

Approved August 14, 2008

SAN JUAN RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

**Coordination Committee
Conference Call**

**Monday, June 23, 2008
9:00 am – 11:00 am**

Summary

Coordination Committee Members:

Jim Brooks, Acting Committee Chair
Catherine Condon
Herb Becker
Tom Pitts
Stanley Pollack
Randy Seaholm
Tom Blickensderfer, Alternate
Brent Uilenberg
John Whipple
Adrian Oglesby, TNC
Absent
Absent
Absent
Absent

Representing:

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

Hydrology & Biology Committee Members and Alternates:

Katrina Grantz, HC Chair	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Holden, BC Chair	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Mark McKinstry, BC Member	Bureau of Reclamation
Bruce Whitehead, HC Alternate	SW Water Conservation District

Program Management:

David Campbell, Program Coordinator	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Sharon Whitmore, Asst. Program Coordinator	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

Brooks welcomed the group and took roll call. A quorum of nine members was present. A legislative update by Pitts was added to the agenda.

February 22, 2008, Meeting Summary - The meeting summary with changes to the attachment, *Prelim. Summary of Hydrology Model Policy Issues Resolutions/Actions for Discussion at 2-22-08 CC Meeting*, provided by Whipple, was approved.

May 9, 2008, Meeting Summary – Pitts indicated he had several edits and a question that he was unable to get out prior to the meeting. He asked that approval of the summary be deferred to the next meeting. The group agreed. Comments are to be provided to the Program Office prior to the next meeting.

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Long Range Plan – Campbell reported that Rich Valdez has been unable to consider and incorporate CC comments on the draft LRP due to illness. He believes Valdez greatly improved the LRP and would like to give him the opportunity to work on the last set of comments after he recovers. He said the current LRP is fairly solid but a few modifications are warranted based on comments received. McKinstry said he talked to Valdez recently and that he should be able to start working again in about two to three weeks. He cautioned that some of the comments may not be easily incorporated. Campbell said the Program Office will work with Valdez on any comments they may be problematic. Brooks asked about the nature of any substantive comments. McKinstry gave an example of one that recommended removing the tables in the back that included Program history. Pitts and Brooks both agreed this is valuable information that should stay in. Holden said he thought the comments related more to removing redundancy in the document than removing Program history. He said there are a number of redundant sections that could possibly be combined. Campbell said there may be some value in keeping these sections separate so they can be easily lifted out of the document and used for planning purposes. He said the Program Office will work with Valdez to see if any sections can be combined as long as it is not too time-consuming to do so. Campbell emphasized that the LRP is a living document that is expected to change annually; however, it will require some level of approval. The CC indicated they want to see the revised plan after the comments have been addressed. If possible, CC approval could occur at the August meeting.

2009 AWP/Budget – Campbell reported that all SOWs have been received and, if everything is funded as is, there would be a \$250,000 shortfall. He said the Program Office, FWS R2 and R6, McKinstry, and Holden, BC Chair, will meet on July 15 and 16 at the New Mexico ES Field Office in Albuquerque to look at priorities identified by the BC and review the SOWs to resolve the shortfall. He envisions this will involve a combination of trimming individual budgets and/or eliminating SOWs or portions of SOWs. A revised budget will be distributed in time for discussion and approval at the BC Conference Call on July 28 and then at the CC meeting August 14 and 15.

Capital Projects – Uilenberg reported that they have had some difficulty contacting APS but is working with Pitts on it. He said they were concentrating on the Hogback fish screens and that the design work is now done. They will now refocus their efforts on securing a long-term contract for O&M and on NEPA compliance. He anticipates a contract will be awarded in late FY2009 with construction occurring in winter 2009 and 2010. The project should be completed in spring of 2010. Brooks asked about the need for O&M at Hogback. Uilenberg said some long term O&M will be needed but not much.

Uilenberg reported they are in the process of updating the table of capital projects and costs. He said they cannot meaningfully update the table until they get the annual indexing for inflation in order. He explained that the legislation provides for indexing but is not specific on how it should be done. He said there is a lot of latitude in how this is done and the method used can profoundly affect costs. Pitts said he thought it was being done using Consumer Price Index. Uilenberg said that method has never been bought off on by his agency. He said how the accounting is done is more critical for the Upper CO River Program as they are bumping up against the index whereas the San Juan River Program has a balance. He will provide a new table as soon as they get the indexing done. He said the good news for the Program is that there are ample funds to do a fish screen/passage at APS.

Pitts asked about the timeline for working on an O&M contract with PNM. Uilenberg explained the solicitor's office will only work on one agreement at a time. They completed the Grand Valley fish screen/passage agreement, will work on the re-payment contract for the Elkhead Reservoir enlargement next, and then on Hogback fish screen. Therefore, PNM's O&M contract is on hold for now.

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McKinstry said there is a quasi-O&M contract in place which provides a mechanism to compensate PNM. Pitts asked why Hogback was in front of PNM considering Hogback will not be completed for another year and a half to two years. Uilenberg responded that PNM has a reimbursement mechanism in place and Reclamation does not want to miss the opportunity to award a contract for Hogback in 2009 by placing it lower on the priority list. Holden asked if Reclamation had done anything on the low tech approach for Fruitland Diversion. Uilenberg said nothing had been done. Pitts asked if Fruitland will be moved out beyond 2010. Uilenberg anticipates everything other than Hogback will be done under the new authorization. Pitts commented that this is another reason why the new authorization is needed.

Legislative Update – Pitts reported that it has taken awhile but the legislation is moving. Final consensus bill language was provided to both NM Senators and Rep. Tom Udall (NM) around May 1. It was decided that Senator Bingaman will take the lead. They received the draft bill back from Legislative Council. This was sent to the CC. The Senate bill had been re-formatted but includes everything. It is in legislative drafting on the House side. Identical bills need to be passed by the House and Senate, so Senate language was provided to Udall's office, with the request that it be sent to legislative drafting. The objective is to get the bill to both House and Senate as soon as possible and get the co-sponsors on board so if there is any opportunity for movement before the end of the year, it will be ready to go. As soon as it is introduced, he will be asking non-federal CC members for letters of support to the Water and Power Subcommittee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee urging passage of the bill. He thinks there is a chance it could pass this year. He hopes everyone can be responsive when he sends out a request for support letters. Uilenberg pointed out that because the new legislation is additive to the total authorized expenditures, the Program's unexpended balance will also carry forward.

SJRB Hydrology Model/HC Activities – Campbell reported that a subgroup of the HC met on June 17 via conference call to review and work-out differences between Gen2 and Gen3. Some progress was made on that call; however, Reclamation and the Service determined that the model needs to be re-worked before it can be an effective, functional tool for use by the Service in establishing a baseline and a depletions schedule and for use by the Program for revising the flow recommendations. He said that going forward with the flow recommendations revision as outlined at the last CC meeting, would not be a productive approach at this time. The Service's approach over the next year will be to work with the BC to integrate the biological data laying out the biological justification for changes to the flow recommendations. At the same time, the Service and Reclamation will work together to bring Gen3 up to where it can be an effective tool for the Service and the Program by rebuilding in RiverWare all of the pieces that are currently being done in StateMod. This will also involve working with NM and CO to refine and resolve depletions issues that have been on the table for the last couple years.

Campbell asked for CC input on the approach. Seaholm said the approach makes sense and it is his understanding that most of the issues with the model were resolved except for baseline differences between CO and NM. Campbell said stepwise depletions modeling as directed by the CC, cannot be done with StateMod in the model, as is. Pitts asked if modifying the model by removing StateMod will result in a budget increase. Campbell said Reclamation's model O&M budget has increased but it will be cheaper in the long term with Katrina Grantz doing the work. After the tech transfer with Dave King is complete, model O&M will be turned over to Grantz. Pitts asked how long it will take. Campbell said he is not sure but it is a high priority for the Service, so he will be working closely with Reclamation over the next two months to put together a work plan that describes the steps, timeframe, and costs. He said they should have something for the CC to review by their August meeting. He said

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Steve Cullinan, Service hydrologist, will be involved in the effort. Seaholm offered CO's help in making the transition. Pitts asked about the HC's involvement. Campbell said that the Program Office will keep the CC updated on the effort and that they can coordinate with their HC members as they deem necessary. The HC will not be convened again until there is a specific request from the CC for committee review.

Flow Recommendation Proposal and Integration Report – Campbell reiterated his recommendation that the BC move forward with integrating the biological data collected by the Program and wait on pursuing the hydrology piece until the Service and Reclamation complete Gen3. The BC can proceed with integrating the biological data now which will be needed for doing the flow recommendations revision when the hydrology model is ready. He said that after the biology side is done and the hydrology model side is done, the two can be brought together to revise the flow recommendations, as appropriate. The timeline is expected to be similar to the original flow recommendations revision process, i.e., the BC biology part and Reclamation/Service hydrology model part will occur during the first year and in the second year, the two can be brought together.

Holden said timing is an important consideration. He said the peer reviewers have said the BC is getting ahead of itself and needs to step back and evaluate the data and collection methods before moving forward. He said that the BC plans to hold a workshop in 2009 to evaluate the monitoring program. He said the results of the workshop and Kevin Bestgen's evaluation of the recapture data are needed for data integration. Campbell agreed and said the two-year time frame may need to be pushed out by one year.

Pitts said the approach described is in-line with comments submitted by the Water Development Steering Committee on the flow recommendations revision proposal, i.e., get the Program's biological information in order first. The Steering Committee does not think the data can tell us as much as is described in the proposal or that the process outlined in the proposal is viable. He asked if the Integration Report will be done before the flow recommendations are revised. Campbell said he does not think the process is that well defined but said a strategy for bringing in the hydrology part will be defined after the biology/science part is done.

FWS Development of Baseline with Time Step – Campbell reported that the process Reclamation and the Service use to re-work the model will provide the mechanism for defining the baseline and will define how the model is used for that purpose. Condon asked if the model revision work plan will be available for CC review at the August meeting. Campbell said an outline will be provided to the CC prior to the meeting.

Navajo-Gallup Consultation - Campbell reported that the Service asked for additional information from Reclamation primarily related to the depletions guarantee language and climate change and are waiting on their response. He said an informational copy of the draft BO will be provided to the CC when it is done. He said it will be up to Reclamation to accept any comments received. Uilenberg said Reclamation is working on the Service's information request but is in the middle of a staff transition since Rege Leach retired. He said Stan Powers is handling it at this time. The group discussed Navajo/Gallup and its relation to Program. Campbell said the Service needs to be able to show climate change impacts are being considered. Seaholm gave a heads up to Reclamation that they may have more issues to deal with as CO has some concerns with how AZ wants to account for CAP water. Pollack said he does not see why it makes a difference from an ESA perspective as to how water is classified if the impacts on the fish are the same. Seaholm said it does not affect the fish but it does affect how much water AZ can divert and how that affects the Program's depletions schedule is

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important. He said they are concerned that an additional 50,000 af of depletions will have to be covered by the Upper CO River and San Juan River programs as a result of the depletion guarantee. They do not agree that this is the best approach. Pollack said he does not think it is an ESA issue. Pitts said what needs to be considered is how the impact is being offset. Seaholm said, right now, it could be argued that the Upper CO River and San Juan River programs would be offsetting the 50,000 af Arizona would be taking and possibly 56,000 af. He said they will be meeting on this issue shortly.

Colorado River Basin Science & Resources Management Symposium: Campbell announced that there will be a Colorado River Science Symposium November 18-20 in Scottsdale, AZ. There will be a session on the relationship between the tribes and the CO River recovery programs. Someone from one of the tribes participating in the San Juan Program will be asked to participate on the panel. He will send out information when he gets it.

Next Meeting - August 14 and 15, 1 p.m. to noon, CC Meeting; Farmington

Potential agenda items include:

- May 9 and June 23 draft meeting summaries approval
- LRP
- AWP and budget
- Hydrology model/baseline work plan outline