

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2014-2015 PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK for:
COORDINATED RESERVOIR OPERATIONS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Project No.: PIP 12C

Lead Agencies: Colorado Water Conservation Board and U.S Bureau of Reclamation,
Eastern Colorado Area Office

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Category:

Source:

- Ongoing project
- Ongoing-revised project
- Requested new project
- Unsolicited proposal

Expected Funding

- Annual funds
- Capital funds
- Other (explain)
(See below under budget)

I. Title of Proposal: Coordinated Reservoir Operations and Public Involvement

II. Project Summary:

This project involves voluntary operational coordination of selected reservoirs in the Colorado River Basin upstream from the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers. The goal is to enhance spring peak flows to improve endangered fish species habitat in the 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River without diminishing reservoir yields or affecting the timing of reservoir filling. Participating reservoirs have included Green Mountain and Ruedi (Reclamation), Wolford Mountain (Colorado River Water Conservation District), Dillon and Williams Fork (Denver Water), and Willow Creek and Granby (Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District & Reclamation). Coordinated Reservoir Operations

occur in years when sufficiently high runoff conditions allow participating reservoirs to contribute without affecting their yield. The intent of Coordinated Reservoir Operations is to attempt to coordinate releases of inflow to enhance the natural peak flows on the Colorado for 10 days to two weeks. This typically occurs during the last week of May and the first week of June.

III. Study Schedule: 1995-present

IV. Relationship to RIPRAP: Colorado Mainstem Action Plan 1.A.5.i.(2)

V. Strategies/Dates:

March/April - The Coordinated Reservoir Operations Team meets and characterizes the type of runoff year based upon forecasts from the National Weather Service and other sources. Characterization of the runoff year will determine which set of 15-Mile Reach flow recommendations coordinated reservoir operations should strive to achieve. The team also determines an approximate starting date and duration time for the voluntary bypassing of inflows to enhance the peaks.

Early April - Each reservoir owner/operator prepares annual operating plans for traditional and peak enhancement operations for their respective reservoirs.

May - A joint public meeting is held, if flows require, to present plans for Coordinated Reservoir operations during the spring runoff and Ruedi Reservoir operations to meet flow targets during the late summer. The proposed annual operating plans for each participating reservoir for the current year are presented and public comment received. Public comments are recorded and distributed as soon as possible thereafter.

May-June - The participating entities monitor runoff to determine more accurately the type of year being faced and their abilities to contribute to peak enhancement.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Colorado Division of Water Resources Division 5 Engineer determine when it is most appropriate to begin bypasses of inflow to enhance the peak in the 15-Mile Reach and notify the participants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the participating reservoir owner/operators, jointly agree when to initiate the voluntary bypass of inflows to enhance peaks as necessary and as they are able, and adjust operating plans as appropriate, including adjustments made based on public comment.

During the period of time that Coordinated Reservoir operations occur, the public will be informed through news releases, direct mailings and email as necessary of

any decisions to adjust reservoir operations and bypasses made to enhance flows for endangered fish purposes.

The Colorado Division of Water Resources Division 5 Engineer conducts an accounting of releases and provides a record of all water bypassed to enhance the peak during the specified timeframe. The Recovery Program monitors the effects of peak flows on endangered fish and critical habitat.

January – The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) prepares a draft summary report with operator reports, Division 5 accounting, and the Recovery Program monitoring reports (if any) included as attachments. The team reviews, modifies and submits the report to the Recovery Program Water Acquisition Committee and the Management Committee and makes it available for general distribution. CWCB distributes the report to other interested parties on behalf of the Coordinated Reservoir Operations Team on an “as requested” basis.

VI. Budget (FY 2014-2015):

Budget Summary	<u>Recovery Pgm \$</u>	<u>CO State In-Kind \$</u>
FY 2014	\$5,000*	\$12,000
FY 2015	\$5,000*	\$12,000

*The Recovery Program funds this project only in years that coordination occurs and costs will be billed on the actual amount spent during the coordination process as documented by the Bureau of Reclamation.