

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2014 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

RECOVERY PROGRAM
PROJECT NUMBER: 5



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

III. **Principal Investigators:**

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III. **Abstract:** Wyoming's program management efforts are integral with those of other Program partners to ensure that timely and effective coordination, planning and implementation of Recovery Program actions occurs. Our participation on each committee and at each level of program conduct will continue as long as there is a Program. Progress towards accomplishing the Program's dual objectives of recovery of the endangered fish while water development continues in compliance with the ESA continues to incrementally occur. Wyoming's representatives participated in meetings, teleconferences and decision-making; actively made suggestions and recommendations and met our reporting commitments. We actively sought to secure understanding, acceptance and support of the Program by Wyoming governmental agencies, the Congress and the Administration for capital construction and annual program funding from the State of Wyoming, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Effective program management remains exceedingly important and is on the critical path for our Program's progress to accomplishing species' downlisting and recovery by 2023.

IV. **Study Schedule:** 1989-ongoing. Fiscal year 2014 was the twenty first (21st) year during which Wyoming received in-kind services credit for our program management efforts.¹

V. **Relationship to RIPRAP:** General Recovery Program Support Action Plan:
VII.A.3 – Update, refine and prioritize recovery actions (RIPRAP) annually.
VII.A.7 – Monitor and assess Recovery Program accomplishments annually.
VII.A.8 – Develop biennial work plan to address priority needs.
VII.B – Actively participate in Recovery Program committees and secure funding for annual work plan and larger projects.

VI. **Accomplishment of FY 2014 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:** The Biology Committee's (BC) efforts are significant and have been extremely important in our innovative recovery program's successes over the past twenty-four years that the committee has existed. A considerable workload is undertaken and accomplished annually by this Committee. Pete Cavalli is an active and respected participant in all of the BC's efforts.

¹ Pursuant to the Recovery Program's 2009 Extension of the Cooperative Agreement (which continues the Recovery Program through September 30, 2023), Wyoming will continue to request in-kind credit for our personnel's direct participation in program management and administration involvement and actions.

John Shields served as a member of the Water Acquisition and Information and Education Committees and as Chairman of the Management Committee during the first half of Fiscal Year 2014. John retired from the State of Wyoming in March 2014. John was heavily involved in all aspects of the recovery efforts since the program's inception, and will surely be missed. Steve Wolff is the new Wyoming representative to the Management Committee. Steve did help with logistical efforts and participated in the recovery programs' annual Congressional briefings trip to Washington, DC on April 7 - 11, 2014.

Accomplishments: Due to the efforts of all program participants, including the involved Wyoming personnel, this recovery program continues to move forward and incremental progress is being made towards downlisting and delisting of the four endangered fish species. Wyoming's program participant as well as a representative of the Wyoming Oil & Gas Conservation Commission participated in the Energy & Fish meeting sponsored by the program.

Wyoming did pass a "must-kill" regulation for certain non-game fish in the Colorado River basin. In parallel with the work to get the new regulations drafted and passed, there has been a great deal of public education to make sure anglers understand what the problem is and why the regulations were put in place.

Discussion of Initial Findings, Highlights, Shortcomings and Noteworthy Activities: None of our efforts are getting any easier. Once again, questions arose in our DC briefings trip as to why we are not on track to downlist the Colorado pikeminnow as previously projected (and written down in prior years' editions of our annual "Program Highlights" document).

- VII. **Additional Noteworthy Observations:** As the verbiage commonly found in real estate contracts says, *time is of the essence.*" This phrase is one that we in this program and our sister San Juan Program need to continually bear in mind. The end of fiscal year 2023 will be here before we know it; and it is a self-imposed deadline that has very real significance.

Participation by each Program participant in all aspects of the Recovery Program remains one of the most critical elements of maintaining the trusting and productive working relationships that have been established over the past twenty-five years. We all need to continue to apply "peer-pressure" and "gentle-reminders" to one another as participants to make Program efforts of all kinds – whether Biology, Management or Water Acquisition Committee meetings or participating in the annual Washington, D.C. briefing meetings with Congressional delegation and Department of the Interior staff the high priority that our collective commitments to one another require.

- VIII. **Recommendations:** All program participants need to remain focused on our ultimate objective of recovering the four endangered fish species. Progress is incremental, and staying on track is vitally important to the ultimate success of the Recovery Program. The program participants need to obtain a better mutual understanding of the process and procedural mechanics of how downlisting is going to proceed so that we are ready to proceed without delay when the opportunity presents itself. We need to begin to conceptualize and start filling in the particulars of what the conservation agreements that will be required to be entered into between the USFWS and the participating states will require. There will be transition challenges to be dealt with and getting a head-start on

them could be helpful.

IX. **Project Status:** Wyoming's Program Management is considered to be ongoing and on-track. Work and time requirements for report and document review, meetings' preparation and participation (whether in person attending meetings, workshops or the annual researchers' meeting, via conference calls or Web-Ex webinars) commitments for accomplishing the Biology Committee's tasks and functions are significant, in particular for the Program's numerous nonnative fish management and control activities.

X. **FY 2014 Budget:**

A.	Funds Provided:	\$47,211 - \$28,401 = \$18,810
B.	Funds Expended:	<u>\$18,810</u>
C.	Difference:	\$ 0
D.	Percent of the FY2014 Work Completed and Projected Costs to Complete:	<i>Not applicable.</i>
E.	Program funds spent for publication charges:	None

XI. **Status of Data Submission:** Not applicable; no data was submitted.

XII. **Signed:** Steven W. Wolff Dated: November 26, 2014
Management Committee Member and Principal Investigator for Wyoming
Program Management (Recovery Program Project No. 5)