



# Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Dated: August 18, 2015

## July 21, 2015, Final Management Committee Webinar Summary

**Participants:** See Attachment 1

**CONVENE: 9:00 a.m.**

Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper.

1. Approve May 27, 2015, revised draft meeting summary – Angela Kantola posted the draft summary to the fws-coloriver listserv on June 4, 2014. Angela reviewed the changes in the summary with minor revisions that she sent out this morning. The summary was approved as revised; >Angela will post the revised summary to the listserv (*done*).
2. Review/discussion of draft elements of the sufficient progress memo and draft 15-Mile Reach and Gunnison River PBOs' status reviews – The Program Director's office sent these draft documents to the Committee for review on July 6 (and copied the technical Committees and the Service). Angela reviewed the schedule and process for the sufficient progress assessment is as follows this year:
  1. ~March 31: RIPRAP assessment is completed and approved by the Program. *Done March 24.*
  2. ~April 15: Program Director's office distributes a draft of the following elements of the sufficient progress memo to the Service and Management Committee. *Sent July 6*
    - a. population status update;
    - b. list of accomplishments and shortcomings;
    - c. discussion and recommended action items; and
    - d. draft communications plan to accompany final sufficient progress memo (per Implementation Committee request in September 2012). *PD's office can easily draft this, but questions the continued need.*

Also included are reviews of action items in the 15-Mile Reach and Gunnison (Aspinall) PBOs.

3. ~April 30: Management Committee webinar to review and comment on the draft elements of the sufficient progress memo. *Today's discussion.*
4. ~May 7: Service webinar to review and comment on the draft elements for sufficient progress memo. The Service considers the Management Committee comments during the review. *August 6.*
5. ~May 30: Program Director's office prepares final draft sufficient progress memo/determination for Service review. *Late August-early September.*
6. ~June 15: Service sends Management Committee the final draft sufficient progress memo primarily for informational purposes. The Management Committee will notify the Service if members have any significant issues/concerns. *By end of September.*
7. ~June 30: Service finalizes sufficient progress memo. *By end of October*

The Committee reviewed the draft by section and provided comments for use by the Service in their August 6 review and subsequent drafting of the 2015 Sufficient Progress Memo.

- Population Status

Colorado pikeminnow - Tom Pitts asked if the numbers of fish being detected by passive interrogation arrays (PIAs) that have never been captured before may indicate more fish in the system than reflected in our population estimates. Tom Chart said some of PIA antenna data can be incorporated in population estimates (when they are gathered at the same time of the traditional population estimates)

and the PIA data also help improve survival estimates. Part of the Program's current database work will look at the question of how the PIA data may influence our abundance estimates. Kevin McAbee recalled this was discussed at some length at this year's researcher's meeting with Dr. Bestgen and Dr. Budy and others. The ability to use this data centers around model assumptions and demographic parameters being estimated. Dale Ryden noted both recovery programs are discussing how the data can be used in population estimates and researchers like Dr. Bestgen have agreed the data are most useful for survival estimates at this point. We have to be cautious with these data so as not to overestimate or underestimate populations. Henry suggested the situation may indicate that we may have made some erroneous assumptions about probability of capture. Tom Chart said PIA data always seems somewhat "sensational," e.g., we find many razorback suckers we haven't detected since their hatchery release (and models for population estimates do account for individuals not captured); however, many such first-captures also are found in sampling for traditional population estimates. Information about survival rates from the PIAs will play an important role in analysis of population viability. Dale added that we're also learning a great deal about fish movement from the antenna data. Tom Pitts asked if a methodology could be developed using only PIA data to compare with mark-recapture data population estimates. Dale said the difficulty is that PIA data don't allow you to develop a ratio between tagged and untagged fish. Melissa agreed, saying we need both sets of data and cautioned that PIA data likely won't alter trend information. Tom Chart suggested continuing this conversation in the Biology Committee's review of population estimate scopes of work next week.

Henry Maddux asked about the lack of error bars on the Green River Colorado pikeminnow adult estimate; >Tom Czaplá will ask if Dr. Bestgen could provide those at this point. Tom Chart noted those variances will likely be pretty large. Henry Maddux asked if Figure 5 is helpful enough to be included; Tom Chart said we added quite a bit of information to this status assessment at the request of Program participants a few years ago. The Program Director's office will take another look at further incorporating the Figure 5 information into the discussion. Henry asked about the status of the San Juan mercury study referenced in the paragraph below Figure 7; Tom Chart said we will reference the completed PVA and the mercury study. Tom Pitts said the discussion alludes to a potential mercury problem, says remediation is beyond the scope of the Program, but doesn't really come to any conclusion regarding how it relates to sufficient progress. Tom Chart said the point of the paragraph is to recognize the concerns and ongoing studies. Tom Chart said we can't quantify the effects of mercury on Colorado pikeminnow at this point, but the potential threat is discussed in the draft Colorado pikeminnow recovery plan. It's not related to any shortcomings in the Recovery Program, per se, but it is a potential concern as it relates to the status of the species. Tom Pitts will provide written comments on this section. Brent said he shares Tom Pitts' concerns that this paragraph is pretty nebulous. Tom Pitts asked if we need to be directing some research at determining the impact of mercury on Colorado pikeminnow. The Program Director's office will reference the contaminant study that was developed and funded via the 4-Corners Power Plan BO that should address some of these uncertainties.

- Accomplishments, Concerns, and Recommended Action Items

Henry asked about the recommended action items on the nonnative item under general; Tom Chart said more specifics are in the Appendix Table. Henry agreed but suggested greater cross referencing between the two would be helpful. The Program Director's office will see where this can be done. . Angela suggested we could note the reference in the table heading and highlight the nonnative fish items.

Brent observed that when the recommended instream flow protection actions listed under Colorado River are completed, the Program will have achieved an unprecedented level of water resource protection; providing any additional base flows in the drier years may be unattainable, however. Jana

Mohrman suggested the 2015 Colorado River PBO review address in more detail flow protection to date and whether it's realistic to be able to do anything further. Henry and Brent agreed; suggesting that the review discuss the lack of capacity to meet the 810 cfs baseflow recommendation in the driest years.

Michelle Garrison said Harry recommends clarifying the discussion of nonnative impacts to humpback chub (under Desolation and Westwater) to acknowledge declines that occurred before nonnative fish expansion. Henry agreed, saying he's concerned that there may be something more than the nonnative fish threat in humpback chub declines. The Program Director's office will take another look at what we drafted in this year's table. Tom Chart agreed that lack of recruitment seems to be the primary problem in Black Rocks and Westwater. Researchers have proposed efforts to investigate this in draft 2016-2017 scopes of work.

- 15-MR PBO assessment

Tom Chart noted that this spreadsheet also will form the crux of the 15-MR PBO status review due out this year, which the Program Director's office will begin drafting soon.

- Gunnison PBO assessment

Tom Chart noted that an interim summary of the Gunnison River fish community monitoring is due later this year.

Tom Chart said last year's sufficient progress memo focused on: 1) more coordinated management of nonnative fish management in Colorado and concern about releasing northern pike in the Stagecoach tag and release study; 2) White River management plan; and 3) entrainment of fish in the Green River irrigation canal. With regard to nonnative fish, a draft summary of recommendations to CPW's Director resulting from Colorado's recent meetings is pending. Kevin McAbee said Billy Atkinson is not tagging any new fish in Stagecoach and is removing captured untagged northern pike. However, to test escapement, Billy is still releasing already-tagged fish (perhaps for a couple of more years?). Tom Pitts asked about the capability of capture; Kevin McAbee replied that only one escaped fish has been captured over the course of the study. Kevin recognized CPW and the Program Director's office have different views, with the PD's office recommending removal of all northern pike captured. >Kevin will ask Sherman Hebein to address this at the Biology Committee meeting next week. Tom Chart thanked CWCB for their financial contributions and extra effort to assist the Program this past year, but expects the White River management plan and flow recommendations will remain a concern in this year's letter. The Program Director's office will work with CWCB to identify what has been done to secure a contractor to assist with the management plan and describe a path forward. Michelle said when CWCB finishes year-end work in a couple of weeks, they can move ahead again on contracting for the White River Management Plan. With regard to entrainment at the Green River canal, we can mention that the BC decided to pursue a vertical weir (similar to Hogback Diversion project on the San Juan River), and that design is underway. Final design decisions will be contingent on continued positive results from the Hogback weir. Tom Chart said he doesn't see any other issues he anticipates the Regional Director will want to call out in this year's sufficient progress memo.

Any additional comments from the Management Committee on the draft elements of the sufficient progress memo should be submitted by c.o.b. on Wednesday, July 29.

3. Recovery planning update – Tom Czaplá said the we received six sets of initial comments on the draft Colorado pikeminnow recovery plan and then seven more since the webinar, with comments from the water users and perhaps The Nature Conservancy pending. The Writing Team will work together to collate

the comments and develop an approach to respond, provide that to the Service, and then provide stakeholders a summary of the comments, how they've been categorized, and the suggested approach for addressing them. Meanwhile, we continue to work on the PVA contract, for which a draft scope of work was shared with the Committee at the end of June. The Biology Committee will discuss that scope next week. If anyone has initial concerns about content of the scope, we'd like to know. Tom Pitts said the methodology seemed lean. Tom Chart said they outlined a process similar to what the San Juan PVA, though that was more of a threats assessment, whereas our objectives are to understand near and long-term viability. Tom Chart cautioned committee members that the results of the PVA will not be black-and-white. Phil Miller is best qualified to do the work, but won't be available to begin until February 2016. Phil thinks a draft could be completed within 6 months. (If we contracted with someone else, it's unlikely a draft could be completed any sooner.) Tom Pitts is very concerned about not having a draft until August 2016, likely meaning the PVA couldn't be factored into a revised recovery plan until the end of 2016. This would make it difficult to discuss annual funding legislation with Congress in April 2016. Henry asked if any preliminary work could be done to speed the process once Phil can begin. Tom Chart agreed and said the Program Director's office would set up the team and schedule the meetings so that Dr. Miller could hit the ground running. Tom Pitts said he'd like to discuss options with Henry and Tom Chart (e.g., perhaps we could contract with someone else who could work with Phil Miller, but get the process started sooner than next February). The Committee concurred.

The Service received positive responses to the invitation letters for the humpback chub recovery team from almost all invitees. Tom Czaplá believes the first team meeting could be this fall (with a first draft plan out in advance of that). Tom Pitts asked if that meeting might be a webinar; Tom Czaplá said it might have to be, though it would be best if the group can meet for the first time in person. A combination webinar and in-person meeting might be needed. Henry suggested an immediate Doodle poll to schedule the meeting given the difficulty of scheduling a large group; >the PD's office will do that. Tom Pitts and Henry asked if having a first draft plan prior to the first meeting is really necessary given the meeting's expected agenda/outcome. Tom Chart agreed that may not be critical; Henry and Tom Pitts thought providing a first draft in advance of the meeting could actually be a detraction. It will be very important, however, to have Ecological Service's folks in attendance to discuss: 1) the difference between threatened and endangered status, 2) the new recovery planning process and 3) the FWS' expectations of the team and for the content of those recovery planning docs.

Tom Pitts emphasized that information from the razorback sucker species status assessment would be very helpful in discussions with Congress next April. Tom Chart said the scope of work still needs to be drafted and once contracted; the assessment likely will take a year to complete.

4. Reservoir update – Red Fleet rotenone treatment and re-stocking is scheduled for the week of October 5. UDWR is purchasing more rotenone than anticipated in March due to higher water volume from the high precipitation in May. The Red Fleet LMP has been reviewed and approved by the Program Director's office.

The Elkhead net project is back on track after some potential contracting issues. The River District has a contract with an engineering firm and plans to draw down the reservoir in late summer. Net installation is still planned prior to 2016 runoff. They expect a final design and estimate for the net soon. The River District has expedited work with the Dam Safety Office for approval within ~6 weeks of addressing their concerns. A draft lake management plan is expected from CPW by the end of this month.

Ridgway Reservoir has not spilled this year thanks to diligent efforts by Tri-County WCD. CPW just completed a smallmouth bass fishing tournament there Sunday which apparently went very well with many fish harvested across size classes. As part of the outreach, Kevin McAbee sent out a well-written article the

Ouray County Plain Dealer newspaper wrote about the Recovery Program, nonnative fish management, and the Ridgway tournament. Michelle Garrison said Trout Unlimited and Tri-County both contributed to the prizes for the Ridgway tournament and Trout Unlimited also provided some volunteer assistance.

Tom Pitts said the water users set up a workshop for the Colorado Water Congress summer workshop that will include presentations on nonnative fish management from Chart, Hebein, Birch, and Brett Gracely (Colorado Springs Utilities). CPW has committed to going to the Commission in September 10-11 in Craig and discuss liberalized bag and possession limits for some nonnatives and a proposed modification to the waste of game regulations. Letters of support for this modification from Program participants will be helpful. Tom Pitts will appear before the Commission to support the modification. The Program Director's office offered to assist with the letter writing Tom Pitts suggested.

5. Update on proposed lease of Ruedi water from Ute Water Conservancy District to CWCB – Michelle said concerns were raised about indemnification which they are completing a risk assessment to address; CWCB hopes to complete the contract this week. The contract is for this year, but is renewable. Linda Bassi is investigating whether they would have authorization to use this water in the spring, in the event of another “April Hole.” The water definitely could be used in July (prior to availability of HUP water, for example). Brent said this is a huge step; the Committee suggested looking into how we might recognize CWCB and Ute Water.
6. Other hydrology updates
  - Coordinated Reservoirs Operations (CROS) to enhanced spring peak flows to improve habitat conditions in the 15-mile reach occurred June 1, 2015 (first time since 2010). Median peak flow at Palisade is 18,000 cfs; we were able to reach 18,900 cfs this year.
  - The Program did not receive DOI funds for USGS quasi-3D model and field experiment to define razorback sucker larval drift as it relates to razorback entrainment in Green River floodplains. USGS and the Program Director's office are looking for alternate funding.
  - GRUWAT white paper review due at end of June; James Greer's office is reviewing a draft now.
  - Opportunity for LIDAR in the Green River floodplain. Utah is coordinating a contract with NPS for 1' contour intervals from the town of Green River to Flaming Gorge, we're working to determine if that will incorporate Green River floodplain sites and provide additional funding if not. Angela mentioned that USFWS – Refuges may have some funding for this work in the Weed Management SOW.
  - HUP calls may begin next Wednesday at 10 a.m. (they will begin when flows hit ~4,000 cfs at Cameo).
7. Any other miscellaneous updates (All, 10 min)
  - Brent said Reclamation has a site visit at OMID with contractors today.
  - Brent still needs to provide SOWs on Price-Stubbs and Orchard Mesa O&M (anticipates ~\$100K). *Done.*
  - The Program Director's office will get Program Management SOWs out in advance of August meeting.
8. Review previous meeting assignments – See Attachment 1.
9. Schedule next meeting, webinar, or conference call – The next Management Committee meeting will be August 17-18<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10 a.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup> and adjourning by noon on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be held again at the [Radisson Hotel Denver Southeast](#), South Vaughn Way, Aurora, CO, with a catered barbecue at Cherry Creek State Park. Agenda items will include: FY16-17 work plan; Colorado pikeminnow PVA; Green River Landscape Conservation Design project; and others.

**ADJOURN: 11:38 a.m.**

## Attachment 1: Participants

Colorado River Management Committee Webinar, July 21, 2015

### Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
Michelle Garrison	State of Colorado
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
Not represented	State of Wyoming
Seth Willey	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
Patrick McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration
Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Henry Maddux	State of Utah

### Nonvoting Member:

Tom Chart	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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### Recovery Program Staff:

Kevin McAbee	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Angela Kantola	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Czapl	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Others

Dale Ryden	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Speas	Bureau of Reclamation
Jana Mohrman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Attachment 2 Meeting Assignments

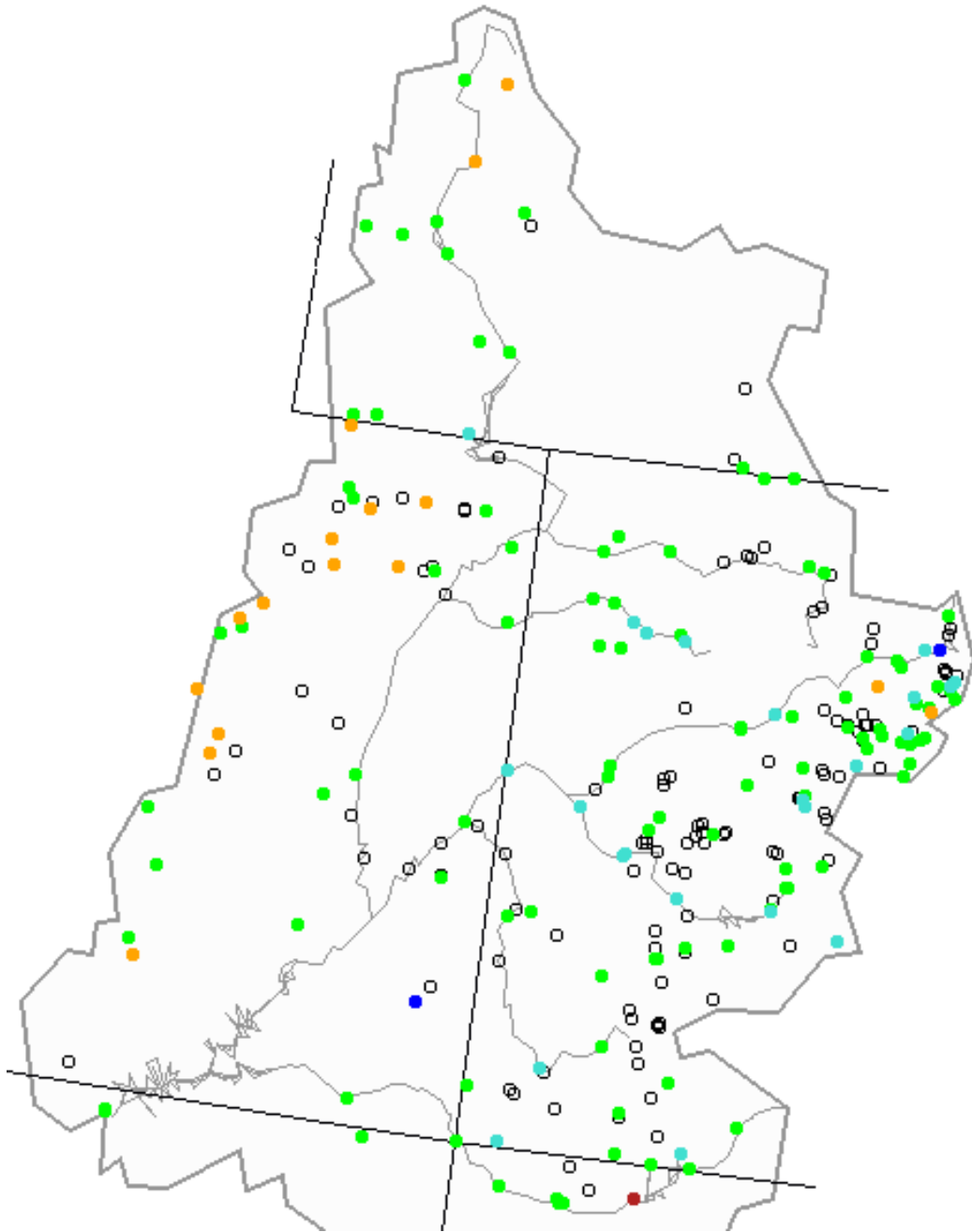
1. **Tom Pitts** will work with **Clayton Palmer and Brent Uilenberg** and provide a list of additional Program contributions to be added to the Program's budget pie chart that appears in each year's briefing book. *In process.* For the 2012 & 2013 *Program Highlights*, we used the \$37.4M annualized estimate. **Western** contracted with Argonne to model and report actual Flaming Gorge power replacement costs going back to 2001. Subsequently, **Western** will provide annual power replacement cost for the previous year each January for inclusion in the *Program Highlights* pie charts. Those pie charts will include a footnote explaining the calculation and assumptions. **Program participants** will identify other significant costs that have not previously reported (e.g., the Granby component of 10,825 which is estimated at \$16M, \$1.25M contributed by Colorado for GVWM and \$1.5M for OMID, CRWCD contributed property for OMID, etc.) (*Done*). **Tom Chart** will ask **Dave Campbell** to work with the SJCC to determine their additional costs not currently reported (e.g., Southern Ute expenditures on population model). Also, **Patrick McCarthy** will provide information on TNC's capital contributions in the San Juan Program. *A Cost Subcommittee met several times via conference call to review the proposal for and results of the power replacement costs analysis. 1/29/14: Water user and Colorado additional costs added and documented in Kantola's Briefing Book Pie Chart Data spreadsheet. Power revenue replacement costs "placeholder" from previous years retained until Argonne report finalized and approved (currently in revision). 3/20: Tom Pitts said that a few adjustments on water user contributions will need to be made, but we seem to have the totals and process for updating pretty much squared away. Tom Pitts will work with the water users to develop an annual report on O&M and contract costs on the 10,825 water. 5/27/15: Clayton Palmer said Argonne's work had been delayed by their involvement in the LTEMP EIS, but they recently had a conference call on completing work on power replacement costs and hope to have draft to share with the subcommittee soon. 7/21/15: Clayton has a conference call with Argonne next week and will provide an update for Angela to send to the Committee. >Angela Kantola will provide Tom Pitts a list of scopes of work needed to document water user contributions to the Program (as outlined in the water user contribution table that is part of the pie chart calculation).*
2. **Tom Pitts** will work with **Henry Maddux, Bridget Fahey, and Brent Uilenberg** to frame a discussion about what will recovery look like as it relates to flows, ongoing operation & maintenance, continued monitoring, and responding to nonnative fish concerns. They will then bring it back to the Management Committee at a later date. *2/3/15: Henry Maddux said this may be part of comments on the Recovery Plan and become part of the recovery plans. 5/27/15: Tom Pitts suggested this will need to outline commitments necessary to maintain the Program's accomplishments. Tom Chart said perhaps this is something that can be outlined before next year's briefing trip. 7/21/15: Tom Chart thinks the discussion might be framed in a one-pager that folks could have if needed during next year's briefing trip.*
3. **Michelle Garrison** and **Jana Mohrman** will add appropriate detail to the White River Management Plan scope of work for the in early November (*done*) and Colorado will issue an RFP (*in process*). **Michelle** will share the updated White River Management Plan SOW with the Management Committee when it goes out for bid and discuss who may want to be on the review panel. *3/24/15: If things go well, a contractor should be on board by June 2015. 5/27/15: Michelle said this remains high on their list of priorities. 7/21/15: when CWCB finishes year-end work in a couple of weeks, they can get move ahead again on contracting for the White River Management Plan.*
4. The **Program Director's office** will share Elkhead net design documents with the Biology and Management committees and ask anyone with concerns to respond within a week of that e-mail. *Pending.*

5. The draft revised compatible/non-compatible species list for reservoir stocking has been sent to the Biology Committee for approval (and then will come to the Management Committee). Yellow bullhead and blue catfish should be added to the list of non-compatible species. The footnote that smallmouth bass may be stocked in waters above Flaming Gorge Reservoir should say “in waters above Flaming Gorge *Dam*.” The **Management Committee** had until April 7 (*deadline extended to April 24*) to submit comments on the draft memo regarding a priority system and cost share structure for reservoir screening to Kevin McAbee and Tom Chart, and then the **Program Director’s office** will finalize the draft memo for Committee approval. *Done; 7/21/1 – Kevin McAbee will send out for Management Committee review. The Management Committee* will review the reservoir screening table (once finalized) as a standing agenda item (perhaps on the Biology Committee’s agendas, as well).
6. The **Program Director’s office** will work with **CPW** to develop a plan to inventory reclaimed gravel pit ponds permitted with notches (Colorado Mine Reclamation Board), identify how many have nonnative fish, and how to address the problem. *7/21/15 Kevin McAbee said he and Lori Martin will discuss this after her filed season.*
7. **Jana Mohrman** and **Tom Pitts** will draft a scope for Program review and approval for a contractor to complete the CFOPs report by the end of this year. *7/21/15 – Tom Pitts will return a revised draft scope of work to Jana by the first week of August.*
8. **Tom Czapla** will ask Kevin Bestgen if he can provide error bars for the most recent Green River Colorado pikeminnow adult estimate for figure 4 in the sufficient progress memo.
9. **Kevin McAbee** will ask Sherman Hebein to discuss the Stagecoach escapement study at next week’s Biology Committee meeting (how many tagged fish have been caught, and when CPW plans to conclude the study).
10. The **Program Director’s office** will quickly send a Doodle poll to schedule the first meeting of the humpback chub recovery team this fall.



# Hydrology Updates

Monday, July 20, 2015 17:30ET



Explanation - Percentile classes							
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High	Not-ranked
	Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal		

Lidar planned for the Green River. Contour intervals created from this type of Lidar below (Quality Level 1) is expected to be >95% accurate at the 1 foot contour interval. Contour lines from USGS topo maps, in many places, are 10-20 ft intervals and the accuracy is typically unknown.

