

**San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program
Program Coordinator's Office
Fiscal Year 2016 Draft Proposal**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Period of Performance: 10/01/2015 to 9/30/2016

Background

The San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) is designed to simultaneously address endangered fish species recovery and development of water resources within the Basin. The Program includes representatives from not only Federal agencies, but also the States of Colorado and New Mexico, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Navajo Nation, conservation interests, and water development interests, most of which have legal mandated responsibilities to the endangered fish and/or the water resources.

Region 2 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is responsible for directing and coordinating the Program. As stated in the Program Document, the Service will appoint a Program Coordinator who will be responsible for overall Program coordination and dissemination of information about Program activities. Element 5, *Program Coordination and Assessment of Progress toward Recovery*, of the Program's Long Range Plan (LRP) identifies Program coordination goals, actions, and tasks that the Program Office will undertake to administer the Program. Numerous additional Program Office tasks are included in the LRP under other Recovery Elements. The Service's Program Office is located in the New Mexico Ecological Services Office (NMESFO) in Albuquerque, NM. Program staff includes a Program Coordinator, Assistant Program Coordinator, Recovery Science Biologist, Program Biologist, and part-time Program Assistant.

Program Coordination

Specific Service responsibilities for Program coordination are described in the May 17, 2012 Program Document as follows:

1. coordinating the activities of the Coordination Committee and the Program's technical committees, including providing notices, agendas, information packets, and providing draft and final summaries for committee and subcommittee meetings and conference calls as per the committee meeting procedures described in this document;
2. preparing and updating the LRP with research, monitoring, and recovery elements and goals;
3. ensuring consistency of the LRP with Service-approved species Recovery Plans;
4. prioritizing projects based on the LRP, and preparing AWP, annual budgets, and annual progress reports;
5. ensuring the approved recovery activities as defined in the LRP and species Recovery Plans are implemented;
6. evaluating project accomplishments and shortcomings and providing an annual report to the Program;
7. monitoring implementation of all Program actions, including those Program actions identified as RPAs and RPMs in BOs, and reporting results to the Service on an annual basis;
8. developing an annual integration report that assesses the preceding year's monitoring data, progress toward recovery, and adaptive management recommendations, including recommendations for changes in direction, termination of projects, new projects, or other pertinent recommendations;

9. coordinating and overseeing development of any revisions to the Program's flow recommendations;
10. maintaining records showing the distribution and expenditures of all annual base and capital funds expended under AWP's by each funding source, and providing to the Coordination Committee at the end of each federal fiscal year an accounting of funds expended during the preceding year;
11. reporting to the Coordination Committee at each of its meetings the status of Program activities, the accomplishment of milestones or delays in meeting milestones, and any problems with maintaining Program work schedules along with recommendations for solving the problems;
12. disseminating information to state, federal, and tribal agencies;
13. ensuring that appropriate collecting permits are provided to each principal investigator;
14. advising Program participants of requests for initiation of consultation;
15. maintaining a list of interested parties as described in the committee meeting procedures provided in this document;
16. managing and maintaining the Program's data, central database, library, website, and listserves;
17. coordinating activities among the Program, the Upper Colorado Program, and the Colorado River Fishes Recovery Team, including participating in the five-year status review and in the updating of recovery goals for Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker;
18. implementing Coordination Committee recommendations to resolve problems or issues that may arise with regard to accomplishing Program activities;
19. providing materials and technical support to the non-federal participants for briefings with the members and committees of the U.S. Congress and state legislatures;
20. reviewing BOs for consistency with the Program's Principles;
21. preparing on a biennial basis a written "Sufficient Progress" assessment of the Program's progress towards recovery, the Program's ability to provide ESA compliance for water development and management activities, and any corrective actions needed to ensure future ESA compliance, in accordance with the Program's Principles;
22. working with Reclamation and other Program participants to improve, maintain, and utilize the Hydrology Model; and
23. implementing other activities needed to ensure the success of the Program as assigned by the Service or by the Coordination Committee.

It is recognized in the Program Document that some of these responsibilities will be carried out with the assistance from Program committees as more specifically defined in the Program Document sections entitled, "Biology Committee," "Long Range Plan Development and Annual Revision Process," and "Annual Work Plan Development Process" of the Program Document.

Maintenance of San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program database and integration, synthesis, and analysis of data

San Juan River research efforts that preceded the establishment of the Program, in combination with those that have subsequently resulted from that program, form the basis of the suite of decisions already made and those to be made regarding biologic and hydrologic issues. An immense amount of information has been gathered through the San Juan River monitoring and research activities that have been conducted over the last 25 years. Most of this information has been synthesized and made available in the form of reports or publications. For example, in 2003 and 2004 researchers

consolidated and analyzed data from their individual long-term research projects and presented it as an integrated report of five years of research (1999-2003). Likewise, the flow recommendations report released in 1999 represented a synthesis between biological, hydrological, and habitat research activities.

Preparation of integration reports was difficult due to the absence of an updated, standardized, and easily accessible Program database. Keller-Bliesner Engineering, LLC, was originally responsible for maintaining the database and produced and distributed to the researchers CDs containing the updated Program database until 1998. In 2002, responsibility for maintaining the database was transferred to University of New Mexico (UNM). They initiated a project to develop and maintain a web-based system. This project was terminated in 2006. In 2007, the responsibility for managing Program data was transferred to the NMESFO's Computer and Geographic Systems Branch. A great deal of effort was required to inspect, transfer, and integrate UNM's GIS Database into existing and new Program data housed in the NMESFO Program database. Between 2007 and 2008, NMESFO IT staff transferred and incorporated a myriad of researchers' data into a Program database. They maintained, performed quality control, annually updated, and distributed the GIS researcher database using appropriate formats, and established electronic archives of the aforementioned database at the repository for this information (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 2 Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico).

In 2008, a full-time biologist position was created in the Program Office to take over the responsibility of maintaining the Program database. During 2009, the Program biologist developed an integrated data management system and performed Program data management activities. In 2011, The Program approved the addition of a recovery science biologist to the Program staff to oversee integration, synthesis, and analysis of the expansive Program database to assess and track the Program's progress and to determine the highest priority management actions needed to recover the endangered fish. The recovery science biologist position could not be filled until the first quarter of FY2015 due to government sequestration and Service hiring freezes and budget shortages. Starting in the last quarter of FY2015, the Program Office will be fully staffed.

Relevant Long Range Plan Tasks

Task 1.2.1.1 Maintain a standardized database for all stocked and recaptured RBS and CPM in order to determine the fate of stocked fish.

Task 4.4.2.1 Develop a centralized database that incorporates all data from standardized monitoring and integrate into the Program database.

Task 4.4.3.1 Identify, describe, and implement strategies for improving long-term survival and recruitment of razorback sucker and Colorado pikeminnow including but not limited to nonnative fish removal, enhancing habitat and food resources, enhancing genetic diversity and viability, and mitigating causes of range fragmentation.

Task 4.4.3.2 Use data and information gathered from fish surveys, hatchery augmentation, and survival studies to describe the best strategies for establishing wild populations of endangered fishes and restoring the native fish community.

Task 4.4.3.3 Use data and information gathered from the nonnative fish control program to evaluate effects of nonnative fish removal on distribution, abundance, and demographics (e.g., fish size, age, sexual maturity) of the endangered fish populations, the native fish community, and nonnative fish populations.

Task 4.4.3.4 Use data and information gathered from habitat assessments as the foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of the flow recommendations and operations decision criteria for Navajo Dam in providing suitable habitat for the endangered fishes.

Task 4.5.1.1 Annually, following review of the previous year's findings and data integration, identify and prioritize new projects, activities, questions, and information needs to be addressed in future work plans.

Task 5.1.1.4 Develop a list of prioritized actions and projects for the Annual Work Plan that most benefit recovery of the endangered fish populations.

Task 5.2.1.1 Establish and maintain a Program database of information collected under the various Program projects including all rare fish collections.

Task 5.2.1.2 Conduct annual Program reviews and develop annual reports that integrate monitoring and research data and results to track and assess yearly Program progress toward recovery.

Task 5.2.1.3 Conduct a biennial comprehensive review and assessment of Program progress towards recovery (i.e., Sufficient Progress Report).

Task 5.2.2.2 Develop positive population response criteria for the razorback sucker and Colorado pikeminnow to meet recovery demographic criteria for downlisting and delisting specified in recovery goals/plans adopted by the Service.

Task 5.2.2.3 Identify and evaluate limiting factors and determine research necessary research to identify actions that will minimize or remove these limiting factors.

Task 5.2.2.4 Use monitoring and research information to evaluate and use adaptive management strategies to modify recovery activities, as necessary, to ensure progress toward recovery.

Task 5.2.2.5 Develop interim recovery benchmarks for the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker that are tied to monitoring data and are consistent with the species recovery plans and goals, positive population criteria, Sufficient Progress Assessment, LRP, and Program Document.

Study Area

This project will encompass the San Juan River Basin downstream of Navajo Reservoir but may ultimately be expanded to include the entire San Juan River Basin.

Objectives

1. Maintain and incorporate researchers' data into the Program's Database.
2. Maintain, perform Quality Control, annually update, and distribute current Program researcher database using appropriate format.
3. Establish electronic archives of the aforementioned database at the ultimate repository for this information (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2, Program Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico).
4. Utilize Program data and other information to analyze and assess progress toward recovery and to determine priority management actions to implement.
5. Maintain and update Program website with reports, data, and other relevant documents.

Methods

1. Update and Maintain Database in consultation and coordination with Program researchers, the Program biologists will integrate existing and new data into the existing Program Database. Data will be checked for Quality Control and updated as necessary.
2. Contact and Coordinate with appropriate personnel in the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program and Glen Canyon Environmental Studies offices to investigate the feasibility of linkage of the proposed San Juan River Recovery Implementation Database with other regional fish databases.
3. Analyze and Assess San Juan River Basin data and other information to track progress toward recovery and to determine priority management actions to implement. This work will be conducted on a year-round basis within the Program Office and be coordinated with Program researchers, other biologist within and outside the Service, and other Program participants on a regular basis.

FY2016 Priority

The Program's 1999 flow recommendations continue to be implemented and evaluated (Task 4.4.3.4). Considerable data have been collected and continue to be collected on habitats in the San Juan River. This information is continually assimilated, synthesized, and interpreted to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of Navajo Dam releases. Results from the past decade suggest that implementation of the 1999 flow recommendations may not be creating and maintaining enough habitat to achieve recovery goals for the endangered fish. In 2014, the Program initiated a process to begin

reviewing and revising the flow recommendations based on monitoring data, the new San Juan River Basin hydrologic model, updated climate change projections for stream flow, and expanded scientific knowledge of flow-ecology relationships. In February 2015, an environmental flow workshop was held to make minimal modifications to the process for implementing the current flow recommendations to partially address apparent weaknesses in the current process and improve flexibility in making releases. However, a comprehensive review and revision of the 1999 flow recommendations is needed (Objective 4; Method 3) and will be a priority of the Program's science staff in FY2016.

Products

The database will be disseminated to all committee members and be made available via a password-protected project website. The database will reside with the Program Office, NMESFO-Region 2 (Albuquerque), the designated repository for the data. Data analyses and integration of San Juan River Basin data and other information will be conducted throughout the year to track progress toward recovery and to determine priority management actions to implement. An environmental flows workshop (e-flow workshop #2) will be conducted in FY2016 to review and revise the Program's flow recommendations. Methodologies and results of data integration, synthesis, and analyses will be subject to independent peer-review and will be communicated to Program participants on a regular basis.

Education and Outreach

Element 6 of the Program's LRP identifies the goals, actions, and tasks the Program Office will undertake to accomplish Program Education and Outreach. The Program works jointly with the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program to conduct outreach activities for both Recovery Programs. Both programs operate under similar recovery elements with management actions that are consistent with the recovery goals for humpback chub, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, and razorback sucker. Because the Program Office does not have dedicated Information and Education staff, the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program's full-time, dedicated Information and Education Coordinator will be used to assist with certain education and outreach activities. An estimate of funds and activities to be provided to the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program include:

\$ 6,000 Congressional Briefing Document (Program Highlights) printing
 \$ 4,000 Newsletter (Swimming Upstream) printing
 \$ 4,000 Exhibit fees
 \$ 2,000 Exhibit repairs/replacement
 \$16,000 Total

The Recovery Programs' continued success depends on coordinated efforts. Communication and outreach are areas where it makes sense to coordinate efforts. Using a shared approach helps to ensure that common audiences receive accurate, consistent information about the endangered fish species and efforts to recover them. Both programs reach out to the general public, elected officials, American Indian tribes, landowners, anglers, river rafter and guides, environmental organizations, water and power developers, teachers, students and Recovery Program participants. The geographic reach of some of these audiences differ by Recovery Program.

Education and Outreach Mission

To support the San Juan Program's success in recovering the endangered fishes by assuring that the public understands what is being done and why, and has confidence that the process is honest, open, sensitive, clear, and understandable. Education and Outreach efforts will be coordinated with the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program.

Goals

- To develop public involvement strategies at the beginning of any and all projects.
- To educate target audiences about endangered fish and to increase their understanding of, and support for, the recovery of these fish species at local, state, and national levels.
- To provide opportunities for the public to actively participate in activities that support recovery.
- To improve communication within the Recovery Program.
- To maintain an effective Program website

Target Audiences

- General public

- Elected Officials
- Land and pond owners
- Anglers
- River rafters and guides
- Environmental organizations
- Water users
- Power user interests
- Educators
- Recovery program participants (includes local, state and federal agencies)

Relevant Long Range Plan Tasks

Task 6.1.1.1 Provide information through news articles, press releases, radio and television ads, and other media in Farmington, Durango, Albuquerque, and others in the area to inform the public of Program activities.

Task 6.1.1.3 Maintain a Program website.

Task 6.1.2.2 Develop and exchange information and materials to incorporate into PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, Program highlights, and Program displays.

Task 6.1.2.3 Participate in selected outreach efforts at local, state, and regional water conferences.

Tasks

1. Coordinate San Juan Program outreach activities with the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program.
2. Proactively participate in education and outreach activities within the San Juan River Basin.
3. Disseminate information on Program activities to the public through brochures, newsletters, and/or the website.
4. Coordinate with outreach activities in the San Juan River Basin such as water users student fairs and local school fairs.

Fiscal Year 2016 Program Management Budget	USFWS Funding	Base Funding
Personnel/Labor Costs (Federal Salary + Benefits):		
Program Coordinator (GS-13) 1560/520 hours @ \$66.55.29/hr	\$103,740	\$34,580
Asst. Program Coordinator (GS-13) 1040/1040 hours @ \$50.13/hr (3/4 of the year)	\$39,101	\$39,101
Recovery Science Biologist (GS-12) 520/1560 @ \$43.93/hr	\$22,841	\$68,523
Program Biologist (GS-9/11) 2080 hours @ 37.88/hr	\$0	\$78,780
Program Assistant (GS-7) 416/416 hours @ 32.26/hr	\$13,421	\$13,421
USFWS IT-Support	\$14,000	--
USFWS Budget Analyst	\$15,000	--
Personnel Sub-total	\$208,103	\$234,405
Travel/Lodging & Per Diem (based on published FY-2015 Federal Per Diem Rates):		
Hotel – 30 days in Farmington, NM @ \$83/night		\$2,490
Hotel – 35 days in Durango, CO @ \$141/night		\$4,935
Hotel – 15 days in Denver, CO @ \$163/night		\$2,340
Hotel - 6 days in St. George, UT @ \$83/night		\$510
Hotel – 8 days in Las Vegas, NV @ \$96/night		\$736

Per Diem – 30 days in Farmington, NM @ \$46		\$1,380
Per Diem – 35 days in Durango, CO @ \$61		\$2,135
Per Diem – 15 days in Denver, CO @ \$66		\$3,526
Per Diem - 6 days in St. George, UT @ \$46		\$306
Per Diem – 8 days in Las Vegas, NV @ \$71		\$568
Per Diem – 20 days camping @ \$29 night		\$580
Registration Fee – UT Water Users Workshop, St. George, UT		\$300
Registration Fee CRWUA, Las Vegas \$250 *2		\$500
Travel/Lodging & Pier Diem Subtotal	\$0	\$20,306
Travel/Airfare & Mileage:		
Airfare to Denver, CO - \$300 trip/6 trips		\$1,800
Airfare to Las Vegas, NV - \$600 trip/2 trips		\$1,200
Airfare to St. George, UT - \$800/1 trip		\$800
Mileage to Farmington - 15 trips@190mi/trip*18 MPG=10.5gpt*4.00pg=\$42.20)		\$633
Mileage to Durango - 17 trips@220mi/trip*18 MPG=12.5gpt*4.00pg=\$48.80)		\$816
Rental Car @ \$120/day*8 days		\$960
Travel/ Airfare & Mileage Sub-Total	\$0	\$6,209
Equipment and Supplies:		
Supplies	\$5,700	\$5,700
Stamps		\$515
Public Notices - costs for publishing public meeting notices in local newspapers; \$40-150/meeting@ 50 meetings		\$2,575
Printing/publication costs		\$4,120
Computer Hardware Upgrades	\$1,500	\$1,500
Computer Software (ESRI GIS license fees, GIS extension (Spatial Analyst, Xtools, etc.), FTP software license, Stella license)	\$1,500	\$1,500
Outreach Materials		\$3,000
Equipment and Supplies Sub-total	\$8,700	\$18,910
Facilities Rental Costs for Meetings:		
Farmington@ \$100/day *35		\$3,500
Durango @\$300/day *15		\$4,500
Facilities Rental Sub-Total	\$0	\$8,000
2016 Budget Subtotal	\$175,325	\$285,796
Administrative charge (3%)		\$8,574
FY2016 Total	\$175,325	\$294,370
Carry-Over from 2015		\$115,000
Grand Total	\$213,803	\$181,465