



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Revised summary dated: September 14, 2011

CR/FY-11 UCRRIC
Mail Stop 65115

Memorandum

To: Implementation Committee
Management Committee, Consultants, and Interested Parties
Meeting Attendees

From: Director, Upper Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program

Subject: Final March 9, 2011, Recovery Implementation Committee Conference Call
Summary

Attached are the final action and assignment summary and the general summary from the March 9, 2011, Implementation Committee conference call.

Attachment

- Summary -
Actions and Assignments
Recovery Implementation Committee Conference Call – March 9, 2011

ACTIONS:

1. Approved the September 22, 2010, meeting summary as written.
2. Delegated approval of RIPRAP revisions/assessment and 2012-2013 Program Guidance to the Management Committee.
3. Confirmed the date of their next meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2011 from 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. in Denver near DIA.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The Program Director's office will show the September 22, 2010, meeting summary as final.
2. The Program Director's office will arrange a meeting room for the next meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. in Denver near DIA.

CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY:

CONVENE: 1:30 p.m.

1. Roll call, review/modify agenda – The agenda was modified as it appears below.
2. Approve September 22, 2010, meeting summary – The Committee approved the summary as written. >It will be noted as final on the Program's website.
3. Program Director's Update – Tom Chart reviewed fish status information:
 - Utah reported another good catch of young Colorado pikeminnow in the middle Green River (as in 2009). Coordination with Reclamation to provide elevated base flows again, which likely explains.
 - Humpback chub populations remain low, but we haven't sampled our two largest populations since 2008. That sampling begins again this year; if a positive response is not observed, the Biology Committee has recommended securing some of those fish in hatcheries.
 - Accumulation of razorback sucker in the middle and lower Green River and in the Colorado River (along with larval razorback in the Green River, also [the Colorado River hasn't been sampled for larval razorbacks]).
 - Dexter NFH detected largemouth bass virus last year and so we had to test all our bonytail (results were clean), which delayed stocking of 2010 fish to 2011.

The Service has drafted 5-year status reviews of the four species and proposes no change in status. The Colorado pikeminnow and humpback chub drafts have gone through Region 6 review and now are before Regions 8 and 2 and should be completed in the next week or so. The bonytail and razorback sucker reviews will follow. When these are complete, they will

be distributed widely and posted on the Service and Program websites. The Program Director's office is working with Bob Muth and Rich Valdez to revise the 2002 recovery goals.

Colorado has strongly committed to including the revised Nonnative Fish Stocking Procedures into their regulations by the end of 2011. Colorado also carefully reviewed information presented at the nonnative fish workshop and adopted three of the Biology Committee's recommended changes to nonnative fish management, including ceasing translocation of smallmouth bass and ending the mark-release of northern pike in the Yampa River upstream buffer zone.

Snowpack looks very good so far this year and the Program has been working with Reclamation on the Flaming Gorge spring flow request. This year's recommendation builds on a synthesis report from Bestgen and Haines and the need to time flows to coincide with presence of larval razorback in the system. Dan Luecke asked if this presents a timing challenge; Tom said Reclamation has historically tried to match the Yampa peak, and now will likely need to time potentially larger releases after that peak. Real-time light trapping will indicate when larvae are present (and river temperature also is predictive). The Recovery Program continues to work on an Aspinall study plan as required by the biological opinion and a final draft plan should go to the committees in next couple of weeks (action items also are being incorporated into RIPRAP).

Steve Guertin said the Southern Rockies LCC formal steering committee will convene for the first time April 5-6 in Salt Lake City with Reclamation and the Service hosting. These agencies are providing base resources to begin moving this LCC forward. LCCs are really starting to make difference as science-based partnerships setting common conservation objectives for these large landscapes.

4. Legislation and budget-related updates

- a. Updates on Program legislation and post-2011 base funding – Tom Pitts reviewed the Program's authorizing legislation, which restricts use of power revenues to only O&M and monitoring after FY 2011. This would mean power revenues couldn't be used for nonnative fish management, research, Program management, and public relations, resulting in a funding shortfall of ~\$2M in Upper Basin Recovery Program and ~\$1M in the San Juan. Legislation to extend authorization of the use of power revenues was introduced in 2009, but didn't pass; therefore, the non-Federal Program participants are starting again from scratch in this Congress, which will have a number of challenges. It will be vital for the Programs' constituents to let their delegation know how important the Programs are to continued water use and development and achieving environmental goals. If legislation isn't passed this year, funds may not be available to make up the shortfall. Water users are very concerned about the threat this would pose to the ability of the Programs to provide environmental compliance. The Service has made it clear such a shortfall could prevent attainment of recovery goals and would undermine and likely degrade the Recovery Program's achievements in recovering populations of the endangered fishes. As a result, ESA compliance provided by the Upper Basin Recovery Program actions for more than 1,800 Federal, tribal, and non-Federal water and hydroelectric power projects depleting more than 2.8 million acre-feet of water per year

in the upper Colorado River basin in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, as well as future projects, would not likely continue.

- b. Projection/assessment of impact of continuing resolution on Reclamation and Service Program budgets – Steve Guertin said the Federal government is under a second continuing resolution (CR) set at 2010 spending levels; this CR expires March 18). The House and Senate are too far apart in their proposals to likely come to agreement at this point, so Steve expects another CR thru mid to late April. House proposals contain enormous reductions, including 10-15% operational cuts (which would certainly affect the Recovery Program). However, Steve thinks it is likely that Congress will try to work out a larger deal that would also address the 2012 budget and consider entitlement spending. Reclamation agreed and had nothing to add to this assessment.
 - c. Report on February 24 Congressional staff conference call – John Shields said everyone was pleased with participation in this first call, which served to whet the Congressional staffs’ appetite to learn more about the Programs activities in meetings beginning next week. We may seek to schedule another call later in the year, perhaps in the fall. Steve Guertin observed that we’re seeing an evolving budget process wherein Congress has backed away from earmarks and no one seems willing to sign letters supporting any particular program as they all seek to outdo each other on who can cut more from the Federal budget. Thus, the old methodology of bipartisan support letters may not work, even though Congressional representatives are not seeking to undermine the Programs. Tom Pitts agreed and said that makes the upcoming briefing trip and other forms of Congressional communication all the more important.
 - d. Washington, D.C., briefing trip – John Shields distributed the latest itinerary of meetings this morning. Only a few remain to be confirmed. At the staff appreciation luncheon, Cathy Condon will speak about the benefit of the San Juan Program to the tribes and Tom Pitts will describe how the Programs streamlined ESA compliance. Tom Pitts and Mike Roberts commended John for all his hard work in arranging the trip. Pat Tyrrell expressed concern about the impression that the large number of people on the trip may make. The Committee discussed dividing the group so not everyone attends each meeting. Steve Guertin agreed and encouraged the group to strategize about should attend each meeting.
 - e. Capital projects – Brent Uilenberg distributed the spreadsheet from last March, when projected FY 11 expenditure was \$7.9M. A more likely amount under the CR is \$4.6M. He’s recommended focusing on Horsethief Canyon Fish-Rearing Ponds (which support both Programs) and the OMID canal automation, which the San Juan Coordinating Committee and Upper Basin Management Committee supported. In light of uncertainty as to when we will get a Federal budget, >Brent will go ahead and update this spreadsheet given currently available information.
5. (Action Item) RIPRAP revisions/assessment; 2012-2013 Program guidance – Angela Kantola said the Program Director’s draft RIPRAP revisions/assessment and 2012-2013 Program Guidance were posted to the listserver on February 3. Technical committees reviewed and commented on these documents and the Management committee will review them on March 25. With draft scopes of work for the FY 2012-2013 Work Plan due April

30, 2011, Angela recommended the Implementation Committee delegate approval of the RIPRAP revisions and assessment and FY 2012-2013 Program Guidance to the Management Committee. The Implementation Committee so delegated.

6. Agenda items for September 21, 2011, Implementation Committee meeting – This meeting is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. in Denver near DIA. Agenda items will include: approval of the FY 2012-2013 work plan; PD update, legislative updates; and the Service’s 2011 sufficient progress review.

ADJOURN 2:50 p.m.

Attachment 1 - Participants

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Steve Guertin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chairman)
Carol DeAngelis, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
John Reber, National Park Service
Dan Luecke, Environmental Groups
Leslie James, Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Pat Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
Rebecca (Becky) Mitchell for Mike King, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Mike Styler, Utah Department of Natural Resources
LaVerne Kyriss for Clayton Palmer, Western Area Power Administration
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin Water Users
Program Director Tom Chart, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (nonvoting)

OTHERS:

John Shields, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
Brent Uilenberg, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Robert King, Utah Division of Water Resources
Dennis Strong, Utah Division of Water Resources
Mike Roberts, The Nature Conservancy
Jana Mohrman, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Debbie Felker, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program
Tom Czaplá, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program
Angela Kantola, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program