



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Dated: 4/01/2016

Draft Water Acquisition Committee Webinar Summary March 28, 2016

Participants: .Melissa Trammell, .Eric Knight, .Michelle Garrison, .James Greer, .Tom Pitts, .Jana Mohrman, .George Weekley, .Erik Knight, .Robert Wigington, .Ray Tenney, Laura Belanger, and .Angela Kantola. Jared Hansen, Steve Wolff, .Brent Uilenberg.

Assignments are indicated in the document in bold, preceded by a “>”.

CONVENE: Noon

Introductions, review/modify agenda

Review 7/23/2015 meeting summary – No changes, but submit by April 1st if you find any.

1. RIPRAP

Tables:

General – With regard to I.B.1. “PDO drafted table identifying flow protections (and remaining needed protection) for flows that have been defined within critical habitat. WAC will review and finalize.” >Jana will re-send and add this as an agenda item to the next WAC meeting.

Green – Tom Pitts asked if Flaming Gorge operation and related items will need to be part of conservation agreements once the fish are delisted. The Committee agreed that is a question we will need to answer.

The WAC recommends that the MC consider how we’re going to identify necessary post-delisting management actions and also determine the appropriate legal mechanism(s) that will satisfy Service requirements for post-delisting species protection. Those items then can be put into the RIPRAP, as appropriate. George Weekley noted that conservation agreements can apply not just to States, but to Federal agencies, as well. The WAC also recommends reviewing the RIPRAP tables for open-ended “ongoing” or “pending” items where specific tasks and end dates are unclear.

Tom Pitts asked if clarification is needed for:

I.A.4.a.(3)	Prepare and execute contracts with water users as required to subordinate diversions associated with approved and/or perfected rights.
I.A.4.a.(4)	Evaluate effectiveness of policy.

James Greer reviewed the 1994 policy. >James Greer provided this language:

Proposed text

In 1994 the Utah State Engineer adopted a policy to protect flows required for the endangered fish on the Green River between Flaming Gorge Dam to the confluence of the Duchesne River by subordination of post-

1994 applications to appropriate water and water right change applications during June 22 to November 1. To meet future needs new diversions totaling 20 cfs was exempt.

Current text:

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WAC recommended that >PDO review RIPRAP tables status column and make sure that “In Progress” indicates items with a reasonably short-term expected end date, versus “Ongoing” indicating items ongoing on an annual basis for the foreseeable future; and “pending” indicates items that will need to occur in the foreseeable future but have not yet been initiated.

>James Greer said Utah plans to evaluate the effectiveness of this next fiscal year

>Tom Pitts will send his flagged items to Angela.

>PDO will check tables for changes that also apply to text. Committee members will submit any additional changes by Friday, April 1.

Updates

2. GREAT review of flow and temp recommendations for Green River (/Jana 10 min)

The team holds bi-monthly calls. The report outline has been fleshed out, assignments made, relevant reference reports identified; the Green River Study Plan Table 2 annotated, and a SharePoint site created. Heather has been updating CRSS to include LTSP flow triggers. This will help identify the ability to meet targets under various scenarios. Jana is working with Heather to document how well we’ve complied with the ROD. Dave Speas drafted a section on temperature. Bestgen drafted species status summary. A master table of all the recommendations in Muth et al. has been developed. The Team plans to provide a draft report to the Committee in July 2016, draft report to the Biology Committee September 2016, and final report January 2017. The MC will review when the summary is written of the 2 synthesis reports.

The Management Committee received copies for their information on 2/24/16. Their review and approval process is separate from this technical report review process.

3. 2016 Green River flow request update (Jana 10 min)

In January, the BC discussed requesting elevated base flows as proposed under the Backwater Synthesis report and a spike flow to disadvantage smallmouth bass as proposed under the smallmouth bass early life history draft report, in addition to larval trigger flow. The FGTWG suggested we develop a study plan and do outreach on the proposed spike

flow first. The draft letter now reflects this. Reclamation has concerns about elevated base flows. In Reach 2 if it's a dry or moderately dry year these targets would be difficult to meet. Over the next year, Reclamation will explore flexibility in the ROD and whether supplemental NEPA is needed to address spike flows and elevated base flows in future years. There is a concern for conducting two NEPA's one to conduct experiments and a second to change the flow recommendations. Meanwhile, we'll draft study plans for next year.

4. GRUWAT (James Greer) 10 min

Utah has circulated a draft report among the technical group. On this week's call (10 am March 31), we will discuss the modelling report from Utah. Utah's internal policy group has started to meet to develop protection for the Green River flow targets.

5. 15-mile reach

a. Ute Water Conservation District water (Michelle) 5 min

CWCB received Board approval and public meeting was held in the Basalt area March 21st regarding the lease of from Ruedi again in 2016 (up to 12,000 af [9,000 af used in 2015]). This water will be delivered during the baseflow period. The lease stipulates using at least 6,000 af each year. It can be renewed annually 2019. This water is available to backup Ruedi fish pools if needed for an "April Hole". The HUP group will begin meetings this Wed at 10am to be ready for a possible April hole.

b. 2015 PBO assessment (Jana/Angela) 10 min

A draft is being reviewed by the PDO's office. It should be available for committee review by late spring or summer. There are concerns both with the flow target and fish population status.

6. Priorities from Geomorphology Peak Flow Technical Supplement (Jana) 15 min

The supplement was approved by the Biology and Water Acquisition committees (1/14/16).

a. Green River suspended sediment monitoring was identified as a priority and is being considered by the GREAT team. Several sites are being considered for 2017; Jensen, Ouray Bridge and a possible new gage site below the confluences of the Duchesne and White River. The GREAT recognized the USBR is not able to use the spillway to achieve the largest spring peaks in the flow recommendation as a result of cost and safety concerns. If the highest peak flows can't be achieved an accretion and or sediment study to determine stream energy to transport sediment load should be closely evaluated.

b. Gunnison River: Toby Minear, USGS, and John Pitlick will do hydrophone work in the Gunnison River in 2016. This inexpensive technique directly addresses flows required to move bed sediment in specific habitat units (riffles, pools, etc.). They use frequencies (0.6 to 3.7 kHz) that are only responsive in the 8 mm to 128+mm range (bedload). A number of previous papers report this range to be relatively robust in different rivers and USGS (San Joaquin and Trinity River both gravel-bed rivers like the Gunnison). They turn off the higher frequency range most likely tied to small bedload and sand movement, (yet to be proven). USGS is currently limits findings to moderate and large bedloads.

USGS uses two different types of hydrophone systems: An in-situ system stationary (similar to traditional bedload sampling but much less expensive) that can be either uncalibrated or calibrated with bedload sampling. If it is uncalibrated, it measures if the bed is moving or not, whereas, with calibration it is used to compute actual bedload transport volumes. In 2014 USGS used uncalibrated in-situ hydrophones installed at two riffles on the Gunnison with hourly measurements over one month on the receding limb of the peak releases.

A mobile hydrophone system attached to a survey-grade GPS receiver and ADCP was also used in 2014. This instrument mounts on a non-motor boat, which then quietly transits the river reach while recording bedload movement. In 2016 this mobile system will be used in the Gunnison River. Tests were done in 2014 on the receding limb of the hydrograph. This year they will capture the entire hydrograph.

7. Capital Projects (Brent) 10 min:

a. OMID: the contract is underway for the reregulating reservoir with plans to operate in the spring of 2017. With 33 check structures in place the operator, Max Schmidt, compared 2008 operations to 2015 and estimates ~7000 acft savings. CalPoly estimated 5,400 acft. Brent will review this data and report this savings annually in his reports.

b. Tusher Wash the USBR hopes the diversion dam and fish passage will be operational this irrigation season. Tom Chart visited it last week; he was amazed at how large it was. The USBR is designing a weir wall concept (like Hogback in the San Juan) for the Green River Canal and hope to contract it 2017, and build in 2018.

8. White River SOW & Flow Recommendations (Michelle & Jana) 10 min

The White River water management scope of work is being updated to describe: 1) how Service flow targets will be finalized parallel to the modeling by the consultant; 2) define signatories to the plan; and 3) incorporate future demands from the Yampa/White/Green Rivers roundtable and Utah's demands will (to be modelled by the consultant). CWCB is expected to finalize the contract soon. The WAC agreed on the technical team to work on the flow recommendations will include; Jana, Robert, Chart, Pitts, Greer, and Garrison. The next meeting is April 25th at 1:00.

Schedule next meeting, webinar, or conference call

ADJOURN: 3:00 pm