

Approved August 23, 2006



**Biology Committee Meeting
July 25, 2006
Durango, Colorado**

Members Present:

Chuck McAda
Bill Miller
Ron Bliesner
Gary Skiba for Tom Nesler
David Propst
Paul Holden
Tom Wesche
Jason Davis

Representing:

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

Program Management:

David Campbell

Program Coordinator

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

Joann Perea-Richmann

Program Support Assistant

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

Interested Parties:

Patrick Goddard (replacing Julie Jackson)
Viola Willetto
Steve Platania
Jim Brooks

Representing:

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Navajo Fish and Wildlife
University of New Mexico, Dept of Biology
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Fishery Resources
National Park Service, SLC Utah
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NM Ecological Service
U.S. Bureau of Affairs – NIIP
Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Dept.
Water Developers

Melissa Trammell
Marilyn Myers

Michael Howe
Albert Lapahie
Steve Harris

1. Introduction; review/modify agenda (McAda)

Review and approve minutes from February 23, 2006 meeting and May 8, 2006 conference call

- Minutes for February 23, 2006 being revised. May 8 minutes were approved with minor edits.
- Action Item Log

2. Program Update (David Campbell)

- Program Document is currently being revised by Coordination Committee (CC).
- Sufficient Progress Report is completed and currently at Region 2 and Region 6 for their review and comments. A conference call is being coordinated.
- RFP Process: geomorphology, temperature, and habitat mapping Contract is in place through BioWest, work is underway.
- Committee Process
 - Biology Committee (BC) and all other committees need to return to operating according to the Program Document.
- Dave stated he and Mark were working on an RFP for a Feasibility Study for the large non-native vegetation removal program we envision. They believed it was such a large endeavor and needed to be coordinated with a number of other similar actions, so a pre-study study was in order.
- APS fish passage design is in the works Brent Uilenberg is working on this.
- Dave mentioned that the BoR RFP process was changing again. Mark McKinstry will not longer be the program contact; Melynda Roberts is now the contact person. The Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) still does not have answers to our primary questions.

3. Trophic Relationships Among Colorado Pikeminnow

- Discussion of Peer Review Comments and recommendation.
 - Some of the questions and concerns raised by the Peer Reviewers are addressed in the SOW
 - Tom Wesche and Tom Nesler feel that there is a lack of evidence that Colorado Pikeminnow (CPM) are affected by lack of available food resources and do not support the project.
 - Two peer reviewers are supportive and one is against.

4. San Juan River Population Model (Bill Miller)

- Discussion of Peer Reviewers comments discussion and recommendation.
 - Bill Miller - Needs to clarify and refine the questions the model will used to address; need to expand assumptions. Bill has had a review of the model from CSU researcher/modeler.
 - Dave Propst stated this study and the Trophic Relations are the only ecosystem level studies being done.

- Tom Wesche stated we need to have Peer Reviewers from experts outside of the Program.
 - Paul Holden asked what do we want the model for? How will it be used; how will it help us reach our recovery goals.
 - Chuck McAda and Paul Holden have concerns and questions on the assumptions that were used and the quality of the data being used to populate the model.
 - Do we need the model to achieve recovery?
 - Has value in projecting population numbers for Razorback Sucker. Maybe used to provide some insights into the impact of water temperature on Razorback Sucker (RBS) and Colorado Pikeminnow.
 - The model can provide response of species growth to temperature and spawning timing. Can simulate response of system for augmentation program and non-native removal program.
 - Contains parameters for flow/ habitat relationship and primary/secondary productivity.
 - Ron Bliesner stated this is a very complex model where the parameters are not verified over time by data which are inherently risky.
- Paul Holden motioned to move Trophic Relations Study forward to the Coordination Committee (CC) for reconsideration for funding Second TW Five for; three against. Motion failed.
 - No motion to move Population Model forward in FY 2006.
 - BC needs to decide for 07 whether it needs a model;
 - What questions does the model need to answer;
 - Committee needs to have a meeting in the next couple of months to focus on the model and to address its capabilities, needs, and format. With external and internal peer reviewers at meeting.
 - Need final report from Bill Miller.

Action: David and Mark will get together with Bill Miller to select specialized peer reviewers to review and give input on the model. David stated prior to doing this it needs to be approved by the CC.

5. NAPI Pond Management Plan

- Discussion of Plan and recommendation.
 - Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) meeting with Navajo Nation (NN) on Aug. 8 to address pond management strategy, moving toward single cohort approach starting with 6 pack ponds. This would entail fallowing three ponds while operating three on a rotating schedule. Keep the Razorback Sucker in the system for 12 months then tag and stock.

- FWS and NN will develop a Razorback Sucker production plan for the single cohort strategy.

12:00 – 12:30 Lunch

6. Young-of-Year Colorado Pikeminnow Monitoring Report

- Paul Holden stated there is a need to develop population estimates for CPM.
- Dave Propst stated the study doesn't appear to have a clear goal and methods are not consistent. This adds to the difficulty in analyzing and comparing data. Conclusions are reaching.
- Paul Holden stated methods changed to adapt to better collection techniques. 1st sample and March sampling techniques remained the same.
- Bill Miller stated that changing methodology prevents analysis conclusions and are not substantiated. This study should end and the program should move to population estimates for Colorado Pikeminnow (CPM).
- Dave Propst stated population estimates in this system with sub-adult CPM cannot be done with any level of confidence.
- Paul Holden disagrees and stated looking at age-0 may identify bottleneck in retention.
- Jason Davis asked what the value of having a population estimate on age - 0 fish? Why not focus on 2+ age classes.

Does the Young-of-Year CPM research move forward in 2007. What are they study objectives?

Ron Bliesner-Motioned to move 2007 proposal forward for funding, Chuck McAda - second. 4 yes; 4 no. Motion fails. Chuck would like to see where it fits into the Long Rang Plan.

Conclusion: BC recommends not stocking the CPM early.

7. Long Range Plan

- Discussion: goals, objectives, tasks, and projects changes have been annotated and another meeting has been established to complete.
- Dave asked that ideas for research projects be sent to him along with comments on the LRP by August 11. (per P. Holden)

8. Available/Additional Colorado Pikeminnow

- Discussion and recommendation.
 - potential for raising additional CPM at Mumma SFH, with an estimate of costs (previous stockings, including the upcoming one, have been funded by the Upper Basin Program).

9. Proposal to reduce size of Annual Reports

- No discussion at this time.

10. Discussion of Temperature White Paper needs and proposed SOW

- Still needs to be reviewed by BC before approving, will complete at next mtg.

12. Set next meeting date

August 29, 2006: 8 am – 4 pm; Farmington Civic Center,
200 W. Arrington, Farmington, NM

Adjourn

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS
(Updated August 7, 2006)

	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Meeting/ Origination Date</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Date Completed</i>
16	BC feels Vince Lamarra should work with Amy Cutler on Water Temperature and submit to BC with analysis.	02-23-06	BC	On going	04-01-06	
18	Long Range Plan comments due to David Campbell	02-23-06	BC/David C	On going	03-31-06	
19	SOW on development of SOW for removal of vegetation removal for Feasibility Evaluation Restoration Options using capital monies.	02-23-06	David C & Mark M	On going	05-08-06	
22	BOR to perform feasibility/design study for nonselective passage improvements for APS.	02-23-06	Mark McKinstry	On going	05-08-06	
23	David will check with Mark on status of whether the BC still needs to take 2.6% budget cut.	07-25-06	David C/Mark	On going	08-15-06	
24	Bill Miller will provide David Campbell with a list of outside peer reviewers to do an evaluation Population Model	07-25-06	Bill/David C	On going	Sept mtg	