

**Peer Review for 2021
Fiscal Year 2021 Project Proposal**

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Background:

A Peer Review Panel was established in 1997 to assist the SJRIP with planning studies, analytical designs, data interpretation, and aiding the Program's use of science towards the process of recovery. The members of the Panel participated in meetings and reviewed pre-draft, draft, and final scopes of work, work plans, reports, integration analyses and reports, and other Program documents. However, the responsibilities of individual peer reviewers were generally unclear, leading to some unsatisfied individuals in the Program as well as peer reviewers themselves. This Scope of Work (SOW) aims to improve the Program's peer review process by refining and guiding the responsibilities of the Panel members to maximize the benefits to the Program while decreasing the ambiguity of peer reviewer expectations.

Goals:

The main goal of peer review in the SJRIP should be to use the professional expertise of panel members to improve the Program's scientific operations, particularly on technical and biological issues. Indeed, peer reviewers are invited to join the Program based on their reputations in their respective fields of study. Therefore, we developed this SOW to capitalize on the use of peer review to aid in guiding and defending management decisions made by the Program. Furthermore, we have incorporated new aspects of the peer review process that are aimed at encouraging candid reviews without the fear of personal/social reprisals as well as to increase transparency of contributions of individual peer reviewers to the Program Office (Program Office). The peer reviewers will contribute to three major components of the Program detailed below and we have noted expectations and responsibilities for each:

1) Review annual SOWs

Annual SOWs by Program PIs are due to the Program Office by 31 March of each year. After the Program Office receives SOWs, each peer reviewer will review a list of SOWs assigned by the Program Office (n=5-15). SOWs will be assigned such that each scope's topic aligns with each reviewer's expertise (as much as possible) and each SOW will receive at least two independent

reviews (as well as comments from the Program Office). Reviews will then be due back to the Program Office by 30 April. If reviewers don't want to remain anonymous, they will need to indicate that on individual reviews sent to the Program Office.

The Program Office would like to see reviews as succinct as possible (i.e., ≤ 1 page reviews will be acceptable) and do not necessarily want to read through track changes on word documents (blind track changes can be delivered to the PIs through the Program Office but will not be required for the review). Blind reviewer comments will then be compiled by the Program Office and disseminated to the BC and PIs. The PIs will then be required to respond to peer reviewer and Program Office comments and append those to their respective SOW before they will be considered in the annual work plan.

2) Attend the November/December meeting and review 2021 work

The November/December BC meeting consists largely of discussions of the previous year's activities conducted by the PIs and proposed future projects. This meeting is for the group to catch up on progress on individual projects in a relatively short period of time. As a result of the discussion of the previous year's work, the group then discusses potential changes in projects and potential projects and studies that could improve recovery actions and progress.

Each peer reviewer will evaluate the presentations and discussion and provide verbal comments on the individual recovery actions and send them to the Program Office by 31 December. These comments should focus on implications of the work toward recovery of the two fish species.

3) Attend and review presentations during the February meeting

The February BC meeting consists largely of presentations of the previous year's activities conducted by the PIs. This is a great opportunity for the group as a whole to catch up on progress on individual projects in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, these presentations should reflect comments supplied by peer reviewers in original SOWs and they are often rough drafts of how data will be analyzed and interpreted in the final reports.

Each peer reviewer will make blind comments on individual presentations (a list of presentations will be provided by the Program Office) and send them to the Program Office by 31 March. These comments should focus on data analysis, presentation, and interpretation but other general comments will be welcomed. The Program Office will then compile the reviewer comments and distribute them to the BC and individual PIs. These written comments to the Program Office will not preclude any questions or comments the peer reviewers want to make orally during the meeting.

An additional meeting (half day) will occur at the end of the February BC meeting among the Program Office, BOR staff and peer reviewers to discuss 'big picture' issues in the Program, progress toward recovery, and other concerns with individual projects or the peer review process. The peer reviewers will then draft a summary of their independent reviews of the Program's progress towards recovery as well as general suggestions for improvement and send them to the Program Office by 31 March.

3) Attend workshops/review special documents (upon invitation)

Workshops are occasionally held to address specific issues that arise during Program operations. These meetings usually occur over 2-3 day periods in Albuquerque, Farmington, or Durango. Some/all peer reviewers may be invited to attend workshops to provide professional and technical guidance. If a peer reviewer is invited, they will be required to provide a review of the workshop and their general opinion on discussions. The same review requirements as 1) and 2) above will apply to any special documents the Program Office asks to be reviewed. In FY 2021 one workshop is anticipated.

Rotating personnel:

The peer review process should benefit from the diverse experiences and expertise of individual reviewers. In this light, individual peer reviewers will be kept on the panel for 3-5 years and then required to take at least a 3-5 year hiatus to allow for new reviewers to join the panel. The exact timing of rotation of individuals from and onto the peer-review panel will be handled at the discretion of the Program Office and BOR.

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Budget FY-2021:

Payment for serving on the Peer Review Panel includes expenses for travel to and from the meeting, and an hourly rate for services. It is anticipated that Panel Members will spend approximately 15-20 days each in 2021 (includes travel, meetings, and document review).

The total budget is distributed among the four peer reviewers through individual Services Contracts with Reclamation.

Salaries:	\$20,000
Travel:	\$10,000
Total	\$30,000

Future use of the Peer Review Panel is not known but they likely will be used each year to provide guidance to the Biology Committee.