

Draft summary dated: May 18, 2015

**Draft Webinar Summary:
UCREFRP Management Committee and SJRIP Coordination Committee
On Draft Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan
May 6, 2015**

CONVENE: 10:00 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda
2. Summary of April 7, 2015, webinar and concerns expressed. The group had no comments on the draft summary.
 - a. Demographic criteria – Concerns included differences from 2002 goals, sub-populations (Gunnison, San Juan), and timelines.
 - b. Threats – Concerns that the draft doesn't adequately reflect the Programs' progress to date in addressing threats.
 - c. PVA – Discussed as a tool to determine population status and viability, with suggestions that we do a PVA before finalizing the revised recovery plan. Tom Chart said the Service and the Writing Team are prepared to divert their attention to the PVA if the group agrees. Patrick McCarthy agreed and asked if this is consistent with other recovery plans that have incorporated PVAs and if it will divert any additional attention and resources from implementing other recovery actions. Shane asked if this was consistent with other recovery planning approaches. Seth said it's not unusual to use models in recovery plans. In this case, we are considering using a PVA to get at both an assessment of current viability and to potentially guide our view of what's necessary for viability which would in turn help develop more objective and measurable criteria for downlisting and delisting. Tom Chart thinks the PVA would be helpful and didn't think it would delay recovery actions. Patrick asked if Tom and Seth believe time put into developing the PVA will significantly strengthen the scientific underpinnings of the downlisting and delisting criteria, and they said they did. Tom Czaplá noted much data collection has already been done in the recently completed Colorado pikeminnow PVA. Scott Durst said that if the PVA is similar to the San Juan's, he thinks it might be useful. Rich said the San Juan PVA has fundamentally the same structure that could be used for the upper Colorado and Green rivers. Developing a PVA for the upper basin would require consolidating data, making sure it's updated, and making sure the model is properly parameterized. Dave Speas called attention to the sentence in the San Juan PVA about data uncertainties and the resulting difficulty in developing targets. Scott Durst said the San Juan PVA was developed to inform a consultation, with substantial effort made to incorporate effects of mercury. Melissa Trammel asked about the pros and cons of deferring finalizing the plan and developing a PVA. Tom Chart said doing a PVA will respond to reviewers' concerns. While these models are only as good as the data they use, we do have good data. Seth said the additional time required is one con, but he thinks the result will be worth it. And a PVA will address one of the criticisms of the draft plan on delisting demographic criteria as it is more appropriate to tie recovery criteria back to viability than carrying capacity.
 - d. Costs – Need to make sure all recovery actions are fully reflected in cost estimates (e.g., Navajo temperature control, need to clarify Service position on temperature control at Blue Mesa, etc.).
3. Role of PVA

- a. Primarily to describe probability of extinction for downlisting –Tom Chart asked the group if they believe this is a reasonable goal. Shane Capron suggested we first need to ask if we need a PVA or if we can develop these criteria qualitatively, using a weight-of-evidence approach. Tom Chart said he doesn't think we've answered this. Bridget said we need something that will tell us if the population is threatened or endangered. We need to know if the species is at risk of extinction right now. Rich Valdez said the value of PVA is to more quantitatively evaluate extinction risk in the face of threats. Melissa suggested PVA can describe the existing population, but if you haven't fully identified effects of threats, the utility may be limited. Rich suggested the PVA might be developed through a series of workshops to help address uncertainties. Shane thinks a relatively rudimentary PVA could describe probability of extinction. The second question is understanding how threats may act on the population and how to understand monitoring data. Tom Pitts said we seem to agree a PVA would be appropriate; discussion of *how* to conduct a PVA might be expedited by a proposal from the Service for the groups' review. Melissa suggested genetic component would be important for a PVA (related to a comment from Southwestern ARRC). Rich said the Vortex model used for the San Juan PVA has a genetic viability component. (However, we may not have the required genetic data for pikeminnow.) The model also allows looking at population, basin, or individual-level dynamics. Rich observed that we don't have a computed N_e for pikeminnow like we now have for humpback. Shane said that a number of considerations will need to be resolved, such as quasi-extinction level in a PVA and believes it would be important to address these. Rich said the PVA model also can address exchange of individuals between populations and number of fish necessary to maintain genetic diversity. Shane said he didn't think a computed N_e would be needed before downlisting, but it would be important before delisting (we would want to know how many breeders are actually contributing).
- b. Potentially inform delisting criteria and perhaps put a finer point on some of the threats criteria (using sensitivity analysis and available data).
- c. Possible schedule for conduct of PVA – Rich said the San Juan PVA took about 9-12 months, including bringing together the data. Since much of that's been done, Rich estimates 4-6 months to complete a PVA. Others thought it might take longer. Seth noted we've discussed having a couple of workshops as part of the process, which might add some time. Sharon agreed with Seth. Tom Chart said Section 7 funds are a possible funding source and would speed the contracting process. Melissa asked if in anticipation of humpback chub and razorback sucker recovery plan revisions, we might want to go ahead and do PVAs for these species also. Tom Czapla said the Service is going to prepare a species status assessment for the razorback. We're also moving forward with the humpback recovery plan revision. The Service has developed a new approach for recovery plans that starts with a species status assessment. Seth noted the Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan revision was begun some time ago, and the Service is revising their approach to recovery plans to focus on time and costs, site specific management actions, and objective measurable criteria. The Service starts with a Species Status Assessment, and then develops a much shorter recovery plan focused just on the aforementioned three elements, as requirements of the ESA. Thus, humpback chub and razorback sucker will be done differently, beginning with an SSA (modeling often is used in these assessments). Rich Valdez mentioned the model that Bill Pine developed for Grand Canyon and other work done by Walters and Coggins, as well as Yackulic. Tom Chart said PVAs would be a worthwhile exercise for all three species, but differing life histories and available data suggest we will need to develop three different PVAs, thus there's no economy of approach to do them simultaneously. Dave Speas supported moving forward with a PVA but thinks there should be discussion with experts regarding the uncertainty about extinction risk described in the San Juan PVA. Dave would like the PVA to move forward in parallel with finalizing the recovery plan. Tom Chart agreed we should consider whether a PVA is our best tool to determine extinction risk. Tom noted he also hopes we'll be able to use our catch per unit effort data in addition to the mark-recapture data. Bill Miller said they've developed a mechanistic population

model that has mechanisms identified that could be used in a basinwide model.

4. Current draft recovery plan comment deadline (to Seth Willey and Tom Czapla by June 5) – Stakeholders should focus comments on threats criteria. (Comments were made that they are arbitrary, don't capture progress, etc.)
5. Wrap-up and path forward – >The Upper Basin Program Director's office will work with Scott Durst and Sharon Whitmore to develop scope of work to identify the most appropriate modeling exercise (leaning heavily toward a PVA) and identify what further steps we can take on the draft recovery plan in parallel with the PVA (e.g., Programs' accomplishments, verifying costs). This will be sent out for the group's (and both Programs' biology committees) review by June 30, 2015.

Cathy Condon asked if the PVA will be completed before a draft plan is released; Tom Chart said yes. Shane Capron asked if the PVA will be used to develop the demographic criteria for downlisting and delisting (since the PVA itself will not have objective and measurable criteria that can be directly understood by the general public). Seth agreed the PVA would help inform the criteria and suggested we discuss this further in a review of a scope of work. Melissa noted the Bull Trout Recovery Plan doesn't have numerical criteria. Seth said recovery plans have varied over time and species. Since the Recovery Team had a general (but not unanimous) sense that the species is not in immediate danger of extinction, Shane suggested it would be important to discuss the rationale for that sense in the plan (which become the criteria for downlisting). Seth believes the PVA will provide increased comfort around this general sense that the species is not in immediate danger of extinction. Shane said it will be important to have a strong record and rationale if targets are reduced from previous numbers. Sharon Whitmore said continued stocking is needed in the San Juan River since it doesn't yet have a self-sustaining Colorado pikeminnow population. Tom Czapla noted that one reason for the sense that pikeminnow is not in immediate danger of extinction is that the upper basin population has not needed stocking.

Seth said another option would be *not* to revise the recovery plan. If the PVA provides sufficient evidence that the species is not in danger of immediate extinction, the Service *could* consider going straight to a 5-year status review or rule-making for a change in status. Under this scenario, a revision to the recovery plan might follow rule-making. Or, the Service could revise the recovery plan that relates to current status, then proceed to a downlisting. Tom Chart added that with the rulemaking approach, the rationale that Shane mentioned would be part of a downlisting package.

ADJOURN: Noon

Attachment 1

Attendees

Colorado River Management Committee Meeting, April 7, 2015

*Asterisk indicates individual on more than one committee/team/etc.

UC Management Committee Voting Members:

*Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
*Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
Steve Wolff	State of Wyoming
Bridget Fahey (and Seth Willey for Bridget)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
Patrick McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration
Henry Maddux	State of Utah

UC MC Nonvoting Member:

*Tom Chart	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
------------	---

SJ Coordination Committee Voting Members:

Catherine Condon	Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)
Dale Ryden	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6
*Tom Pitts	Water Development Interests
*Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
*Patrick McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Kristin Green,	State of New Mexico (Interstate Streams)
Celene Hawkins	Counsel, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2

Sarah Rinkevich	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2
Tom Sinclair	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2

Recovery Team Members:

Krissy Wilson	Utah Department of Wildlife Resources
---------------	---------------------------------------

Writing Team Members:

*Tom Chart	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
*Tom Czaplá	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6
*Kevin McAbee	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6
Rich Valdez	SWCA

UC Recovery Program Staff:

*Tom Czaplá	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6
*Kevin McAbee	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 6
Angela Kantola	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg 6

SJ Recovery Program Staff:

*Sharon Whitmore	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2
Scott Durst	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reg. 2

Others

Jerry Wilhite	Western Area Power Administration
Dave Speas	Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Harms	Coordination Committee Alternate, New Mexico (Interstate Streams)
Shane Capron	Western Area Power Administration
Bill Miller – SJ BC Chair	SUIT
Robert King	Utah Department of Natural Resources.
Carrie Lile	Southwestern Water Conservation District, Durango
Steve Harris	Southwestern Water Conservation District, Durango
Brian Westfall for Michael Howe	Keller-Bleisner (BIA) for Michael
Leland Begay	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Vince Lamarra	Navajo Tribe