



**FINAL SUMMARY
BIOLOGY COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
15 March 2018**

Attendees

Biology Committee (BC) Members

Bill Miller – Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Jacob Mazzone – Jicarilla Apache Nation
Brian Westfall – U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Jason Davis – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Region 2, BC Chair
Mark McKinstry – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
Benjamin Schleicher – USFWS Region 6
Vince Lamarra – Navajo Nation (NN)
Mike Ruhl – State of New Mexico
Harry Crockett – State of Colorado
Tom Wesche – Water Development Interests
Dave Gori – Conservation Interests
Craig Townsend – Absent

Coordination Committee (CC) Members

Dale Ryden – USFWS Region 6

Other Interested Parties

Matt Zeigler – New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF)
Micheal Farrington – American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers LLC (ASIR)
Scott Clark – University of New Mexico (UNM)
Katie Creighton – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Carrie Lile – Southwestern Water Conservation District, Colorado

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:

Sharon Whitmore, Program Coordinator – USFWS Region 2
Melissa Mata, Asst. Program Coordinator – USFWS Region 2
Scott Durst, Science Coordinator – USFWS Region 2
Nathan Franssen, FCPP Biologist – USFWS Region 2
Eliza Gilbert, Program Biologist – USFWS Region 2

Thursday 15 March 2018

BC discussion of Colorado Pikeminnow stocking options in 2018 and post-2018

- Program Office (PO) provided a document on 8 March 2018 with a recommendation for stocking options. The documentation that was sent out was essentially the same as the PO recommendation presented at the 20-21 February 2018 BC meeting.

- The recommendation is to stock 400,000 Colorado Pikeminnow that are marked in the Fall of 2018 and Post 2018 stocking is based on anticipated release from Navajo Reservoir.
- The PO recommendation was reviewed by the Peer Reviewers and the PO has responded to the Peer Reviewers' comments that was also distributed to the BC to provide clarification of the PO's recommendation.
- Some clarification was provided on the confusion of stocking and small-bodied monitoring. SNARRC will need to know by April 1 if we will need fish to stock out in November 2018. Small-bodied monitoring is completed by October. Fish stocked in the Fall of 2018 will not be captured until 2019 sampling effort.
- There were some concerns that we have already compromised the diet study, since only 200,000 fish were stocked in 2017. The overall goal of the diet study is the rate of piscivory.
- Keep in mind that the PO recommendation was also based on our lack of spring release this year and that there is an expectation of a low cohort year. Miller wanted to remind folks that on the Green River that good cohort were produce several years after good years of water. There may be better spawning habitat allowing for good cohorts. Wesche added that we may be able to detect this in future and we may have to adjust stocking in the future to account for such relationship.
- The BC has agreed to move forward with the PO recommendation for 2018 stocking and mark all fish.
- For the upcoming May meeting, we need to start thinking about post-2018 stocking.
- Ruhl and Zeigler are already working on putting some thoughts together and Durst has offered to assistant and send out to the BC prior to the May meeting.

Discuss BC concerns with NMDGF request for Navajo Dam pulse release (1,200 af) to inundate restoration project at Simone Canyon

- New Mexico Department of Game and Game has restored wetlands in the Simone Canyon area and requested Program support to release 2,000 cfs for 2 hours out of Navajo Dam to ensure survival of the new plantings. This water will be needed sometime in late May or early June. Susan Behery had estimated that approximately 1,200 af would be used for this purpose.
- There was support during the last Navajo Water Operation meeting to release water to benefit this restoration effort.
- Miller motioned, Lamarra second, and the Navajo Dam release is proposed to go forward.
- PO will ask Behery to describe the hydrograph for prior this release.
- PO asked that if similar projects come up that coordination with the BC be conducted early.

Questions on 2019 draft SOW submission

No question on 2019 SOW submission

Reminders

- Draft SOWs due 12 March 2018 (on-going projects) and 19 March 2018 (new projects)
- Review and approve draft summary from 20-21 February 2018 BC meeting via email 30 March 2018
 - Miller Reminder PO to adhere to timeline for notes.
- Draft 2017 reports due 31 March 2018; final reports due 30 June 2018

- Draft SOW review due 20 April 2018
- Colorado Pikeminnow PVA review deadline 20 April 2018

Annual Meeting Proposal of Modification

- PO will summarize the highlights of this past years work and the PO will ask the PIs to provide highlights of their projects.
- Elicit specific talks from PIs and provide them with more time to present information as “hot topics”:
 - Navajo Dam releases getting up to 5,000 cfs
 - Phase I and II updates and summaries
 - Phase III plans
 - CPM survival and capture effects
 - Razorback seasonal movement and PNM passage
 - Long-term flows and low-velocity
 - N_b of Razorback Sucker and Colorado Pikeminnow
 - Waterfall Updates?
 - Calcein Project?
 - Capital Project Updates
- In addition to the summary of Program projects, the PO will have a wrap-up presentation where the participants can discussion the results and direction of the Program.
- The PO will email PIs with specific instructions for highlights and “hot topics” with associated deadline in preparation for the Annual Meeting.
- Recap decision points, schedule next meeting/call, and review assigned action items
 - 3 April 2018 Colorado Pikeminnow PVA webinar
 - 22-23 May 2018 BC and Annual Meetings

Other Note

- McKinstry highlighted the importance of tracking important decision points for the BC and Program as a whole. The PO will explore methods how we can easily track decision points for future reference.