



**Approved Summary
San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program
Biology Committee Conference Call
9 July 2012**

Attendees:

Biology Committee Members:

Bill Miller, Chair – Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Kevin Terry – Jicarilla Apache Nation
Brian Westfall – Bureau of Indian Affairs
Jason Davis – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Mark McKinstry – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Dale Ryden – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Vincent Lamarra – Navajo Nation
Harry Crockett – State of Colorado
Eliza Gilbert – State of New Mexico
U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Absent
Tom Wesche – Water Development Interests
Patrick McCarthy – Conservation Interests

Program Office – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2:

David Campbell
Sharon Whitmore
Scott Durst

Interested Parties:

Carrie Lile – Southwestern Water Conservation District
Steven Platania – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
James Morel – Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife
Benjamin Schleicher – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Nate Cathcart – Kansas State University
Mike Farrington – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
Mary Brandenburg – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers

Monday 9 July 2012

Changes to agenda:

- Update on work in San Juan River tributaries from Nate Cathcart.

- Ryden will introduce new San Juan biologist Benjamin “Joey” Schleicher and provide information on the changing situation with BIA Farmington regarding shuttles.
- McKinstry will provide new information from Bureau of Reclamation on Lake Powell work.

Approve 15 May 2012 draft meeting summary and review Action Item list:

- Durst incorporated previous comments and edits. There were no additional comments on this revised version of the meeting summary. Ryden motioned to approve the summary, Wesche seconded, and the summary was unanimously approved.

Update on work in San Juan River tributaries – Cathcart:

- All fish species are being tagged in McElmo Creek, Chaco River, and in the mainstem San Juan River near the McElmo Creek confluence. To date 582 fish have been tagged. Fish > 300 mm are double tagged with PIT tags and floy tags. Fish that are double tagged can also be detected by non-native removal and adult monitoring crews, however smaller fish should also be double tagged so data can be collected if they are captured by other efforts in the mainstem San Juan River. The PIT tag reader in the lower portion of McElmo Creek is functioning and continues to document these tagged fish using that area. No razorback suckers or Colorado pikeminnow have recently passed the remote reader.
- If non-native fish with floy tags are removed or native suckers with floy tags are captured from other efforts in the San Juan, this data should be sent to Cathcart.
- Cathcart will send Durst the PIT tag numbers he has used.
- Habitat monitoring is occurring in conjunction with this work. Habitat types are being documented along with habitat length and width. Discharge measurements are being collected and temperature monitoring is also occurring.
- Annual reports will be available detailing the preliminary findings of this work.

Benjamin Schleicher is FWS-Grand Junction’s new San Juan biologist:

- Ryden introduced Schleicher. He will be the new biologist in the field for work on the San Juan River filling Ryden’s role. He will run the Fall Monitoring trip this year.
- Travis Francis will fill some of the roles vacated by Bob Burdick.

Update on shuttle situation with BIA-Farmington:

- Ryden provided an update. The shuttles provided by BIA-Farmington have not been included in past SOWs. In the future BIA-Farmington may not be able to provide this service. Adding shuttles into future SOWs would be a substantial cost and introduce logistical challenges.
- The Program Office will look into RPAs that obligate BIA to provide this service.
- Davis and Ryden will explore shuttle options with BIA-Shiprock, BR construction office in Farmington, and BLM.

Bureau of Reclamation position on Lake Powell:

- McKinstry provided information on a recent briefing of the SJRIP’s work in Lake Powell to the regional BR directorate. BR considers the work in Lake Powell very important and is proposing a 50% cost-share of \$250,000 to be split between the San Juan and Upper Colorado Recovery Programs to fund work in both the Colorado River arm and San Juan River arm of Lake Powell in 2013. A third year of work would maintain momentum of the last two years in terms of logistics and equipment. There are sonic tags implanted in razorback suckers that will be active through 2013. Initial signs indicate the proportion of untagged fish in the San Juan River is declining while the proportion in Lake Powell remains high suggesting the possibility of recruitment.

- The BC previously decided to not do work in Lake Powell in 2013 but rather conduct an integration analysis of the last two years of work in Lake Powell to direct potential work into the future. However the last two years of work in Lake Powell had different results possibly due to the different hydrologic regimes, so it is not clear how much data could be integrated between these two years and what would be gained from an integration of this data. A third year of work in Lake Powell would lead to learning the system in terms of sampling efficiency, timing of sampling, and logistical improvements.
- Miller indicated that it is important to not lose other SOWs that have recently been added to the AWP. However, if Lake Powell work could be funded at least partially outside of the Program, it would be important to proceed with that work.
- Could the SJRIP access funds set aside for the Upper Program if they decide not to participate in the Lake Powell work? The Upper Program is holding a BC meeting later this week and this proposal will be discussed.
- Miller asked McKinstry to prepare and circulate a memo from BR detailing this proposed funding of work in Lake Powell. The Lake Powell SOW should remain in the Annual Work Plan as a placeholder. The BC should hold another conference call prior to the CC's August conference call to come up with a final list of priorities for the 2013 AWP.
- In general the BC is supportive of the BR offer.

Discussion of 2013 SOWs:

Review Coordination Committee input:

- The LRP should be approved and finalized each year because it is used for project tracking and to evaluate sufficient progress.
- The CC supports the proposed AWP that includes scopes-of-work for data integration, opercula analysis, natal origin analysis, remote PIT tag antennas, habitat retrospective study, and monitoring in the Animas River and upstream of the Animas confluence in the San Juan River.
- Final approval of 2013 AWP will occur during 21 August conference call.

Review new workplans on scale analysis, opercula deformities investigation, habitat retrospective study, and Lake Powell summary analysis:

- Wesche asked for a concise statement in the natal origin analysis that addresses the how documenting recruitment is related to the recovery potential of this work.
- McKinstry cautioned against putting full budgets in SOWs because that information is considered proprietary. This information could be used to gain a competitive advantage when future work goes out for bid. The budgets should include costs for general categories of work but not specific rates.
- Farrington clarified that the opercula deformities investigation will be conducted on only collections that contain < 10 specimens.
- Wesche asked for clarification in the opercle deformities investigation SOW on the captions of Tables 2 and 3, why are correlations with hydrologic and temperature regime included, and why there is a difference in the overhead charge compared to the regular larval survey work?
- McCarthy questioned the timeframe for the habitat retrospective study. It is important to examine conditions at least as far back as when Navajo Dam started to operate. Availability of digital data limits this investigation only to 1990, however current condition are certainly derived from past conditions. The study will include a literature review to provide the appropriate historical context. Wesche questioned the proposed 5 year time interval of the

analysis; Lamarra indicated he will add perturbation events into the 5 year time intervals. This shorter timeframe will better inform the flow recommendation revision.

- Wesche indicated that it would be important to measure flow in the restored RERI sites. Also cross-sections in restored channels should be periodically investigated. Additionally, repeat on-the-ground photo points should continue to be monitored.
- McKinstry will work with Miller and Lamarra after the call to clarify funding in FY 2011 and FY2012.
- The Lake Powell summary analysis is not covered under a current SOW. The integration effort out of the Program Office should cover any Lake Powell summary analysis.

Review revised adult and small-bodied monitoring workplans on expanding efforts upstream of the Animas River – San Juan River confluence for 2012 and 2013:

- Terry reiterated the Southern Ute's and Jicarilla's offer to help with this monitoring effort in 2012 with the expectation that no funding is available for this work. Ryden, Gilbert, and Terry will have discussions outside of the call to move this forward.
- The expanded monitoring effort for 2013 is detailed in revised SOWs from Ryden and Gilbert.

Update on status of FY2013 funding:

- McKinstry reported that the Program will have full funding for 2013 adjusted for inflation. The current legislation can be extended but new legislation has been proposed as well. Since the legislation is not likely to pass before the election in November, continuing resolutions will probably occur so we could expect delays similar to last year. So non-federal partners should be funded first. Funding agreement for FY2012 for Navajo Nation and New Mexico are still not in place and may not be remedied during the current fiscal year.

Discussion of protocol for operating PNM fish passage as a non-selective passage:

- Miller indicated that PNM should only be operated as a selective fish passage per relevant BOs. FWS - R2 and R6, New Mexico, and the Program Office echoed this.
- Morel provided background on Navajo Nation's funding problems. PNM was operated non-selectively when technicians were not available to work the passage this past April. There has been limited non-native fish movement during past springs. Morel suggested the passage be operated dynamically depending on available personnel. When the passage is closed sediment build up occurs that can shut down the passage until it is cleared with heavy equipment.
- Navajo Nation's funding issues should be an anomaly but the passage should only be operated as a selective passage. When this is not possible the passage should be closed.

Finalize 2012 version of the Long Range Plan:

- Whitmore sent out version of LRP that incorporated Wesche's comments and also a list of outstanding questions that need to be addressed.
- These outstanding questions should be addressed during the BC's fall meeting.
- The CC will approve the current version of the LRP during their August call to approve the 2013 workplan so the next version the BC looks at will be a draft version that will be approved in 2013. In the future the LRP should be approved in May so the BC will make their final recommendations during the February meeting.
- Whitmore asked about the O&M cost for Horsethief Ponds in 2013. Ryden reported that the ponds will be completed by late July and he will look into the cost-share agreement between the two recovery programs on these ponds. The Upper Program will use these ponds right away for razorback suckers and will bring humpback chub in the future. There are currently no identified

uses of the ponds for the SJRIP. The lead time for the SJRIP to use these ponds will be as little as 6 months since the Upper Program can move fish to other facilities. McKinstry suggested putting razorback sucker in Horsethief Ponds sooner than later in order to have a parallel study to determine what the return rate of these fish would be. This could be important if there are no improvements in return rates from Uvalde because the SJRIP will be getting fish from Uvalde until 2015 or 2016. If a move to Horsethief did not occur until then it would take a few years to be able to measure the return rate of any fish produced from this facility giving a short window to the end of the Program. Davis will take a preliminary look at captures by source to determine how many fish from Uvalde were detected in the San Juan this year following their revised management in 2011.

Award for the 2012 larval monitoring contract:

- The larval monitoring contract was awarded to ASIR. The new contract is flexible and allows for up to six trips per year, future scale analysis, aging of otoliths, and processing additional larval collected from Lake Powell. It is also possible to conduct work for other recovery programs and possibly do comparative studies for the different recovery programs.
- Platania addressed the 20% versus 15% overhead rates. The 20% rate was negotiated through GSA and the 2013 larval monitoring work was submitted as if it were to be funded through the state of New Mexico. The previous 15% overhead rate did not include the 7% New Mexico gross receipts tax.

Status of Biology Committee recommendation to the Coordination Committee to conduct a feasibility study of removing fish passage barriers in the lower Animas River:

- The BC made a recommendation during the May meeting to do this feasibility study. The PO should prepare a memo to submit to the CC in time for their August conference call.

Review action Item tasked during conference call:

- Revise and distribute SOWs from ASIR, habitat retrospective study, and Lake Powell summary analysis (from PO) by 20 July.
- Ryden motioned that the BC accept the SOWs as discussed, McCarthy seconded, and the group approved unanimously.
- FWS R2 and R6 will follow up on the shuttle issues with BIA.
- 2013 budgets need to be detailed out to 5 years. There should be an increase in annual budgets each year of 2-5%. BR should provide written guidance on this prior to 20 July 2012. This new budgeting will need to be communicated to the CC.
- The Annual Researchers' Meeting will be held in Moab, UT the week of 14 January. Volunteers to help with the meeting and give presentations are encouraged.

Schedule next Biology Committee meeting:

- A one hour call starting at 9am on 13 August 2012 to discuss 2013 activities in Lake Powell and finalize priorities for the 2013 workplan prior to the CC conference call.
- The fall meeting will be held in Durango over 7-8 November. Everyone should plan on the meeting running 8-5 both days.

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 11 July 2012)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
1	Provide RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data		P.I.'s to the Program Office	Annually before Jan. 1		
2	Provide Preliminary Draft Report Presentations		Project Leads (authors)	Annually at Feb. meeting		
3	Review LRP		BC	Annually at fall meeting		
4	Review Peer Review Comments from the February and May meetings		BC	Annually at fall meeting		
5	Provide Draft Reports		Project Leads (authors) to Program Office	Annually by end of March		
6	Scopes of Work		Project Leads to Program Office	Annually by end of March		
7	Provide Final Reports		Project Leads (authors) to Program Office	Annually by end of June		

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 11 July 2012)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
8	Annual Data Delivery		PIs to Program Office	Annually by June 30		
9	T&E Species Data		BC to Program Office	Annually by Dec. 31		
10	Annually compile T&E data and Program progress into summary to address overall Program recovery goals/objectives for presentation at annual meeting		Program Office/BC	By Annual Meeting in May		
11	Distribute Consolidated Data and list of annual data collected and available in the Program's database		Program Office to BC	Annually by Jan. 31		
12	Recapture analysis on PIT tagged fish		Durst	Annually by March		
13	Coordinate CPM stocking closely with Reclamation to avoid negative impact due to high flows/releases		Project Leads	Annually		
14	Waterfall Inundation Whitepaper – review past meeting summaries, determine what is needed, and provide report at the next meeting.	05/18/07	Program Office	12/07/07	Not a current priority	

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(Updated 11 July 2012)

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15	Revise RBS Augmentation Goals (based on the outcome of experimental stocking)	5/10/10	FWS Fisheries/Program Office	5/2011 – provide update and extend as needed	ongoing	
16	Develop a detailed outline for San Juan River Recovery Program case history manuscript	11-5-08	Propst/Miller			On hold
17	Pursue Non-native fish stocking procedures	11/5/09	Crockett and Gilbert	12/1/09	5/14/12	
18	Pursue effects study on Hg/pikeminnow with other groups/programs	1/14/10	Program Office lead	ongoing		
19	Blank database structure for data integration	1/13/10	Durst	3/23/10	2/24/11	
20	Discussion of what is the appropriate number of fish to stock	3/23/10	BC	ongoing		
21	Southern Ute funding of Population Model	5/10/10	Miller	11/2010	ongoing	
22	Work with I&E Coordinator to determine feasibility of brochures and signs	11/10/10	PO	2/24/11	Ongoing	

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(Updated 11 July 2012)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
23	Revised positive population response criteria	11/15/11	PO and FWS to BC	2/13/12	5/14/12	
24	Workplan for scale analysis and opercula investigation	5/15/12	ASIR	7/2/12		7/2/12
25	Workplan for habitat retrospective	5/15/12	Lamarra	7/2/12		7/2/12
26	Workplan for Lake Powell summary analysis	5/15/12	Ryden	7/2/12		7/2/12
27	Review RPAs concerning BIA's obligations to provide shuttle service	7/9/12	PO	8/13/12		
28	Explore other shuttle options with BIA-Shiprock, BR-Farmington, BLM	7/9/12	Davis and Ryden	8/13/12		
29	Prepare memo to CC conveying BC recommendation to conduct a feasibility study on removing fish barriers in the lower Animas River	7/9/12	PO	8/20/12		
30	Revise and distribute natal origin and opercle deformity investigation SOW	7/9/12	ASIR	7/20/12		
31	Revise and distribute habitat retrospective SOW	7/9/12	Miller and Lamarra	7/20/12		

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG

(Updated 11 July 2012)

Item No.*	Action Item	Meeting/O rigination Date	Responsible Party(s)	Due Date	Revised Date	Date Completed
32	Prepare Lake Powell summary analysis SOW	7/9/12	PO	7/20/12		
33	Guidance on preparing 5 year budgets	7/9/12	BR	7/20/12		

* Items were re-numbered after changes were made

Yellow highlight indicates annual action items

Green highlight indicates new action items

Red highlight indicates completed action items that will be removed from the next iteration of the Action Item Log

Annual SJRRIP Cycle (Oct. 1 –Sept. 30)

January 2011 version

Date	Annual Tasks	PO	CC	BC	P.I.
Oct.	Reclamation administers contracts	X			
Nov.	BC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify questions for annual data integration Review data integration results from previous year Discuss Program priorities LRP review and provide recommendations (pros and cons) to Program Office 	X		X	
Dec. 31	RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data to Program Office				X
January	Notification/update of Program rosters/ mailing lists	X			
January	Executive meeting (Program Office; Reclamation Fund Manager; CC and BC Chairs) to do preliminary planning for upcoming year	X	X	X	
January	Updated LRP to BC and CC for review	X	X		
Jan. 31	Distribute consolidated PIT tag data and post other data	X			
February	BC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for Annual Meeting Provide preliminary results; draft report presentations Review updated LRP Review annual data integration priorities 	X		X	X
February	Final updated LRP to CC (with explanation of input included/not included)	X			
Feb/Mar	Approval of yearly LRP		X		
March	Annual guidance/solicitation for SOWs based on LRP/list of prioritized projects	X			
March 31	Draft reports due/SOWs to Program Office			X	X
April	Preliminary draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
May	Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program overview P.I. presentations Review preliminary draft AWP Committee reports 	X	X	X	X
June/July	Draft Annual Workplan and Budget	X			
June 30	Provide final reports and data sets				X
August	Tech review of draft AWP; recommendations with pros and cons to Program Office			X	
August	Revise AWP based on input and transmit final draft to CC with documentation of all input	X			
Sept.	Review and approve final AWP		X		
Sept.	Post final AWP to website	X			