

I. **Project Title:** Reclamation Program Management

II. **Principal Investigator(s):**

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III. **Project Summary:** In FY 2019, Reclamation provided representation to the Recovery Program’s biology, management, and implementation committees and managed financial assistance agreements and interagency agreements with program cooperators to implement the annual work plan.

IV. **Study Schedule:** Ongoing

V. **Relationship to RIPRAP:** General Recovery Program Support Action Plan, Provide Program Planning and Support (Program Management), Task No. VII

VI. **Accomplishments during FY 2019: Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:** Program management funds are used to provide Reclamation participation in general Recovery Program activities not covered by specific scopes of work. Examples of these types of activities include administration of “base” or annual project funding agreements (i.e., not inclusive of capital projects), work planning, monitoring project progress and performance, and other general program management and administration.

**Task 1: Work with Recovery Program participants to coordinate work plans.**

Task 1 Accomplishments, Discussion, and Shortcomings: In FY19, Reclamation participated in RIPRAP revisions, review and completion of final reports, and other issue papers pursuant to Task 1. We reviewed and approved FY20-21 Recovery Program work plan scopes of work at the July 2019 Biology Committee meeting and resulting budget modifications for Management Committee approval (Sept 3-4). We developed scopes of work for operation and maintenance of Upper Colorado River PIT antenna systems and Reclamation program management of the Recovery Program. We participated in a multi-day planning workshop for recovery activities after 2023 and follow-up management committee meetings in September 2019. We provided technical reviews of most Recovery Program technical documents and projects (i.e., White River flow recommendations, Project 158, smallmouth bass flow spike study plan, Green River

Evaluation and Assessment Team [GREAT], etc.) as well as routine requirements pursuant to grant and interagency agreement monitoring.

We participated in the Flaming Gorge Technical Working Group and functioned as a liaison between the Recovery Program and Reclamation managers in implementing the 2006 ROD, which involved close coordination with researchers from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to implement the Larval Trigger Study Plan (LTSP). We attended the Flaming Gorge Working Group (FGWG) meetings held in Price, UT (March 7, and August 15), and Vernal, UT (April 18). We worked closely with dam managers to operate the Flaming Gorge Dam selective withdrawal system in order to meet Green River endangered fish water temperature objectives. We also coordinated with Recovery Program participants to collect, organize and interpret temperature data from the 2018 peak- and base-flow period in the Green and Yampa rivers for compliance with the 2005 biological opinion on Flaming Gorge Dam operations.

We participated in the GREAT to evaluate efficacy of the Green River Flow Recommendations under the 2006 ROD. We contributed to the final draft version of the report which was made available to the Biology Committee and peer reviewers in late spring 2019. A revised draft including peer reviewer input is currently awaiting approval by the Biology Committee and should appear before the Management Committee in early CY20 for their review and approval.

We continued to work with the Recovery Program PDO coordinators, Bureau of Land Management and other cooperators to plan modification of the Stirrup Bottom wetland for installation of a water control structure and fish kettle. These modifications should allow for effective management of wetland filling and draining as part of the LTSP. Construction is currently expected to start in July of 2020.

We assisted USFWS – Colorado River Fishery Project (CRFP) field crews with smallmouth bass control and sampling activities on the Yampa River (June 2019) and assisted with installation of the new fish screen/weir at the Green River Canal near Green River, UT (March 2019). Additionally, we assisted USFWS CRFP representatives in conducting outreach activities at the Children’s Water Festival, Colorado Mesa University (Grand Junction) during May 2019.

We gave a presentation on usage of the Dolores River by endangered fish at the Desert Fishes Council Annual Meeting (Death Valley, CA; Nov 2018). We also contributed authorship to a paper on razorback sucker movement between the Upper Colorado and San Juan river basins via Lake Powell (Pennock et al; in review by Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems). We prepared presentations for the Annual Researcher’s Meeting originally to be held in January 2019. While the meeting was unfortunately cancelled due to shutdown of the Federal Government, the presentations nevertheless afforded an opportunity to evaluate Green River temperature objectives in some depth which will likely be of use in future operations of the Flaming Gorge Dam selective withdrawal system.

We continued analysis on the utility of automated PIT data in recovery monitoring through Utah State University. This effort resulted in preparation of two papers, one on use of PIT data in evaluation of Colorado pikeminnow survival trends (Connor et al; intended for the Researcher's Meeting but cancelled due to Government shutdown) and one on use of such data in derivation of fish abundance estimates (Connor et al; presented at the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting, and currently under review by Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences). We hope to present these materials at the next Researcher's Meeting in Durango, CO (Jan 2020).

## **Task 2: Administer funding for Recovery Program projects.**

Task 2 Accomplishments, Discussion, and Shortcomings: The Recovery Program FY19 work plan required us to create or modify several funding agreements between cooperators and Reclamation pursuant to Task 2. Each agreement required multi-faceted administrative maintenance, including requests for Federal assistance for Recovery Program-approved projects, communication with Recovery Program Director's office on funding issues, preparation of determination and findings documents, review and approval of project budgets, requests for obligations to cover funding agreements, agreement or contract awards, maintenance of agreement and contract filing systems (including agreement instruments, invoices, and accruals), tracking of budgets, review and approval of invoices, performance of periodic site visits to monitor project performance, filing of advanced procurement reports, tracking project performance and status of deliverables, filing project monitoring reports, filing recipient performance reports, answering agreement inquiries from auditors, and other related tasks.

In FY19 we established three new five-year grants, one each for Colorado State University, Colorado Division of Water Resources and Utah Division of Wildlife for their respective supporting roles in endangered fish recovery. We provided some training to program participants on use of a new budget template from Reclamation's Acquisitions Management Division. We feel that the templates provide format standardization and transparency of project budgets and can speed the review process considerably.

We coordinated procurement and distribution of PIT tags, PIT antennas and supplies for use by program personnel in all field offices using a DOI-wide PIT contract with Biomark, Inc. We identified and utilized non-Program funding to cover PIT-related costs during FY20 and about half of the PIT-related costs in 2021. Working with UDWR and Reclamation acquisitions staff, also, we reprogrammed unused funds from an expiring UDWR grant and applied them to completion of the Matheson Wetland renovation project, Moab UT.

We reviewed Recovery Program capital projects and capital project operation and maintenance expenditures with a budget analyst from Reclamation's regional office and contract representatives in Reclamation's Western Colorado Area Office (Grand Junction, CO). We intend to make this a regular feature of planning for Recovery

Program annual funding each year, and thus assist with budget/ceiling forecasts at the start of each fiscal year.

As has been the case for the last few years, procurement reviews in 2019 conducted both regionally and departmentally severely delayed awards for several financial assistance grants (i.e., Federal aid to state or private institutions; awards to other Federal agencies were mostly issued within the second quarter of 2019). We continue to take steps to improve to the timeliness of financial assistance funding awards. As of October 2019, all materials for funding requests in FY20 have been submitted, and our hope is (as always) to reduce delays in funding in the coming year. We have been meeting bi-weekly with the acquisitions staff for several years now to track progress towards financial assistance awards and will make these updates available to recipients on request. We fully understand the difficulties faced by the participating agencies in the wake of these funding delays and are engaged at several management levels to try and improve things.

VII. Recommendations:

- Continue this project in FY20 using staffing levels proposed in the FY20-21 scope of work as guidance
- Continue to evaluate and revise Reclamation's labor and funding requirements for program management support to the Recovery Program in future years.

VIII. Project Status: Ongoing

IX. FY 2019 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$236,575
- B. Funds Expended as of September 30, 2019: \$236,575
- C. Difference: \$0
- D. Percent of the FY 2019 work completed: 100%.
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: \$0

X. Status of Data Submission (where applicable): Not Applicable

Signed: /s/ Dave Speas  
Fish Biologist, Principal Investigator

Oct 31 2019