



San Juan River Biology Committee Meeting

November 9, 2005
Farmington Civic Center
200 W. Arrington
Farmington, New Mexico

Members Present:

Chuck McAda
David Propst
Ron Bliesner
Mark McKinstry
Paul Holden
Bill Miller
Jim Brooks
Vince Lamarra
Tom Wesche
Greg Gustina

Representing:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Fishery Resources
Navajo Nation
Water Development Interests
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Program Management:

David Campbell

Representing:

Program Coordinator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service

Other Interested Parties:

Mike Buntjer
Rob Ashman
Jeff Cole
Carl Woolfolk
Dale Ryden
Manuel Ulibarri

Representing:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service
Public Service Company of New Mexico
Navajo Nation
APS – Four Corners Power Plant
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Dexter Hatchery

INTRODUCTION; REVIEW/MODIFY AGENDA (MCADA)

- Two items added to the Agenda:
 - A request for an update on the Program Document;
 - Chairperson selection.

REVIEW AND APPROVE SUMMARY FROM JUNE AND JULY MEETINGS (CHUCK MCADA)

- June 8 minutes need to be redone. **Not Approved.**
- July 18 – 19, Page 5 - Date needs to be 2005. **Approved as changed.**
- Joann will create an Action Item Log for the Biology Committee (BC).

PROGRAM DOCUMENT REVIEW (DAVID CAMPBELL)

Dave informed the BC that the final draft of the Program Document had been distributed to the Coordination Committee on Friday Nov.4. The BC requested copies of Program Document package be sent to BC members. It is understood that the Program Document is a Coordination Committee (CC) document and any comments from Biology Committee members need to be channeled through their CC representative.

The BC will not formulate a formal position on the Program Document.

Melissa Trammell (NPS) asked if the document could be distributed outside of BC membership. Dave Campbell responded that the document is a draft and that he would check with the CC as to when it can be distributed outside of the Program.

DISCUSS WATER USER COMMENTS TO INTEGRATION REPORT (BILL MILLER)

Bill Miller explained to the BC that some of the comments are outside of the scope of the report and should be addressed in a separate report that provides a review of the Program's progress towards recovery.

Paul Holden stated that he believed that most of the comments were appropriate and could be addressed by the BC.

One of the comments proposed that the Integration Report and the review of the Program's progress should be independent of the BC responsibility. Members of the BC were divided on this issue and it was decided that the BC needs to define the goals of a future Program Evaluation (summary) process and how it would occur. Tom Wesche stated that his constituency believes that there needs to be an integrated Annual Review meeting including CC, HC, BC and that there needs to be an Annual Program Review Document to summarize status of the program.

The BC agreed that future integration reports need to provide the data and an analysis of the data that can be used to track progress toward recovery and that the process needs to have single author who is responsible for the report.

Dave Campbell informed the BC that members of the CC asked that the Water Development comments be on the CC agenda in December.

FOLLOW UP

The Biology Committee will begin preparing responses to comments. Some of the comments are of a policy nature and the CC will need to address them. The BC will address those that relate to the BC work and responsibilities.

- Bill will review and assign tasks to individuals in two weeks comments will be addressed by Feb meeting.
- Individual researchers with responsibilities need to review comments and provide any responses/edits to Bill.
- Bill needs to track the Integration Report objectives and make sure they are addressed in the document.

- Need recommendation in document as to what the integration process should look like how it should be completed, how often and who should do it.

UPDATE ON SAN JUAN MODEL (BILL MILLER)

- Discussion of recommendation for continuation.

Bill provided brief slide show on the SJ Population model and provided results to date (slide show attached). A discussion of model development and calibration followed. The calibration phase of the model included sensitivity analysis.

Paul Holden wanted to know how well the model represents the real world? Bill responded that the model uses the data collected on populations in the SJ and the model uses mortality rates from literature. To be more representative of the SJ system the model needs population estimates and more data sets. Bill believes the model is accurately representing what is occurring in the system.

Resolution:

- BC recommends keeping the project as a place holder until the Feb. meeting before a decision on 2006 funding is made.
- Bill will provide a summary report for December CC meeting and a complete report will be finished later this winter.

UPDATE ON SAN JUAN ISOTOPE STUDY, STATUS OF FINAL REPORT (DAVE PROPST, KEITH GIDO)

- **Process for decision making on continuation of project.**

The BC received the Final Report just before the meeting. We have Peer review comments. There was not enough time for Committee members to adequately review and provide comments. Discussion at this time is not productive.

Process for final Draft approval of “Evaluation of need for fish passage” report.

The latest version of the report was posted on the UNM website, but not everyone was able to access the latest version. Members will have two more weeks to provide review comments.

Tom Wesche and a representative from APS indicated that they could not support one of the recommendations in the report, which was to consider notching the weir. The committee discussed the issue and felt that the author had the right to make a recommendation, but that it was up to the Program to decide whether to implement it or not. However, because there was already some information available about why it might not be feasible from an engineering perspective, the Committee felt that the information should be included in the report.

The report concluded and the committee concurred that the weir is an impediment to movement, but not a barrier. Marked fish have been documented to pass upstream over the weir.

PROCESS FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF “TEMPERATURE MODIFICATION” REPORT

Review Process for ALL Reports: Review Process will be as follows; Comments from BC 30 days after posting on site. 30 days for researcher to respond to comments/modify report- Two weeks (after posting) for final review and approval by BC; **If any BC members do not agree with approval then review and comment period will be held open.**

Razorback sucker augmentation.

Status of pond renovation and aeration

- Repairs and fencing have been completed.
- There is a ROW issue for the power for the aerators. This issue needs to be resolved before project can move forward.
- Pond management is challenging, however people are on the ground at the site. Vince believes that coordination needs to improve between pond management and pond stocking. (Vince, Dale, Manuel, Albert); Mark McKinstry expressed his concerns related to the administration of funding and the Navajo Nations failure to bill for services in a timely manner. Jeff Cole stated that he was aware of this issue and was working to resolve it; Jeff stated that the Navajo Nation needs to be involved and the Program needs to help facilitate their involvement. Dave Campbell will work with Jeff, Stanley Pollack and Mark to resolve the funding and billing issue.
- A draft Pond Operation Plan has been developed.
- Production has increased, however Chuck believes that 6,000 fish may be a reasonable target figure for the ponds.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF OPTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTING RAZORBACK SUCKER FROM OTHER SOURCES

- Jim Brooks, Dave Campbell, and Mark McKinstry have been evaluating options for increasing the Program's razorback sucker augmentation production numbers. They have requested interest from hatcheries to provide additional RBS for stocking.
- To date, there have been 5 responses including four written proposals. All responses were from federal (4) or state hatcheries (1). All proposals require expenditures of capital funds and will require operating funds from the annual budget.
- Mark McKinstry stated that if we use a hatchery that we currently have an agreement/contract with; it would be relatively easy to modify the existing agreement to include the additional production work. This would save a year of time compared to the Program issuing an RFP.
- Currently the recommended course of action includes continuing to use existing pond structures, work with the USFWS and Navajo Nation to develop active on the ground pond management; reduce production expectations at NAPI ponds and develop additional sources of razorback to augment our stocking efforts. The total fish amount between the sources should exceed our target number.
- Mark McKinstry will brief CC for decision on approach.
- Pikeminnow stocking update (See Dale's attachment)

FY06 WORKPLAN

- **Update on funding availability**

Additional funds due to increase in CPI, All Contracts are being processed.

- **Modifications necessary?** None at this time.

FY 07 WORKPLAN

- Overview of budget

Approved as Preliminary Budget

- **Damage at Hogback diversion may be an additional capital fund project.** There is not enough information on how the damage will be addressed at this time to forecast any additional cost.

PLANNING FOR FEBRUARY REVIEW MEETING

Meeting will include all Coordination Committee, Biology and Hydrology Committee members

Day 1 and 2 will be formal presentations on results to date. The structure will be 15 minute presentation followed by 5 min. discussion.

Day 2 – Will include after the presentations, an informal discussion of status and progress of the Program towards recovery.

Day 3 - Biology Committee meeting

Dave, Chuck and Mark will develop guidelines for presentation by researchers; time for presentations and discussion.

CHAIRMANSHIP

Chuck McAda is elected for one more year.

NEXT MEETINGS

Conference Call on December 9 @ 9:00 am, Joann will set it up. Bill will provide agenda items for this topic.

February 21 (1:00 pm – 6:00 pm); February 22 (8 am – 3:00 pm) for Annual Review and February 23, 2005 (8 am – 3:00 pm) will be regular BC meeting Farmington Civic Center, Farmington NM

ADJOURN

(Updated December 15, 2005)

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Meeting/ Origination Date</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Revised Date</i>	<i>Date Completed</i>
1	Create an Action Item Log for the Biology Committee (BC).	07-18-05	Joann	12-09-05		12-15-05
2	The BC needs to establish monitoring protocols that also work for population estimates. Paul Holden asked if/when the Program begins to develop population estimates do we need the model? This is unknown at this time.	7-18-05	BC	12-09-05		
3	The BC would like in the final report information on model development, data sources and data development, the assumptions used in the model, the model uses and limitations. What is the foundation of the model and it's utility. Having the final report is important to assess the future value of the model.	7-18-05	BC	12-09-05		
4	Members should review the report and distribute comments to other BC members prior to the Dec 9 conference call.	7-18-05	BC	12-09-05		
5	Include discussion on comments in conference call Dec. 9 @ 9:00. Recommendation on funding will occur at this meeting. Send 06 and 07 SOW to BC members. The 07 SOW was not in the work plan package.	07-18-05	BC	12-09-05		
6	BC needs to review the report and provide recommendation to CC.	07-18-05	BC	12-09-05		

(Updated December 15, 2005)

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

7	The BC consideration of the recommendations in the report and developing a final recommendation to the CC will be a separate issue.	07-18-05	BC	12-09-05		
8	BC tentatively approved the report, pending concurrence with modeling runs and other technical issues by B. Miller and R. Bliesner; Any additional comments need to be provided to Melissa Stamp and the BC by Nov 25.	07-18-05	BC	11-25-05		
9	Joann will send out UNM website password.	07-18-05	Joann	12-09-05		
10	The New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office will develop a SJRRIP FTP Site.	07-18-05	David Campbell	12-09-05		
11	Complete and post RFP for Pit Tag purchase. Award contract for pits tags	07-18-05	Mark McKinstry	11-9-05		
12	Complete and post RFP for water temperature monitoring geomorphology, and habitat mapping.	07-18-05	Mark McKinstry	11-9-05		