

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

June 4, 2008

Country Inn & Suites, 4343 Airport Way, Denver, Colorado

CONVENE: 9:30 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper – The agenda was revised as it appears below.
2. Approve [March 31](#) meeting summary and [April 28](#) conference call summary – The summaries were approved as written.
3. Draft sufficient progress memo – The Committee discussed the Service’s draft memo. Angela Kantola said comments have so far been received only from Tom Pitts; most of which are of a clarifying nature. Under the Yampa River section, Tom has pointed out that a date is needed for CDOW’s upper Yampa River strategy. Bob Muth said he thinks Sherm Hebein will commit to have this completed before the December nonnative fish workshop. John Reber asked if “remove smallmouth bass wherever northern pike removal occurs” (in the Yampa River) could begin this year. Bob Muth said CDOW has not yet agreed to this; it is, however, on the prioritized list of recommendations from previous nonnative fish workshops that the Biology Committee will discuss next week. Tom Pitts suggested acknowledging CFOPS in the memo, but the Service believes it’s premature since the study was just initiated in 2007. John Shields asked about the commitment in the Flaming Gorge ROD to manipulate other resources downstream to reduce floodplain dependence on flow. Bob Muth said the work under that study plan is being done this year, so it’s premature to include it in this year’s memo. John Reber will submit comments to the Service and the Committee. Some are clarifications/editorial. John asked if the need to finalize White River flow recommendations should be called out (in light of oil and gas pressures). Bob Muth agreed that this probably should be. With regard to the memo’s conclusion, John Reber said we don’t seem to have a way to more strongly word the need to push harder to achieve recovery. Tom Iseman agreed, noting that whether we’re making “sufficient progress” seems somewhat indeterminate to him as it’s a very qualitative assessment. Perhaps it would be helpful to call out the action items again in the conclusions so that Program participants to track them throughout the year (e.g., on Management Committee agendas). Bob Muth and Tom Pitts agreed. John Shields said that the response to the Service’s memo is a collective, Program response. For example, at the top of page 10, John suggested that the language “the Service, and Western Area Power Administration need to determine how they can better manage Aspinall spring flows” shouldn’t be limited to just the Federal agencies. Bob Muth said the Service can add “and other cooperators.” Tom Pitts sees the sufficient progress documents as following from our Section 7 Agreement, thus, it’s appropriate for the Service to call out action items and for the Program to react with appropriate modifications to the RIPRAP and the work plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Tom Iseman asked if we can get updates on population estimates more frequently than every three years (Tom Blickensderfer echoed this concern); Bob Muth said the estimates require multiple years of data and subsequent analysis. However, the Service has expressed concern about downward population trends and called out actions in order to respond to that. Tom

Iseman mentioned the research framework; Bob Muth noted this will be unavoidably delayed by a few months. Tom Iseman asked about a potential 50,000 af diversion from the Green River at Tusher Wash; Robert King said this proposal has a very long way to go. A Uintah County WCD proposal for an 8,000 af diversion is more likely, and they have initiated consultation with the Service (the *depletion* amount still needs to be determined). The benefit would be that return flows would no longer bypass the lower section of the Duchesne River. Tom Iseman asks how this relates to Utah's work to legally protect flows in the Green River. Robert said it will be easier to protect these Green River flows than tributary flows. Bob Muth said the Service should have called out Green River flow protection as an action item in the draft memo (item IB3a-c in the RIPRAP). Tom Iseman agreed. >The Service will finalize and distribute the sufficient progress memo in June.

With regard to revising the RIPRAP table to include the RIPRAP assessment in future years; this will be considered at the next meeting. >Angela will look into how to use track changes in Excel, and into printing options to reduce it to letter size).

4. Yampa Nonnative Fish Management Strategy – Tom Chart noted the Implementation Committee's directive that began work on this strategy. Rich Valdez drafted a strategy that was then worked on by an ad hoc committee and subsequently approved by the Biology Committee (and now before the Management Committee for approval). John Shields asked about the annual progress reports to be made to the Biology Committee and Upper Colorado River Basin Researcher's Meeting; Tom Chart said we still need to work out specifics, but it will be linked to annual RIPRAP assessment and should be considered when Program Guidance is developed. Tom Pitts added that whatever form annual reporting takes it also should go to the Management Committee. Tom Chart suggested that project annual reports and periodic programmatic nonnative fish management syntheses would be a means to evaluate the progress of this strategy. The plan was for Rich Valdez to start on this synthesis (which is the highest priority workshop recommendation from the Nonnative Fish Management Subcommittee), but if he's going to be unavailable, we may need to consider other avenues. Tom Chart described control efforts planned this year to achieve required exploitation rates; Bob Muth added that at the same time, we have to be very careful not to adversely affect native fish populations with our intensive sampling. Bob Muth strongly encouraged Management Committee members to attend the December nonnative fish workshop (the Program Director's Office will try not to schedule it in conflict with the December 15-17 meeting in Las Vegas). Tom Iseman asked if we'll replicate this strategy in other locations; Bob Muth said probably so (and we're already implementing elements of it in other reaches). Tom Pitts suggested making item #2 at the top of page 2 more active. Strike "assumptions" on page 3. The last box should be "Evaluate Effectiveness of Strategy" not "Evaluate Progress Toward Recovery"; and should have feedback arrows. Tom Pitts emphasized the need to translate this strategy into action items and Program guidance; Tom Chart noted that we attempted to do that in the current RIPRAP revision. >The prioritized list of nonnative fish workshop recommendations will come to the Management Committee after it goes through the Biology and I&E committees. From the big-picture perspective, the Committee recognizes that nonnative fishes are our greatest challenge and that we *must* reduce nonnative fish impacts on the endangered fishes in order

to achieve recovery. Tom Iseman said that when he and Dan Luecke met with Harris Sherman, they said they would meet with him again when the Yampa Strategy was completed, so they may be following up on that. The Committee approved the strategy with the foregoing revisions. >Tom Chart will finalize the document, distribute it, and make sure it gets posted on the website.

## 5. Updates

- a. Spring flows – Tom Chart reviewed recent and forecasted flows (see attachment) and how these compare to the historic record. The Colorado River at Cameo peaked this morning at midnight. Jana said that she and Dan Luecke and Brent urged an extension of the peak with CROS on this morning's CROS call, and that was agreed to, with Green Mountain, Ruedi, and Homestake reservoirs contributing for a total of 1,000 cfs. Tom Iseman asked how/if we might want to tell this story; Jana said a press release was discussed at the end of the CROS call; >Debbie Felker will be following up on this (along with the potential for a bigger story, perhaps for the SLC Tribune series). Brent Uilenberg noted that there was concern about flooding at the Skipper's Island bridge just west of Fruita and a portion of I-70 was closed for a few days in late May. This year is a good opportunity to record flood thresholds for future reference. On the Green River, Tom Chart said that Reclamation is considering going beyond power plant capacity to maintain >18,600 cfs for a total of 14 days. Tom said that the Recovery Program is capturing aerial photography and videography of the high flow conditions in certain reaches of the Colorado, Gunnison, Yampa, and upper Green Rivers
- b. Capital projects
  - i. Contracts – The contract for the GVVUA fish passage and screen operation is now in place. Reclamation is now focusing attention on the Elkhead repayment contract modification; with interest payments, amount should be just under initial projections. The Solicitor has asked for a complete revision (instead of modification), so that's been done and they're now are working out remaining language details.
  - ii. May 15 irrigators meeting – Brent said he thought the meeting went very well; GVIC is working hard to operate their fish screen and passage and Redlands also is doing well. With the GVVUA contract, that screen should be up and operating this summer. Tom Pitts echoed that these are good problem-solving sessions. Brent and Jana are working on the meeting summary and action items; then these will be distributed to the group.
  - iii. Tusher Wash – The Green River Canal Company and Utah have selected a consultant to do design work for dam rehabilitation; we're at a standstill until we know what the dam configuration will be. Of course, we don't yet know our total available budget (this hinges on ceiling calculations and the new legislation). Brent said they would like to award a Tusher Wash contract in 2010.

- iv. Grand Valley Hatchery facility – Brent said they still haven't found an HVAC firm.  
>Brent and Angela will set up a conference call with Chuck, Bob Norman, themselves, and any others needed to determine the appropriate next step.
- c. Tom Blickensderfer announced he will be leaving Colorado DNR and joining the planning staff for Wyoming's Governor Freudenthal; John Shields presented Tom with a plaque, thanking him for his long and dedicated service to the Recovery Program.
- d. Cooperative Conservation Award – Agency and individual certificates were distributed and John Shields showed photos of the awards ceremony. John also distributed copies of the comments he made at the workshop.
- e. 10,825 Alternatives (requirement of 15-Mile Reach PBO) – Tom Pitts said a three-component favored alternative includes releases from Granby Reservoir, continued releases from Ruedi (especially in dry years), and water conservation measures at Orchard Mesa Irrigation District (similar to Grand Valley Water Management check structures). If these don't work out, Sulphur Gulch Reservoir would be a less-preferred alternative, but the least environmentally-damaging of the remaining alternatives. Good progress is being made on this and the water users expect to meet the December 2009 deadline.
- f. Aspinall EIS – Brent Uilenberg said he understands there's been breakthrough in resolving the Black Canyon issue, which will help move the EIS forward. Clayton Palmer said the decree has been agreed to by the Black Canyon mediation group, but there are additional steps before it is final. Leslie James expressed disappointment with the Service's stridency in the EIS process, especially with regard to the flow recommendations. Leslie said they feel they've made significant concessions in the Black Canyon settlement process. Randy Seaholm concurred; saying it seems that the Service representatives have been fairly inflexible. To get off dead center, operating rules for Aspinall need to be developed to be included in the preferred alternative. Randy said he doesn't think there's been any change in schedule and Reclamation has been working very hard to meet the deadlines. There's been discussion about re-visiting the flow recommendations (recognizing that it may be better to wait until the USGS study results are in). Randy agreed with Leslie that, unfortunately, the process seems to be looking at Aspinall reoperations mostly separate from the Recovery Program. Clayton said Western has met with Reclamation and the Service and Colorado a couple of times and has agreed not ask for anything that would modify the schedule (unless Interior modifies the schedule). Western does think several issues offer flexibility and eventually would like to raise some of those at the Biology Committee (e.g., how the Gunnison River fits into recovery goals, non-flow actions to provide for fish needs in the Gunnison, use of flows for sediment transport, consideration of tributary inflows, etc.) as part of adaptively managing Aspinall to meet endangered fish flow needs. The Committee discussed similarities and differences between the Flaming Gorge and Aspinall consultations. Randy said the Service seems unwilling to consider how other recovery elements/actions may contribute to offsetting

Aspinall impacts (especially in dry and moderately dry years). Clayton disagrees with the Service's position that none of the alternatives meet the flow needs. Both Clayton and Leslie said they're not asking the Management Committee to take any action with regard to their comments; they're simply providing an update to the Committee on their perspective of the process.

- g. Proposed whitewater park at Palisade – Brent said fish passage and Orchard Mesa hydro and pumping plant operations are at issue. Brent said Reclamation isn't yet satisfied that operations won't be impacted. Bob Muth said the Service also still has significant questions.
  - h. Recovery goals – Bob Muth said the Service's revisions will go out to stakeholders by next week.
  - i. Fall 2008 Colorado River science and resource management symposium – Angela Kantola reported that planning for the symposium is well underway. It will be held at the Doubletree Resort in Scottsdale, AZ, November 18-20, 2008 with the theme of Coming Together: Coordination of Science and Restoration Activities for the Colorado River Ecosystem. The symposium is being hosted by the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center with assistance from the Water Education Foundation. Complete proceedings will be published within six months of the event. Announcements will be mailed in June (and widely disseminated electronically); abstracts are due August 15. A broad array of sessions planned. The first session will include presentations from each of the four river programs: Upper Colorado, San Juan, GCDAMP, and LCRMSCP. A session looking at nonnative fish management issues and sportfishing also is planned. A wrap-up session will include remarks from resource users/stakeholders from throughout the basin (water, hydropower, environmental, sportfishing, recreational rafting, tribal, UCR Commission, states). Tom Pitts, Leslie James, Jennifer Pitt, and Dan Luecke have been mentioned as possible speakers in this session (Tom Pitts said he can't be available on the 20<sup>th</sup>).
  - j. Reports status – Angela Kantola distributed an updated reports due list.
6. Report to Congress – Angela Kantola reported that the Service's contacts in Washington say the report has been in the Solicitor's Office for some time, and has now apparently been misplaced. As best as we understand it, the report has been through agency review and the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs; after the Solicitor, it goes to the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Management who sends it to OMB, then it goes to the Secretary for signature. John Shields or others may follow up with a contact in Interior.
7. Proposed amendments to the Recovery Programs' legislation – Tom Pitts said they made the one change to the draft legislation requested by Brad Warren, and then the legislation was sent back to the Congressional contacts. Tom said he hopes this will get introduced soon, then we'll start seeking cosponsors and to get a hearing, with the intent of getting it passed this year. Tom said they've requested a review copy when it comes back from legislative

drafting (before it is introduced); when that copy is received, Tom Pitts will circulate it to the Management Committee. Tom Iseman said the environmental groups have been concerned about how we define facilities; they would like “adjacent impacted infrastructure” removed. Tom Pitts said that at the very least, they will try to clarify the meaning in the report language. Tom Iseman said perhaps this can be revisited when the legislative draft comes back. Dave Mazour said the concerns they expressed on the April 28, 2008, conference call still remain; if the legislation doesn’t pass this year, Dave said they would like to see the subsequent process more closely follow the protocol they’d originally envisioned (introduction after the report to Congress, full Implementation Committee review and discussion, etc.). Dave added that the Implementation Committee seems to have turned over many of its responsibilities to the Management Committee, but believes we need to reconsider whether policy decisions shouldn’t be made by the Implementation Committee.

8. Information and Education Update – Debbie Felker gave a brief update on I&E activities. There’s a big story on the Ouray National Fish Hatchery in the Vernal Express today. Plans for the July 1 Grand Valley dedication and tour are well underway. John Shields will be the master of ceremonies. Commissioner Bob Johnson will speak, as will Bryan Arroyo from the Service. Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett may be coming. Jay Slack and Carol DeAngelis and likely Bob Muth also will speak.
9. Upcoming Management Committee tasks, schedule next meeting – August 12 from 9:30 – 3:30 p.m. near DIA. >The Program Director’s office will arrange a meeting room. Agenda items will include: 1) prioritized list of nonnative fish workshop recommendations; 2) revising the RIPRAP table to include the RIPRAP assessment in future years; 3) any work plan updates/revisions (2009 is the second year of our existing 2008-2009 work plan).

ADJOURN 4:00 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; but pending decisions on dam rehabilitation.*
2. The **Program Director’s office** will provide a more specific recommendation regarding establishing a basinwide recovery/conservation oversight team for the endangered fishes.
3. 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). *Pending receipt of final report.*

RIPRAP items:

5. **Clayton Palmer** will provide proposed additional language for 29, IA3d no later than Friday, April 4.
6. 35, IIIA1b2b,c: **Tom Blickensderfer** will talk to CDOW and get a submission date for the Yampa Aquatic Management Plan (*done*) and upper Yampa River strategy and report to the Program Director's office no later than Friday, April 4.
7. A report will be made to the **Management Committee** at June next meeting on a cost estimate for the Duchesne River transit loss and recommendations for the scope of the habitat study. *Deferred.*
8. **The Program Director's** office will provide a revised RIPRAP assessment to the Committee by c.o.b., Friday, April 4 with comments due no later than April 11. *Done.* They will revise the RIPRAP text and tables to make them consistent with changes made to the RIPRAP assessment. *Pending.* **Brent Uilenberg** will provide revised RIPRAP budget table ASAP. *Pending outcome of capital funds indexing discussions.*

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9. The **Program Director's office** will update the FY 06-07 screen and passage O&M scopes of work so USBR-SLC can obligate FY 08 funds; then will work with the operators later in the season to refine these scopes of work. *In draft.*

New assignments:

1. The **Service** will finalize and distribute the sufficient progress memo in June.
2. **Angela Kantola** will investigate "track changes" in Excel, and into printing options to reduce a RIPRAP-with-assessment table to letter size.
3. The prioritized list of nonnative fish workshop recommendations will come to the **Management Committee** after it goes through the Biology and I&E committees.
4. **Tom Chart** will finalize the Yampa River Nonnative Fish Management Strategy, distribute it, and make sure it gets posted on the website.
5. **Debbie Felker** will follow up on a CROS press release (*done*) (along with the potential for a bigger story, perhaps for the SLC Tribune series).
6. **Brent Uilenberg and Angela Kantola** will set up a conference call with Chuck McAda and Bob Norman to determine the appropriate next steps for repairs at the Grand Valley hatchery facility. (*Done; contractor visited facility June 12 and will be providing rough cost estimate.*)

7. The **Program Director's office** will arrange a meeting room for the next Management Committee meeting on August 12 from 9:30 – 3:30 p.m. near DIA.

Attendees  
Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado  
June 4, 2008

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
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ( <i>Bob Muth has been acting for Carol Taylor in the month following her retirement; USFWS has not yet appointed a new representative to the Management Committee</i> )	
Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
John Reber	National Park Service
Tom Iseman	The Nature Conservancy
Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration (via phone)

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
Tom Chart	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Debbie Felker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Jana Mohrman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (via phone)
Terry Hickman	Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association