



**SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (SJRIP)
COORDINATION COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
1 August 2023**

Coordination Committee (CC) Members:

Jason Davis (Chair)
Jen Dumas
Crystal Tulley-Cordova
Lisa Yellow Eagle
Michelle Garrison
Colleen Cunningham (Alternate)
Todd Adams (Alternate)
Joseph Trungale
Rudy Keedah
Lee Traynham
Dale Ryden
Absent
Absent
Steve Wolff (Alternate)

Representing

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

Program Office (PO):

Melissa Mata, Program Coordinator
Eliza Gilbert, Assistant Program Coordinator
Scott Durst, Science Coordinator
Raphaela Ware, Program Biologist

Representing

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Other Interested Parties:

Letisha Yazzie
Chris Breidenbach
Aaron Chavez (CC Alternate)
Peter Nylander (CC Alternate)
Jacob Mazzone (BC Member)
Steven Davenport (BC Member)
Tom Chart (BC Member)
Harry Crockett (BC Chair)
Adam Barkalow (BC Alternate)
Melissa Trammel
Pamela Norris
Kerri Pedersen (BC Member)

Representing:

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
State of Colorado
Water Development Interests
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Jicarilla Apache Nation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Water Development Interests
State of Colorado
State of New Mexico
National Park Service
Arizona Public Service
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Introductions and Changes to Agenda

Davis conducted a roll call of CC members and alternates. A quorum was present. Other interested parties added their names and affiliations in the Teams chat. Gilbert asked to add an agenda item to

approve an email vote of capital funding to replace the Fruitland gage.

Meeting Summaries and review of action items

Gilbert incorporated comments from Noftsker and Pitts. No further discussion. Wolff motion to approve the revised summary. Ryden seconded. None were opposed and the summary was approved as final.

10 May 2023 Action Items:

1. The CC is in the process of voting to invite the NPS as a signatory participant. Mata will resend the request to CC members.
Votes from Colorado and New Mexico to affirm NPS as a SJRIP participant have been outstanding for approximately one year. There was no update from either state on the status of a vote. Keep action item on list.
2. Garrison will share draft scope of work for Recovery Program economic review to CC.
The group has not met to develop this scope of work. Keep action item on list.
3. Mata will request online vote for Bluff wetland proposal funding.
Completed and approved.
4. Dumas will send Mata Tribal water depletion data.
Mata confirmed this was on her plate and is waiting for Dumas to send data from the Pueblo Tribes.
5. The PO will post the December and February meeting summaries to the website.
Completed.
6. Mata will send the Environmental Assessment to the CC.
Completed. Received comments and discussion is on today's agenda.

Discuss and approve fiscal year 2024 SJRIP Annual Work Plan (vote) – CC

Mata provided an overview of the Program Office's (PO) recommended annual work plans (AWP). Due to the uncertainty in FY24 funding, the PO proposed AWP's for three different funding scenarios. To develop AWP's under each scenario, the PO relied on Biology Committee (BC) technical input, including BC new scope of work (SOW) ranks, identification of ongoing SOW's that could be reduced to fund new SOW's, and BC input on the PO's proposed AWP. In addition, the PO considered the (1) Program Document, (2) Long-Range Plan, (3) Recovery Plans, (4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sufficient Progress Report, (5) PO's list of prioritized topics, (6) Peer Reviewer input, and (7) past BC and CC discussions. The PO asks the CC to approve an AWP under each scenario to address the uncertainty in annual funding. The PO thinks the recommended AWP's under each funding scenario provide the best paths forward to make progress in achieving recovery objectives in FY24 and into the future. However, the PO recognizes the significant variation in BC support for New-7 and proposed alternatives for the CC to consider in funding scenarios 2 and 3.

In funding scenario 1 SJRIP FY24 funding is the same as FY23. No new SOW's could be funded in this scenario without significantly reducing or foregoing ongoing projects. Most BC members identified annual habitat monitoring (SOW 25) as an ongoing SOW to reduce to fund new projects. However, during earlier Navajo Reservoir flow release discussions, BC members highlighted the importance of habitat monitoring in FY24 to assess the impact of this year's high spring flows. BC members also highlighted on-the-ground management actions (SOW 53 – Experimental Colorado Pikeminnow Stocking and SOW 41a – Facilitated passage of Razorback Sucker over the Piute Farms Waterfall) and evaluation of a management action (SOW 41b – Estimating reproductive contributions

of translocated Razorback Sucker) for funding reduction. However, the PO determined it was inappropriate to reduce funding of on-the-ground management or evaluation of management actions over inclusion of new SOWs that are monitoring or research oriented. The sub-adult/adult monitoring project was also highlighted by the BC for reduction (SOW 19). However, reduction in the spatial extent of sub-adult/adult monitoring would have been too significant to provide for a new SOW. Thus, under this AWP funding scenario, the PO proposed only including ongoing SOWs.

In funding scenario 2, the SJRIP FY24 funding is increased 7% from FY23 funding. The PO's recommended AWP (2a) proposes funding the BC's two highest ranked new SOWs (New-6 Assessment of Jicarilla Apache Nation Supplemental Flows and New-5 Recruitment Monitoring of Razorback Sucker and Colorado Pikeminnow in the San Juan Arm of Lake Powell) and the proposed process to identify, prioritize, implement, and evaluate recovery actions (New-7 Adaptive management plan development to increase efficiency of native fish recovery action implantation). New-6 allows for the direct evaluation of a management action. New-5 provides monitoring to address an information gap. New-7 could help the SJRIP identify and implement management actions more efficiently to promote recovery. To allow these three new SOWs to fit in the budget, the PO requested reductions of \$10,000 – \$15,000 in several SOWs but this would only impact the implementation of two SOWs: sub-adult/adult monitoring (SOW-19) and the San Juan River Basin Hydrology Model Operation and Maintenance (SOW-13). These reductions may result in a 50 mile decrease in the spatial sampling of sub-adult/adult monitoring and will remove at least one yet to be identified task from the hydrology model SOW. If the CC chooses not to include New-7 in this funding scenario because of variable support from BC members, the PO proposes alternative 2b. Under this alternative all SOWs with reduced budgets would be fully funded. Remaining funds would be allocated to SOW 25 because some BC members thought this SOW should be continued if flexibility in the timing of habitat monitoring is provided.

In funding scenario 3, the SJRIP receives FY 24 funding as proposed in the President's budget. The PO recommends 3a which includes the BC's third highest ranked new SOW (New-4 Using mobile PIT tag antennas to evaluate movement, passage, population demographics, and aggregations of Colorado Pikeminnow and Razorback Sucker) and the new SOWs identified in Scenario 2a. Under this funding scenario the PO proposed no reductions to ongoing projects. If the CC chooses not to include New-7, the PO proposes alternative 3b, which would allocate all New-7 funds to SOW 25 (habitat monitoring).

New Mexico supports including New-7 but Cunningham asked how SOWs were identified for funding reduction in scenario 2. The PO clarified reductions were based on BC input and FWS consideration of progress toward recovery. Cunningham suggested reducing larval monitoring, but larval and small-bodied monitoring are important to track the identified recruitment bottleneck between the larval and juvenile life stages. However, Ryden pointed out that successful recruitment of wild-produced fish would need to proceed through the adult life stage too. He also said, the three fish monitoring projects were intended to complement each other and provide context for the entire fish community.

Wolff indicated that scenario 3 is most likely but having flexibility of AWP's under the three funding scenarios is helpful. The Water Users do not support including SOW 53 (Experimental Colorado Pikeminnow Stocking), SOW 41a (Facilitated passage of Razorback Sucker over the Piute Farms Waterfall), and SOW 41b (Estimating reproductive contributions of translocated Razorback Sucker) in any AWP. Some BC members did not support SOW 53 because they thought stocking Colorado

Pikeminnow eggs and larvae was inconsistent with the decision the SJRIP made to stock age-1 fish. Jicarilla voiced support for SOW 53. The PO clarified that SOW 53 was an outcome of the nonnative fish symposium and sub-group as a method to increase the number of stocked Colorado pikeminnow in the San Juan River to reduce the impact of channel catfish predation. Existing genetic monitoring is available to distinguish between wild and hatchery produced fish so this stocking effort would not confound efforts to identify wild recruitment of early life stages. A recent report highlighted the importance of providing facilitated passage at the Piute Farms Waterfall. Razorback sucker translocated upstream of the waterfall accounted for 6% of larval production. This information was not available when the BC suggested forgoing the project if a spawning bar was being constructed below the waterfall.

Davis suggested the group consider the PO recommendation and debate the merits and their support for structured decision making (SDM – provided in New-7) before considering the Water Users proposal. Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) is not supportive of New-7 unless only Task 1 is under consideration (problem scoping in two workshops where SDM is used to break decisions into smaller parts by framing the problem, specifying objectives, creating management alternatives, predicting consequences of alternatives, and evaluating tradeoffs among objectives). Jicarilla indicated the importance for everyone to be on board for SDM to work. FWS-R2 is generally supportive but recognizes the need for refinement of the project. The Water Users and Colorado have had positive and negative experiences with SDM and said that for the effort to be successful it needs to have buy-in from everyone with clearly defined objectives and expectations. New Mexico highlighted the need for SDM or some other process to implement a decision-making process that results in more on-the-ground management activities to promote recovery. Utah suggested the committees define where the SJRIP wants to go and how to get there. FWS-R6 does not support SDM at this point and suggested it be delayed at least a year. TNC is generally supportive of SDM but recognizes the need for buy-in to be successful and thought Task 1 could be implemented to achieve that buy-in. Mata indicated SDM could be helpful to the SJRIP in addressing uncertainty to move toward recovery but there's no SOW developed that only covers the Task 1 concept. Davis asked for a vote of support for New-7 as written. In favor of New-7: FWS-R2, Jicarilla, New Mexico, TNC; opposed to New-7: SUIT, FWS-R6, Water Users, Colorado, Bureau of Reclamation, Utah, Navajo Nation. The group discussed ideas to accomplish Task 1 including setting some funds aside, having independent unbiased facilitation, but did not have clear guidance to give the PO on how to proceed. Colorado has staff that could provide facilitation. The FWS National Conservation Training Center has SDM courses but would require travel and commitment among all parties.

Ryden motioned to approve the AWP under funding scenarios 1, 2b, and 3b without the inclusion of New-7. Dumas seconded.

Votes of support for the AWP under funding scenario 1: FWS-R2, SUIT, Jicarilla, FWS-R6, Navajo Nation, Reclamation, New Mexico, TNC, Utah, BIA; opposed to the AWP under funding scenario 1: Water Users, Colorado. The AWP under funding scenario 1 is approved by the SJRIP.

Votes of support for the AWP under funding scenario 2b: FWS-R2, SUIT, Jicarilla, FWS-R6, Navajo Nation, Reclamation, New Mexico, TNC, Utah; opposed to the AWP under funding scenario 2b: Water Users, Colorado, BIA. The AWP under funding scenario 2b is not approved by the SJRIP.

Votes of support for the AWP under funding scenario 3b: FWS-R2, SUIT, Jicarilla, FWS-R6, Navajo

Nation, Reclamation, New Mexico, TNC, Utah, BIA; opposed to the AWP under funding scenario 3b: Water Users, Colorado. The AWP under funding scenario 3b is approved by the SJRIP.

Hold email vote to approve use of capital funds to replace Fruitland gage – Gilbert

Gilbert asked if the CC was willing to hold an email vote to approve the State NFWF capital funds to replace the Fruitland gage. The gage is helpful for guiding Reclamation's operation of Navajo Reservoir. Colorado and New Mexico are supportive of using State NFWF funds. Jicarilla motioned to conduct this vote over email, Navajo Nation seconded, and there was no opposition. Gilbert will provide details and rationale for a vote to approve using the State NFWF account to replace the gage at Fruitland.

Next CC meeting – Gilbert

Gilbert will send two Doodle polls: 1) to begin the process of revising the Program Document, and 2) to hold another meeting to close the loop on what the CC would like to see in a process to guide the SJRIP's decision making and to cover outstanding agenda items.

New actions items from 1 August 2023 Coordination Committee meeting

1. Ute Mountain Ute Tribe will name a CC alternate.
2. PO will send Doodle poll for Program Document revision
3. PO will send Doodle poll for follow up CC meeting.
4. PO will send email request for vote to approve funding for replacement of Fruitland gage.



**SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN
RECOVERY
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
DRAFT SUMMARY
16 August 2023**

Coordination Committee Meeting

Coordination Committee (CC) Members:

Absent
Jenny Dumas (Alternate)
Crystal Tulley-Cordova
Lisa Yellow Eagle
Kara Scheel (Alternate)
Colleen Cunningham (Alternate)
Absent
Absent
Chris Kitcheyan (Alternate)
Lee Traynham
Absent
Absent
Absent
Tom Pitts

Representing

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

Program Office (PO):

Melissa Mata, Program Coordinator
Eliza Gilbert, Assistant Program Coordinator
Scott Durst, Science Coordinator
Raphaela Ware, Program Biologist

Representing

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Other Interested Parties:

Aaron Chavez (CC alternate)
Steve Wolf (CC alternate)
Peter Nylander (CC alternate)
Tom Chart (BC member)
Sarah Seegert (BC member)
Letisha Yazzie
Kerri Pedersen
Julie Stahl

Representing:

Water Development Interests
Water Development Interests
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Water Development Interests
State of Utah
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Region 6

Introductions and changes to agenda

Mata explained Jason Davis nor Nate Caswell were able to participate in this meeting, which meant a CC chair was not present. Additionally, Mata said there was not a quorum of CC representatives present but there were no agenda items that required a vote. Mata asked whether there were any objections to continuing with the meeting. There were no objections. There were no changes to the agenda but Letisha Yazzie updated the CC that she was expecting to be nominated as Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's alternate through a Tribal Council resolution, which should occur next month.

Review draft Program Document revision

Gilbert reviewed the reason for the Program Document revision, which is primarily to align the document with U.S. Congressional legislation that will reauthorize the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (Program) and the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery. There was also an interest from some CC members and the PO to streamline the document to better serve its purpose, which is to "... provide the framework for the Program by outlining the Program's purposes, authority, structure, and operating procedures. This includes how the Program is to be funded, procedures to develop budgets, as well as the purposes, composition, authority and duties of Program." This resulted in removal of approximately 30 pages. The PO's intention was not to change any meaning or substance. Aspects that were removed from the document generally consisted of historical river and species conditions, recovery objectives, and long-range plan elements that are describe in other documents such as species recovery plans, species status assessments, flow recommendations, the long-range plan, etc. These documents are identified in the revised version with hyperlinks that direct the reader to the webpages where the documents are located. Cunningham said New Mexico liked the revisions that paired the document down to what is essential to decision-making and partner responsibilities but asked if any CC members had concerns. No members voiced concern and some voiced support for the streamlined format.

The PO also removed two appendices. These were appendix B that reports baseline depletions from the Navajo Reservoir Operations biological opinion. This appendix is only referenced once and values are reported in the biological opinion and incorporated into other documents. The PO also suggested making the "Principles for Conducting Endangered Species Act section 7 Consultations on Water Development and Water Management Activities Affecting Endangered Fish in the San Juan River Basin (Principles)" a standalone document that would be published on the Program's website instead of occurring as Appendix C. Pitts asked that the Principles remain part of the Program Document and Gilbert reincorporated it. Durst clarified that the Program Document revision would not include a revision to the Principles and everyone agreed this was so. Both the current and revised Program Document are annotated with comments that explain what material was retained or removed from the current document or what is new in the revised version. In the revised version, there are a couple of comments that highlight sections the PO thinks would benefit from consolidation and clarification but would like to get input from the CC.

Chapter 6 in the revised version is the section that describe Program funding arrangements and was provided by Scheel and Cunningham. Scheel said the language was taken from a previous document that describe funding arrangements and it should look familiar to the CC. This entire chapter will need to be updated when legislation passes and when the states decide how to split their funding. Gilbert said there was a new table that identified funding sources for a set of three intervals (2024-2028, 2029-2033, and 2034-2038). Pitts thought this should only include years authorized by legislation. Scheel thought it could be beneficial to have the timetable extend and Cunningham was unsure if New Mexico would be able to support that. Pitts suggested there be language in the Capital Project Funding

that identifies the split between the two recovery programs. Mata thought this had not been previously decided and Pitts thought there had been a decision to have an annual meeting of the recovery programs to identify Capital Project priorities.

Because legislation has not passed, the states have not determined their funding agreements, and further conversations on how to allocate Capital funds needs to occur. Pitts suggested the CC provide comment on all sections except for Chapter 6 – Funding. There was no objection to this and Scheel suggested that once comments were incorporated into Chapters 1-6 and agreed upon, the CC could approve these portions of the Program Document. This would allow the Program to make progress on the revisions while waiting for legislation to pass. There was general agreement on this strategy. The CC decided that comments should be returned to the PO within 4 weeks.

Timeline Program Environmental Assessment (EA)

The draft EA was sent to the recovery programs, NEPA experts within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) on 11 August 2023. The revisions from the previous version include the Effected Environment and clarification of the proposed action. Previously the proposed action focused on signing documents or passing legislation. However, Mata was advised by Reclamations NEPA experts that the action should be the extension of the recovery programs. The prior version also had language about reauthorizing the recovery programs for 15 years but the new version extends this timeframe generically and beyond 2024. The deadline for the review of this document is 25 August 2023. Once edits are incorporated the EA will go out for a 30-day public comment period. Tulley-Cordova asked how the EA could go out for public comment when legislation that describes funding arrangements had not been decided. Mata said the EA did not reference the funding arrangements and instead the language is flexible by mentioning that funding availability is dependent on legislation. Pitt's asked how the public would be notified of the comment period and Mata said there would be a news release posted to the Service's website and it would be posted on the recovery programs' website. Pitt's suggested it also be posted by Reclamation since many Reclamation projects are impacted by the recovery programs. Mata said she would confer with Reclamation.

Next CC meeting – (Friday 1 September 2023 from 9 to 11am)

Action Items

1. Coordination Committee will provide comments on the revised Program Document by 15 September.
2. Coordination Committee will provide comments on the Programs' Environmental Assessment by 25 August.
3. Mata will confer with Reclamation about a press release for public comment on the Programs' Environmental Assessment.