program so he charged more of his time to Program base funds. The FWS decided not to cut those funds so he will be decreasing the amount he charges to the Program for his time and charging to the FWS contribution. McKinstry said his Funds Management budget went up to accommodate the additional oversight Denver provides for all contracts.

**Element 6** – The Education & Outreach program may be hindered for a while due to Debbie Felker retiring. The UCR Program will need to get a waiver to hire a replacement which could be a long process. McCarthy said it is unfortunate considering the CC recently discussed the importance of having an active I&E program and fully supported it and now it is derailed. Brooks and Campbell will work with FWS R2 ARD to get some help from R2 external affairs. Pitts and McCarthy will work on forming a small work group to work on facilitating I&E program.

**Estimated Budget** - Campbell said total costs for projects went down from last year but the draft AWP budget shows a hefty deficit. This is because the estimated hydropower revenues for 2014 decreased due to the Sequester. The sequester cuts appear to be 5% in 2013, 8% in 2014, and no one knows what they will be in 2015. Campbell said he does not plan to make 5% across-the-board cuts to all projects to decrease the budget and the BC identified no projects that could be eliminated. The Program Office will work on finding ways to decrease the deficit and will bring another budget back to the CC. A time frame for the next draft was discussed. McKinstry explained that in the past, he usually wanted the AWP approved before the end of the fiscal year so they could get the contracting done before the end of the calendar year. In October of 2013, Reclamation will be switching to a new budget management system (FBMS) and their financial systems will be shut down from September to December. If possible, he would like to get the 2014 AWP approved early enough to get everything wrapped up before the shutdown. Hansen said she will be able to work on the paperwork but will not be able to process contracts during the shutdown.

The CC's goal will be to get the 2014 AWP approved before August, if possible. The Program Office will get the next draft to the CC in early June for approval by early July.

**2013/2014 Annual Base Funding Update** – McKinstry reiterated the budget situation is still largely unknown. The federal government has not had a budget for four years which makes planning difficult. Hydropower revenues are not typically as affected. They were first told the Sequester would not apply to those funds so Reclamation moved forward with fully funding 2013 projects. They were then told sequestration does apply with a 5% reduction for 2013. This created problems for both Programs but more so for the UCR Program. Reclamation is also contending with the continuing resolution (CR) which

prevents them from obligating the funds and the bundling of activities into single contracts. He explained they are able to fully fund 2013 projects by using carryover which is not subject to sequestration but there have been delays in getting 2013 contracts done so Reclamation sent letters to the Principal Investigators informing them they will get funded. He hopes this provides some assurances. Brooks reported the FWS has been able to hire seasonals to do field work.

McKinstry explained that to come up with an estimate for 2014, he had to go back to 2012 and work forward. It looks like there will be an 8% cut in 2014 but it may not be that bad because CPI and the 5% cut from 2013 can be added back into the 2014 total (because it is revenue not appropriations). Still, there is no official word that sequestration applies to hydropower revenues. Pat Tease, who manages the hydropower revenue account for Reclamation, says there is a lot of carryover so everything can be fully funded right now. They are looking at a 3% cut in 2015.

Hansen emphasized that Principal Investigators should not make any cuts in their budgets because of sequestration. They are long-term contracts and no one really knows what will happen in the future. The costs in the SOWs need to reflect actual needs.

**FY13 Appropriations** – Pitts did not have much to report because the current status of the President's budget is unknown at this point but the budget request looks favorable. It will be used as a benchmark to make cuts from. Congress promised to produce a budget but the deadline has passed for any input. House and Senate members of the four states' delegations were asked to include the Programs in their funding priorities that are communicated to the appropriations committees and they understand the value of the two recovery programs as 13 of 14 members are on board. The CR will use the 2012 amount or what is in the 2013 request, whichever is lower. Uilenberg said Reclamation has about \$8 million in the budget (2012 amount). He said Reclamation's request stood up well mostly because of the UCR DC delegation visiting with agency heads to promote the recovery programs. Pitts said he specifically asked the FWS Director to support the budget.

**Capital Projects Update** – Uilenberg reported that Hogback fish weir is completed with only a few items left to wrap up. The project cost about \$3.5 million. Navajo Engineering Construction Authority (NECA) did a good job. Next on the capital projects list is APS fish passage but it cannot move forward until a decision is made on the site of the Navajo-Gallup lateral. If they decide on APS, the lateral and fish passage will be a joint project. He said it was determined that Fruitland did not need passage. Whitmore pointed out the evaluation done by Melissa Stamp back in 2004-2005 (Stamp and Golden 2005) also recommended that the rock dam be re-evaluated after maintenance work was next performed.

Uilenberg mentioned evaluating fish passage at the waterfall. He does not think it can be done. Campbell said he talked to his counterparts in the AZ Ecological Service Field Office about effects equalization may have on the endangered fish. Their office is the consultation lead for that project. He said they were not aware there were so many endangered fish in the reservoir and the effects on the listed fish were not considered in the EIS or BO. Kowalski said the 2007 guidelines are complex dealing with water deliveries, multi-state agreements, etc. and are not on the table. Campbell said the waterfall that forms from low lake elevations affects recovery so it is an ESA sec. 7 issue. Ryden added recruitment may be occurring within designated critical habitat in the reservoir. Brooks acknowledged the complexities of this issue but said we cannot just ignore it. Questions were asked about habitat truncation. Pitts said he thinks recovery can occur within the San Juan River. It is possible the waterfall could go away at some point on its own. Kowalski mentioned the Glen Canyon Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan and asked if something related to lake elevations could be included in that plan.

Whitmore asked if there were any entrainment problems that needed a capital projects fix. Platania said the study they did in 2004-2005 (Renfro et al. 2006) looked at entrainment at Hogback the first year then

added several smaller canals, Farmer Mutual, Jewett Valley, and Fruitland, the second year. They caught a variety of non-listed fish in the three smaller canals but only Colorado pikeminnow (CPM) in Fruitland. No razorback suckers were caught in any of the canals they sampled. Whitmore said studies like this and others that were done a long time ago should be re-evaluated now that there are many more endangered fish in the system. It was acknowledged that the loop needs to be closed on LRP Goal 2.3, *Provide Increased Range to Support Recovery of CPM and RBS Populations* which includes actions and tasks addressing both entrainment and fish passage (Page 62 of the LRP). Miller said the Program Office and BC will start discussing this.

Pitts asked about Farmer Mutual Ditch repair. Uilenberg said he has included it in his requests but it has never been funded.

**2012 Draft Sufficient Progress Report** – Campbell said that the report was signed and is final. The signed transmittal memo and final report were sent to the CC. Pitts said he appreciated the FWS getting the report out. He emphasized the importance of the document and asked if all the recommendations are in the LRP as tasks. Uilenberg said the task for APS Weir improvement is clear but not for Fruitland. There is a disconnect between the LRP and Sufficient Progress Report. Recommendation #9 about spills is also not clear. Whitmore will work on making a better cross-walk between the two documents and will make a check list to track sufficient progress recommendations.

**BC Meeting Report** – Miller said the BC met two days prior. They recommended that the CC approve the 2013 LRP. After listening to the earlier CC discussion about the early approval of the 2014 AWP, the BC will schedule a conference call in the next 2-3 weeks. He reported the BC has several new members. Ben Schleicher replaced Ryden as the new BC FWS R6 member and Ryden is now on the CC. Greg Gustina left the BLM but no new BLM member has been identified. Jake Mazzone will be the new Jicarilla BC member. Nate Franssen gave an in-depth report on some of the work he has been doing integrating Program data. Miller gave an update on the population model.

Miller said the BC finalized their memo on Ridges Basin escapement study and will be sending it to the Program Office this week. The Program Office will send the memo to the CC with a cover letter asking for CC review. After CC review, it will go to Patty Gelatt for a FWS determination on compliance with the ALP BO. It will be included on the agenda for the next CC conference call.

**Update on Recovery Plans** - Campbell reported the CPM recovery plan update is ongoing. A recovery team made up of state members from CO, NM, and UT and the two FWS regions is working on Chapters 1-3 of the plan first then will do Chapter 4. They expect to have a plan out in 2014. A recovery team is being formed to do the razorback sucker (RBS) plan. Jason Davis has been asked to be on the team.

Pitts voiced concern about the timelines for the revised recovery plans and how it might affect the Programs' timeline of delisting by 2023. This could occur if the new plans do not come out until 2018, 2020, or later and include new requirements for recovery. He mentioned the criticism they received when the FWS changed the date for CPM downlisting from 2013 to 2018 considering the amount of money that has been spent on both Programs. Pitts said we need a clear path outlined of what is needed to get to delist and downlist – a roadmap and measures of success. Campbell emphasized that the SJR only has two of the four species. Pitts pointed out the lower basin is also involved with the RBS. Kowalski said Tom Chart told him the date for CPM downlisting was changed to make it more realistic and to allow for flexibility but it could go back to something sooner than 2018. He pointed out that Lake Powell could also be an important factor for recovery.

**Debriefing on Annual Meeting** – Campbell thought it was a productive, well done meeting and he had no concerns. Miller said we have done this format for several years now and he thinks it works. He asked

the CC if there was something else or different they would like to see. Uilenberg said he liked the format and thinks the meeting was good. McCarthy thought the presentations were good. Miller said they tried having the peer reviewers review and provide feedback on all the presentations before the annual meeting to improve them but decided it was unnecessary. Pitts said the format is good and he had two observations.

Pitts' first observation was that the increase in CPM numbers is an artifact of stocking. Recruitment is needed and how do we get that? Campbell said we are getting closer with RBS. CPM has a longer lifespan and does not spawn as early in life as RBS. The stocked CPM are just now getting mature. McCarthy said perhaps they are just hard to find and may be detected in significant numbers only after the population size crosses some minimum threshold. Campbell said it may just be a matter of time and that the natal origin study may help to address this. Brooks said they are hard to find.

Hawkins asked why the nonnative fish removal crews are catching more endangered fish than the other monitoring efforts. Davis replied it is because of the amount of effort. The nonnative fish crews are on the river catching fish many more times than the monitoring crews. Ryden said if you include effort, trends across studies are the same. Steve Ross said no fish were found prior to the Program and now we have fish retaining in the system which is a positive trend.

Pitts' second observation is that the catfish control effort is not working. Based on the presentations, Condon indicated that she could not see that NNF removal was benefitting the endangered fish. Becker added how much this activity is costing the Program. Miller said the BC has wrestled with this issue. Ryden said they used to think the other native suckers could be used to gauge when the RBS will do well (i.e., what's good for the native fish is good for the endangered fish) but are now thinking blue head sucker and flannelmouth sucker may not be a good measuring stick for RBS. Removing carp definitely created a hole, possibly for the endangered fish that are being stocked every year. Brooks said the two endangered fish need space and with as many catfish as are being removed every year, space is being freed up. Using annual data and results, Davis said they have made adjustments, both temporally and spatially, to the nonnative fish removal program over time to improve success. Gilbert pointed out that we have seen a decrease in channel catfish in the upper river so there has been some success. Campbell added we are not seeing negative effects on the other native species from stocking which may not be the case if we were not removing nonnative fish and freeing up space.

McCarthy said targets for nonnative fish removal based on when the Program sunsets would be useful and asked if any had been developed. Whitmore said there is a task in the LRP to develop a comprehensive NNF removal plan that includes targets. Miller said the population model will be able to do this. He said the model will be operational by mid-summer and this version of the model has the full river system in it whereas there were only 5 reaches before.

McKinstry showed photos of the new Hogback fish weir. He pointed out where the Program will be installing a PIT tag reader to detect fish that get over the weir and into the canal. To see if the weir is excluding fish as designed, Miller said some additional monitoring is probably needed to detect small fish that do not have a PIT tag. Platania said there are good opportunities to do this.

**Next CC meeting** - Conference Call July 31; 1 p.m.; agenda items 2014 AWP and budget; Ridges Basin Dam fish escapement