



**SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (SJRIIP)
COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

**May 5, 2021
Draft Meeting Summary**

COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CC) MEMBERS:

Jason Davis, Chair
Steve Whiteman
Jennifer Dumas
Michelle Garrison
Susan Millsap, CC alternate
Stanley Pollack
Dale Ryden
Tom Pitts
Leland Begay
Roland Becenti
Colleen Cunningham, CC alternate
Ryan Christianson
Absent

REPRESENTING:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service), Region 2
Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)
Jicarilla Apache Nation
State of Colorado
The Nature Conservancy
Navajo Nation
Service, Region 6
Water Development Interests
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
State of New Mexico
Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

PROGRAM OFFICE (PO):

Melissa Mata, Program Coordinator
Eliza Gilbert, Assistant Program Coordinator
Scott Durst, Science Coordinator

Service, Region 2
Service, Region 2
Service, Region 2

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

Ron Bliesner, BC alternate
Jojo La, CC alternate
Matthew Zeigler, BC chair
Adam Barkalow, BC alternate
William Miller, BC member
Ben Zimmerman, BC alternate
Jacob Mazzone, BC member
Brian Westfall, BC member
Rudy Keedah, BC alternate
AJ Keith, BC member
Christina Noftsker, CC alternate
Crystal Tulley-Cordova, CC alternate
Lorelyn Hall, CC Alternate
Carrie Padgett, BC alternate
Vince Lamarra, BC member
Dan Lamarra, BC alternate
Colin Larrick, BC member
Dave Speas, BC alternate
Benjamin Schleicher, BC member

BIA
State of Colorado
State of New Mexico
State of New Mexico
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
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Jicarilla Apache Nation
BIA
BIA
The Nature Conservancy
State of New Mexico
Navajo Nation
SUIT
Water users
Navajo Nation
Navajo Nation
Ute Mountain Ute
Reclamation
Service, Region 6

Travis Francis, CC alternate	Service, Region 6
Stephen Davenport, BC member	Service, Region 2
Kathleen Callister, CC alternate	Reclamation
Mark McKinstry, BC member	Reclamation
Reecellee James	Reclamation
Valerie Deppe	Reclamation
Susan Behery	Reclamation
Tom Chart	Service, Region 6
Tildon Jones	Service, Region 6
Julie Stahl	Service, Region 6
Kevin McAbee	Service, Region 6
Nate Caswell	Service, Region 2
Nathan Franssen	Service, Region 2
Steve Mussmann	Service, Region 2
Melody Saltzgeber	Service, Region 2
Tracy Diver	Service, Region 2
Wade Wilson	Service, Region 2
Manual Ulibarri	Service, Region 2
T. Kim Yazzie	Navajo Nation
Steve Platania	ASIR
Mike Farrington	ASIR
Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distribution Association
Cameron Corely	Arizona Public Service
Pamela Norris	Arizona Public Service
Mike Green	Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM)
Brian Hines	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Melissa Trammel	National Park Service
Jamie Shockey	City of Farmington
Casey Pennock	Utah State University
Matt Bogaard	Kansas State University
Emily DeArmon	University of New Mexico
Deb Freeman	State of New Mexico
Katherine Duncan	State of Colorado
Matt P. Owens	North American Coal
Laura Spann	Southwestern Water Conservation District
Teresa Garcia	Unknown Affiliation
Zach Sylas	Unknown affiliation

Introductions and changes/additions to agenda – Davis

Annual meeting with open discussion

Mata presented results from the FY2020 annual work plan and the status of the species.

2020-2021 Hydrology and Operations - Behery

Behery updated the committee on Navajo Dam operations. The Animas-La Plata Project conducted its first requested release from Lake Nighthorse on March 15, 2021 at 8:00 AM. A total of 410-acre ft for 5 days was requested for the release. Nighthorse released 44 cfs for 3 days and 38 cfs for 2 days for a total release of 413.74-acre ft. Nighthorse will be refilled from the Animas River. Pitts asked if this was the first release from Nighthorse. Behery said it was the first called release. Behery reported on the 2021 hydrology in the San Juan River Basin. The basin is still very dry, but the upper San Juan River Basin and the Animas River Basin are 95% and 86% of average snowpack, respectively. Soil moisture is very low with current conditions being at the third lowest year over the last 40 years. Cumulative streamflow from the Animas River at Durango, CO is far below normal. Flow in the San Juan River at Four Corners is predicted to be very low in 2021 with peaks between 800 and 1000 cfs. There are significant amounts of dust in the mountains so that may help speed up runoff and increase peak flows. Reservoirs in the basin are averaging 40% capacity. Navajo Reservoir pool elevation is predicted to end at a lower elevation compared to current conditions at the end of the water year. None of the San Juan River flow recommendation high flow targets are predicted to be met in 2021. La asked if the reservoir drops below 5990 ft and shortage sharing occurs, would base flows be reduced. Behery responded that Reclamation would work with the Program to set base flows. Davis asked if the reservoir is going to be relatively low at the end of the year, does Behery have any idea about how much snowpack we would need next year to get back to more normal conditions. Behery responded that she wasn't exactly sure, but we would probably need 130-140% of average. Pitts asked how much Navajo needs to release in order to maintain base flows at 500 cfs. Behery responded that it depends on how much water people are drawing. In extreme dry periods, the dam needs to release between 1,000 and 1,200 cfs to maintain target base flows.

Behery reported on the 2020 water year. Soil moisture going into 2020 was not as low as it is currently. Soil moisture accumulates over time, therefore a third straight year of dry conditions will likely have strong impacts to runoff. The 2020 runoff came relatively early compared with previous years. Due to the low soil moisture, the actual runoff was below average even though snowpack in the basin was near average. Cumulative streamflow in the Animas River at Durango ended the year below the 25th percentile with record low flows in late 2020. Pitts asked what the source of water was that kept the Animas wetted during those low flows. Behery replied it was likely groundwater inputs. Pitts asked if those low flows in the Animas in the winter are normal. Behery responded "no", they are typically around 300 cfs during that season. Pitts asked if flows downstream of Durango were likely higher. Behery didn't look at the other gauges but it was likely a little higher at Farmington but not by much. Behery used the Durango gauge because there is little irrigation upstream and that reach of river is unregulated, making it a good measure of hydrology in the basin.

Review of March 8, 2021 Actions Items – Mata

1. The PO in coordination with Region 6 will summarize the contribution of Lake Powell to recovery. Mata will review Service documents re: the role of Colorado Pikeminnow in Lake Powell in recovery and report back to the CC. CC will write a memo to the Service requesting the Service's opinion of the contribution of Lake Powell in recovery. This Action Item is ongoing, the PO is currently waiting for the memo from the CC.
2. Mata, McKinstry, and Christianson will explore options regarding O&M for Navajo Nation projects. An update will be provided later in the meeting.
3. Gilbert will organize a small group to incorporate Section 7 Principle comments. Ongoing, there have been a couple of meetings. NM and CO are currently working on language and will bring suggested edits back to the group. Keep as an Action Item.

4. The PO will develop an initial draft clarifying appendix A of the long-range plan and send that to the BC for development of the 2021 long-range plan appendix A. Ongoing, BC was informed but has not been sent out yet. Need to make sure the Sufficient Progress Report and Long Range Plan Appendix are in agreement.
5. The Service will make an assessment on using the Navajo Gallup Depletion Guarantee in Hydrology Modelling for future section 7 consultations – report to CC on 5 May 2021. Ongoing. Pollack provided Navajo Nation’s concerns to Mata.
6. The PO will work with New Mexico to resolve comments on the quick reference SJRIP roles and responsibilities – report to CC on 5 May 2021. Ongoing, the PO will meet with NM soon.
7. Mata will coordinate with NPS to gage their interest in joining the SJRIP and provide a written proposal to the CC as appropriate – report to CC on 5 May 2021. There is an agenda item for this topic later in the meeting.

Approval of March 8, 2021 meeting summary – Durst

Durst received comments from Pitts, Ryden, La, Cunningham, and Christianson. Edits were left in track changes. Garrison motioned to approve the summary, Ryden seconded. The meeting summary was unanimously approved.

BC meeting review and discussion – Zeigler/Davis

Zeigler reported that the BC meeting yesterday focused on the FY2022 Annual Work Plan. There were several new projects that seemed to have a lot of support from BC members and the group discussed their merits and contribution to recovery if funded as well as other ongoing projects. There was a lot of discussion about the newly discovered Razorback Sucker – Flannelmouth Sucker hybrids that we previously assumed were wild recruited Razorback Sucker (RZB). There are plans to genetically assess juvenile RZB that are in the Museum of Southwest Biology to better quantify the prevalence of hybridization over time. McKinstry gave an update on current diversion projects in the Animas River and potentially working with project proponents to make diversions more fish friendly. The BC finished the diversion prioritization exercise and those results will be shared with the CC after they are compiled. Franssen gave an update on fish passage rates at PNM weir, there are more fish passing when the passage is operated as a swim-through channel compared to when fish are being trapped. The BC discussed potentially keeping the passage “open” all season long to increase passage rates but no decision was reached and the group will continue to assess ways to increase passage rates. The BC voted to recommend alternative 1 (downstream rock ramp design) for fish passage at the Arizona Public Service (APS) weir with the request that future designs be reviewed by the BC. Davis asked if the BC reached a consensus on the design, is the CC ready to vote or do they need more discussion. Ryden indicated he needed more time to discuss it with his BC representative. Davis asked when the CC needed to decide? Christianson said the decision should be made sooner than later. Davis asked that an email vote could occur in the next two weeks. McKinstry noted that APS was not interested in alternative 2 because they thought a fish passage configuration upstream of the weir may affect water intake at their structure. Cunningham asked if National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funds would be used for this project or just capital funds from Reclamation. Christianson responded that he was planning on using appropriated capital funds. La asked about the strategy of prioritization and basin-wide planning and the status of potentially working on prioritizing diversions in the Animas from downstream to up and what is the timeframe for that work. Gilbert responded that if the BC approves the rankings we can start planning to look at specific structures. La asked if there have been discussions of other diversions that are currently being renovated that are not on the prioritized list and asked whether that discussion would be followed up by a CC discussion and expressed cost concerns. Zeigler replied that yes, the BC will keep those in consideration and we want to be flexible so that

diversions can be made fish friendly if they are being renovated. Mata noted that working on structures as they are being renovated may bring some cost savings as the Program may not have to pay as much money if structures are being worked on by other entities. Mazzone mentioned that some of these projects could be fully funded so it would be good if the Program could help advise ways to increase fish passage and reduce entrainment. Cunningham liked the idea of the ‘low-hanging fruit’ but cautioned that we should budget our funding wisely as to not impair higher-priority projects. Davis concurred and appreciated that partners are reaching out to Program. Davenport noted that the National Fish Passage Program may also be another source of funding to increase passage but those grants are usually <\$100,000. Pitts is concerned about the “piecemeal” approach to ameliorating diversion issues in the Animas and still has questions about habitat availability and where the water is going to come from to support endangered fish. Mata responded that we are not leap-frogging structures because the next structure is upstream of Ranchman’s-Terrell diversion. Moreover, the diversion prioritization process is currently assessing which diversions should be assessed next. Pitts asked what are the implications of entraining fish in the Animas? Mata responded that we won’t know how much entrainment will occur until fish make it into those reaches. Pitts is concerned with costs associated with screening the multiple diversions in the Animas. McKinstry stated the Reclamation has someone in the Technical Services Center in the Denver office that is working on low-cost screening that may help reduce costs. Pitts noted it is difficult to make decisions when the CC does not know potential costs and if habitat is suitable for the endangered fishes in the Animas. Mata stated that temperatures in the Animas were investigated during the diversion prioritization process and the Animas does provide suitable thermal habitat for both species. Nonetheless, all funding decisions for work on diversions will be determined by the CC.

Fiscal year 2022 draft annual work plan and budget – Mata/Zeigler

Mata reported that the BC review of the FY2022 Annual Work Plan (AWP) included all Scopes of Work (SOW) submitted to the PO. The BC received the AWP with no budgets and only saw the overall project costs after their review. The Principal Investigators are going to revise their SOWs and respond to comments by June 4. The PO will then compile the revised SOWs and then send them back to the BC. The BC will then make their recommendations to the PO in July. Zeigler stated that most of the morning was dedicated to the new SOWs. Those included using nonnative vegetation to increase habitat for the endangered fishes, identifying spawning locations of RZB, quantifying age at maturity of RZB, and using radio telemetry to assess dispersal and habitat use of age-1, 2, and 3 Colorado Pikeminnow (CPM). The BC was generally supportive of all four of these SOWs. Another new SOW was proposed to continue the transport of RZB and CPM below the waterfall that is currently being conducted by Kansas State University (KSU). This work was proposed to continue because samples to assess genetic contribution of fish that are transported above the falls were relatively low in 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions. The group discussed the merits of and potential pauses to other ongoing projects including nonnative removal and the spring age-1 RZB monitoring trip. Mata stated that the Program will likely not be able to fund all submitted SOWs. The estimated total budget is \$2.88 million whereas the total costs of projects is \$3.3 million. The PO still needs to look for cost savings in all SOWs. Davis asked if the new SOWs are multi-year projects. Mata stated that all new SOWs are two years. Davis stated the PO should look for cost savings over multiple years then. Mata agreed and noted the new SOWs are all directed toward ameliorating the apparent recruitment bottlenecks of the species. Davis wondered if the Program is getting its money’s worth from the \$27 thousand that is being spent on outreach. Mata thought it was worth the funds to publish “Swimming Upstream”. Pitts also mentioned that those outreach materials are valuable for congressional briefings. Mata also noted that the BC discussed the Peer Review SOW and mentioned that the BC may request Peer Review on an ad hoc basis, but that is still an ongoing conversation. Cunningham asked when the PO wanted CC

feedback on the AWP. Mata replied that the CC will be able to review the AWP after the BC has finished their technical review.

National Park Service potentially joining the Program – Mata

Mata stated the National Park Service (NPS) is a partner in the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (UCREFRP) but not a part of the SJRIP, however, there have been discussions of them joining in the past. Trammel stated she had spoken with NPS leadership and they are still interested in partnering with the SJRIP but she was unclear on the next steps. One reason the NPS didn't join previously was because they were unable to provide any funding but the NPS is still looking for appropriations that could come to them. So, overall, they are still interested if the CC would support their involvement. Pitts noted that the NPS joining the SJRIP was not previously supported by some partners because there was a concern regarding too many federal participants. He also noted that he has not received input from the Water Users about the idea. Mata added that the state of Utah was also interested in participating but there has been no news on that front. Davis asked if the UCREFRP has an even distribution of federal and nonfederal partners. Pitts responded that the UCREFRP is operated a little differently in that they need unanimous support for decisions while the SJRIP only needs 2/3 of votes to advance decisions. Trammel stated that the NPS joined the UCREFRP relatively late and it was only after the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association (CREDA) joined as a voting participant that NPS was allowed to participate in order to balance federal and nonfederal partners in the group. Davis summarized that there is interest in getting the NPS involved but there is still work on NPS's end to figure out the next steps. Trammel agreed that there was still some discussion that needs occur with NPS leadership. Mata stated that new Program partners cannot be added through Biological Opinions and the CC would still need to vote to approve NPS participation. Trammel asked what the process is for moving this forward. As a new Action Item, Mata will figure out those details and let Trammel know.

Post-2023 update – Garrison/Pitts

Garrison reported the Post-2023 working group is trying to understand where funds for the Recovery Programs have come from in the past and why they are predicted to decline in the future. They are working to identify sources of funding moving forward, however, these talks were delayed by COVID-19 because budgets for interested parties have been changing rapidly. The States provided a proposal for different funding scenarios that tried to speak to the most important pieces of the Program that needed addressed for authorization of the Program and funding agreements. The States proposed the SJRIP move forward at cost estimates as proposed and should include annual adjustments for the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Timeline for reauthorization was suggested at 15 years but this can be reassessed after 9 or 10 years. Most other alternative funding ideas were better suited for capital rather than annual funding. The States also proposed that the annual funding reductions from hydropower revenue should be split proportionally among all the Colorado River programs and the Grand Canyon Adaptive Management Program and that, federal appropriations could be used to make up for any short falls, and the States will continue their current level of funding and in-kind contributions. For capital projects, the States proposed congressional appropriations, along with other sources that might become available on a project by project basis. The contributions of in-kind funding from the States is better quantified in the UCREFRP than they have been in the SJRIP. Some of those are hard to monetize and they haven't been tracked the same way, so the SJRIP lacks a summary of those contributions. The topic for discussion at the funding group's next meeting on May 12 is ideas for efficiencies in the recovery programs. These include potentially merging Program elements, reducing work plans or non-Program related activities (e.g., ESA work not linked to the Programs), combining Sufficient Progress reports, increasing coordination and meetings among Programs. It was noted that

possibilities to combine Program Management would not include merging decision-making committees. The States did not try to break down the sources of federal appropriations to which individual federal agencies, as it didn't seem their place to make those decisions. Davis asked if the proposed 15 years for reauthorization was realistic. Garrison thought that it was realistic. The recent Platte River reauthorization was for 13-years. She hopes 15 years would be achievable. Cooperative agreements need to be in place with the same timeframe.

Colorado Pikeminnow recovery planning - McAbee

McAbee from the UCREFRP gave a status update on the CPM recovery plan. The Service recently completed four, 5-year review recommendations with downlisting recommended for RZB and Humpback Chub, and no change for Bonytail. No status change was recommended for CPM, but the recovery plan is being revised. Recovery plans are written because section 4 of the ESA requires the Service to have recovery plans for listed species. Section 4 also outlines what needs to be in the plans: site-specific management actions, objective and measurable criteria for when a species may be removed, and estimates of the time and cost needed to achieve those criteria. How does the Service use recovery plans? They are guidance documents and not regulatory documents, meaning their criteria are not used to make final listing decisions. They also represent the official position of Service when signed by the Regional Director. The recovery plans are not required for reclassification but used to guide evaluation of recovery. A new approach to recovery planning through Recovery Planning and Implementation (RPI) was revised in 2016. This includes 1) Species Status Assessment (SSA), 2), RPI recovery plan, 3) Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS). Recovery plans need to be revised through the Federal Register. The CPM SSA was completed in March 2020, which supported the 5-year review document and it was recommended that the recovery plan be revised. The recovery plan team includes 10 species experts from the tribes, states, and federal agencies. So far, they have held four meetings and are continuing to meet monthly. They are currently working on the Recovery Criteria, demographic metrics and levels and thresholds of threat reduction. The RIS is a separate document that describes the who, what, where, when and how to get to get recovery actions done. These should also be outlined in the UCREFRP's RIPRAP and the SJRIP's Long Range Plan and provide species-specific actions. These will also provide for time and cost estimates. The Recovery Plan will have criteria and high-level actions and statutory requirements while the RIS will detail the specific tasks. The RPI for CPM should be completed by winter 2021. Site-specific actions in the plan will be provided in the RIS. The SJRIP's CC and the UCRRP's Management Committee will review the plan and complete time and cost estimates. Pitts stated that it sounds like there is an assumption that the Programs will take actions, eliminate threats, and then the criteria for downlisting will be met. McAbee responded that yes, it is assumed that threat reductions will lead to long-term conservation. Pitts noted that the Recovery Plan does include long-term commitments to recovery, but he is concerned that those actions will not lead to increased populations, given ongoing threats and the potential for new threats. He cited the recent nonnative fish invasion in the Green River that lead to declines in CPM. It doesn't seem realistic that implementation of actions will be enough to reach recovery criteria but rather just preserving the species on the landscape in current conditions. The species will likely need to rely on continue conservation activities to persist. McAbee responded that the new plan will try to include those unknown and unforeseeable threats. Pitts stated that in his opinion there will always be new threats and we may never reach those recovery criteria. La asked what the role of Lake Powell will be in the Recovery Plan for CPM. McAbee responded that they are only beginning to look into how fish in the Lake affect the three R's in the SSA ("representation," "redundancy," and "resiliency"), but noted that just because some populations may not have specific recovery criteria that doesn't mean that the USFWS views them as unimportant. Cunningham asked if

the BC and CC will be able to review the recovery plan before it is finalized. McAbee answered those committees will be able to review the final draft document.

Capital projects update – Christianson

Christianson began with an update on acquiring an O&M contract for facilities on Navajo Nation (NN) lands. NN Department of Fish and Wildlife is interested in entering a contract for O&M on those facilities. In the past, Reclamation has often entered into site-specific contracts for O&M (e.g., PNM, APS, Fruitland, NAPI ponds), so an “umbrella” contract to perform O&M at the many facilities would be more efficient. Reclamation will draft a contract for all projects on NN and work with NN to get it executed. Christianson then shared the capital projects funding excel spreadsheet. Fruitland is on track for completion in late 2021 or early-2022. Any project at APS weir is going to need an O&M contract but that could be included in the “umbrella” contract through NN or APS could also be contracted for O&M if they wanted to go that route. Activities at PNM weir and the waterfall are still to be determined. Jewett and Farmers diversions are also still a long ways out. Phase III was completed and funding was provided for that project. Hogback pumps are still interfering with the PIT tag antennas, there were funds available through BIA to fix the issue, but getting that work done slipped in priority. The CC voted to fund \$1.2 million to fix the problem previously. NN Department of Fish and Wildlife may be interested in taking this over due to the fish component, more information is needed but contracting through them could be a potential path forward. McKinstry presented information about PIT antenna install at Ranchman’s-Terrell diversion. The diversion work was not exactly like they wanted but it likely provides more passage than before construction. The PIT antennas did not go in when they were planned due to COVID, but they will be installed about 200 yards downstream of the diversion. A PIT antenna was installed in the diversion channel, so they will be able to assess entrainment. Christianson concluded that there is not much planned for capital projects in 2022, but APS weir is planned for 2023.

Bureau of Reclamation Benefits Analysis – Callister and Deppe

Callister presented Reclamation’s benefits analysis of water use in the Colorado River Basin. This analysis attempted to assess how benefits of water use were split among entities and possibly help with post-2023 planning. Valerie Deppe was responsible for the analysis and she stated this was an attempt to assign proportional share of water among Federal, Irrigation, MI, power, and ESA. They looked at 3 scenarios: 1) all purposes, 2) removal of ESA water, and 3) removal of ESA and Power. Those scenarios were then used to estimate percentages of water use and how much this equated to in money using the total cost of \$23 million. Currently, \$11.3 million goes to GCAMP. Pitts asked how firm was Reclamation on allocating that much money to the GCAMP in the future. Callister responded that she is still awaiting guidance from her leadership and the current administration about that question. Pitts thought that the amount water depleted for M&I and ag uses in the spreadsheet was excessive and incorrect. Deppe responded that those were the data they were given. Pitts asked what the CC was supposed to use this for. Callister was just looking for input on whether this could be a useful tool or not for post 2023 planning purposes.

Davis asked if there was consideration of the Tribal Component for the SJRIP. Deppe responded that tribal components were not identified in this analysis. Katherine Duncan noted that this is not a proposal or a response to the State’s proposal. Callister added that we could use this as a counter proposal and work to find a middle ground between proposals if that would be helpful. Davis wanted clarification on what Callister needed to discuss with her leadership. Callister responded that she needed to circle back with leadership about GCAMP receiving most of the power revenue. Davis responded if that is the case, is it premature to get feedback from the CC until that is clarified. Callister said the point of presenting this analysis was to see if people had any comments and if they do, let

Reclamation know. Reclamation will try and incorporate any suggestions, but Reclamation is not looking for a formal response from the CC. Leslie James appreciated Reclamation making this analysis and welcoming people's ideas about how we get to consensus on what we want to do post 2023. Pitts stated he would like to see the analysis with different allocations between GCDAMP and the RIPS. La stated that in-kind contributions were not included in the analysis but represents an important component of the program and funding. Callister said that further discussion on depletions can be had if people think that would be useful. Davis asked for a copy of the spreadsheet, Callister affirmed she would send it to Mata to distribute.

Fiscal year 2022 appropriations and Washington D.C. trip – Pitts

The 2021 congressional briefings were conducted during the week of April 19 via Zoom. The briefings included staffs of the House and Senate delegations from the four upper basin states and the authorizing and appropriations subcommittees for Reclamation and the Service. Senator Hickenlooper (CO) had not fully staffed his office, and his staff will be briefed later.

A total of 22 briefings was conducted with congressional staff. Briefings included sharing the goals of the programs, describing the importance of the Programs for ESA compliance and highlighted the rarity of lawsuits, costs and cost sharing. Paul Badame (UT Department of Natural Resources) and Miller gave updates on the status of the species. Congressional staff were glad that the partners were working together to solve problems. Dumas and Whiteman thought everyone was very receptive and supportive of the Programs and overall it went really well.

The briefings were well received and necessary, given the normal staff turnover. Normally, the briefings would have included a request that members support funding for the program that is included in the President's FY22 budget. However, the President's budget was not available prior to the briefings. Program participants committed to getting back to the delegation when the President's budget became available.

Normally, briefings of the directorates of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Service occur along with the congressional briefings. However, appointments were in transition and some essential parties were not available during the week of April 19. As a result, no briefings were conducted with the directorates. These briefings will be scheduled at a later date.

The April, 2021 congressional briefings included a request to amend the recovery programs' authorizing legislation. The requested amendments included

- extension of the authorization for capital funding by Reclamation through FY 24 to allow Reclamation to include FY 24 in its 3-year budgeting process,
- extension of the due date for the post-2023 report by the Secretary of the Interior from September, 2021 to September 30 2022,
- reinstating the authorization for hydropower funding deleted by the 2019 Dingell Act, and,
- elimination of the requirement that the cooperative agreements establishing the program be reinstated prior to reauthorization of the authorizing legislation.

Given that Western Area Power Administration has provided hydropower funding for FY 20 and FY 21, the reinstatement of authorization is not considered controversial by most of the program participants. However, in March, 2021 Colorado River Energy Distributors Association requested

Congress to provide \$10 million in appropriated funds for FY 22. Given the inconsistency, CREDA declined to participate in the congressional briefings.

Update on Public-Private Conservation Fund Concept – La

La discussed recent efforts by The Nature Conservancy to develop a Public-Private Conservation Fund and that this was part of the Post-2023 Funding group activities looking for alternative funding sources. TNC brought their experience to help develop this idea for the Program. TNC developed a scoping and feasibility document to direct next steps, which involved 3 phases: 1) look for potential partners to be involved 2) see where the Program might intersect with such a partnership and 3) gain approval from the committees. Nancy Smith (TNC) has conducted some preliminary feasibility reviews. The most promising options appear to be where program activities have a nexus with tribal interests and renewable energy. A key next step will be talking with tribal representatives and the Post-2023 funding group.

Action Items:

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2. Mata, McKinstry, and Christianson will explore options regarding O&M for Navajo Nation projects.
3. Gilbert will organize a small group to incorporate Section 7 Principle comments.
4. The PO will develop an initial draft clarifying appendix A of the long-range plan and send that to the BC for development of the 2021 long-range plan appendix A.
5. The Service will make an assessment on using the Navajo Gallup Depletion Guarantee in Hydrology Modelling for future section 7 consultations.
6. The PO will work with New Mexico to resolve comments on the quick reference SJRIP roles and responsibilities.
7. Mata will coordinate with NPS to figure out next steps and provide a written proposal to the CC as appropriate.
8. Mata will ensure the SJRIP's Long Range Plan and Sufficient Progress Report tasks are in agreement.