

## **Remote Biologist for San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program**

Principal Investigators:  
 Stephen R. Davenport and Nate Caswell  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office  
 3800 Commons Avenue N.E.  
 Albuquerque, NM 87109

and

Daniel Kaus  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office – Remote Duty Station  
 6251 College Blvd  
 Farmington, NM 87402

### **History**

The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's (SJRIP) mission is to recover the Colorado Pikeminnow and Razorback Sucker while allowing water development and management activities to continue in the San Juan River Basin. In pursuit of this mission, the SJRIP funds projects under six major program elements: management and augmentation of populations and protection of genetic integrity; protection, management, and augmentation of habitat; management and control of nonnative aquatic species; monitoring and evaluation of fish and habitat in support of recovery actions; program coordination and assessment of progress toward recovery; and, information and outreach. Principal investigators representing various federal and state agencies, tribal governments, and non-governmental organizations are contracted to perform tasks associated with the SJRIP's mission. Most of these entities reside outside of the basin and, as a consequence, extensive travel costs are incurred to complete this work.

Beginning in 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) filled a remote biologist position that was stationed in the Farmington, New Mexico area. This position focused primarily on endangered fish monitoring, nonnative fish control, and rare fish augmentation. Additionally, assistance was provided to the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife (NNDFW) with daily operations at a selective fish passage near Fruitland, New Mexico, and with daily operation/maintenance at the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) Razorback Sucker grow-out ponds. Due to the proximity of the duty station to the Four Corners Area, the remote biologist was available to assist other SJRIP partners by shuttling support vehicles and providing reconnaissance prior to the initiation of sampling trips. In addition, the remote biologist provided urgent assistance to all SJRIP partners in cases of emergency (i.e. equipment issues/loss, injury, Gold King mine spill, etc.). In January 2016 the individual filling this position retired, and the position remained vacant until August 2018.

### **Background**

The following scope of work outlines the expected duties of the remote biologist for FY 2021. Proposed activities are similar to those described in the FY 2020 remote biologist scope of work. The remote

biologist will have responsibilities on the following Scopes of Work. Scopes of Work a, b, c, d and g will be considered full time in that these will require the biologist to assist with all parts of the project. Scopes of Work e and f will be part time in that they will require support by the biologist, but are not primary or full time work.

*Scope of Work (a)* Seasonal non-native channel catfish removal (SOW 17). The remote biologist will work on all field trips and field trip preparation, as well as managing the data generated by the project.

*Scope of Work (b)* Secondary channel habitat maintenance project (SOW 42). The remote biologist will provide field support for this project.

*Scope of Work (c)* Native fish demographic monitoring and research led by USFWS Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation (GJFWCO), Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), and NMFWCO (SOW 19-b). The remote biologist will work all demographic trips, if other personnel are available then the remote biologist can be freed to do other work.

*Scope of Work (d)* The remote biologist will assist NNDFW with daily operation/maintenance at NAPI rearing ponds, and provide support with operation and maintenance of permanent and portable PIT antennas throughout the San Juan Basin (SOW 11).

*Scope of Work (e, and f)* The remote biologist will assist as needed with coordinating annual endangered fish stocking events with other SJRIP participants at the Horsethief ponds, and at Southwest Native ARRC rearing (SOW 8, 9 and 10).

*Scope of Work (g)* Once completed, the remote biologist will provide support for operation and water quality monitoring of facilities and fish monitoring at the Phase III restoration site. The time commitment for this project is outlined in the Phase III SOW (NEW-3).

The remote biologist will have the flexibility to assist, as needed, with other projects as directed by the Program Office and with the supervisor’s approval. We anticipate that the Remote Biologist will assist with larval and small-bodied fish assemblage monitoring, shuttling of vehicles and equipment, data analysis, etc, but the position may work other assignments. If other personnel are available to cover NMFWCO’s responsibilities on projects then the remote biologist can be freed for other work and will not be required to provide support for every field trip.

The attached budget differs from past budgets. We are submitting a single budget that captures the complete cost of the Remote Biologist position to the Program. Included in the budget is the savings to the Program by individual scopes of work where the Remote Biologist provides labor. Nearly half of the cost of the Remote Biologist is covered by his/her labor on three current SOWs, and one new SOW.

**Schedule:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Nonnative removal	December 2020 to March 2021	50 days
Endangered fish augmentation	October 2020 to November 2020	12 days
Demographic monitoring	September 2020 to October 2020	38 days
Phase III maintenance and monitoring	March 2021 to May 2021	32 days
NAPI pond assistance	April 2020 to October 2020	18 days
Secondary channel habitat maintenance	April 2020 to August 2020	15 days
PIT antenna deployment and maintenance	Year-round	10 days

SJRIP meetings	May 2020, November 2020, February 2020, one workshop annually	9 days
Other program activities	Year-round	13 days
Training	Seasonally	10 days
Holiday	Seasonally	10 days
Sick leave	Seasonally	13 days
Paid time off	Seasonally	20 days

### **Budget Justification**

For the 2021, the Remote Biologist proposed Scope of Work we are providing the full cost of a GS-09 Fish Biologist with benefits in our budget. This will account fully for the salary and benefits of this position. Cost savings for the other New Mexico FWCO projects where the Remote Biologist will provide assistance is provided. Nearly half of the requested funds for this project are accounted for in other Program funded projects.

## Program Office

### *How can the technical aspects of this SOW be improved?*

- Identify the need from each of the SOWs that this SOW supports (for example: provides 1 of the 2 NMFWCO personnel needed for each of the 5 day Demographic monitoring trips). **Added additional information on how the remote biologist will support multiple SOWs. I indicated the SOW's where I believe the remote biologist will be used full time, and where they will be used part time. Keep in mind that even with that designation there will continue to be flexibility for this position to work on many projects.**
- We understand the need to provide explicit details on how the Remote Biologist will participate with various SOWs to provide expectation and clarity in duties. However, the SOW should consider some flexibility, given that the original purpose was to have a person on the ground with the flexibility to conduct many different and often unplanned tasks when needed. **Agree, added a sentence that allows for other personnel to fulfill our obligations, so that the remote biologist can have more flexibility. We should be able provide this flexibility most years.**
- It is also hard to understand some of the totals under the schedule. How does Demographic monitoring require 48 days if there are 3 trips of 6 days each? **I assume that some of the additional days are for field work preparation and clean up after the trip, and for data entry and management. We handle all the data entry for our trips. But even with that extra time I agree that 48 days for Demographic monitoring is high. Reduced to 36 days, but this is approximate.**

### *What is this SOW's contribution to recovery?*

Having personnel that can quickly respond to SJRIP needs increases overall efficiency and flexibility in implementing many other SOWs.

<b>FY 2021</b>						
<b>SJRIP - Remote Biologist</b>						
<b>Labor Cost</b>						
<u>Position</u>	<u>Grade/Step</u>	<u>Salary w/benefits</u>	<u>Hours/Day</u>	<u>Total Days</u>	<u>Sub-Total</u>	
Fish Biologist (1 FTE)	GS 9/3-4	\$82,215.45	N/A	N/A	\$82,215.45	
Supervisory Fish Biologist	GS 13/4	\$71.12	8	5	\$2,844.80	
Administrative Officer	GS 9/8	\$46.93	8	5	\$1,877.20	
					<b>Total Labor</b>	<b>\$86,937.45</b>
<b>Travel and Per Diem</b>						
	<u>Days</u>	<u>Rate</u>				<u>Sub-total</u>
Hotel Costs (4 two-day meetings)	8	\$102.00				\$816.00
Per Diem (Travel Day)	4	\$48.00				\$192.00
Per Diem (Full Day)	4	\$64.00				\$256.00
Per Diem (Camping Rate)	6	\$29.00				\$174.00
Travel voucher fee	4	\$14.75				\$59.00
Hotel Tax	8	\$12.00				\$96.00
					<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$1,593.00</b>
<b>Equipment</b>						
	<u>Miles/Qty</u>	<u>Total Miles</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>		
Vehicle Fuel						
1 truck used throughout year est. 50 miles/day 5 days/week 52 weeks/year	50	13,000	\$0.54	\$7,020.00		
					<b>Equipment</b>	<b>\$7,020</b>
					<b>Sub-total for Remote Biologist - NMFWCO only</b>	<b>\$95,550.45</b>
					Overhead 3%	\$2,866.51
						\$98,416.96
<b>Remote Biologist Savings/SOW</b>						
17		\$16,688.00				
19a		\$12,682.00				
8		\$13,350.00				
Channel Maintenance (New)		\$4,005.00				
					<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$46,725.00</b>