

Progress and Recovery in the San Juan River Basin

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The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) is a collaboration among Federal, State, and Tribal partners with the goal of recovering Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker in the San Juan River basin while providing Endangered Species Act compliance for existing and new water development projects. When the SJRIP began in 1992 a small remnant population of Colorado pikeminnow was present but razorback sucker was functionally extirpated from the system. Adult populations of both species that regularly reproduce have been established via a successful hatchery augmentation program but recruitment of wild-spawned individuals to subsequent life stages remains rare. Habitat degradation and nonnative species competition and predation are thought to be major threats limiting recovery. However, spring releases from Navajo Reservoir are not of sufficient magnitude and frequency to create and maintain habitats needed to sustain all life stages and nonnative fish management efforts have not resulted in anticipated species responses. Because of these ongoing recovery challenges, the SJRIP must continue to innovate and implement on-the-ground management actions that resolve recruitment bottlenecks that lead to self-sustaining populations of Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker in the San Juan River basin.

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