

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

December 6, 2007
Salt Lake City, Utah

CONVENE: 10:00 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper – The agenda was revised as it appears below.
2. Report to Congress – Bob Muth said that in early November, the Program Director’s office provided a draft of the "Report to Congress" for transmittal to the Regional Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Regions 2 and 6) and Bureau of Reclamation (Upper Colorado Region) requesting appropriate regional office review. Bob received comments from Region 6 of the Fish and Wildlife Service (Bridget Fahey, chief of the endangered species branch), and believes we can address most of those comments easily. Bridget also sent a courtesy copy to Kelly Hornaday in the Service’s Washington office (acting for Michelle Morgan as Recovery Branch Chief) and suggested that Kelly coordinate with Bryan Arroyo and Congressional Affairs. Region 6’s acting legislative affairs specialist forwarded a courtesy copy to Lesli Gray, Matthew Huggler, and Shawn Finley of the Washington Congressional Affairs office. Bryan Arroyo has offered to shepherd the report through Interior in Washington. *(Notice was received December 10 that Bryan has been appointed Assistant Director for Endangered Species; the position in which he had been acting.)* Brent Uilenberg said they’ve briefed their Regional Director on the report and it was sent to Deb Lowler in Reclamation’s Salt Lake City office; Brent believes they have no comments, but >will check to be sure. The Implementation Committee will discuss the report via conference call next Monday (Dec. 10) and the final draft is scheduled to go to the Service and Reclamation in Washington, D.C., on January 4, and then to Congress by March 1. Tom Iseman said the environmental groups want to be sure we’ve looked at the full range of recommendations in the event of a shortfall in the basin fund. Melissa Trammell echoed this concern for the Park Service. Tom Pitts said he believes the question of the adequacy of our current funding *level* is a separate discussion, and is not what we’ve been asked to address in this report. Leslie James agreed. Leslie said CREDA is okay with the report itself as written. (With regard to Aspinnall, Black Canyon, etc., CREDA still feels the Program acts as the reasonable and prudent alternative for everything but power resources, however.) Leslie said she sent the report to the CREDA Board and one comment she received suggested the report might place more emphasis on the status of the fish. Bob said this is addressed in section 4.3.1-4 and also will be part of the to-be-developed research and monitoring appendix. With regard to whether we’re moving toward recovery, Angela said Bridget Fahey asked a similar question, which might be addressed by discussing the Service’s annual assessment of sufficient progress. Tom Pitts and others emphasized the need to state the status of the fish as succinctly as possible. Tom Iseman echoed Bridget Fahey’s comments about explaining the importance of research and monitoring and program management, noting that it might tie in with the research framework (Bob Muth added we will get that report next year). Bob welcomed any ideas of visual ways to show progress toward recovery. With regard to the basin fund, Western’s new rate includes an “adder” they could put on the rate in any year the basin fund is predicted to fall below \$25 million.

Likely this would occur simultaneously with seeking a loan from CWCB, but not necessarily. Tom Iseman asked what happened to the previously-suggested recommendation to seek a loan from the Lower Basin Development Fund. John Shields replied that we realized there is no authority for this and it's politically untenable. Tom Iseman said >the environmental groups will let the Management Committee know if they have any remaining concerns after their conference call tomorrow. John Shields noted that on the Implementation Committee call, >>we need to make it clear that letters of support from the non-Federal partners are expected to be part of the report to Congress when it goes to DOI on January 4, so they need to be signed within the next couple of weeks.

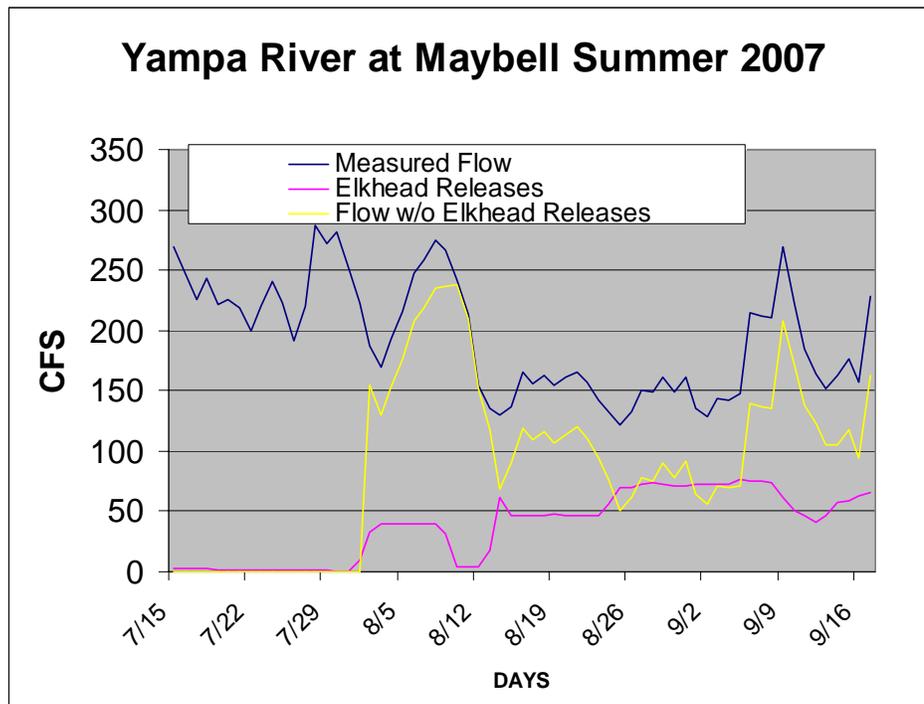
3. Potential amendments to the Recovery program legislation – Tom Pitts said the legislation Senator Domenici plans to introduce will not be attached to a 2008 appropriations bill, but likely will be introduced by January. It will provide \$12M in capital funds for the San Juan program, \$15M for our Program, and extend authorization for both programs through 2023. Tom Pitts agreed with John Shields that we might prepare an insert on this for the D.C. briefing book. Tom Iseman asked if this “rockslide” legislation is really related to recovery and what precedent it might set. Tom Pitts said it provides rehabilitation for protection of critical habitat (Dave Campbell has concurred with this assessment). The \$15M is based on a realistic assumption of what might be needed to repair/replace electrical and mechanical systems on upper basin screens and passages and to fully screen Tusher Wash.
4. Implementation Committee conference call (December 10, 1:00 p.m.) and meeting (February 27, Salt Lake City) – On the December 10, the Implementation Committee will discuss the draft report to Congress before it is officially submitted to the Washington offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation along with letters of support from the Recovery Program's non-Federal partners. The February 27 meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Room 2000 (second floor of the east building) of the Utah Department of Natural Resources office at 1594 West North Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah. This venue may allow Larry Walkoviak, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's new Regional Director, to attend a portion of the meeting and also increases the possibility of attendance by Mike Styler, Director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources and/or Darin Bird, also of Utah DNR, as the Utah Legislature will be in session during this time. *(Notice was received December 10 that Steve Guertin has been appointed as Regional Director for Region 6, the Mountain-Prairie Region.)*
5. Updates
 - a. Aspinall – Clayton Palmer said there will be a December 17 cooperating agencies meeting and Reclamation has been told to complete NEPA compliance (and the biological opinion) by the end of 2008. Settlement of the Black Canyon water right is intended to be consistent with NEPA on Aspinall operations. Tom Pitts asked if they've considered the fact that NEPA can not be completed in one year. The Committee will ask Mike Stemple and Steve McCall or Ed Warner to provide a briefing on Aspinall either via conference call or at the next Management Committee meeting.

>Brent Uilenberg will ask Ed Warner to add Management Committee members to the EIS e-mail notifications list.

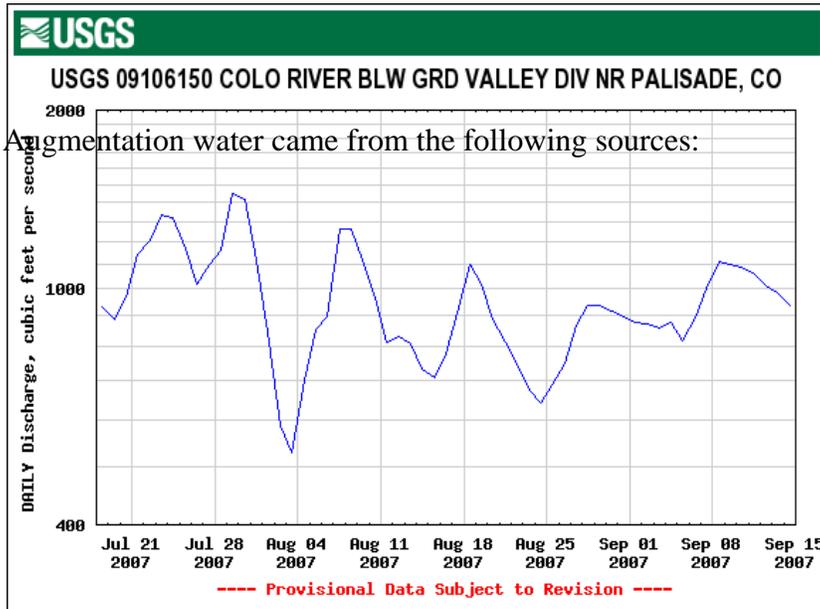
- b. Cameo power plant closure and potential impacts to 15-Mile Reach flow augmentation – Brent Uilenberg said Xcel Energy has announced they will close the Cameo generating station in Debeque Canyon by December 2010. Staff operating that station also operate the hydropower unit associated with the Grand Valley Project, but this doesn't appear to be too great a concern, since Grand Valley Water Users or OMID could bid to operate the plant (or if they elect not to, Reclamation can issue an RFP). >Brent will send the Management Committee a memo outlining the options.
- c. Coordinated Facilities Operations Study (CFOPS) – Tom Pitts said this is a requirement of the Colorado River Programmatic Biological Opinion. The objective is to provide up to an additional 20,000 acre-feet/year to enhance peak flows in the 15-mile reach, without substantial cost to water users. Tom Pitts reported that the Phase 2 CFOPS report completed in 2003 recommended use of existing Service environmental pools to replace water released by water users to enhance peak flows (only if needed to replace lost yield). These pools normally provide water for enhancement of flows in the late summer and early fall in the 15-mile reach. The water users have engaged in Phase 2 to identify the physical operating principles and legal issues that would have to be resolved before implementation of CFOPS. George Smith and Jana Mohrman were invited to participate on behalf of the Service, and are doing so. Phase 3 will include resolution of any legal issues associated with implementation of CFOPS. Phase 2 is due for completion in early 2008. Phase 3 is due for completion in the spring of 2008. If Phase 3 can be completed in that time frame, it is possible that releases under CFOPS could be made in the spring of 2008, but this is not certain at this time.
- d. Ruedi Water (10,825 af) Replacement Study – Tom Pitts reported that the 10,825 water replacement study is a requirement of the Colorado River Programmatic Biological Opinion. It is based on an agreement by east slope and west slope water users to reduce water deliveries for the endangered fish from Ruedi Reservoir by 10,825 acre-feet/year by providing alternate sources of water. The current burden on Ruedi as a result of previous consultations is approximately 20,000 acre-feet/year. Water users have completed a Phase 1 screening study to identify and narrow down alternatives for providing 10,825 acre-feet/year from other sources. Based on that report, a detailed technical/cost review was conducted of remaining alternatives to identify those that are technically and economically feasible. This report has been completed. Screening and evaluation criteria for the remaining projects have been developed. A refined list of recommended projects or a combination of projects that will meet the 10825 water requirement at the same frequency that releases from Ruedi is being developed. This report is expected to be completed in February 2008. At that time, water users will engage in a negotiation process to select the appropriate alternative. Tom expects that the requirement of the Colorado River PBO that agreements among water users and the Service be signed by December 2009 for replacement of Ruedi water will be met, with implementation on a defined schedule. Tom Iseman asked >Tom Pitts to arrange for a

presentation on the options when the Phase II report is complete. Pitts said he will do so. Brent said Reclamation has been investigating the possibility of water management similar to the Grand Valley Project for the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District and believe up to 16,000 af per year (conservatively) could be saved for ~\$10M or less (~\$20/af). The River District has suggested combining this with Ruedi as a back-up in years when the OMID savings wouldn't be available.

- e. Summer/fall flow augmentation – Bob Muth reviewed this year's late summer/fall flow conditions. We used 4,300 af of our 5,000 af pool from Elkhead to augment Yampa River flows (final accounting pending):



The 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River was kept above 850 cfs most of the time (often above 1,000 cfs):



Augmentation water came from the following sources (preliminary numbers):

Ruedi Reservoir:	14,273af
Williams Fork Reservoir:	2,523af
Wolford Reservoir:	4,339af
Green Mountain Reservoir:	~23,000af
Total:	~45,000af
Shoshone make-up water:	8,500af
Grand Total:	~53,000af

(Flow target 850 to 1,240 cfs)

We're improving our ability to declare the Green Mountain surplus and it was declared a little earlier this year.

- f. Proposed whitewater park at Palisade – Bob Muth said COE is compiling and analyzing the public comments received on the 404 application, and then will meet again with the Service and Palisade and Gary Lacey. Tom Blickensderfer said Colorado isn't satisfied with the level of detail that's been provided so far (the Service isn't either).
- g. Capital projects
 - i. Contracts – Brent said they've had difficulty getting the Grand Valley Project fish screen operational due to the need for a reimbursable agreement with GVVUA (Reclamation's solicitor will only work on one contract at a time); however, that agreement may finally be signed next week. Hopefully the screen will be

operational as soon as irrigation begins this spring. Between the San Juan and Upper Basin programs, we have an urgent need to complete 3 more contracts: Elkhead Reservoir contract modification, PNM fish passage operation, and a construction contract for the Hogback fish screen. >Bob Muth will arrange a meeting to discuss Elkhead contract modification with Dan Birch and Reclamation during the Colorado Water Congress meeting in January.

- ii. Myton Diversion rehab – Brent said the agreement with NFWF has been modified to allow the Section 7 funds for this work to be transferred to Reclamation.
- iii. Status of Price-Stubb passage construction – Brent said this is going very well and showed photos. With the deflector boom (one of the safety precautions), the total cost is now \$9.985M.
- iv. Follow-up on earlier discussions about Tusher Wash screening – Brent said they've had two conference calls with the Service. The Service is considering how to cover incidental take if we don't screen the hydro portion, as well as the possibility of turbine replacement. Robert King said the Green River Partnership is looking at rebuilding the diversion dam (redesign will significantly affect screen design), and he has alerted them to concerns about fish passage. Brent said they'd like to have a screen construction contract by late summer 2009.
- h. Jeopardy versus No Jeopardy biological opinions – Carol Taylor said the Service's Washington office and some of our consulting agencies remain concerned about our use of jeopardy opinions. As soon as staff time is available, the Service hopes to convert as many new opinions as possible to no jeopardy and put the RPA's up front as conservation measures. Tom Pitts said the water users don't have any concerns with this as long as it is consistent with the Section 7 agreement. Tom Iseman agreed, saying they want to be sure recourse remains in the event that the Program is unable to serve as an RPA. John Shields agreed with these caveats. The Service will need to outline how no jeopardy approach will work with all the various types of biological opinions (>4,500 af vs. <4,500 af, new vs. historic, <100 af vs. >100 af, etc.).
- i. Recovery Goals – Bob Muth said the draft revisions should be out for stakeholder review by mid-January. Tom Iseman asked if the goals will address climate change and Bob said they will.
- j. Environmental groups funding – Tom Iseman said NFWF has agreed to fund the environmental groups' participation in the Recovery Program for two more years at \$20,000/yr. They have to raise one dollar for every dollar they spend from NFWF, but are on their way toward that with TNC cash and time and Western Resource Advocates' fundraising. NFWF has said they will not fund the environmental groups' participation (as currently structured) beyond the next two years. NFWF does have a new director of their Conservation Initiative. D.C. trip participants will consider visiting NFWF in March.

k. Nonnative fish management

- i. December 18-19 nonnative fish workshop (Grand Junction) – The workshop agenda was posted to the fws-coloriver listserver on December 4. The purpose of this year’s workshop is to (1) examine the results from 2007; (2) compare those results with previous years’ data; (3) recommend changes to 2008 nonnative fish management efforts; and (4) recommend a process to evaluate the Program’s ability to reduce the threat of nonnative species on a river-wide or population scale. Recommendations will then go to the Biology Committee for consideration. Bob commented on the importance of a second level of data integration (to be discussed on the second half of the second day of the workshop).
- ii. Yampa strategy – Bob Muth said Rich Valdez recently revised the draft strategy based on comments submitted by the Biology Committee (posted to the fws-coloriver listserver on October 25, 2007). The Biology Committee discussed this draft and formed an ad hoc committee to work with Rich to review and revise the strategy and to better develop Table 1, which presents a timeframe for nonnative fish control tactics and adjustments on the Yampa River. The ad hoc committee held a conference call on November 15 and agreed to submit written comments to Rich and the other committee members by December 3, 2007. They will meet in Grand Junction December 17 prior to the Nonnative Fish Workshop to review the comments and begin revising the document. A discussion of the Strategy also is scheduled during the Nonnative Fish Session at the Annual Researcher's Meeting in Moab, Utah.
- iii. Rifle Gap Reservoir – Tom Blickensderfer said some members of the public misinterpreted a document to say that CDOW was going to rotenone Rifle Gap. CDOW has no such intention.
- l. Reports status – Angela Kantola distributed an updated reports list. At their last meeting, the Biology Committee approved the following reports: Lodore/Whirlpool fish community response; effects of nonnative predator removal on Yampa native fishes; centrarchid isotope analysis; and Colorado River channel monitoring.
- m. FY 08-09 Work Plan status, updates – Bob Muth discussed new starts for FY 08. He would like to defer the proposed Green River backwater development, sediment availability and peak flows in Reach 2 work and instead put some Program funds toward Argonne’s completion of backwater topography work in FY 08 (Bob has asked Argonne to develop a scope of work). This would then feed into the backwater development work which could be combined with the backwater biology work and begin in FY 09. Deferring the project also would allow USGS to finish their sediment monitoring work at the Jensen Gage. The Committee concurred with Bob’s recommendation. The other new start for FY 08 is the floodplain habitat versus flow

synthesis, for which Reclamation will be posting an RFP shortly. Cost-share funding expected from the San Juan Program on the cyprinid key has not materialized, which presents a problem for completing this key in a timely fashion. Bob remains hopeful that the San Juan or other programs will provide funding for this in '09 (or earlier). Contingency funds are being held for repairs at the Grand Valley hatchery building, continued work on pikeminnow entrainment in Yampa River diversions, and coordinated reservoir operations.

- n. Researchers meeting –This year's researchers meeting will be held January 15-16, 2008 in Moab, Utah. The Biology Committee requested a more focused agenda this year, so the plan is to have four sessions: 1) instream flow/evaluating flow recommendations; 2) propagation; 3) stocked fish evaluation and contributed papers (on any topic); and 4) nonnative fish management.
- o. Proposed fall 2008 Colorado River science symposium – Bob Muth distributed a draft prospectus for a symposium that John Hamill, Chief of the USGS, Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center, has proposed to promote exchange of information on research and management activities related to the restoration/conservation of the Colorado River in the U.S. as a whole. A conference call was held on Monday to discuss the meeting, it was agreed the conference is a good idea, and a program committee is being established. The tentative date is December 2-4 2008, possibly in Las Vegas. Up to 500 people are expected to attend and formal conference proceedings will be published.

6. Lower basin activities

- a. Lower Basin Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) –Tom Burke gave a presentation to the Committee on the MSCP's fishery program and status of razorback sucker and bonytail downstream of Grand Canyon. The MSCP is a 50-year program implemented by Reclamation under a ROD signed in April 2005. It covers 27 species (4 fish) and is funded at \$620M (indexed to 2003) with a 50/50 Federal/State cost share. On their website at www.lcrmscp.gov, fish work is described in the Fish Augmentation Plan, Annual Implementation Report, and Five Year Research and Monitoring Priority Report. Conservation strategies include fish augmentation, species research, system monitoring, habitat development, data management, adaptive management, and coordination with recovery programs. Tom recommended establishing a basinwide recovery/conservation oversight team for the endangered fishes. Tom Pitts said he thinks we should support this recommendation. John Shields agreed and asked if >the Program Director's office might provide a more specific recommendation.
- b. Current news regarding the interpretation of the recovery goal numbers for the Grand Canyon population of HBC – Clayton Palmer said a biological opinion on operations of Glen Canyon dam will include the Service's interpretation of the recovery goals for humpback chub in Grand Canyon. There seem to be several interpretations of (and considerable confusion regarding) the meaning of the minimum viable population

(MVP) of 2,100 adult fish for the Grand Canyon population. Clayton believes this has implications for how we will define recovery in the Upper Basin. Shane Capron said the questions turn on the date of the first point estimate acceptable to the Service (early 90's or a future estimate). Clayton said that in 2004, the Service said we didn't yet have an acceptable estimate. Bob Muth said the revised recovery goals will be out soon and comments will be invited. Currently there appear to be about 6,000 fish, which compares well with the estimates from the early 90's. Bob said recent sampling appears to have verified the GCMRC model, but we need to see the final report on the concurrent sampling; Clayton Palmer asked >the Service to put that in writing.

7. Approve August 14-15 meeting and October 18 and November 5 conference call summaries and review assignments – All three summaries were approved as written.
8. Upcoming Management Committee tasks, schedule next meeting, discuss March briefing trip to Washington, D.C. – The next meeting will be February 6 in Denver near DIA from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. John noted the need for letters of support for the report to Congress in the next two weeks, then support letters for appropriations prior to the trip to Washington.

ADJOURN 3:00 p.m.

Assignments

Carry-over from previous meetings:

1. The **Service** will meet to consider if it would be acceptable to screen the irrigation water and not the low-head hydropower water at Tusher Wash or if there are other ways (e.g., a weir wall) to achieve our objectives for screening Tusher Wash. *Discussions underway.*

New assignments:

1. **Brent Uilenberg** will check to see if Reclamation's Salt Lake City office has any comments on the draft report to Congress.
2. The **environmental groups** will let the Management Committee know if they have any remaining concerns with the report to Congress after their conference call tomorrow (Dec. 7).
3. Letters of support from the **non-Federal partners** are expected to be part of the report to Congress when it goes to DOI on January 4, so they need to be signed within the next couple of weeks.
4. **Brent Uilenberg** will ask Ed Warner to add Management Committee members to the EIS e-mail notifications list.
5. **Brent Uilenberg** will send the Management Committee a memo outlining the options for operation of the hydropower unit associated with the Grand Valley Project after closure of Xcel Energy's Cameo generating station.
6. **Tom Pitts** will arrange a presentation to the Management Committee on the 10,825 af Ruedi water replacement options when the Phase II report is complete.
7. **Bob Muth** will arrange a meeting to discuss Elkhead contract modification with Dan Birch and Reclamation during the Colorado Water Congress meeting in January.
8. The **Program Director's office** will provide a more specific recommendation regarding establishing a basinwide recovery/conservation oversight team for the endangered fishes.
9. The **Service** will provide written notification that they believe recent humpback chub sampling in the Grand Canyon has verified the GCMRC model (after they've reviewed the final report on concurrent sampling).

Attendees
Colorado River Management Committee, Salt Lake City, Utah
December 6, 2007

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Blickensderfer	State of Colorado
Robert King	State of Utah
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
John Shields	State of Wyoming
Carol Taylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (via phone)
Leslie James for Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Melissa Trammell for John Reber	National Park Service (John Reber also participated via phone)
Tom Iseman	The Nature Conservancy
Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration

Nonvoting Member:

Bob Muth	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Recovery Program Staff:

Angela Kantola	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Others:

Krissy Wilson	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Terry Hickman	Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Dave Irving	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sam Finney	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Larry Crist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Shane Capron	Western Area Power Administration (via phone for the Grand Canyon humpback chub item)