



**SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (SJRIP)
BIOLOGY COMMITTEE
20 August 2020 MEETING SUMMARY**

BIOLOGY COMMITTEE (BC) MEMBERS:

Matthew Zeigler (Chair)
Harry Crockett
Jacob Mazzone
William Miller
Vince Lamarra
Colin Larrick
Brian Westfall
Stephen Davenport
Mark McKinstry
Benjamin Schleicher
Ryan Besser
Tom Wesche
Absent

REPRESENTING:

State of New Mexico
State of Colorado
Jicarilla Apache Nation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Navajo Nation
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Water Development Interests
Conservation Interests

COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CC) MEMBERS:

Ryan Christianson

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

PROGRAM OFFICE (PO):

Melissa Mata, Program Coordinator
Scott Durst, Science Coordinator
Eliza Gilbert, Biologist

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

Adam Barkalow, BC Alternate
Dave Speas, BC Alternate
Ben Zimmerman, BC Alternate
Jill Wick, BC Alternate
Kathleen Callister, CC Alternate
Brian Hines
Katie Creighton
Nathan Franssen
Steve Mussmann
Melody Saltzgeber
Tildon Jones
Susan Behery
Melissa Trammel
Jeff Arnold

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)
Utah Department of Wildlife Resources
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. National Park Service
U.S. National Park Service

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| Steven Platania | American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers |
| Michael Farrington | American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers |
| Cameron Corley | Arizona Public Service |
| Tyler Pilger | FISHBIO |
| Casey Pennock | Utah State University |
| Keith Gido | Kansas State University |
| Matt Bogaard | Kansas State University |
| Dustin Sersland | Navajo Transitional Energy Company |

Introductions and changes to agenda

McKinstry suggested discussion on the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget and Mata asked for time to make a special announcement.

Approve draft summary from 12 May 2020 BC meeting; review Action Item list – Franssen and Mata

Mata reviewed the action item lists from the last meeting. Comments on the last summary were received from Zeigler and Wesche. Franssen incorporated these comments and no further comments were received. McKinstry moved to approve and Mazzone seconded. The summary was approved with no objections.

Discuss and recommend Trap and Transport options – BC and Pilger

The draft report from the scope of work (SOW) “Feasibility assessment to increase efficiency of endangered fish trap and upstream transport at the Piute Farm waterfall [waterfall] on the San Juan River” was completed by Dr. Tyler Pilger of FISHBIO. This SOW is one piece of a larger long-term effort to decide whether and how to provide upstream fish passage at the waterfall. The SOW was scheduled to be completed at the same time as the Bureau of Reclamation’s Technical Services Center (TSC) SOW to assess the feasibility of constructed fish passage designs. This was done so a full suite of options could be considered by the SJRIP. TSC’s draft report should be available to the BC in the early fall and a presentation given at the late fall meeting. Considering how many fish are detected below the waterfall, the BC thought it was worthwhile for the SJRIP to take the opportunity to evaluate the options laid out in FISHBIO’s report and decide whether to recommend to the CC that, in the short term, some of the trap and transport options be implemented to increase the number of fish passed upstream and to conduct field tests of the different trapping methods. Pilger gave an overview of the options provided in the draft report and the following discussion centered on the technical nature of each trapping option, the daily movement and seasonal presence of fish, electrofishing efficiency, and the pros and cons of each option. With the exception of option #3, which will be further discussed when considering construction solutions from TSC, many BC members thought that a couple of trapping options could be tried given their relatively low-cost. Some BC members thought the trapping options could be employed in an experimental design and more specifically, it would be useful to test whether the guiding wings for some of the trap designs could work in the San Juan. The BC decided to fully recommend the SJRIP implement options 1 and 2 and give serious consideration to option 4. Gilbert and Durst will work with Pilger to finalize the report and Zeigler will draft a cover letter to communicate the BC’s recommendation to the CC for their approval to proceed.

Status of Demographic Monitoring – Schleicher and Duran

Given the Navajo Nation COVID-19 closures and restrictions, the first trip by UDWR will be canceled as permission has not been received to conduct the trip. The rest of the trips will be canceled on September 2nd if the PIs do not get permission from the Navajo Nation by that time. This was a low water year and it is hypothesized that these conditions may result in age-0 Razorback Sucker recruitment. UDWR ask the BC whether they would recommend converting their canceled trip to one that samples the lower San Juan River to try and detect age-0 Razorback Sucker. The BC made the recommendation that UDWR conduct the trip and if UDWR was going to use SJRIP funds that the CC be sent a brief amendment to the SOW. There was no final decision on what to do with the funds or available personnel should the remaining two trips be canceled but the PIs would consider conducting another trip to sample age-0 Razorback Sucker in the lower San Juan River. However, it was recommended that the CC receive a brief amendment if any other effort from those PIs is redirected this year.

Presentation of Service Regional Director Award to Dr. Mark McKinstry - Mata

Mata announced that the Service awarded a Regional Director Award to McKinstry for his contribution to the recovery of Colorado River Basin's threatened and endangered fishes. The award included a letter from the Regional Director and a plaque. The award will be presented to McKinstry at the next in-person meeting.

Reclamation's Technical Service Center challenge prize for temperature control device – McKinstry

The challenge prize was a review of commercially available technology that can be used to change the temperature of large bodies of water. Miller thought there were interesting ideas in the report that the BC should consider and highlighted the technology that break up a reservoir's stratification. Lamarra said Doug Osmundson has recently calculated degree days for Colorado Pikeminnow and Osmundson's work may indicate thermal modification of reservoir releases could increase Colorado Pikeminnow range. The BC discussed that the effects on the downstream fishery would need to be considered; information from Flaming Gorge dam releases and how increasing temperature may support the tailwater invertebrate community would be helpful. Miller thought that since the BC now has some concrete examples of how Navajo Reservoir release temperature could be manipulated that this topic should be an agenda topic for a more focused meeting. It was suggested that it could be on the agenda topic for one of the fall or winter meetings. Prior to a future meeting on this topic, Amy Cutler and Lamarra's reports should be sent to the BC. Both reports are also on the SJRIP website.

Habitat workshop summary next steps – Zeigler and Miller

Miller and Zeigler asked for comments on the approach they took. One of the prioritization exercises was structured to help identify research projects that would allow the SJRIP to have better data and would also facilitate the 2022 work plan. The other exercise was structured to identify feasible habitat projects. Miller and Zeigler asked for comments on these exercises by September 14th. The plan would be to package the habitat workshop summary with a memo to the CC that recommends the BC's habitat project priorities. A second memo would follow that provides the BC's prioritization for studies. The BC discussed that assessing habitat needs and

priorities for Colorado Pikeminnow or other Razorback Sucker life-stages would require another workshop.

Budget update - McKinstry

Congress has yet to pass a budget and if there is a continuing resolution funds will not be available for the recovery programs. In regards to capital projects funds and because of the 2023 deadline, the SJRIP needs to identify and initiate capital projects prior to 2023. These could be habitat projects but there are also some potential hatchery needs that could be funded. A subcommittee may be needed to make progress on moving capital expenditures forward. Under the annual capital projects funding cap there is room to plan for both FY 2022 and 2023

Schedule upcoming meetings/calls/webinars - Durst

Durst will send out a doodle poll for an October meeting (19th-26th). That meeting will be structured to have a few focused topics with the potential items include temperature control for Navajo Reservoir, subcommittees for capital projects, prioritization of diversions from The Nature Conservancy report, and/or Channel Catfish control. Durst will also send out a doodle poll for a longer meeting to occur after the Thanksgiving week.

| BIOLOGY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEM LOG (Updated September 10, 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Item No. * | Action Item | Meeting/Origin | Responsible Party(s) | Due Date | Revised Due Date | Date Completed |
| 1 | Provide RBS/CPM stocking/capture/recapture data | | PIs to PO | Before Jan. 1 | | |
| 2 | Provide Preliminary Draft Report Presentations | | PI | At Feb. meeting | | |
| 3 | Review LRP | | BC | At fall meeting | | |
| 4 | Review Peer Review Comments from the February and May meetings | | BC | At fall meeting | | |
| 5 | Provide Draft Reports | | PIs to PO | By end of March | | |
| 6 | Scopes of Work | | PIs to PO | By end of March | | |
| 7 | Provide Final Reports | | PIs to PO | By end of June | | |
| 8 | Annual Data Delivery | | PIs to PO | By June 30 | | |
| 9 | T&E Species Data | | BC to PO | By Dec. 31 | | |
| 10 | Compile T&E data and Program progress into summary to address overall Program recovery goals/objectives for presentation | | PO/BC | At May meeting | | |
| 11 | Distribute consolidated data and list of annual data collected and available in the Program's database | | PO to BC | By Jan. 31 | | |
| 12 | Recapture analysis on PIT tagged fish | | Durst | By March | | |

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| 13 | Coordinate CPM stocking closely with BOR to avoid negative impact due to high flows/releases | | PIs | Annually | | |
| 14 | Revise RBS Augmentation Goals (based on the outcome of experimental stocking and analysis by Franssen and Durst). What is the appropriate numbers of fish to stock? | 5/10/10 | NMFWCO/PO | 05/2011 – provide update and extend as needed | Ongoing | |
| 15 | Pursue effects study on Hg/Colorado Pikeminnow with other groups/programs | 1/14/10 | PO lead | | Ongoing | |
| 16 | Include benchmarks for recovery in LRP (amended to also included in Pathways document and monitoring protocols) | 12/5/14 | Mata | 01/5/2015 | Ongoing | |
| 17 | Status updates for the LRP | 12/2/15 | PIs to Mata | 02/23/2016 | Ongoing | |
| 18 | Make Program peer-reviewed publications available to Program participants | 11/29/16 | PO (Mata) | 02/21/2017 | Ongoing | |
| 19 | Disposition of Razorback <300 mm TL | 02/21/17 | NMFWCO | 05/16/2017 | Ongoing | 11/28/2017 TBD 2019 |
| 20 | Draft a plan for Colorado Pikeminnow stockings | 02/21/17 | PO, NMFWCO, and NMDGF | 02/21/2017 | Ongoing | |
| 21 | Coordinate aerial flights for base flow imaging | 11/28/17 | BC (Lamarra)/PO (Franssen) | Fall | Ongoing | |

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| 22 | Rank entrainment risks for diversions included in the Diversion Study | 02/019/2020 | PO | Ongoing | | |
| 23 | Coordinate with Upper Colorado Program on enhancing CPM broodstock | 02/019/2020 | PO | Ongoing | | |
| 24 | Planning document for Colorado Pikeminnow rearing at NAPI | 5/12/2020 | NMFWCO and PO | None given | | |
| 25 | Finalize the trap and transport SOW | 8/20/2020 | Pilger, Durst, Gilbert | None given | | 8/24/2020 |
| 26 | Memo to CC recommending trap and transport options | 8/20/2020 | Zeigler, BC | None given | | |
| 27 | Demographic monitoring PIs send memo to CC if revising the SOW effort | 8/20/2020 | PIs | 9/14/2020 | | |
| 28 | Schedule a BC calls for October for focused discussion and another longer meeting after Thanksgiving | 8/20/2020 | PO | None given | | |
| 29 | Update long-range plan to reflect change in Colorado Pikeminnow stocking | 5/12/2020 | PO | 6/30/2020 | Prior to Oct mtg | |
| 30 | Write a path forward paragraph for habitat workshop summary and send to BC for review | 7/14/2020 | Zeigler and Miller | None given | 9/14/2020 | |
| 31 | Send the final Razorback Sucker augmentation plan to PO and then BC | 7/14/2020 | Davenport | None given | End of Aug | |
| 32 | Schedule a BC call to discuss trap and transport study, temp. mod. Study | 7/14/2020 | PO | None given | | 7/27/2020 |
| 33 | Send the BC recommendation to the CC re: the VFDs and Fruitland's weir cost increases | 7/14/2020 | Mata | None given | | removed |

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| Item No. * | Action Item | Meeting/Origination | Responsible Party(s) | Due Date | Revised Due Date | Date Completed |
| 34 | Send revised Colorado Pikeminnow Adaptive Management Stocking Plan to the BC | 7/14/2020 | Barkalow | None given | | 8/18/2020 |
| 35 | Publish previous meeting summaries to the webpage. | 7/14/2020 | PO | None given | | 8/21/2020 |

Yellow highlight indicates annual action items
Green highlight indicates new action item
Red highlight indicates completed action items