



**SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY  
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (SJ RIP)  
COORDINATION COMMITTEE  
Thursday, May 14, 2020**

**Draft Meeting Summary**

**COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CC) MEMBERS:**

Jason Davis, Chair  
Catherine Condon  
Jenny Dumas, CC Alternate  
Michelle Garrison  
Patrick McCarthy  
Stanley Pollack  
Dale Ryden  
Tom Pitts  
Leland Begay  
Roland Becenti  
Christina Noftsker, CC Alternate  
Ryan Christianson

**REPRESENTING:**

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service), Region 2  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
State of Colorado  
The Nature Conservancy  
Navajo Nation  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6  
Water Development Interests  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
State of New Mexico  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

**PROGRAM OFFICE (PO):**

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

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 2

**OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:**

Jojo La, CC Alternate  
Crystal Tulley-Cordova, CC Alternate  
Colleen Cunningham, CC Alternate  
Paul Harms, CC Alternate  
Kathleen Callister, CC Alternate  
Rudy Keedah, CC Alternate  
Lorelyn Hall, CC Alternate  
Matthew Zeigler, BC Member  
William Miller, BC Member  
Steve Whiteman, BC Member  
Ben Zimmerman, BC Member  
Mark McKinstry, BC Member  
Brian Westfall, BC Member  
Jacob Mazzone, BC Member  
Tom Wesche, BC Member  
Benjamin Schleicher, BC Member  
Stephen Davenport, BC Member  
Bobby Duran, BC Member  
Adam Barkalow, BC Alternate  
Daniel Lamarra, BC Alternate  
Carrie Padgett, BC Alternate

State of Colorado  
Navajo Nation  
State of New Mexico  
State of New Mexico  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
State of New Mexico, BC Chair  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Water Development Interests  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
State of New Mexico  
Navajo Nation  
Water Development Interests

Pamela Norris	Arizona Public Service
Aaron Chavez	San Juan Water Commission
Steven Platania	American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
Seth Willey	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Steve Mussmann	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Nathan Franssen	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Daniel Kaus	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Melody Saltzgiver	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stephani Clark Barkalow	American Southwest Ichthyological Researchers
David Speas	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Susan Behery	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
Deb Freeman	Trout Raley

### **Introductions and changes to agenda**

The BC Update agenda item was moved prior to discussion of the annual work plan. Action items were reviewed prior to approval of meeting summaries. Updates on the Colorado Pikeminnow adaptive management plan, Hogback Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) and Report to Congress were added to the agenda. In addition, discussion on the Navajo Gallup Depletion Guarantee was requested to occur after 12:30pm.

### **Annual Meeting**

Mata stated the annual meeting is usually an in-person meeting but due to pandemic the meeting is being conducted as a webinar and the report of the 2019 accomplishments was summarized in a 1-hour PowerPoint presentation.

### **Action Item Updates**

1. The PO will develop a quick reference list of BC and CC responsibilities/processes with specific examples.  
This will be drafted for CC for review by June 5, 2020.
2. The PO will coordinate with Region 6 to summarize Lake Powell's contribution to recovery. A draft synthesis providing a chronology of work completed in Lake Powell will be shared with the BC by June 30, 2020. This synthesis of information as well as any current science will be used to help revise future recovery plans.  
Pitts asked whether fish in Lake Powell count towards recovery. Pitts stated that it is not clear, and he would like an opinion and a policy statement on this matter. Mata stated is the opinion of both herself and Tom Chart (Program Director for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program) that these fish would be counted towards recovery. However, Pitts wants to know what the "Service" says and whether or not that the Service's statement is reflected in the 5-year reviews. Mata stated she will review relevant Service documents and report back to the CC.
3. The PO and BOR will work to provide the \$25,000 to fix the Hogback VFD pumps.  
This was approved by CC and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funds were provided but the pandemic caused a delay in receiving the parts.

4. Clarification on any proposed future stocking will be proposed as amendments to SJRIP augmentation plans.  
This was provided in the summary notes being approved during this meeting.
5. The PO will finalize and post meeting summaries for May 16, 2019 and July 30, 2019.  
These meeting summaries have been uploaded on the SJRIP website.
6. CC will provide comments on the October 17, 2019 meeting summary by November 27, 2019.  
Comments were received and are open for discussion and approval in this meeting.
7. The Service will update the SJRIP Section 7 Principles and provide a draft for review to the CC.  
A draft will be provided to the CC by June 19, 2020.
8. The PO will amend the Long Range Plan to include a subtask under Task 2.3.2.3 to include monitoring activities with PIT Antenna as discussed for the Ranchman-Terrell Biological Opinion (BO).  
This amendment will be completed by June 30, 2020 and an additional task will be included to reflect the shift in Colorado Pikeminnow augmentation from 400,000 age-0 fish to 12,000 age-1 fish for the BC review.
9. The Service will update the Ranchman-Terrell BO to be in accordance with the SJRIP Section 7 Principles.  
This BO is in the process of being updated.

**Approval of October 17, 2019 and November 20, 2019 conference call summaries – Mata**  
Condon and McCarthy didn't have any further comments on October notes. Condon provided editorial comments on the November notes. Condon moved to approve both meeting summaries and seconded by McCarthy with caveat that editorial notes for November be included. No opposition and motion was approved.

#### **BC Update – Zeigler**

The BC meeting focused on the fiscal year 2021 annual work plan (AWP). Discussion centered on the five new scopes of work (SOWs) submitted and SOWs that had significant changes from prior years. There was support from the BC for the Phase III SOW and the Colorado Pikeminnow broodstock collection SOW. The BC also discussed a request from the City of Bloomfield to BOR to increase San Juan River flows during a paddle board competition that would be part of a New Mexico Outdoor Conference in October. The BC had a concern that providing the water would set a precedent but ultimately supported the request if the PO had an information and education booth at the event. The Razorback Sucker augmentation plan was discussed and BC members requested additional information be included. The BC will review the document once that information is included before recommending it for CC review and comment.

#### **FY2021 Draft Annual Work Plan and Budget – Program Office**

The BC provided technical comments for select SOWs as requested by the PO and additional SOWs at their discretion. A first draft of the 2021 AWP that included comments and initial budget projections for each SOW was provided to the BC and CC. Five new SOWs were submitted for consideration in the 2021 AWP. The first proposed stocking Razorback Sucker from Horsethief ponds into Lake Powell. The principal investigators (PIs) clarified that this would not affect the number of fish provided by this hatchery for other San Juan River stocking commitments. The PIs also clarified the

proposed monitoring and evaluation of the project. The PIs said they would revise and resubmit the SOW. The second new SOW proposed creating Razorback Sucker spawning habitat by placing cobble directly below the waterfall. The PIs thought the odds of building a fish passage at the waterfall are low and this may provide a way for adults below the waterfall to contribute to reproduction in the basin. BC members thought feasibility investigations to build gravel spawning bars should be conducted but the PIs considered this project a feasibility investigation. The PIs will not resubmit the creation of spawning bar SOW as part of the 2021 AWP, but it may be resubmitted outside of this process since this SOW could be funded as a capital project. The third new SOW was submitted to provide for the operations, monitoring, and evaluation of Phase III habitat restoration as described in the approved SOW to fund construction of the project. The fourth new SOW was a field experiment using a chemical application to reduce stress during Colorado Pikeminnow broodstock collection. This SOW would need approval by the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program Office and would be submitted once that was given. The fifth new SOW was developed to support Colorado Pikeminnow broodstock collection. This SOW was supported by the BC. Southwest Native Aquatic Recovery and Research Center revised its SOW to reflect the recommended BC shift of producing 400,000 age-0 Colorado Pikeminnow to 12,000 age-1 fish. The CC approved this shift but since it was a significant change to the SOW, the BC provided technical review. New Mexico Game and Fish Department (NMDGF) amended the small-bodied monitoring SOW to increase sampling of two river reaches. The BC supported this change. New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office provided two scenarios in the nonnative fish removal SOW: continue the prior year's protocol or add an additional removal pass. The BC supported the second scenario. A SOW from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Bureau of Reclamation detailed the installation of three 20-foot permanent PIT tag antennas at various locations downstream of Shiprock to increase detections in locations where few antennas are present. This installation would be a capital project.

The CC discussed the proposal to stock excess Razorback Sucker into Lake Powell and the contribution of Razorback Sucker in Lake Powell to recovery. Pitts asked again whether fish in Lake Powell count towards to recovery? Pitts stated that it is not clear, and he would like an opinion and a policy statement on this matter. Mata stated is the opinion of both herself and Tom Chart (Program Director for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program) that these fish would be counted towards recovery. However, Pitts wants to know what the "Service" says and whether or not that the Service's statement is reflected in the 5-year reviews. The PO and other Service representatives indicated there were several documents indicating those fish counted towards recovery, which included the recently developed species status assessment. The Service did not think there was a reason why those fish would be excluded from supporting recovery. Mata stated she will review relevant Service documents and report back to the CC.

The current AWP is ~\$100,000 over budget and Mata will be working with PIs to find budget efficiencies.

### **Next steps in the AWP process**

The PO compiled comments from BC, Peer Reviewers, and PO on all SOWs that received comments for the BC and CC. The next draft of the AWP will include revised SOWs and PIs response to comments. Response to comments from PIs are due June 26, 2020 and CC will see the second draft AWP mid-July.

### **2020 San Juan River Environmental Flows/Navajo Dam Release Update – Behery**

Navajo Operations have been maintaining baseflows of about 600 cfs. Spring runoff has begun a few weeks early and baseflows have risen to 800 cfs. Most reservoirs within the San Juan River Basin are 75-90% full and snowpack is about average. However, the available water forecast is low (50% of average) due to low soil moisture because of the dry 2019 monsoon season. The available water calculation indicates no spring release and shows there's little expectation of meeting any of the spring peak flow targets this year or having water available for adaptive management. Runoff in the San Juan River basin is expected to be quicker and sooner than normal, peaking to ~2500 to 3200 cfs around May 20<sup>th</sup>. McCarthy asked if there will be a problem meeting baseflow targets at the end of the irrigation season. Behery does not anticipate it being a problem.

### **FY20 appropriations/DC trip update – Pitts**

The annual Washington, D.C. trip proceeding on schedule for the week of March 23. Meetings were scheduled with staffs of House and Senate members from the four upper basin states, authorizing and appropriations subcommittees for Reclamation and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the directorates of Reclamation and the Service, and Department of the Interior administration. Due to the virus, all in-person meetings were canceled. Briefings of the same parties took place via conference calls. Briefing materials were provided to the D.C. participants prior to the calls. As originally scheduled, each briefing of the congressional offices was timed for 30 minutes. The conference call format worked well for conveying information and responding to questions of the D.C. participants. In total, twenty-six conference calls were conducted. Calls to the Utah delegation were not made due to the Utah Recovery Program representatives being involved with both the virus and an earthquake in Salt Lake City. However, the Utah Department of Natural Resources stays in close touch with the Utah congressional delegation on a regular basis and the Utah delegation supports the recovery programs. The conference call with the Administration included the Commissioner of Reclamation, Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reclamation Regional Director from Salt Lake City, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Directors from Denver and Albuquerque, and several upper-level staff of the Washington and regional offices of Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposed downlisting of the humpback chub published in early 2020 from endangered to threatened was very well received among the congressional offices, as was the proposed downlisting of the razorback sucker to be published later this year. Members understand that the goal of the programs is recovery of the endangered fish. The downlisting proposals are considered significant milestones toward recovery.

The recovery programs are identified within Bureau of Reclamation for annual funding from both hydropower and appropriations, meaning we will get one or the other for FY2021. There is a directive from OMB (2018) to transfer funds that have been used to fund the recovery programs and the Grand Canyon Adaptive Management Program (\$21.4 million) to the Treasury. For FY 20, WAPA has already sent funding to Reclamation. Any such transfers result in a direct reduction in the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund.

Support for the recovery programs remains firm in the Administration and among the congressional delegations. This is due in large part to the grassroots support by tribes, states, environmental interests, power customers, and water users.

Tom Pitts commended Bill Miller for his excellent participation in the briefings and thanked the Southern Ute Tribe for supporting Bill Miller's participation.

### **Update Post-2023 and report to Congress – Mata/Pitts**

Mata has provided annual base and capital expenditure projections to the post-2023 funding group based on the SJRIP committees' recommendations for activities necessary to make progress toward recovery. The Funding Subgroup recently asked Mata to re-evaluate capital projects to provide a cost estimate for 10 years instead of the 15 that was initially proposed. The SJRIP originally mapped out a 15-year estimate, so this was a simple exercise by providing a cut off at the 10-year mark and report out which capital projects can be completed.

Davis also followed up on whether the Funding Subgroup is seeking an evaluation of funding for base funds. Mata stated initially, yes, but the exercise was then targeted to capital funds. However, it seems unlikely that the annual funding estimate would change in a 10-year time period versus 15-year time period. Garrison mentioned that the subject of annual funds may come up later. Garrison also stated that Mata has expressed during the Funding Subgroup meeting that the projections post-2023 are similar to annual funds being requested now.

Pitts discussed the development of a white paper, where the first task was for Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and Bureau of Reclamation to determine a sustainable level of funding for the three programs they fund (SJRIP, UCREFRP and the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Group [GCDAMP]). WAPA indicated that on average \$12.5 million/year was sustainable over the next 10 years, which is lower than the \$21.4 million they currently provide. They proposed that the GCDAMP receive priority of the \$12.5 million with funds also available for the Recovery Program and that non-federal partners provide a 50% match but did not propose a percentage match for the SJRIP because of tribal involvement. The proposal will be under discussion by the Funding Subgroup as the subgroup comes to recommendations regarding future funding of the recovery programs.

The Funding Subgroup will be getting into negotiations into how to fund the programs and where contributions will be coming from. The current sources are federal appropriations, states, water users, and hydropower funds. This information will eventually contribute to the Report to Congress for the Recovery Programs in fall 2021.

Mata reported that sections of the Report to Congress have been written. The report is due to be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior in September 2020 and is due to Congress in September 2021.

Mata will email both the BC and CC her response to the Funding Subgroup request of re-evaluating capital funds over a 10-year period.

### **Colorado Pikeminnow Adaptive Management Stocking Plan**

This was sent to the CC last week for comment/review. The plan was developed by NMDGF and the intent was to put Colorado Pikeminnow (CPM) stocking into an adaptive management framework where desired conditions and uncertainties are mapped out with performance metrics. The purpose is to evaluate metrics on a scheduled timeline. As detailed previously, there have been substantial discussions where the BC recommended, and the CC approved to stock age-1 CPM (the recommended alternative 5 in the plan). Stocking 12,000 age-1 CPM will be evaluated over 5 years before determining if a new management action needs to be implemented. Davis asked if the document had

been vetted by the BC. The plan has been reviewed by the BC numerous times and they recommend it move to the CC for their review. Davenport indicated that the adaptive management plan will be used substantially for revision of the CPM propagation and augmentation plan. La was unsure if all the options for the disposition of stocked fish were realistic. Barkalow clarified that there are no unstocked fish in the recommended action of stocking age-1 fish every year (alternative 5). La indicated that she would feel more comfortable if there was caveat language that says, “these options for the disposition of unstocked fish will be analyzed in some process.” The options for the disposition of unstocked fish are not ranked in any particular order. CC comment/review of the document is due June 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Navajo-Gallup Depletion Guarantee – Mata**

Discussion of Navajo-Gallup Depletion Guarantee has been delayed since the January 28, 2020 hydrology meeting. Pollack reiterated a recommendation to remove the Navajo-Gallup Depletion Guarantee from the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project BO and the Gen 4 hydrology model. The Depletion Guarantee is triggered to offset new depletions once Navajo Nation depletions exceed a 752,127 afy threshold. Pollack believes the Depletion Guarantee has outlived its usefulness. In addition, Pollack stated that the Service now treats all tribal depletions recognized by various court decrees as within the environmental baseline for the Gen 4 model whether or not the water is currently depleted. Since all of the water in Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project is included in the decrees that quantify water rights of the Navajo Nation and the Jicarilla Apache Nation, there is no reason to use the Depletion Guarantee in the hydrology model, FWS section 7 consultations, or any reason to treat the tribal water in Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project differently from any other tribal water that is in the baseline. It is Pollack’s understanding that the Navajo Nation, or any of the other tribes, can make new diversions of water, and assuming those uses are consistent with their decreed rights, it would be unnecessary to offset the depletion impacts arising from the new diversions. Noftsker asked Behery if the Depletion Guarantee can be turned off in the Gen 4 model. Behery stated yes it simply changes the values entered in the model and documentation has been provided for in the past to explain the differences.

La asked if the Depletion Guarantee were removed what would it mean from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service perspective and Endangered Species Act standpoint. Mata stated the Depletion Guarantee is part of the proposed action in the Biological Opinion and given that environmental baseline for the Gen 4 model is now different, this would be new information to trigger reinitiation for consultation. Given that the action agency for the Biological Opinion is the Bureau of Reclamation, Reclamation would need to reinitiate consultation. However, Noftsker pointed to some language in the BO on page 14 that may give the Service the latitude to re-evaluate the Depletion Guarantee. The Service will review the BO regarding this matter.

Mata will further investigate the potential outcomes of reinitiation of the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project and work with Bureau of Reclamation to obtain a complete understanding as to how the Depletion Guarantee influences the current Gen 4 model and the implications of the Depletion Guarantee outside of the model.

Mata will convene a subcommittee to continue discussing the Depletion Guarantee. The following individuals volunteered to participate in the subcommittee: La, Garrison, Christianson, Behery, Pollack, Tully-Cordova, Becenti, Keedah, Begay, Duma, Vigil, Mata, Durst, Noftsker, Harms, Condon, Miller and McCarthy.

**2020/2021 annual base funding update – McKinstry**

Awards for most of the FY 2020 SOWs have been finished. The award is almost complete for the Phase III wetland and construction which is likely to occur this fall/winter. Fruitland weir construction has been delayed and is expected to begin this fall/winter. The PIT tag antenna for the Ranchman-Terrell project in the Animas River has been purchased and will likely be installed this fall. Reclamation expects Program funding to be the same as last year with no CPI (Cost Performance Index). The current FY 2021 AWP is about \$100,000 over budget.

**Capital funding/capital projects update – Christianson**

The funds to construct Phase III habitat restoration project (\$525,000) will be provided to the Navajo Nation through a grant that should be finalized shortly. Construction is expected to begin this fall/winter. Funds to construct a weir during refurbishment of the Fruitland irrigation canal system will be provided to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (\$975,000) through an interagency agreement and is much less than actual construction costs, where the remaining balance will be paid by Bureau of Indian Affairs. An operations and maintenance agreement are in development for the Fruitland weir and construction is expected to be completed this fall/winter. A server upgrade is needed at Hogback irrigation canal weir and the request was made to the CC for NFWF funds to be added (~\$25,000) to ACES Automation Inc. contract to fix the variable frequency drives for the Hogback canal pumps. The PIT tag antennas for the Ranchman-Terrell ditch improvement project have already been purchased and the installation will occur this fall/winter.

**Schedule next CC meeting(s)**

Doodle poll for conference call late July or early August.



**ACTIONS ITEMS FROM 14 May 2020  
COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

1. The PO will develop a quick reference list of BC and CC responsibilities/processes with specific examples by June 5, 2020.
2. The PO in coordination with Region 6 will summarize the contribution of Lake Powell to recovery. Mata will review Service documents re: the role of Colorado pikeminnow in Lake Powell in recovery and report back to the CC.
3. A draft synthesis providing a chronology of work completed in Lake Powell will be shared with the BC by June 30, 2020.
4. The PO will finalize and post meeting summaries for October 17, 2019 and November 27, 2020
5. The Service will update the SJRIP Section 7 Principles and provide a draft to the CC for review by June 19, 2020.
6. The PO will amend the Long Range Plan to include a subtask under Task 2.3.2.3 to include monitoring activities with PIT Antenna as discussed for the Ranchman Terrell BO by June 30, 2020.
7. The Service will update the Ranchman-Terrell BO to be in accordance with the SJRIP Section 7 Principles.
8. Coordination Committee will receive annual work plan once PIs have sent in their revised version and the BC makes a recommendation in July.
9. Program Office will coordinate a subcommittee of CC and volunteers to review the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project depletion guarantee in the Biological Opinion.
10. Email Coordination Committee to request NFWF funds for computer system at Hogback.
11. CC will review and provide comments on the Colorado Pikeminnow adaptive management plan by June 4, 2020.
12. Mata will email BC and CC response to Post-2023 request to re-evaluate capital project over a 10-year period.