

Approved May 17, 2007



**Biology Committee Meeting Summary
February 14-15, 2007
Farmington, New Mexico**

Members Present:

Paul Holden
Ron Bliesner
Chuck McAda
Jason Davis (Marilyn Meyers 15 Feb)
Keith Lawrence for Vince Lamarra
Mark McKinstry
David Propst
Tom Wesche
Bill Miller
Gregory Gustina
Steve Ross (Peer Reviewer)
Ron Ryel (Peer Reviewer) (14 Feb 07)
Mel Warren (Peer Reviewer)

Members not in attendance:

Tom Nesler

Program Management:

David Campbell

Joann Perea-Richmann

Interested Parties:

Howard Brandenburg
Michael Farrington
Ernie Teller
Steven Platania
Melissa Trammell
Darek Elverud
D. Weston Furr
Dale Ryden
Viola Willetto
Bill Leibfried
Yvette Paroz
Amy Kraft (15 Feb 07)
Steve Lynch (15 Feb 07)
Marilyn Meyers

Representing:

Jicarilla Apache Nation
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2
Ecosystems Research Institute
Bureau of Reclamation
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
Water Development Interests
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Bureau of Land Management
Museum of Southwestern Biology, UNM
Dept. of Forestry Range Wildlife Sciences
USDA Forest Southern Research Station

State of Colorado

Program Coordinator

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2, NM Ecological
Services Field Office

Program Support Assistant

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2, NM Ecological
Services Field Office

Representing:

University of New Mexico
University of New Mexico
Bureau of Indian Affairs-NIIP
University of New Mexico
National Park Service
Utah Division Wildlife Resources-Moab, Utah
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6
Navajo Fish and Wildlife
SWCA Consultants
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
SWCA Consultants
SWCA Consultants
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2

Welcome and Introductions (Paul Holden), February 14, 2007; 1:45 pm

Modifications/Additions to agenda: Paul Holden

- Review and approval: Meeting summaries, October and December
- October summaries approved
- December summaries approved with changes

Discussion of voting process

The Biology Committee (BC) voted to approve and move forward for funding the modification of the Habitat Mapping SOW. The CC did not approve the modification the SOW. Several members of the CC noted that votes by both Committees may have not followed the new Program Document procedures. Brian Millsap discussed the vote process and explained that the FWS considered both votes valid. Other items discussed included:

Does the Biology Committee need to develop a recusial (sp) process for projects that members may work on? Yes, to follow the new Program Document procedures.

- BC and Program Coordinator need to lay out a process to follow in future voting
- BC re-voted on habitat scope of work and it again passed
- SOW needs to reflect that it would be a pilot study and species assemblage approach would be incorporated

Solicitors Opinions on Contracting (Mark)

Mark explained two opinions for funding projects for the San Juan program:

- ❖ Sole source agreements financial assistance with state, federal government and tribes. These are the participants for the program as defined in the Cooperative Agreement. The legislation P.L. 106-392 provides funding for the Cooperative Agreement and the participants.
- ❖ Sole source or limited competition contracts with tribal participants or other contractors as determined by the tribes. Much of the work for the SJRIP is conducted on tribal lands and they have the ability to limit competition to those contractors (including state and federal agencies) that can obtain the required permits and permissions from the tribe (s).

Overview and summary of Annual Review Meeting

- Separate Q&A for each presentation
- Target presentation to the audience
- Consider restructuring meeting format so that the presentations show the relationship of the project to recovery and Program objectives
- Provide additional time to researchers
- Develop a synthesis component to the format
- Cheat sheet for latin names and acronyms

Finalize 2007 Work Plan

- Jason Davis' proposed modification to his 2007 SOW
- Removal efforts are a high priority for the Program. The BC should develop measurable objectives and targets for the SJR. The BC should address expanding NN removal to include the middle section and an overall increase in effort.

- Maintain or increase level of effort on both ends, add higher level of effort to middle reach;
 - ❖ Need to develop criteria or target for nonnative reduction effort;
 - ❖ Mel Warren noted that removal may decrease the size at sexual maturity, so a growth rate study element may be needed in SOW;
 - ❖ 5-10 year effort, how long should the increased effort last?
 - ❖ As a base 12 passes per year
 - Add here as another bullet David Campbell to work with FRO and Utah to develop recommendations for SOW
- Vince Lamarra's White Paper – Comments on white paper due Friday March 16. Send to Program list serve-Peer reviewers to provide review and comments. Final Report will be due April 16
- RFP for constructed backwaters
 - ❖ We need a technical/cost analysis; need to consider nonnative fish implications; water quality needs to be addressed;
 - ❖ CC needs a written assessment of the issues prior to making a decision. What is the product and process for the assessment, Mark McKinstry, Brent Uilenberg, Paul Holden, and Ron Bliesner. Paul Holden will be the lead.
- Population Model

Status of the workshop

- Two reviewer line up, looking for a third. Mark McKinstry to firm up date in week of April 9-13 (10-11)
- Bill Miller will provide draft agenda by February 18
- Need to provide original questions for the intended use of the model

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Population Model discussion continued

- Ron Bliesner - What are the key questions that the Program needs to have a model answer?
- Dale Ryden – Are the numbers being used for the target populations large enough to maintain a self sustaining population
- The model can answer augmentation questions, could be used to address non native removal questions (we would need to address any changes in spawning age, fecundity issues)
- The model may be used to detect the large scale effects of habitat change
- Can the model be used to set target criteria for nonnative removal, possibly...with the appropriate assumptions, calibration and interpretation

Population Goals

- Augmentation Rates
- Nonnative removal
- Flow/habitat interaction

Complex Reach study

A vote on this modification was taken via email; the project is considered a high priority for incorporating into the 2007 WP

Next steps:

- BC needs to link study objectives to evaluating the flow recommendations
- Address long term study design. (add sediment transport component) Ron Bliesner will provide a short write-up to Dave Campbell

Need to incorporate elements into LRP

Equipment purchases with 2007 funds

David Campbell and Marilyn Myers will handle equipment purchase requests

Availability of additional 2007 age 7 Colorado Pikeminnow

- We need to evaluate the results of stocking larger fish. Purchasing additional large fish at this time is not supported because we have not evaluated the results of the 2006 stocking
- Tom Wesche would like to have additional information on the number of fish available and time frame

Recommendation to provide for additional hatchery capacity

- The BC recommends putting 1- 2m in 2010-2012 capital budget to reserve the ability for additional capacity

Review and discussion of modifications to Monitoring Program

- Annual report for study
- Peer Reviewers and BC review of study and methods
- BC needs to look at the linkage to fish use
- BC needs to link to evaluating flow recommendation
- Address long term study design. (add sediment transport component)
- Develop process for assessing the flow recommendations
- Need to incorporate elements into LRP

Population Estimate

We need to define the overall purpose of the estimate

- What are the objectives?
- Number of fish in the system by age class
- Survival of RBS/CPM, by stocking
- The overall/long term approach needs to be developed in context of the monitoring program
- Which populations?
- When to start?
- We need to have workshop to address the pop estimate approach (agenda for ARM 2008)
- In 2007 build pilot approach into Nonnative removal effort. Jim Brooks to address
- We need to analyze existing data (CPUE?) (priority for 2007)
- Need to analyze the existing pit tag data; do we have a high probability of answering the objectives?
- Analyze existing data using stock assessment model

Lake Powell selective fish passage barrier

Ron Bliesner provided some statistics for the committee

- What is the probability of Lake Powell filling? 10 out of 26 years it is a problem.

- Current elevation 3605, needs to come up 85ft.
- What species are of concern? Striped bass, walleye, catfish, only one year we saw a potential problem.
- How much of a problem is it?
- What are the issues for native species?
- A dam of some sort would cause a loss of habitat above it as it would fill in with sand/silt
- Will a selective passage help retain CPM
- Does a barrier restrict gen. exchange
- Where you place the barrier (Mexican hat or Clay Hills)

Fruitland Diversion

- ~1 mile of critical habitat above diversion but would provide ~40 miles of habitat above the mouth of the Animas
- Only a barrier when it is rebuilt, then it is a complete barrier for a few days/weeks until high flows break it up
- Currently, an impediment to passage not a blockage. A designed structure would improve conditions
- May require a fish screen on diversion
- The BC would like Brent to provide low tech options. No hard structure

Develop BC process for assessing and recommending changes to the flow recommendations

- Lower flows are not accomplishing the expected results. (2500 and 5000 cfs)
- Integration Report identified the need to revisit the Flow Recommendations
- The addition of fish data to the complex reach study will be important in future evaluations
- We can ask the Hydrology Committee (HC) to analyze the revised flows

The BC Process will be:

- Develop recommendations for changes in the operating rule. Ron Bliesner will draft the recommendations for the BC
- Mini-flow recommendations report will be included 2008 work plan. Need to work with BC members to develop Scope-of-Work (SOW) for report

Update of Monitoring Plan

- We need to evaluate the Monitoring Plan in context of the revised LRP
- Time will be set aside at the May 17 meeting will address this subject

Finalize 2007 Workplan

1. Nonnative removal (preferred option) with embedded Pop Data element OR
2. Fish Sampling Modification to Detailed Reach Study
3. Equipment wish list

Population Workshop

Mark McKinstry set the workshop for April 10-11 in Ft. Collins, starting at 1 PM.

Schedule next meeting

May 17-18, Farmington, NM

Adjourn

