

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

FY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

PROJECT: 05

Project Title: Wyoming Program Management

Principal Investigators:

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Abstract:

The Wyoming State Engineer's Office and the Wyoming Game & Fish Department provide support to the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Program) through participation in program committees and related activities, as well as the annual congressional briefing trip to Washington, D.C.

Study Schedule:

1989-ongoing. Fiscal year 2020 was the thirty-second (32nd) year of Wyoming's participation in the program.

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.

Accomplishment of FY2020 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 thirty-two years that the committee has existed. A considerable work load is undertaken and accomplished annually by this Committee. Pete Cavalli is an active 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 coordinates scheduling efforts and general trip logistics for our annual spring Washington, D.C. briefing trip.

Noteworthy Activities: A primary focus again this year has been the P2023 program discussions.

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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 ongoing effort by the USFWS to finalize the downlisting of two of the species is certainly a sign of significant progress, and brings with it much needed political support.

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-two years.

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.

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 webinars) commitments for accomplishing the committee's tasks and functions are significant, in particular for the Program's numerous nonnative fish management and control activities.

FY2020 Budget Status

Funds Provided:	\$29,488 – USGS Joint Funding Agreement
	<u>\$22,043</u> – Program Funds
	\$51,531 – Total Provided

Funds Expended: \$ \$51,531

Status of Data Submission

Not applicable; no data was submitted.

Signed: Steven W. Wolff Dated: November 30, 2020
Implementation and Management Committee Member and Principal Investigator for
Wyoming Program Management (Recovery Program Project No. 5)