

DRAFT Management Committee Webinar Summary, November 10th, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm**CONVENED: 8:01 AM MT**

1. Introductions & requests to modify agenda
 - a. Jojo announced that she is leaving CWCB. Jojo thanked all of the partners for their work on the Program. The Committee members expressed thanks to Jojo for all the work she has done over the past few years and wished her well in her transition.
2. Hydropower analysis update – Derek Fryer reviewed where Reclamation and WAPA are in the process of the hydropower analysis. Derek reviewed that the purpose of this analysis is to look at the magnitude of hydropower costs over a range of conditions over 20 years, examining a base case vs implementation of the GREAT experiments. The analysis will also allow for separation of the experiments so each could be assessed individually. A subgroup convened last fall with representatives from Reclamation, WAPA and the Program Director’s Office to outline assumptions and create a plan around what modeling was needed. Tildon Jones, Tom Chart, and Don Anderson were included in these discussions early on to try to translate the recommendations in Muth et al. and the GREAT into rule sets for the models. As an example, Tildon said we would not expect to conduct a flow spike in wet hydrologies.

WAPA contracted Argonne to run the hydropower analysis part based the Reclamation model traces. Most of the work has been completed on the GTMax model to get it running cleanly. Argonne started looking at the data and noticed a few things that gave them pause regarding the base-case dataset, which included Drought Response Operation (DRO) assumptions. WAPA and Reclamation met and determined it would be prudent to rerun the models without drought operations and to use the most recent years of data (“stress test” drier hydrology 1988-2018). Once Derek gets the modeling data from Conor Felletter at Reclamation, he believes they can move quickly with the GTMax Model with results expected in about January.

Conor Felletter introduced himself as the primary modeler for Reclamation with the Colorado River Simulation System (CRSS) model. The models include a few different kinds of data, one including the full dataset of all years available, and another that only looks at the last 30 years (1988-2018). Reclamation is now using these more recent years for all of their efforts, which excludes a high-water period that occurred in the 1980’s. Experience with drought operations has indicated that there may not be flexibility to allow for large releases out of the reservoirs. He noted it is important to see what the agreements will contain for DRO, instead of projecting what

they might be. Both changes will be included in the dataset that Conor is providing to WAPA. The official model (base case) includes both model runs with increased flows in the summer to support the Program and increased winter flows for hydropower. Conor then looked at including LTSP using a model developed by Heather Patno, which shifts the peak to later in the summer and more quickly downramps the flows after the peak (2000 cfs/d). The next experiment looks at LTSP and added the smallmouth bass flow-spike as 3 days of powerplant capacity in the dry to average hydrologic year types. The start dates were varied based on hydrologic year type as well. The third combination includes all three experiments (LTSP, flow-spikes, and Colorado pikeminnow baseflows). Conor showed a graph that compared the base case vs the three different experimental runs for Julian day flow conditions. In general, flows are lower in the fall and early winter in the projections, but then increase in February to support hydropower. The committee thanked both Conor and Derek for the information.

A committee member asked about the plan moving forward. Derek committed to returning to the committee with a plan as it is developed and envisioned future conversations about what the costs might be and what mitigation measures might be available. Derek is hoping to return to the program in February with some results. A question was asked if there will be a time when DRO flows will be added back into the discussions. Conor said what DRO will be is currently under discussion within Reclamation. Once they have those specifics, it would be possible to model the logic in CRSS, but there is no plan to add those into this analysis at this time. Conor noted that the effects of lowering Flaming Gorge is included in this model, accounting for the 181KAF that was released in 2021. Tildon said this analysis makes a lot of sense because the purpose was to determine the difference between the base case and the experiments. Adding DRO just adds complication, which confuses the outcomes. Tildon also noted that because of the timeline this year, the PDO was thinking about bringing a priority request back to the BC in December to get some feedback early to develop the flow request letter in January specifically to incorporate partner input. Tildon suggested the BC could discuss where water should be prioritized if water is available through DRO. He also noted that the timeline on the letter is tight and non-negotiable. The Committee supported that path forward. Melissa Trammell noted that both NPS and FWS have presented priorities to Reclamation within the context of the DRO discussions. A committee member asked if the effects of power production at Flaming Gorge vs Glen Canyon would be considered. Derek said this analysis only considers Flaming Gorge. Shane said modeling the entire system is much more complicated, especially with DRO flows. Flows released from Flaming Gorge not only provide power at FG, but also provide more hydrologic head at Glen Canyon, which improves power production. Chris Keleher thanked Derek and Conor for their explanation and presentation.

3. NPS Funding – Melissa Trammell said National Park Service is likely to get the \$1.8M requested in appropriations for the recovery programs in FY22. This represents additional funding that the program was not anticipating having available quickly. Melissa is working with both program

offices to figure out what to do with these funds. The original intent was to support nonnative fish work, but that is difficult to get into the PIs workplans at this stage in the process. The long-term plan is to integrate the funding into the workplan. Committee members thanked NPS for their efforts and requested that the FY22-23 workplan be formally amended and approved by the MC and IC. Julie noted some concerns about our ability to integrate these funds into the workplan for FY22 specifically. Tom Pitts requested that NPS bring a list of potential funding targets back to the MC, even if that was outside of the traditional work planning process. Melissa agreed to report back to the MC once details were available.

4. Sufficient Progress discussion – Julie Stahl sent a draft Sufficient Progress document out for review on October 27th. She reviewed the major changes the Committee should be aware of. The memo is largely based on information in the RIPRAP. The big difference in this year’s memo is that the PDO shortened it based on feedback from the last one. The PDO removed large tables based on the Recovery Goals, which was replaced by text summarizing the SSA documents. This also recognizes that the Recovery Goals are guidance documents and not quantitative targets that must be met. Other changes include breaking tables in to general and subbasin specific accomplishment tables, with separate tables for concerns. This format more closely aligns with the RIPRAP format. Finally, the PDO tried to make the conclusions clearer and more concise. The MC still has 2 weeks left to review the memo and submit any recommended revisions (due Nov. 30). Tom Pitts thanked the PDO for compiling the document and stressed that the water users consider this a very important process. Julie requested a single set of comments from each partner, combining MC and BC representatives’ feedback. The memo will be reviewed by FWS ES offices before signature by the Regional Director.
5. Post-2023 – Michelle Garrison said the post-2023 group continues to meet and is in conversations about annual funding. The question currently under discussion examines in-kind contributions and how they can be defined. Michelle reiterated how important the in-kind contributions are to making this program work. The partners are working to develop a consistent way to monetize those contributions, potentially in relation to how much money those efforts are saving the program. Michelle thanked NPS for their willingness to contribute and was excited that partners are being so generous in these discussions.
 - a. Report to Congress - Michelle noticed this is currently overdue and we are getting short on time to get these conversations wrapped up. The Report needs to get up through the Interior review process as soon as possible. Cooperative Agreements, Legislation and NEPA are all still required after these discussions wrap up.
 - b. Recent legislation – HR 5001 update. With the infrastructure bill passed, H.R. 5001 may get more attention soon. There was a hearing last week, and some joint letters of support were submitted. Many thanks to Tom Pitts and Jojo La for spearheading the effort to coordinate letters of support, and to everyone that contributed to those letters of support. We still need to ensure that the newer request to shift some remaining capital ceiling from the SJRIP to the

UCRIP is added to the bill as it moves forward, which should happen relatively soon. Leslie noted the Colorado River has been a big topic at National Water Resources Association and thanked all the partners who are doing a really good job talking about the programs and their importance.

6. Capital project updates – Ryan Christianson noted we are running out of cost ceiling and the importance of HR. 5001 with the proposed amendment. Ryan reviewed the budget table as updated through FY23. Once the bills are passed, he will add FY24 to the table. Ryan has been working with GVIC on a proposal to fix the GVIC fish screen and passage structure. He is hoping a proposal will come back to the MC for approval soon. Ryan has allocated \$300K for the Green River Canal cleaning equipment. The canal company has cleaned the fish passage a few times this year, but it has turned out to be dangerous to reach to the trash rack with equipment from shore. Ryan is suggesting constructing track mounted equipment to prevent machinery falling into the river. Additional equipment (including a pressure washer and another excavator) to clean the fish screen. Ryan is working on an agreement to state that the excavator that is not track mounted could be used in other places, but all operation and maintenance costs would be borne by the canal company. The canal company has agreed to those terms. Ryan is comfortable requesting approval on this at this meeting because the estimates for GVIC are still very general. Tom moved approval on that proposal. Michelle seconded. The committee approved the expenditure to improve the Green River canal cleaning process.

Ryan showed photos documenting the spillway screen being constructed at Ridgway. Construction is on track and should be completed in FY22 before the spring runoff. Melissa asked about the Ridgway water elevation and if it was low. Ryan said it is actually one of the fuller reservoirs at this point, but its level has been supportive of construction.

Paul Badame said that Utah staff have been meeting to discuss final designs for Starvation Reservoir. He is working to get those plans to Reclamation's Force Acct Crew by February. He committed to including Ryan and Wes James on those emails.

Construction at the Stirrup is almost complete. We are waiting for the gate to arrive, which just arrived in port in Oakland. Ryan Proctor thinks installation will likely be able to occur closer to the end of the month. Tildon has coordinated with the Force Acct Crew, who is willing to install the gate as weather conditions permit. Ryan Christianson expects the project to come in within the approved budget.

As major improvements (repair and replacement) are needed on aging infrastructure, Ryan is asking people to split their costs into what is operations and maintenance (O&M) vs rehabilitation and replacement (R&R) to be able to spend capital funds on R&R. Mark Harris has spent funds resolving issues with motors and electrical issues on the GVP Roller Dam diversion.

Ryan and Mark agreed that 1/6 of those costs should be paid by the Program because one of the bays was dedicated to the fish passage. Ryan asked for approval to spend \$89,000 to support the improvements. The committee approved the expense. >Ryan will distribute all his materials to the MC after the meeting (*done*).

Current anticipated expenses for all Program projects are about \$1M over the authorized budget when we look out through FY23. Right now, the values in FY22 are under budget, with remaining appropriations available in the realm of about \$500,000. Tom commended Ryan and all others at Reclamation for their incredible management of these capital resources over time. The committee agreed that Ryan's work is commendable.

Potential capital projects for Infrastructure Bill - Ryan reviewed a list of projects developed by the PDO, Ryan and others. The list includes the GVIC fish screen, deferred maintenance and improvements at hatcheries, construction at Old Charley, the Catamount screen, and installation of permanent monitoring equipment. Ryan noted Congress would still need to appropriate funds for these projects. Tom noted that the \$50M authorization includes the Upper Colorado, San Juan, Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program and the LCR-MSCP for FY22-26. The programs should prioritize shovel ready projects to submit for consideration in the appropriations process. Jojo said she will be testifying in relation to the Infrastructure Bill in the next few weeks. She reiterated the importance of understanding the difference between Infrastructure funding and traditional recovery program funding. Committee members asked if Ryan was considering the importance of spending the funds within 5 years. Ryan said having the capacity to design and construct these facilities once approval is complete will be the pinch point. Reclamation crews can build one project a year, with additional planning efforts going on in the background. Ryan is holding discussions around how those funds can be used with grant funding or outside contractors. Ryan noted the importance of coordinating across the programs for any hatchery improvements.

7. Program Director's Update –Julie thanked Kevin McAbee for serving as the Program Director in the interim between Tom's retirement and Julie's selection. She also thanked Kevin for getting all the documents completed to facilitate the humpback chub downlisting, which was finalized this fall. Kevin also worked on finalizing the 15MR PBO assessment. The PDO hopes to package that with the Sufficient Progress memo for RD approval. Julie announced that Melanie Fischer plans to retire at the end of this year, and thanked Melanie for all her contributions. There are two positions now open in the PDO—Deputy Director and I&E coordinator. There are also signals from FWS that we may be able to fill a Propagation Coordinator position. Julie thanked the PDO staff for their adaptability in navigating all of the staffing changes.
8. Meeting summary approvals, schedule January meeting – Julie requested approval of two meeting summaries (June and Sept.). There was one final revision suggested by Leslie James

which was incorporated. There were no additional comments. The summaries were approved.
Schedule next meeting—January 4th 9-noon.

ADJOURNED: 10:28am

Attachment 1: Meeting Attendees

Management Committee Members In Attendance:

Chris Keleher	MC Chair, State of Utah
Mike Robertson	State of Wyoming
Michelle Garrison	State of Colorado
Jojo La	State of Colorado
Tom Pitts	Water Users
Joe Trungale	The Nature Conservancy
Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distributors Assoc.
Shane Capron	Western Area Power Administration
Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
Ryan Christianson	Bureau of Reclamation
Marj Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Julie Stahli (non-voting)	Program Director

Upper Colorado Program Office Staff:

Kevin McAbee	Nonnative Fish Coordinator
Tildon Jones	Habitat Coordinator
Melanie Fischer	I&E Coordinator
David Graf	Instream Flow Coordinator
Chris Michaud	Database Coordinator

Interested Parties:

Dave Speas	Bureau of Reclamation
Derek Fryer	Western Area Power Administration
Colleen Cunningham	State of New Mexico
Paul Badame	State of Utah
Rob Billerbeck	National Park Service
Gene Seagle	National Park Service
Kathy Callister	Bureau of Reclamation
Katie Duncan	Colorado Attorney's General Office
Edalin Koziol	The Nature Conservancy
Chris Breidenbach	Colorado Attorney's General Office
Harry Crockett	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Conor Felletter	Bureau of Reclamation