



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Summary Dated: March 5, 2012

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 September 19, 2011, Recovery Implementation Committee Conference Call
Summary

Attached are the draft action and assignment summary and the general summary from the September 19, 2011, Implementation Committee conference call.

Attachment

- Summary -
Actions and Assignments
Recovery Implementation Committee Conference Call – September 19, 2011

ACTIONS:

1. Approved the March 9, 2011, conference call summary as revised
2. Ratified 2012-2013 Work Plan as approved by the Management Committee.
3. Confirmed the date of their next conference call on Monday, March 5, 2012 from 9: a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and their next meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Denver near DIA.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Angela Kantola will finalize the revised summary and have it posted to the Program's website. *Done.*
2. The Program Director's office will bring the scientific integrity policy back to the Committee for endorsement when Reclamation's version is finalized.

CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY:

CONVENE: 10:00 a.m.

1. Roll call, review/modify agenda – The agenda was modified as it appears below.
2. Chairman updates – Steve Guertin said that Dan Ashe was confirmed as the new Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service this summer. We will want to include him in our briefings and updates going forward. All Federal agencies are expected to be under a continuing resolution through the end of November. And although budget cuts will be real, they are now not anticipated to be as severe as was originally anticipated.
3. Approve March 9, 2011, meeting summary – Angela Kantola said that Brent Uilenberg submitted a correction to the FY11 capital funding amount under item 4.3 on page 3.
>Angela will finalize and distribute the revised summary and have it posted to the Program's website (*done*).
4. (Action Item) Ratification of the FY12-13 Work Plan which was approved by the Management Committee on August 10 (Please see item #4 in the summary at <http://www.coloradoriverrecovery.org/committees/management-committee/meetingsum/081011MC.pdf>) – Carol DeAngelis said Reclamation was able to pre-obligate FY11 appropriated funds to make the Upper Colorado and San Juan recovery programs' FY12 budgets whole. John Shields visited with both Larry Walkoviak and Brent Rhees to express the Program participants' sincere appreciation for making up this shortfall for FY12. The group recognized that this is a stopgap for FY 12 only, and we need to keep

the authorization legislation front and center and get it done as soon as possible. The Committee ratified the work plan as approved by the Management Committee.

5. Status update and discussion of legislation – Tom Pitts said CUWCD and CREDA met with Kiel Weaver and his assistant in July. They were agreeable to introducing the legislation for continued funding with hydropower revenues, but asked for a report on: 1) the role of stocking in recovery; 2) the status of the species; and 3) Federal and non-Federal cost sharing. They also wanted to schedule a meeting with Rep. Bishop (who has agreed to be the primary sponsor of the legislation) and Rep. McClintock (this meeting has not yet taken place, but Rep. Bishop is expected to contact Rep. McClintock to schedule). With regard to “cutgo” (\$24M over 8 years), the legislation can be introduced without suggesting matching cuts elsewhere, but the cuts will need to be found, and this will be discussed with the Water and Power Subcommittee. Tom Pitts sent a draft of the report requested by Kiel Weaver to the non-Federal Program participants for a final review and will send it back to Kiel possibly by the end of this week (with an information copy sent to Program participants). We hope to see a bill introduced after Reps. Bishop and McClintock meet and get a hearing in October (Congress will recess December 8). Placeholder legislation was introduced earlier in the Senate, but will be replaced by the House version. In the cost-sharing calculations, the non-Federal share now incorporates power replacement costs. Leslie noted that CREDA’s Board continues to be concerned with what’s going on with the Aspinall EIS and sees Aspinall reoperation as a key part of the Recovery Program. Tom Pitts said we can expect scrutiny to increase as our expenditures increase (we’re now at \$309M); therefore, we all need to work hard to move things along faster to improve the status of the fish. John Shields noted that we need to schedule a Congressional conference call at some point and that we will need to seek cosponsors for the legislation.

6. Brief Program Director’s update – Tom Chart gave a brief update on recent Program activities.

- **HIGH FLOWS: 2011**

River	Gage	Date of Peak	Magnitude (cfs)	Period of record (yrs)	No. of years with higher peaks
Yampa	Deerlodge	09 June 2011	25,700	27	1
Yampa	Maybell	09 June 2011	19,600	97	1
Green	Jensen	11 June 2011	32,200	66	3
Colorado	Stateline	09 June 2011	46,800	59	5

- Related actions:

- Gathered aerial photography throughout the sub-basins very near peak flows to capture important areas of inundation.
 - Coordinated with Reclamation to time their spring releases from Flaming Gorge Reservoir to be coincident with presence of larval razorback sucker.
 - Increased sampling for larvae in those floodplain habitats to evaluate entrainment - subsequent sampling will evaluate over-summer survival.

- **Water management :**

- Coordinated with the Colorado River Water Conservancy District to experiment with a new release pattern for the Program’s “fish water” in Elkhead Reservoir (to disrupt smallmouth bass and assist field sampling efforts).

- Coordinating with Historic User pool groups to maintain the ‘wet year’ baseflow target (1630cfs) in the 15-mile Reach.
 - Coordinating with Reclamation to maintain a ‘wet year’ baseflow target (>2,800 cfs) in Reach 2.
 - The Program drafted flow recommendations for the Price and White Rivers – finalization expected in FY2012. The Price River position paper is scheduled for Biology Committee approval at the end of this month and then it will go to the Management Committee.
 - The Program finalized and began implementation of an Aspinall Study Plan to evaluate Reclamation’s re-operations at the Aspinall Unit.
 - **Research and Monitoring**
 - Hatchery produced razorback sucker spawned for the first time in the White River, Utah!
 - Additional spring sampling in Browns Park (Green River Reach 1) yielded - nine (9), late juvenile / adult Colorado pikeminnow captured upstream of Lodore Canyon in the mouth of Vermillion Creek; and no burbot. We have not previously sampled this area as part of pikeminnow population estimates.
 - **Programmatic**
 - [Five year reviews for the Colorado pikeminnow and humpback chub](#) were completed in FY2011 – no change in listing status for either species was recommended at this time. The razorback sucker and bonytail reviews are expected to be complete by the end of the calendar year. The Recovery Goals for all four endangered fish (with the Colorado pikeminnow [which has the strongest data set] taking priority) are under revision to incorporate new information. Leslie James asked when the humpback chub recovery goal revisions would be complete. Due to peer and public review requirements, Tom Chart couldn’t predict exactly when the goal revisions will be finalized. Tom Czapla said they hope to provide webinar presentations when the documents are sent out for Service and then stakeholder review to help speed the review process. Overall, it appears the timelines to recovery will remain similar to what was presented in the 2011 *Program Highlights*. Tom Pitts said it would be a big help to the Program if we can downlist the Colorado pikeminnow in 2013. Tom Chart said they hope to have more information for the Management Committee along these lines in October. Dan Luecke asked if the Service has declared that the “clock has started” for downlisting. Tom Chart said yes, and referred to the discussion in [this year’s sufficient progress memo](#) (where the Service said it would track trends using mark-recapture estimates begun in 1992 for the Colorado River and in 2000 for the Green River).
 - The Program has drafted a Basin-wide Nonnative and Invasive Aquatic Species Prevention and Control Strategy, which when approved, should provide important guidance on what many partners consider the largest remaining threat to recovery.
 - The Program continues to promote accomplishments and its cooperative approach to endangered species recovery through an aggressive outreach effort.
7. Sufficient progress update –Tom Chart reviewed progress on items of concern that the Management Committee is tracking from the Service’s sufficient progress memo (Attachment 2). Tom Pitts urged the Program to move forward with any recommendations regarding declining humpback chub populations (e.g., captive propagation) as quickly as

possible. With regard to getting the Aspinall EIS and ROD completed, Clayton Palmer noted the EIS was delayed for a couple of years due to internal Interior issues. Western would like to see a couple of things modified in the current draft, but they don't anticipate those creating any significant delays.

8. Update on DOI Scientific Integrity Policy (see attachment 4 of Management Committee meeting summary and http://elips.doi.gov/app_dm/act_getfiles.cfm?relnum=3889). At some point in the future, the Implementation Committee may want to somehow formally endorse this policy, as it will apply to Program documents. Tom Pitts said it may be more relevant to endorse the Reclamation or Service version when those are solidified and that we would then want to reference it in contracts and cooperative agreements. >The Program Director's office will bring this back to the Committee when Reclamation's version is finalized.
9. (Action Item) Discuss/schedule future meetings – The Committee scheduled their next conference call for Monday, March 5, 2012 from 9: a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and their next meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Denver near DIA.:
 - a. Next Congressional staff conference call – The non-Federal partners will move forward with this once a bill has been introduced in the House. We will want to provide the participants with the completed 5-year status reviews for the humpback chub <http://www.coloradriverrecovery.org/documents-publications/foundational-documents/recoverygoals/HBC5-yearStatusReview.pdf> and Colorado pikeminnow <http://www.coloradriverrecovery.org/documents-publications/foundational-documents/recoverygoals/CPM5-yearStatusReview.pdf> in advance of the call.
 - b. Washington, D.C., briefing trip – Tom Pitts has suggested that the 2012 D.C. trip fall somewhere between March 12 and 27, 2012 (note: Leslie James is not available March 22-23).

ADJOURN 11:41 a.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 (with Clayton Palmer standing in on the second half of the call), Western Area Power Administration
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin Water Users
Program Director Tom Chart, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (nonvoting)

OTHERS:

Julie Lyke, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Shields, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
Darin Bird, Utah Department of Natural Resources
Robert King, Utah Division of Water Resources
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
Pat Martinez, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program

Action Items from the [2011 Sufficient Progress Memo](#)

General – Upper Basin-wide				
#	Recommended Action Items	Lead	Due Date	Status
1	Cory Williams to send revised draft sediment report to USGS editorial by June 1, then revise & send to BC/WAC for final approval by August 1.	USGS	8/1/11	Sent to BC/WAC July 22; review webinar scheduled for October 13.
2	The Program Director's office will work with the signatories to the Nonnative Fish Stocking Policy to develop a Nonnative Fish Strategy that squarely addresses the issue of illicit stocking (draft due 9/1/11).	USFWS-PD	9/1/11	Draft strategy sent to BC 8/29/11. Tom Chart also sent a letter to the States about illicit introductions and addressing this issue in the nonnative fish strategy.
3	The Larval Fish Lab is scheduled to submit the draft razorback monitoring plan by May 31, 2011.	LFL	5/31/11	Behind schedule, but larval razorback monitoring is included in draft FY12-13 Work Plan in project #22f, #160 & #163, as well as an additional placeholder,
4	The Program Director's Office will monitor results from ongoing humpback chub population estimates (Deso-Gray 2010-2011; Black Rocks and Westwater 2011-2012 and monitoring (Cataract Canyon annual CPUE; Yampa River information gathered through nonnative fish management projects). The Program Director's Office will convene a panel to discuss humpback chub genetics and captivity and identify actions necessary to ensure the survival and recovery of humpback chub and an implementation plan for those actions in 2011.	USFWS-PD		The Program Director's Office has assembled an ad hoc group (three geneticists and Rich Valdez, Melissa Trammell, and Brandon Albrecht) to work on a humpback chub genetics management plan. They will have an initial conference call in October.
Green River				
5	The Program Director's Office will provide a draft Upper Basin Nonnative Fish Strategy for Program review by September 1, 2011. This strategy will identify actions needed to prevent introduction of new invasive species and also identify actions to eliminate newly-emerging invasives such as burbot and gizzard shad.	USFWS-PD	9/1/11	Draft strategy sent to BC 8/29/11.
6	The Program Director's Office will provide a final draft Role of the Price River in Recovery of Endangered Fish and the Need for Flow Management for Program review by July 1.	USFWS-PD	7/1/11	Provided. Submitted 6/21/11 and discussed at 7/11-12/11 BC meeting. BC deferred review/approval to their September 30 webinar.
7	The Tusher Wash Ad Hoc Group is gathering information (literature review to be completed in summer 2011, and a potential mortality study, if needed and funding available) to develop a screening recommendation.	Tusher Wash Ad Hoc Group		Most recent BC discussion deferred to 9/30/11.
Yampa River				
8	The Water Acquisition Committee will review mechanisms of current flow protection under the PBO's for both the Yampa and Colorado rivers to determine if additional mechanisms or instream flow filings are needed at this time (this will be reviewed every 5 years). As part of this review, the Committee will discuss the need for peak flow protection (which would require a peak flow recommendation).	WAC		7/19/11: WAC began discussing this; tabled until next call. MC: WAC needs to make call on whether instream flow filings currently necessary AND add language to RIPRAP to allow review before 5 more years, if needed. Also need to consider whether additional mechanisms for flow protection are needed.
9	CWCB will create a Consumptive Uses & Losses Report for 1975-2009, compare those to the old 1975-1998 numbers, and compare their new estimates for 1975-1998 to 1999-2009. The StateCU model will be completed by June 1, 2011;	CWCB, FWS, TNC, WAC	6/1/11	8/11/11: Report not yet ready for sharing, but will be by 12/31/11.

	Subsequently, meetings will be held with TNC to discuss StateMOD. CWCB, the Service, and the Water Acquisition Committee also should discuss whether we are able to adequately document depletions.			
10	CSU will complete the programmatic synthesis of smallmouth bass removal efforts (2012) which will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the Program's removal efforts as well as a thorough assessment of escapement.	CSU-LFL	8/31/2012	Draft final report due to Recovery Program 8/31/2012.
11	CSU will conduct a programmatic synthesis of northern pike removal efforts (2011-2012) which will evaluate current removal efforts in the context of northern pike life history throughout the Yampa River drainage. The Service supports the Program Director's Office recommendation that there be additional emphasis on northern pike control above Hayden.	CSU-LFL	6/30/13	Draft final report due to Recovery Program 6/30/13.
White River				
12	The Program Director's Office will submit a draft flow recommendations report to BC/WAC by July 1, 2011. Program participants have initiated efforts to develop a White River Management Plan that likely will lead to a programmatic biological opinion.	USFWS-PD	7/1/11	Draft report submitted July 1, 2011. Jana will update Biology Committee on comments received (some of which are conflicting) during September 30 webinar.
Colorado River				
13	Recovery Program participants will consider options and opportunities for meeting flow recommendations on a more consistent basis after completion of 10,825 EA and agreements.	Program	Pending	
14	Recovery Program participants will complete the final CFOPS report by September 30, 2011.	Program	9/30/11	2008, 2009, and 2010 CROS reports that will allow completion of the assessment of the potential benefits of CFOPS distributed. Conference call held 8/3/11, schedule revised: draft report to CFOPS team by 9/23/11 10/11/11, to WAC 10/31/11 11/18/11; final to Program 11/30/11 12/16/11.
15	The Service will document condition of a surrogate species (white sucker) below the Grand Valley Irrigation Company return pipe (begins July 2011).	USFWS	2011	This work had to be deferred to 2012 due to high flows. Results and recommendations to be documented in the 2012 annual report.
16	CDOW and the Recovery Program have coordinated with Parks so that the 2011 unscreened outlet release will be scheduled in the summer when oxygen is depleted at depth to prevent fish escapement. The Recovery Program also will coordinate with Parks to revise the scope of work accordingly (to assure that unscreened outlet releases only occur when oxygen levels are ≤ 2 mg/l).	CDOP&W	2011	In progress and SOW revised .
Gunnison River				
17	The Aspinall Study Plan will begin to be implemented in FY11. Reclamation will complete the final Aspinall Environmental Impact Statement by December 31, 2011.	Program/Reclamation	2011	SOW at http://www.coloradoriverrecovery.org/documents-publications/work-plan-documents/sow/10-11/rsch/163.pdf . Final ROD now expected in early 2012 prior to spring runoff.

