

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
05/12/99



MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Colorado River Management Committee, Denver

Date: May 12, 1999

Attendees: See Attachment 1

>Assignments are highlighted in the text, and in Attachment 2.

CONVENE: 9:00 a.m.

1. Review/modify agenda and time allocations - The agenda was revised as it appears below.

2. Approve March 3 meeting summary - The summary was approved as written.

3. Program activities updates:

a. 15 Mile-Reach programmatic biological opinion - Henry said that some comments on the draft are still pending. He will be meeting with the water users tomorrow, and will propose a timeline for completing the opinion (August 15, although that date will need to be discussed). Tom Pitts said that the River District sent a letter saying their support of the programmatic opinion will be contingent on resolving issues on the Yampa and the Gunnison (and reviewing the Aspinall studies synthesis report and biological opinion), but Tom recommends continuing to move forward with the opinion. >As sections of the opinion are revised, Henry will post them to the listserver.

b. GVIC Fish Screen - Tom Pitts said that he met with the GVIC board and although they have some technical questions, they are willing to work with us and construction of this fish screen should be in 2001.

c. Price Stubb Fish Passage - Brent Uilenberg reported that the draft EA was released on Price-Stubb fish passage. It presents three alternatives, with Reclamation's preference to remove the dam (but not until 2002, after the Ute Pipeline replacement is completed, because the dam will provide a dependable water supply while the Pipeline is being replaced). FERC has released a draft EA on the proposed Jacobsen hydro plant at Price-Stubb and encouraged >Management Committee members to comment on that proposal (a hydro plant would prevent removal of the dam and require a fish ladder, at an increased cost of ~\$500,000).

d. Land acquisition activities - Henry said the Service is working to resolve some internal concerns regarding selenium. Meanwhile, appraisals and work to lease growout ponds continue. Dan McAuliffe noted that Colorado State Parks owns a property called Virginia Acres, which they would like to dispose of. > The Service will let Dan know if that property would be useful to the Program.

e. Propagation activities - Henry reported recent propagation activities. Razorback suckers: 5,754 stocked in Green River depression wetlands; three new lots of Green River razorbacks (two at Ouray and one at Grand Junction) bringing the Green River total to 16 lots; 750,000 razorback eggs (which have now hatched) at the Grand Valley facility; 20,000 larval razorbacks from Lake Mohave stocked in Bounds Pond. Bonytail: 20,000 stocked with coded wire tags instead of PIT tags recently (10,000 in Green and 10,000 in Colorado River); an additional 20,000 will be stocked in the fall. The Grand Valley pikeminnow hatchery building is behind schedule, but should be completed by July. >Tom Czaplá will provide a brief status report on propagation for Program participants' use (perhaps something like the quarterly Section 7 consultation update, but with narrative that's easily understood).

f. Status of Ouray construction - Brent Uilenberg reported that the water treatment system is not functioning adequately and they're in an administrative claims process with the contractor to determine to how to fix it (or if it can be fixed). The fix may cost \$250,000

with an additional \$100,000 annual operation cost. (Domestic water in Vernal or Grand Junction would be cheaper.) Frank Pfeifer questioned the need to treat water for both the ponds and the hatchery building, versus just treating water for the hatchery building. Brent said that once we know the cost, we may need to reconsider whether to continue as planned at Ouray. >The Committee requested a report by July 1 from the Program Director's office (working with the Reclamation and the Service) identifying alternatives and making recommendations for resolving the problem (the report also should include a summary of what has been spent to date at Ouray).

g. Service sufficient progress determination - Susan Baker reported that the Service is waiting for comments from the water users (Tom Pitts said he'd provide those by the end of May). The Service believes they can address the comments received to date.

h. Washington D.C. trip - John Shields reported that the trip was very successful (9 of 10 House delegation members signed the joint letter supporting the FY 2000 budget; we anticipate 4 of 6 of the Senate delegation members will sign the Senate letter). The trip report has been posted to the Program participants' web site (<http://www.r6.fws.gov/crrip/>). The long-term funding legislation should be introduced within about a week. >The Program Director's Office will post the official version of the legislation (as soon as it's received), the briefing materials, and the power revenues memo to the web site. >Tom Pitts will send out support letters, etc. from New Mexico.

i. Tusher Wash - Henry Maddux alerted the Committee that at the Tusher Wash diversion on the Green River, the Green River Canal Co. has installed a cement wall to reduce the amount of water going to a hydropower user and that wall is creating a great deal of turbulence and causing fish to end up injured and dead. So far, about 40 bluehead and flannelmouth suckers are being killed each day. It's just a matter of time until a razorback sucker or Colorado pikeminnow is killed; Henry said he would like to find a way to solve this problem (prior to Service law enforcement involvement). The Service is sending a letter to both parties alerting them to the potential take situation and also will send a copy of the letter to Kathleen Clarke.

j. Utah response to Program letter - John Shields noted that Utah has responded to the Management Committee's letter regarding late reports; Henry and John said it appears that the State is pretty much on track (will be reflected in the next late reports list).

k. Section 7 consultation update - Angela Kantola provided an updated consultation list (recently posted to the listserver).

4. Instream flow protection in Colorado - The recovery flow instream flow applications were withdrawn in both Yampa and on Colorado River mainstem. Randy Seaholm explained the original concept of base and recovery flows (which originally were filed as a package). Randy says he believes base flow protection is still feasible. Robert Wigington suggested that Colorado should determine what sort of conventional instream flow appropriation could be made for the year-round flow recommendations for recovery. Dan McAuliffe said that the Division 5 judge has asked for additional biological and hydrological information for the base flows (within one month prior to a status conference). The Committee agreed that there's probably nothing that the Program can do to influence the outcome of that status conference. Tom Pitts recommended that Colorado get the water users and Program participants together (like we did in the "Guru 2" process) to try to determine how to protect the flows needed for recovery (after we finish the Colorado River 15 Mile Reach opinion). Dan McAuliffe said that Program participants will need to encourage CWCB to do this. >Dan, Henry, Tom, Robert and Colorado (Randy Seaholm) will develop a schedule and process to resolve these issues and provide that to the Management Committee by June 30.

5. Development of recovery goals - Henry Maddux provided a draft scope of work for a contractor who will work with the Recovery Team to develop recovery goals (including habitat components). >Comments on this draft should be provided to Henry by Wednesday, May 19. The decision-making process needs to be added to this scope of work. The Committee approved funding this with Section 7 funds held by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

6. Yampa Management Plan - Gerry Roehm distributed a memo from the Yampa Management Team to the Management Committee. The team believes that they need to follow through on evaluation of a full range of alternatives for meeting the flow needs of the fish at the Program's expense. The Team would like the Management Committee's direction as to whether they agree. Referring to the fourth paragraph of that memo, Frank Pfeifer clarified that the Biology Committee's conclusion does not preclude water storage options, since they only said the biology indicates it's not prudent to store water from the *spring* peak to release in the fall; they did not say we shouldn't consider storing summer or winter flows. The Management Committee endorsed the Team's recommendation to follow through on evaluation of all the alternatives (see paragraph 6 of the memo), with the understanding that: 1) the alternatives are not limited to off-peak supply; and 2) if there are impacts outside the baseflow period, then determine how to address those. This will be done within the FY 99 budget.

7. Information and Education coordination in the Recovery Program - Kathy Kanda reviewed the Information and Education Committee's recommendations to revamp public involvement efforts: integrate public involvement planning into the Program's decision-making process; develop the capacity to do effective public involvement; and improve internal communication. All of these recommendations involve strengthening the role of the I&E coordinator, as well as additional commitment of time from public relations professionals from the other Program agencies/groups. Robert Wigington suggested that item #5 of the action plan should read "*Complete* two pilot projects" not "*Start* two pilot projects." Under recommendation 2, Tom Pitts recommended adding "The I&E coordinator should meet regularly with interested and affected parties to explain the Program and Program activities and to receive input from those parties." To item #4 under the "Action Plan", Tom recommended adding "Regularly update I&E materials to reflect current Program achievements" and "Develop simple, cheap, and easily updated videos for distribution to interest groups and Program participants." Tom also noted that the definition on page 4 isn't really a definition. John Shields suggested that #2 under the Action Plan should read the "coordinator *has the primary* responsibility for disseminating information." With regards to improving internal communication, John suggested that another important communication tool would be internet conferencing for the various Program committees. Bruce recommended that once the new coordinator is on board, they meet with the I&E Committee and go through this plan to identify the Committee's the coordinator's responsibilities (which also could lead to re-defining role of, or perhaps even re-evaluating the need for the I&E Committee).

8. Reintroduction of bonytail in Colorado - Colorado amended state law to take control of the reintroduction of extirpated wildlife species, that is species that are: a) Not or no longer found in Colorado; AND b) a candidate for listing or has been placed in the threatened or endangered list pursuant to the Federal ESA. Bonytails are not available for reintroduction in Colorado this year; when bonytails are available in FY 2000, then Colorado is prepared to go to the legislature (as are the water users) for approval.

9. FY 99 capital funds status

- USBR report on use of Program funding - Brent Uilenberg provided a list of FY 99 capital funding under approved scopes of work, highlighting differences in original scope

of work totals and expected expenditures. Based on an anticipated \$1.754 million surplus, Reclamation reprogrammed \$1.5 million for Rio Grande. Committee members questioned why they weren't informed before this action was taken and why Reclamation didn't consider the contingency list when they developed their estimate of surplus funds. The Committee asked >Reclamation's Implementation Committee member to formally inform the rest of the Implementation Committee of the reprogramming (and the justification for it) and to recommend how the Program might avoid this in the future.

- Leota 10 growout pond construction - The Committee approved \$162,700 for Leota growout pond construction.

- Wahweap pumps - This should be about \$60,000 of the \$100,000 shown under Grand Valley fish facilities (if it's not, then the Committee approved funding with remaining capital funds surplus).

10. O&M funding - Brent provided an updated outyear budget table. Henry provided an updated long-term funding estimate for operation and maintenance of Program capital facilities (which is still being revised because it doesn't yet include Ruedi water, growout pond leases, O&M to manage acquired bottomlands, reservoir screening, etc.).

11. Extending the Recovery Program's cooperative agreement - Henry Maddux distributed a discussion outline for what the Program will be from 2003 - 2010. Tom Pitts suggested a frontpiece outlining what we expect to accomplish before 2003 and from 2003 to 2010. Robert noted that the outline also needs to reflect monitoring and O&M after 2010. Other factors to address in the outline concept paper: 1) goal to delist the fish by 2010; 2) Section 7 consultations would continue as they are now until the species are delisted; 3) elements contained in the programmatic biological opinions. John Shields asked if CREDA would want to be a voting member when the Program is extended.

>Management Committee members will provide comments to Henry's office on the draft outline concept paper by June 15. >John Shields will put together a draft agreement (or amendment to the existing agreement). That draft will include language regarding maintaining the states' current level of support, but not specifying a dollar amount. The Committee would like to keep the agreement or amendment as simple as possible.

12. Next Management Committee meeting - August 16-17, at UDWR in Salt Lake City. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. on the 16th and adjourning at 4 p.m. on the 17th. >Marty Ott will reserve one of the large conference rooms at UDWR. Agenda items will include work plan review and approval, development of the Implementation Committee agenda, and extension of the Recovery Program.

13. Review of action items from recent meetings - No questions were raised regarding the action items list.

ADJOURN: 4:00 p.m.

Attachment 1

Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado

May 12, 1999, Meeting Attendees

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg and .Chris Karas Bureau of Reclamation

Bruce McCloskey State of Colorado

Tom Pitts Upper Basin Water Users

Marty Ott and Barry Saunders Utah Department of Natural Resources

Robert Wigington The Nature Conservancy

John Shields State of Wyoming

Shane Collins Western Area Power Administration

Susan Baker U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nonvoting Members:

Dave Mazour Colorado River Energy Distributors Association

Henry Maddux Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Recovery Program Staff:

Angela Kantola U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Dan McAuliffe Colorado Water Conservation Board

Tom Nesler Colorado Division of Wildlife

Gerry Roehm U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ray Tenney Colorado River Water Conservation District

Randy Seaholm Colorado Water Conservation Board

Frank Pfeifer U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Kathy Kanda Colorado Department of Natural Resources

[TOP OF PAGE](#)