

Program director's message By Bob Muth

Because this is my first message as program director, I want to introduce myself with a brief background sketch and to share some of my attitudes. Born and raised in small towns in South Dakota, my beliefs are basic and grounded in the principles of hard work, dedication to purpose and a strong sense of community.

An early appreciation of the outdoors and all that the land has to offer guided me along the path of a career in biology and natural resources. I am genuinely concerned about the human condition and conservation of the natural environment and believe that both can prosper with thoughtful management of our precious resources. This is by no means easy, and I strongly support an integrated approach to problem-solving. A diverse group of individuals who work together to achieve a common goal can accomplish far more than one person or a group with a narrow perspective.

My formal interest in aquatic systems started in the Black Hills while studying stream insects as an undergraduate and quickly broadened to include fish (especially larval fish) during research for my master's degree at the University of South Dakota. In 1980, I moved to Fort Collins to continue my graduate studies at Colorado State University. I enjoyed 17 years there as a doctoral student, researcher and administrator at the Larval Fish Laboratory where my activities focused on the four endangered, big-river fishes of the Colorado River Basin. During that time, my relationship with the Recovery Program was cemented. Never did I imagine that one day I would become the Program's director.

The job is a continual learning experience, but I find my progress a lot easier with the help of an excellent staff and the irresistible momentum of the Recovery Program. Henry Maddux left the Program on solid ground, and I continue to marvel at the dedication and hard work of Program participants, which for many is a part-time endeavor. It is my privilege to share with you some of the Program's most significant highlights of the past year:

- The Colorado River Energy Distributors Association and the National Park Service became voting partners.
- Public Law 106-392 was signed, authorizing funding through 2011.
- Draft recovery goals were completed that provide population targets and focus management actions to minimize or remove threats.
- Recovery Program leaders voted to recommend extending the Program's cooperative agreement through 2013.
- The draft Yampa River Management Plan is complete and the programmatic biological opinion is expected by spring 2002.
- Canal checks were installed in the Government Highline Canal to help enhance flows in the Colorado River through the 15-Mile Reach.
- An operation and maintenance agreement to install a fish screen at the Grand Valley Irrigation Company Diversion Dam was signed. The screen will protect endangered fish from being swept into the canal.
- Colorado and Utah revised their stocking plans to help the Recovery Program reestablish razorback sucker and bonytail.
- Pilot nonnative fish management studies are nearly complete providing the Program with data to plan future actions to benefit the endangered fishes.
- Public awareness of recovery efforts has increased through news media coverage, interpretive exhibits and a variety of educational projects.

As you can tell, it's been a busy year for the Recovery Program. We have a lot more work to do but I believe in the Program's goals and am confident they can be accomplished. I am committed to fulfilling the trust of our partners and the public that we will move ahead on schedule and with accountability to recover the endangered fishes. My door is always open and I welcome constructive input. ←

Editor's note: Bob Muth became the Program Director on Jan. 28, 2001. He served as the Program's instream flow coordinator from March 1999 until that time.

Haines serves up baby razorbacks

At 6:30 a.m. Bruce Haines enters data in the computer on razorback sucker larvae he trapped the day before in a remote area of the Green River. It might seem like a typical day for a fishery biologist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Field Office in Vernal, Utah. What is unique is that Bruce retired in February 2001, after a 31-year career with the Service and five years with New Mexico Game and Fish. Since then, Bruce continues to report to work five days a week, four hours a day, as a volunteer.

"I'm always asked why I do this," Bruce said. "To me the answer is simple. I love this work. I enjoy putting my hands on fish and catching and observing them in their habitats where few people ever get to go. I've been fortunate to work with some of the best experts in the world to exchange knowledge about the fish and their habitat."

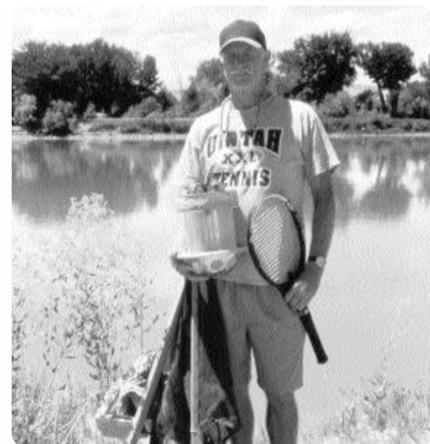
Bruce wasn't ready to give this up when he retired and he wanted to complete three important projects he'd started for the Recovery Program. One key project is to identify razorback sucker larvae. It takes a keen eye and a knowledge of river habitat to locate tiny larvae about the size of a straight pin. Bruce uses a light trap to attract the tiny fish into a container where he can identify and study them.

"I learned a lot about larval fish from Bob Muth when he worked for the Larval Fish Lab at Colorado State University," Bruce said. "We worked together to develop and test the traps that enable us to identify the species right in the field."

Larval fish study findings are important to recovery of a species because they give researchers information about when and where razorback suckers spawn and the type of habitat they need.

Bruce also is involved with an instream flow study on the Duchesne River, a tributary to the Green River, and with humpback chub population estimate work taking place in Yampa Canyon.

"Bruce's contributions as a volunteer are immeasurable," said Tim Modde, project leader for the Service's Colorado River Fishery Project and Bruce's long-time friend and coworker. "He has unique skills that we won't be able to replace for



BRUCE HAINES USES A LIGHTTRAP WHEN CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON RAZORBACK SUCKER LARVAE. SINCE RETIRING, THOUGH, HE'S FREQUENTLY SEEN AROUND TOWN IN TENNIS ATTIRE, PRACTICING FOR TOURNAMENTS AND COACHING THE HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS TEAM.

some time including an understanding of population estimators and statistical analysis that none of the rest of us have. He also has a lot of institutional memory about who caught what fish and when and in which particular area of the river. These are not skills that can easily be taught to someone else. They are developed through years and years of hard work on this river system."

Bruce's career took him from Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico to Lander, Wyoming, to Valentine, Nebraska and to Kalispell, Montana. During those years, he provided technical assistance on fish-related issues to numerous Native American tribes.

His strong interest in research led him to Vernal, Utah, where he was one of the first fishery biologists to work with the Recovery Program. "Most of my work centered around studying Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker nursery habitat and reproduction in the Green, White, Yampa and Duchesne rivers," Bruce said.

"As a student of the early life history of fish, one of my favorite sayings is 'it all begins here,' meaning that knowledge of fish population dynamics begins with an understanding of reproduction and larval fish biology," Recovery Program Director Bob Muth said. "Bruce was one of the initial champions of that

Highway department and private landowners help recover endangered fish

Motorists traveling Interstate 70 just east of Grand Junction, Colorado, may not realize that they're driving past a special pond where thousands of endangered fish now have a better chance at life thanks to the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The same organization that built the interstate highway that winds through 14 miles of Debeque Canyon is donating the use of one of its ponds to support the Recovery Program's efforts to recover the razorback sucker.

The 9.6-acre pond was originally developed in 1981 as waterfowl habitat when the excavated soil and gravel was used to construct I-70 near the town of Debeque. The pond's size, depth and location make it ideal for the

Recovery Program's work in recovering endangered fish. Last May biologists stocked the pond with about 6,000 young razorback suckers raised at the Recovery Program's hatchery near Grand Junction. The pond is needed for fish to grow larger and acclimate to a more natural environment before they are reintroduced into the Colorado River in the fall of 2002.

"Many people don't realize that CDOT does more than build and maintain state highways. We feel a strong responsibility to help maintain a healthy ecosystem," said CDOT Program Engineer Richard Perske. CDOT joins other city and federal agencies in the Grand Junction area, as well as private landowners, in providing ponds to help recover the razor-

back sucker. Using existing ponds saves the Recovery Program from constructing new ponds which would be much more costly.

Grand Valley residents since 1936, Hal and Peggy Morse were among the first private landowners to work with the Recovery Program to lease their private, three-acre pond. They can see the pond from their house.

"The pond was just sitting there so it seemed like a good idea to put it to use," Hal said. "It's a source of income for us that we wouldn't have otherwise and if it can help the endangered fish, then I think it's a good program. It's a way to help us and a way to help the fish."

This fall, biologists removed the largest razorback suckers stocked in the



GRAND VALLEY RESIDENTS PEGGY AND HAL MORSE LEASED THEIR PRIVATE, THREE-ACRE POND TO THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.

Morses' pond a year ago and reintroduced them into the Gunnison River. The smaller fish will be left to grow larger during the winter. Next spring the cycle will begin again with biologists removing the larger fish to stock

into the river and placing new young fish into the pond to grow larger over the summer. ←

Yampa River Basin Partnership

(continued from page 4)

"The Partnership includes a broad cross-section of interests in the Yampa Basin," he said. "Members help solve big problems, like endangered fish recovery, in ways that fit with local values and concerns. They are powerful when speaking with one voice through the Partnership."

Draft Yampa River Management Plan

Published in October 2001, the Draft Yampa River Management Plan details specific actions the Recovery Program considers essential to the recovery of the four species of endangered Colorado River fish. The importance of the Yampa River to these fish is significant. The river provides critical habitat and maintains important spawning and nursery habitats.

The Yampa River Basin Partnership helped the Recovery Program develop the draft plan. Further input will be sought at public meetings in Craig and Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and in Baggs, Wyoming, the week of November 26, 2001. For more information, contact Gerry Roehm, 303-969-7322, ext. 272, gerry.roehm@fws.gov. The plan can be viewed on the Recovery Program's website: <http://www.r6.fws.gov/crrp/yampa.htm>.

An Effective Model

Like the Recovery Program, the Partnership operates under a consensus model requiring unanimous consent.

"I highly recommend to other communities looking to establish a Partnership like ours to use a model of unanimous consent," said Moffat County Commissioner T. Wright Dickinson, the Partnership's first chairman. "This ensures that no one interest group can be run over in the process. It builds trust."

This model also keeps projects going forward without being tied up in costly lawsuits. "I think both the Partnership and the Recovery Program have met their goals of keeping litigation out and getting productive results," T. Wright said. "Many water projects have been approved that might otherwise have been held up waiting for court decisions."

Partnership members take their job of representing citizens in their communities seriously. "We make an extraordinary effort to involve the public," said Jeff Comstock, natural resources policy analyst for Moffat County. "We hold a lot of public meetings. We want our citizens to know what's going on and to find out what they think about the recommenda-

tions we may suggest through the Partnership. That's another reason why I think it's so effective."

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) member and fifth-generation Colorado rancher David Smith is another member of the Partnership. "The White River in neighboring Rio Blanco County runs right through my ranch and, like the Yampa River, is home to endangered fish," he said. "Issues that affect the Yampa will most certainly be a concern for the White, too."

David has reviewed countless water development projects during his 19 years on the CWCB. "I don't believe in stopping water projects, but I do believe they should be done in an environmentally responsible way," he said. "I've been a rancher my entire life. I believe in using my land — it's my lifeblood. I'm willing to work

hard to protect it and our river systems."

Clearly, citizens of northwest Colorado take an active role in protecting the Yampa River and their way of life. Perhaps Ben Beall best sums up the feelings of citizens in both Routt and Moffat Counties.

swimming upstream

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Shaping the future — the Yampa River Basin Partnership

To some it may seem unfathomable that the fate of the Yampa River is guided by 33,000 Colorado citizens representing two distinctly different neighboring counties in northwest Colorado. But who better to help protect this great river system than those whose lives directly depend upon it?

Les Hampton, Moffat County Commissioner and newly-elected chairman of the Yampa River Basin Partnership, is one of those people. Whether dawn breaks to freezing

blizzards or warm, sunny skies, Les ventures out to feed his cattle and horses. Far away from rush hour traffic, giant shopping malls and throngs of people, Les and his wife, Bonnie, are content at their 800-acre ranch, Lesbentons — French for "The Good Times."

One of Les' neighbors, Burt Clements, also belongs to the Partnership. A fifth-generation native, Burt's ancestors were cattle ranchers who settled in the area after the Civil War. An active member of the Yampa

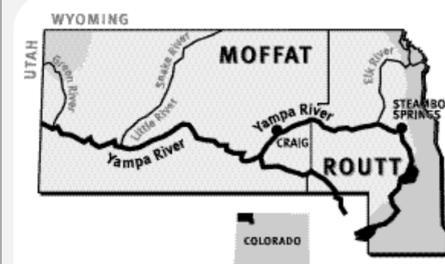
Valley Bassmasters, Burt is deeply committed to the community and the future of the Yampa River.

Traveling east from the rolling landscape that surrounds Craig and crossing into neighboring Routt County, the Rocky Mountains rise high above the Yampa Valley to form the world-renowned ski slopes of Steamboat Springs. In the summer, mountain bikers and kayakers replace skiers in this resort community, which is also famous for its natural hot springs.

Routt and Moffat Counties are about as different as night and day. Both are geographically diverse. Routt County, bounded on the east by the Continental Divide, extends from alpine tundra through spruce-fir forests down to semi-arid sagebrush. The Routt National Forest is the largest public landowner. Tourism primarily drives the county's economy. Irrigation from the Yampa River and its tributaries also supports a thriving agricultural community.

In contrast, Moffat County to the west features large, relatively flat tracts of land where agriculture and mining dominate. Spectacular canyons carved by the Yampa and Green rivers through the eastern edge of the Uintah Mountains accent the northwest corner of Moffat County. The Bureau of Land Management manages the majority of federal lands in Moffat County, except Dinosaur National Monument — a part of the national park system that extends west into Utah.

Despite the significant differences in geography, lifestyle and economy, Routt and Moffat Counties are forever linked by their dependence on what many call the West's last great, free-flowing river — the Yampa River.



Routt County
Population: 19,690
Total land area: 2,362 square miles
Persons per square mile: 8.3
Business and economy:
-Agriculture: Horses, cattle, sheep, hay, wheat, oats, barley
-Natural resources/mining: (Colorado's largest coal producing county)
Coal and minerals
-Tourism and recreation: (Year-round accounts for 80% of economy)
-Skiing, fishing, kayaking, rafting, canoeing, camping, hunting, golf
Source: Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce

Moffat County
Population: 13,184
Total land area: 4,742 square miles
Persons per square mile: 2.8
Business and economy:
-Agriculture: Cattle, sheep, wheat, barley, oats
-Natural resources/mining: (Colorado's second largest coal producing county)
Oil, natural gas, coal and other minerals
-Tourism and recreation: Fishing, rafting, hunting, Dinosaur National Monument
-Second largest county in Colorado
Source: Craig Chamber of Commerce

ences in geography, lifestyle and economy, Routt and Moffat Counties are forever linked by their dependence on what many call the West's last great, free-flowing river — the Yampa River.

A Partnership for the Future
Strong dependency on the Yampa River system continues to forge a

unique and close relationship between the two counties. Former Routt County Commissioner and Steamboat Springs resident Ben Beall has witnessed tremendous growth in the area. His concern that growth be managed responsibly led him to participate in a two-day conference in December 1994

(continued on page 4)

swimming upstream



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225



Scientists count Colorado pikeminnow, p. 2
Sampling continued this summer in the Green, Yampa and White rivers.



Biologists capture fish — nine years apart, p. 3
Biologists locate a large Colorado pikeminnow in the Colorado River, twice.



2001 outstanding researcher named, p. 4
Chuck McAda is the third recipient of the Recovery Program's award.



31-year veteran continues work, p. 5
Bruce Haines wasn't ready to give up his life's work when he retired in February.



CDOT and landowners help recovery effort, p. 6
The highway department joins other agencies and private individuals in providing ponds.

Mission possible — counting Colorado pikeminnow

More than 550 miles in the Green, Yampa and White rivers are home to the majority of wild Colorado pikeminnow. The murky river water that flows through remote canyons and floodplains makes it difficult for scientists to actually see what those waters contain. So, how do they know how many Colorado pikeminnow exist?

The Recovery Program is contracting with scientists from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and Colorado State University's Larval Fish Laboratory to count the number of Colorado pikeminnow in these three rivers.

Last year, work focused on the middle Green River which includes the Yampa and White rivers. This spring, the lower Green River was added from the White River to the Green's confluence with the Colorado River. Sampling occurred in all of these river reaches from mid-March through early May. Scientists searched for fish in all habitats.

"Shorelines, flooded tributary mouths, boulder habitat, tamarisk areas, along canyon walls that are 400 to 500 feet in height — they pop out of everywhere," said Mike Hudson, aquatic biologist, UDWR.

where they want, the sequence repeated. When a Colorado pikeminnow is captured, scientists scan it with a PIT-tag reader to detect if it was previously tagged. If it has a tag, the fish is recorded as a recapture and released. New captures are tagged, weighed, measured and released. Again, a couple of weeks pass before the sequence is again repeated for a total of three or four passes through the same river reaches.

"I'm really proud of these guys," Mike said. "It's not an easy effort to go out there and stand in front of a boat under a baking sun for 10 to 12 hours a day. They have to stay alert and be good at catching fish and keeping accurate records." Mike's crews of seven use two electrofishing boats and two gear boats. They are gone for nine to 10 days.

"Preparation is the key," Mike said. "They have to take everything they could possibly need, including back-up gear. They're working in remote canyons where you just can't go get something you forgot. Everyone puts a lot of effort toward this job."

Sometimes scientists gain unexpected information about the endangered fish during their research.

"While looking for Colorado pikeminnow, we collected several razorback sucker that the Recovery Program had stocked in wetlands near Jensen, Utah, last year," said Tim Modde, Service biologist from the Vernal Field Office. "That means these fish survived over winter. When flood waters came up in the spring, the fish left the wetlands for the river and were found more than 100 miles downstream in Desolation Canyon."

Over nine to 10 days, scientists from the three agencies floated down the rivers in rafts containing nets and electrofishing equipment. The gear allows them to capture a portion of the fish that are present. The nets are regularly tended. Electrofishing equipment temporarily stuns the fish. As they rise to the surface, biologists pick them up with dip nets.

Every Colorado pikeminnow captured is measured for length and weight, marked with a passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag injected into its abdomen and released to the river where it was caught. It is forever marked.

After a couple of weeks of leaving the fish alone to move around

and the more fish that are captured, the more accurate and precise the estimate is," said Kevin Bestgen, director of the Larval Fish Laboratory. "I suspect this is one of the largest abundance studies ever done for fish. The geographic scope is enormous. The objectives of this study can be completed only with the combined

expertise and capability of several different agencies. They are working together to make this mission possible."



Colorado Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*)

Distinguishing characteristics

- Olive-green and gold back, silvery-white belly
- Generally 18 to 22 inches long but have been known to reach up to 6 feet and weigh 80 pounds or more
- Torpedo shaped body, back end of the upper jaw extends to or beyond the middle of the eye

Specifics

- Largest species of minnow native to North America
- Thought to have evolved 3 to 5 million years ago
- Have been known to live 40 years
- Capable of spawning at an age of 5 to 6 years
- Known to migrate more than 200 miles to spawn
- Presently found only in the Upper Colorado River Basin
- Young primarily eat insects; adults mainly eat other fish
- Known as the "white salmon" or "Colorado salmon" by early settlers

Status

- Listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1973
- Listed as endangered under Colorado law in 1976; status changed to threatened in 1998
- Listed as protected under Utah law since 1973
- Populations stable and increasing in the Green and Colorado rivers
- Small population present in the San Juan River Basin

expertise and capability of several different agencies. They are working together to make this mission possible."

Work conducted by crews this summer is part of an ongoing study to determine the number of Colorado pikeminnow in the Green River system. In addition to Mike and Tim, other crew leaders were Ron Brunson, aquatic biologist, UDWR in Vernal and John Hawkins, researcher, Larval Fish Laboratory.

The number of Colorado pikeminnow is important to measure the Recovery Program's progress toward self-sustaining fish populations. Recently completed recovery goals detail numbers required in specific geographic locations before the Service can consider changing the Colorado pikeminnow's status under the Endangered Species Act from endangered to threatened (downlisting) and eventual removal (delisting) from protection under this law.

A similar sampling strategy is used for humpback chub. Wild populations, however, are restricted to relatively short, canyon-bound river reaches. Razorback sucker and bonytail populations must first be reestablished through stocking efforts before a sampling strategy can be implemented. For more information, contact Tom Czaplak, 303-969-7322, ext. 228, or tom.czaplak@fws.gov.

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service P.O. Box 25486, DFC Lakewood, CO 80225 Tel: 303-969-7322 Fax: 303-969-7327 www.r6.fws.gov/coloradoriver



Biologists recapture fish after nine years

Biologists occasionally have the good fortune to locate a large Colorado pikeminnow while conducting research on the Colorado River and its tributaries. Such was the case for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Doug Osmundson (pictured left). Doug captured this 38-inch Colorado pikeminnow on June 13, 2000, in the Colorado River about seven miles upstream from the Colorado/Utah border. The fish was too heavy for the scale the biologists had with them, but Doug estimated it weighed more than 20 pounds.

Even more interesting is the fact that the fish Doug captured is the same fish Colorado Division of Wildlife Biologist Bill Elmblad (right) caught and tagged nine years earlier on May 21, 1991. Bill caught the Colorado pikeminnow in the Colorado River about two miles above the Colorado/Utah border. At that time it was 35 inches long and weighed 16 pounds. In 1991, this fish was 19 years old based on growth rings on its scales, confirming the fact that this fish is long-lived with relatively slow growth as adults. (For more information on this species, see related story, "Mission Possible..." on page 2.)

NPS honors Modde with Natural Resources Award

The National Park Service presented its prestigious Natural Resource Research Award to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Tim Modde at the Recovery Program's Biology Committee meeting held May 19 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Intermountain Region of the NPS presents this award each year to individuals who have clearly demonstrated high achievement in professional research that will advance the conservation and restoration of natural resources associated with national parks.

Dinosaur National Monument Resource Management Specialist Steve Petersburg presented the award. "I've had the pleasure of working with Tim for the past nine years," he said. "I continue to be impressed by his dedication to recovery and his tenacity in studying the ecology of the endangered fishes."

"Tim's research into the population dynamics, habitat requirements and impacts of human-caused activities on the endangered fish of the Upper Colorado River Basin clearly exemplifies the ideals of this award. His work has led toward restoration of native species to NPS units such as Dinosaur National Monument, Canyonlands National Park and Glen



TIM MODDE (LEFT) RECEIVES THE NATURAL RESOURCE RESEARCH AWARD FROM STEVE PETERSBURG.

Canyon National Recreation Area."

Specific projects Tim completed include documentation of migration and habitat use of the Colorado pikeminnow; population assessments of the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker and humpback chub; modeling of minimum flows needed for endangered fishes of the Yampa River; documentation of the importance of flooded bottomlands to razorback suckers for successful reproduction; and research into the critically endangered bonytail.

"Tim's dedication and expertise exemplify the kind of work I'm proud to see take place by Fish and Wildlife

Service employees," said Ralph Morgenweck, director, Mountain-Prairie Region and chairman of the Recovery Program's Implementation Committee. "He continues to demonstrate that partnerships with other natural resource agencies maximize the benefit of research. Sharing important study findings improves each agency's ability to manage and conserve natural resources."

Tim is the leader for the Colorado River Fishery Project in Vernal, Utah, a position he's held for nine of his 15 years with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Service biologist named outstanding researcher of the year

Chuck McCAda, a fishery biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Grand Junction, Colorado, is this year's recipient of the Recovery Program's Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award. Colorado River Fishery Program Project Leader Frank Pfeifer presented the award at the Upper Basin Researchers Meeting last January.

"Chuck is an extremely dedicated and knowledgeable researcher," he said. "His dedication and vast experience make him the best ally the fish could have on their road to recovery."

Chuck has worked on biological issues concerning the Colorado River endangered fish for 25 years. He has authored or coauthored more than two dozen manuscripts on the life history of the fish. He also chairs the Colorado River Fishes Recovery Team. He has worked on all of the rivers in the Upper Colorado River Basin that are home to these fish.

"I've always been impressed by Chuck's quiet, dedicated service," said Recovery Program Assistant Director Angela Kantola. "He's always seemed to be in this for the long-haul, demonstrating commitment to high-quality research and patience to get the job done."



CHUCK McCADA TALKS WITH CHILDREN AT THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S CARPENTER BENCH.

Chuck is the third recipient of this award. Darrell Snyder received the award in 2000 and Ed Wick was the first recipient in 1999.

"Chuck is highly deserving of this award," Ed said. "I first met Chuck in the early 1980s and he had already earned a reputation as a leading researcher. I've always admired him. This award really means a lot to me and I couldn't possibly pick anybody I'd love to share it with more."

The Recovery Program presents this award each year to an individual who has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the recovery of the endangered fishes and who has made significant contributions to understanding their biology and environmental needs.

Yampa River Basin Partnership

(continued from page 1)

entitled, "Shaping the Future of the Yampa River Basin: A Working Leadership Conference."

The conference drew more than 260 participants representing local, state and federal agencies; local businesses; nonprofit agencies and the general public. Its purpose was to bring together diverse interest groups from Moffat and Routt Counties to develop a common set of priorities and to create the framework for mutual decision-making.

"Out of that meeting came an action item to form the Yampa River Basin Partnership to look out for the interest of the counties," said Ben, who was later elected its chairman, a role he will relinquish to Les Hampton in January. "Issues included transportation, health care, telecommunications and the environment."

The Partnership's main emphasis in recent years has been to work with the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program in its efforts to recover the endangered humpback chub, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker which are native to the Yampa River system.

"When we first learned about the endangered fish issues in the Yampa River, we decided it was better to come up with a local plan than to sit back and wait for the federal government to make decisions for us," Les said.

And, that's exactly what the counties did. "The Fish and Wildlife Service signed a memorandum of understanding with the Partnership which gave the Partnership a standing in the process," Ben said. "It's not often that citizens are given such standing and this has gone a long way toward establishing cooperation in the Yampa River Basin."

Through the Partnership, citizens work with local, state and federal agencies. "We tell them about our wants, needs and interests," Les said. "Once the meeting starts, it's no longer 'us' versus 'them.' We all share a common interest — the health and future of the Yampa River."

The Recovery Program could not have successfully completed the



BEN BEALL STANDS IN FRONT OF THE YAMPA RIVER IN DOWNTOWN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS.

recently published Draft Yampa River Management Plan without the Partnership according to Tom Pitts, a water consultant who represents water users on the Recovery Program's governing committees.

(continued on page 6)

Yampa River Basin Partnership

Established: July 1, 1995
Mission: "Working with the citizens of the Yampa River Basin to balance natural resource and social issues to protect and enhance our quality of life through open communication, education and coordination of interests."
Membership: Individuals, agencies and organizations may participate by signing a Memorandum of Understanding or Letter of Intent to participate in and support the Partnership's goals.
Funding: Annual dues of \$20 per individual, agency or organization.
Structure: Executive Steering Committee members represent 15 categories of community interests for Routt and Moffat Counties; one-year term; consensus model of decision making.
2002 Chairman: Les Hampton, Moffat County Commissioner
Immediate Past Chairman: Ben Beall, Former Routt County Commissioner
Staff: Audrey Danner, Executive Director, Yampa Valley Partners
Contact: 970-824-8233; infocenter@co.routt.co.us; www.yampavalleypartners.com

Recovery Program news and updates

swimming upstream



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Swimming Upstream is a publication of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. The Recovery Program is a cooperative program involving federal and state agencies, environmental groups and water and poweruser organizations in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. Its purpose is to recover endangered fish while allowing development of water resources for human uses. The four endangered fish species are humpback chub, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker.

Robert T. Muth
Program Director
Debra B. Felker
Editor

Program Partners
Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Colorado Water Congress
Environmental Defense
National Park Service
State of Colorado
State of Utah
State of Wyoming
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Utah Water Users Association
Western Area Power Administration
Wyoming Water Association

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service P.O. Box 25486, DFC Lakewood, CO 80225 Tel: 303-969-7322 Fax: 303-969-7327 www.r6.fws.gov/coloradoriver



Congress authorizes funding through 2011

Public Law 106-392, signed Oct. 30, 2000, authorizes \$500 million to support both the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Programs. In the Upper Basin, the legislation extends capital expenditures through 2005. It also supports operation and maintenance through the life of capital projects as well as monitoring and research through 2011.

- Funds will be provided through a cost-sharing program and will be used to:
- Develop fish passageways,
 - Screen irrigation canals,
 - Acquire permanent flood easements along the Colorado River and its tributaries,
 - Restore floodplains that double as nursery areas for young fish,
 - Lease water, and
 - Manage nonnative fishes.



Razorback suckers use fish ladder

Five razorback suckers used the 350-foot fish ladder at the Redlands Diversion Dam on the Gunnison River for the first time this summer. One of the fish was stocked in 1996. The others were stocked this year.

Since the ladder became operational in 1996, 52 Colorado pikeminnow and more than 40,000 other native fish have used it. The razorbacks' use of the ladder confirms biologists' belief that this species can negotiate this type of passageway and may signal that efforts to reestablish the species in the Upper Colorado River Subbasin are working.

Construction of the ladder opened 57 miles of historic habitat. Planned completion of two passageways on the upper Colorado River will provide another 55 miles of historically-occupied habitat for adult Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker in the upper Colorado River.



Utah State Fair features endangered fish

The Utah State Fair in Salt Lake City featured an aquarium with bonytail and razorback sucker for the second year. Organized by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the aquarium is part of a much larger exhibit that features other species and a wealth of educational material on a broad variety of wildlife and environmental issues. The exhibit continues to be one of the fair's most popular, attracting an estimated 200,000 visitors annually. Endangered fish used in the exhibit were raised at Utah's Wahweap State Fish Hatchery near Page, Arizona.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife also features endangered Colorado River fish in its exhibits at national and international sports shows held in Denver every January and February.



New exhibit helps raise public awareness

Pictured in front of the Recovery Program's new freestanding exhibit are Wyoming Water Association President George Bartholomew (left) and John Shields, Wyoming State Engineer's Office and Recovery Program Management Committee chairman. At their annual meeting in October in Casper, Wyoming, members of the Wyoming Water Association adopted a resolution to support the objectives and ongoing conduct of the Recovery Program.

The exhibit is part of the Recovery Program's effort to raise public awareness of its work. It measures about 10 feet wide and 8 feet tall and features 3-foot replicas of the four endangered fish species.

This summer the Western Colorado Museum in Grand Junction, Colorado, hosted the exhibit. It now appears in the lobby of Alpine Bank in the same city. In the past year, Recovery Program representatives also staffed exhibits at the Colorado River Water Users Association's Annual Meeting in Las Vegas and the Colorado Water Workshop in Gunnison.

For more information or to borrow the exhibit, contact Kathy Holley, 970-255-9007, kathy_holley@fws.gov.



Colorado opens new hatchery to help raise endangered fish

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has opened its latest hatchery facility in Alamosa, Colorado. The Mumba Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility is designed to help restore endangered and threatened species of the aquatic world throughout Colorado. Concentrating on the boreal toad and fishes of the front range, the hatchery has been able to set aside space to raise bonytail and razorback sucker for Recovery Program stocking efforts.

"We have about 25,000 bonytail that we will grow to 8 inches to stock into the Green and Colorado rivers," said Hatchery Manager Dave Schnoor. "We are cooperating with Trinity State

College faculty and aquaculture students, as well as a private landowner, to make this facility a community effort toward restoring our aquatic resources."

The Mumba hatchery will receive bonytail eggs or fry from New Mexico and Utah. Razorback sucker larvae will be brought in from Grand Junction on an as-needed basis. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will spawn Colorado pikeminnow next to the river and transport the eggs to the hatchery.

Resolution of the Colorado Water Congress Colorado River Project in Recognition of the Dedication and Achievements of Henry Maddux

WHEREAS, the Executive Committee, Colorado Water Congress Colorado River Project directs Colorado Water Congress activities regarding the "Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin" (Recovery Program).

WHEREAS, the Colorado Water Congress has been an active participant in the development and implementation of the Recovery Program.

WHEREAS, Henry Maddux has served as Recovery Program Director for the three year period ending in 2000.

- BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Executive Committee
- Acknowledges the numerous achievements of the Recovery Program during his tenure as Program Director, including recovery goals for four endangered fish species, the Duchesne River biological opinion, the Colorado River biological opinion, and federal legislation authorizing long-term funding for the Recovery Program among many others,
 - Recognizes that these accomplishments are directly related to his hard work, dedication and personal integrity.
 - Appreciates that he fostered and enhanced mutual respect and cooperation among all Recovery Program participants,
 - Values his lasting contributions to the Recovery Program that will help ensure its continued success, and
 - Sincerely wishes Henry and his family happiness in the future.

Julie McKenna
Julie McKenna, Chair, Executive Committee

Tom Pitts
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin Water Users Representative, Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin

Editor's Note: Henry Maddux was the Recovery Program director from August 1997 to August 2000. Currently he is field supervisor for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Salt Lake City, Utah, where he is tackling new challenges such as recovering June sucker, Utah prairie dog and Virgin River fishes.

