

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY 2019 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

RECOVERY PROGRAM  
PROJECT NUMBER: 5



Upper Colorado River  
Endangered Fish  
Recovery Program

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

II. **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 occur. Our participation on relevant committees and at each level of the program 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 review and reorganize any post-2023 program.

IV. **Study Schedule:** 1989-ongoing. Fiscal year 2019 was the twenty sixth (26th) year during which Wyoming received in-kind services credit for our program management efforts.<sup>1</sup>

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 2019 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

six years that the committee has existed. A considerable work load is undertaken and accomplished annually by this Committee. Pete Cavalli is an active and respected participant in all the BC's efforts.

Steve Wolff serves as Chair of the Management Committee and is Wyoming's representative to the Implementation Committee. As such, Steve participated in all committee activities through the year. In addition, Steve helped with scheduling efforts and participated in the recovery programs' annual Congressional briefings trip to Washington, DC on March 12 - 14, 2019.

Accomplishments: Due to the efforts of all program participants, including the involved Wyoming personnel, the recovery program continues to move forward and incremental progress is being made towards downlisting and recovery of the four endangered fish species. Discussions about a post-2023 program are in full swing, with a draft report being prepared for the Secretary of the Interior review by fall 2020. In addition, we completed our latest 5-year depletions review in the Little Snake River basin pursuant to the Yampa River PBO.

Discussion of Initial Findings, Highlights, Shortcomings and Noteworthy Activities: A primary focus again this year has been the introduction of federal legislation to extend the Secretary of the Interior's authorized use of Colorado River Storage Project hydropower revenues for annual base funding of the recovery programs through FY 2023. At this time, efforts to secure funding for FY2020 – FY2023 are ongoing.

- VII. **Additional Noteworthy Observations:** Knowing that the program has a major deadline in 2023 when the major elements of the program expire, much recent discussion has focused on the program post-2023. The end of fiscal year 2023 will be here before we know it; and we need to outline a program with sufficient detail that can continue to be supported by all program partners. The recent efforts that the USFWS has recently taken to begin the downlisting of two of the species is certainly a sign of significant progress.

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 thirty 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. We have been hit with a significant issue the past couple of years relative to funding that we continue to spend an excessive amount of time to resolve. This issue has also delayed our post-2023 planning process which is also critical. The program participants need to stay

focused on the benefits of the program. We have begun to conceptualize and start filling in the particulars of post-2023 program elements and other agreements that will be required to be entered into between the USFWS and the participating stakeholders. 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 2018 Budget:**

A.	Funds Provided:	\$49,634 - \$28,878 = \$20,756
B.	Funds Expended:	<u>\$20,756</u>
C.	Difference:	\$ 0
D.	Percent of the FY2019 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: October 23, 2019  
Implementation and Management Committee Member and Principal Investigator  
for Wyoming Program Management (Recovery Program Project No. 5)