

Management Committee Webinar Summary, April 27th, 8:30 am – 1:30 pm**CONVENED: 8:33 AM MT**

1. Introductions & requests to modify agenda--the agenda was modified as reads below.
(See attendance list at end of summary.)
2. Post-2023 update
 - a. Public Private Partnership Update – Jojo La reminded the Committee that this was part of the Post-2023 activities looking for possible funding sources. The Nature Conservancy brought its experience to help develop this idea for the Program. It involved 3 phases: 1) look for potential partners to be involved 2) see where the Program might intersect with such a partnership and 3) gain approval from the MC. Edalin Koziol said TNC has conducted some preliminary feasibility reviews. The most promising options appear to be where program activities have a nexus with tribal interests and renewable energy. A key next step will be talking with tribal representatives and the Post-2023 funding group. Edalin summarized by adding that this sort of partnership might be best viewed as supplemental to core activities of a future program. Tom Pitts asked about how this concept might intersect with capital projects. Edalin agreed that those projects appear to be the best fit for this partnership. Tom also recommended coordinating with the SJRIP about their capital list being developed and asked about potential funders. Edalin said they are still brainstorming this area, but perhaps corporate foundations would be interested to further their environmental efforts. Edalin added that Nancy Smith (TNC) is watching for new federal options that might present an opportunity. Leslie James pointed out that there are many tribes who participate in the CRSP and asked for more details on how the partnership could apply to them. Edalin answered that projects being implemented by tribes or on their lands that have a recovery program benefit are what they thought might be options. Jojo added that Nancy has been aware of the tribal nexus with CRSP hydropower, but most of the effort has been directed at identifying potential donors. Jojo said the next steps are to discuss this more in depth at the Post-2023 Funding Group. They also plan to give an update to the San Juan Recovery Program's Coordination Committee (CC).
 - b. Benefits Analysis – Val Deppe (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation [USBR]) presented an analysis USBR completed to analyze the program beneficiaries as a basis for a possible future funding structure. First, USBR identified federal projects and summarized the 10-year average water releases by purpose (e.g., M&I, irrigation, hydropower, ESA). USBR then compiled the non-federal projects and then totaled all water releases and diversions by purpose and estimated the federal/non-federal proportional allocation of benefits from the recovery programs. USBR also allocated the releases and uses by state. USBR

assessed three scenarios, including all releases (scenario 1), removal of ESA releases (scenario 2), and removal of ESA and power releases (scenario 3). USBR examined a funding scenario based on Scenario 2 assuming an annual RIP funding cost of \$8.64M (FY2020). USBR divided the \$8.64M by applying the tool developed to allocate potential funding proportions. Steve Wolff thanked USBR for putting the analysis together and thought that down the road, it could be revised with other stakeholder input to create a useful tool. Jojo thanked Valerie and Kathy Callister and others for their efforts. Jojo said they are looking to work with USBR and provide a little more information about in-kind contributions and other efforts. Todd Adams asked if the San Juan portion for Utah was included. Valerie said it does include both recovery programs. Tom Pitts said this is a very complex analysis and noted there is room for discussion about assumptions. He requested distribution of the tables as well as a description of the analysis to help further understanding, including a list of assumptions that were used to get to the figures. Valerie noted there is a tab that describes some of the steps that were taken. Tom Pitts asked how tribal uses of water were assessed. Valerie says they were not treated differently than any other depletion; she noted they were put into irrigation or M&I based on how they were listed in the depletion table. Valerie confirmed that a similar presentation will be made at the upcoming San Juan Program Coordination Committee meeting as well. She said there are many discussions that could stem from this analysis. Kathy is willing to set up conversations to help further the understanding of this analysis. Tom Pitts asked that those conversations occur after the participants have time to assess this tool. Melissa Trammell asked if the tool will be shared with the Management Committee and noted this will take extensive study. Tom Pitts asked if this was done for the GCDAMP. Valerie said it was not, and one is not currently planned. Tom Chart mentioned that this may be brought up at the Implementation Committee meeting tomorrow (April 28) and asked if it could be characterized as Steve Wolff noted earlier, as a tool that could be used for future discussions. Ed Warner emphasized that the analysis is not a proposal, it is only a tool that could be used to support discussion after the MC has the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the tool. >Valerie will send this to Julie for distribution to the MC. *Done via email, April 27.*

- c. Funding Group Status and schedule – Michelle Garrison said the Funding Group started by looking at how the hydropower revenues might apply to the Program, and then all possible funding sources that might be applied in the future. The annual funding is the biggest piece that needs to be addressed. Michelle mentioned the states have developed a high-level proposal to serve as a basis for discussion. The May 3 Funding Group meeting will wrap up the remaining “cut sheets.” The next step will be to identify the duration being requested for the authorization. Then the Funding Group will begin looking at cross-program efficiencies. They expect to finish the process this September in time to prepare a draft report for the Secretary of the Interior this autumn. Leslie asked if the MC will address an extension for the Report to Congress (see next agenda item) in the

Program's authorizing legislation. Tom Chart recognized that the Funding Group agreed to use the State's proposal as its working document and asked if that is how this should be referenced to the IC meeting tomorrow. Steve Wolff characterized the states' proposal as just that, and he thought all options are still up for consideration. Todd Adams agreed. Tom Pitts indicated that he felt the state proposal is a good starting point for development of a consensus recommendation.

- d. Report to Congress update – Don Anderson reminded the group that the Secretary of Interior is expected to submit a report in September 2021 under current legislation. Tom Pitts said a one-year extension will be sought. Don identified that it would be ideal to have a year for Secretary's review before submission to Congress. The PDO shared the draft with the MC and CC for feedback and input. Don appreciated the feedback, given the reviewers' experience working with Congress and previous reports. The most recent draft has been reduced for brevity, based on the feedback received in January 2021.
3. D.C. Briefings – Steve Wolff said they were able to have virtual briefings with most of the congressional offices and committees/subcommittee the non-federal participants typically see (24 total). They still need to meet with OMB and DOI. Tom Pitts added they typically brief the directorates of BOR and USFWS, and they still plan on scheduling those. The message from the non-federal partners was that the broad coalition is working together in these programs. Because of the continual changes in congressional and administration personnel, these briefings are important every year. The group gave updates on the status of the fish (Badame and Miller). They also mentioned ESA compliance and the proposed downlistings for razorback sucker and humpback chub, which was well received. Tom Pitts explained that the partners gave briefings on needed amendments to the programs' authorizing legislation. Tom thought they received a favorable reception and the participants were impressed with our accomplishments. Steve noted strong participation by Tribal representatives and expressed appreciation for their attendance in these meetings. Leslie called attention to the fact that CREDA did not participate in the meetings this year. She noted CREDA's continued support for the \$10M in USBR appropriations that is authorized through the Dingell Act. CREDA supported this knowing that the President's budget has not yet been released. CREDA noted that the talking points put out relative to the DC trip may have been contrary to the Board resolution supporting appropriations through Dingell. Leslie said if this program is going to continue on a consensus basis, conversations are needed to determine if consensus has been reached before changes are made to Dingell. Steve said the group was put in a strange situation this year because they usually support the President's budget; this year the budget has not been released. He noted he understands the problems with the Basin Fund and understands Leslie's position. Leslie asked if a request was made to change legislation. Tom Pitts said the group asked for restoration of language allowing for hydropower funding, but they did not recommend removing the Dingell language that supports BOR appropriations. In late 2020, Tom Pitts was told by WAPA staff that WAPA

has the intention of funding the programs in FY22 so the group was trying to remain flexible. Leslie noted a concern about making a specific ask without having a discussion about specific language in this group. Tom Pitts recommended restoring hydropower funding authorization language that was deleted in the passage of Dingell to increase our funding options. Steve said specific language needs to be drafted and assessed by the non-federal partners once the President's budget has been released. Steve understands Leslie's position and thanked her for bringing it back for the group. Edalin thanked the group for the conversation. Katie Duncan is working on drafting language for the partners to consider addressing the Report deadline extension, the funding language, and extension to 2024 for capital funds only to allow USBR to make a budget request. Jojo asked for Leslie's thoughts on how to frame that language. Katie Duncan asked if the language in Dingell were revised, would WAPA be in a position to provide funding for the recovery programs. Shane Capron said there is a possibility that the authority would be there in the future. He noted many ongoing conversations are occurring in WAPA in trying to figure these things out. Shane noted the next few years are looking very dire, and WAPA is concerned that the basin fund will continue to be stressed by poor hydrology.

4. Program Director's Update –

- a. Federal Register updates- Tom Chart reminded the Committee that the humpback chub proposed rule went out for public comment in January 2020. The draft Final Rule is in Headquarters review. The proposed rule for razorback sucker is still in DC undergoing review and was delayed with the transition between administrations. It has cleared FWS review. The next steps are to be signed by DOI leadership before publication in the Federal Register. Tom McDowell said we are still learning about timelines and expectations with the new administration, so it is difficult to predict how much time these will take.
- b. RIPRAP—Tom Chart reminded the group that Julie sent out a package for review on March 10th. The process will involve electronic review and comments being submitted via email by May 14, in coordination with technical committee representatives' input. The PDO requests comments be compiled into a single submission from each partner (MC and technical comments combined, please).

5. Recovery Plan Implementation Process and Recovery Plan Overview – Craig Hansen is the Legacy Region 6 Recovery Coordinator for FWS, and has assisted with SSAs and the development of the proposed rules. Craig explained that the ESA generally requires recovery plans for listed species. The recovery plan provides guidance on how to achieve recovery, but it is not a regulatory document. Recovery plans includes activities, actions, and how to evaluate progress towards criteria that may indicate a species can be reclassified. The plan should be developed with input from partners, but ultimately represents the views of FWS. Recovery plans do not create legal obligations beyond existing legal requirements. Craig

reviewed the definitions of threatened and endangered under ESA Section 4. Recovery criteria can assist in determining whether a species meets the Section 4 definitions for a species' status. Recovery plans can be revised based on new information or changes in species status, but those revisions may require public review and comment via a Federal Register notice. The Service's RPI (Recovery Planning Implementation) process makes updates easier and more efficient. Recovery Plans are required to include 1) site-specific management actions 2) objective and measurable criteria and 3) estimates of time and cost. The recent shift to RPI makes recovery planning more nimble and compiles scientific information in the SSA. RPI partitions recovery planning into three parts: 1) an SSA (Species Status Assessment) 2) the recovery plan and 3) a RIS (Recovery Implementation Strategy). The SSA informs the recovery plan, which includes legally required components. The plan is then used to develop the RIS. The SSA and RIS can be updated as needed, whereas the Recovery Plan may require publication in the Federal Register and public comment. Under RPI, recovery plan actions are expected to be more visionary and higher level. Specific on-the-ground activities are described in the RIS, allowing for activities to be more fluid and adaptable. Steve asked if the MC could have a copy of the slides. > *A copy of Craig's presentation was distributed, via email 4/27.* Edalin asked about opportunities for collaboration in the RPI process. Craig said that input can come in many places in the process, but at a minimum in public comment. (Also see item #8 below). The Committee thanked Craig for his presentation.

6. USBR Modeling of GREAT Report and potential effects on Lake Powell – Malcolm Wilson, Jim Prairie, and Conor Felleter. Malcolm explained that the GREAT report recommended some updated activities at Flaming Gorge Dam to benefit endangered fishes. These include 1) Larval Trigger Study Plan (LTSP) 2) smallmouth bass flow spikes and 3) revised summer base flow targets to improve Colorado pikeminnow juvenile survival. WAPA asked for analyses of these recommendations and how they might affect the hydropower resource. There was also a request to analyze whether the proposed GREAT actions might influence Lake Powell elevations. Conor and Jim have been modeling these activities to assist in answering the information requests. Conor explained that the GREAT report included CRSS modeling that covered the ROD operations and the GREAT experiments. Those models did not include current FWS and WAPA requests under the ROD, nor updated drought hydrology that USBR considers the “stress test” hydrology. The current modeling does include both full hydrology (1906-2018) and the drier stress test hydrology (1988-2018). It also incorporates drought response operations and extends through 2040. The baseline model includes ROD operations and flow requests as described in the ROD (base and winter flows) that are constrained by the May 1 target reservoir elevation. The experimental models include adding LTSP with 2000 cfs/day downramp rates, smallmouth bass flow spikes, and Colorado pikeminnow base flows. Pikeminnow base flows are generally higher than current ROD targets in average to dry years, and lower flows in wetter hydrologies. Flaming Gorge median

outflows change slightly between the two modeled scenarios. The potential effects of the GREAT experiments at Lake Powell are minor, with only occasional changes in operational tiers. The experiments at Flaming Gorge rarely lead to changes in Glen Canyon Dam release volumes. Conor then went into detail about the projected risk of falling below certain 10-year release volume thresholds for each model scenario. Edalin asked where water might come from for the GREAT experiments. Malcolm said that all of the water is coming from USBR project water, and that water would come from moving monthly release volumes. Melissa asked if the modeling was constrained by the May 1st elevation target. Malcolm confirmed it was. Melissa asked if the drought operations were also included. Malcolm said that drought operation releases were part of the authorized purposes under CRSP Act. Conor explained that the model addresses drought operations by increasing hydrologic categories under which releases are determined. The MC requested that USBR share the slides with the group.

>Done via email, 4/27. Steve asked if drought operations were incorporated since they have not been implemented before. Conor said that the model does include drought operations based on 24-month study projections for Lake Powell elevations. Jojo asked if there would also be a written explanation. Conor said USBR shared the results with WAPA and did not plan to author a report. Jojo said it would be good to capture what analysis was performed and memorialize the information. Tom Chart asked whether the question from the states on Lake Powell effects has been answered satisfactorily. Steve said he had the information he needed. Steve asked if USBR could provide some confirmation of the analysis to the PDO to document how the analysis was completed. Malcolm said USBR has provided a summary of the assumptions used in the models to the PDO and WAPA. Edalin agreed a summary would be helpful and said she would be interested in seeing when drought operations were activated in the modeling. Jim Prairie thought it might be possible to include a frequency of drought operations for each future year. Leslie thanked Malcolm for his many years of service and acknowledged his pending retirement. The Committee added their support for Malcolm's many efforts and wished him well in his retirement. The Committee also thanked Jim, Malcolm and Conor for the modeling efforts.

7. Next meeting – Julie asked the Committee about options for future meetings, specifically whether we envision an in-person meeting being feasible in Aug/Sept. Steve suggested we plan for such a meeting. Todd agreed. >Julie will send a Doodle. Tom Chart asked if there is a possibility for the MC to meet in person to work through the funding proposals, as early as June. Tom asked if the Committee thought such a meeting would be helpful. Steve thought a face to face meeting would be useful. Jojo agreed. Jojo asked whether this meeting would include the CC or just the MC. Tom Chart was proposing having the MC focus on the Upper Colorado Program funding solution as a first step. Tom Pitts did not feel there could be separate proposals. Steve asked Colleen for her perspective. Colleen thought a joint meeting would be good, but New Mexico cannot travel out of state. Leslie supported an in-person meeting and asked whether NM employees could participate in any in-person meeting

regardless of location. Colleen was unsure of the specific guidelines and added that they are in flux. Tom Chart thought an outdoor venue or large space allowing for distancing might be a workable solution. Steve suggested Tom Chart coordinate with the SJRIP. Tom Pitts expressed concern that June was about a month away, and there is still uncertainty regarding the pandemic's status. Jojo mentioned that the Platte Program made important progress by using a moderator / facilitator. Michelle proposed that scheduling for a later date might make an in-person meeting more attainable.

8. Update on Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan – Tildon Jones described that the Colorado pikeminnow recovery team has met 4 times to discuss the revised recovery plan. The team is working on demographic criteria at this time, including revising the metrics used in the SSA for the species. We expect the Implementation Team for the recovery plan will include the MC and CC, which will develop time and cost estimates to accomplish the site-specific management actions from the draft recovery plan. This input will be included in the recovery implementation strategy (RIS) as well as the time and cost estimates which will be included in the recovery plan. The MC and CC will be afforded time to review the draft recovery plan at that time. Our hope is that the plan will be ready for review this winter. Jojo asked if any new actions had been requested by the team. Tildon responded that the recovery team has not discussed site specific management actions yet, but that in response to declining populations the Recovery Program has been collecting Colorado pikeminnow to develop a broodstock, in case stocking the species is needed in the future.

9. Flaming Gorge Updates
 - a. 2021 Operational Plan – Tom Chart summarized that the Program has submitted the flow request, and USBR has held two public meetings to refine the operation plan for Flaming Gorge Dam. The focus is on the dry/moderately dry scenario which has a smallmouth bass flow spike as the priority. We think this would likely take place in mid to late June, with 3 days at powerplant capacity and cooler water using the Selective Withdrawal Structure. The Program's second priority is to supplement base flows to improve Colorado pikeminnow survival. USBR's most recent modelling indicates that summer base flows will be lower than anticipated, due to increasingly dry hydrology. In anticipation of dry hydrology and limited availability of water, the Recovery Program requested that USBR revert to Muth et al. targets for the spring peak release, i.e., forego the larval trigger experiment. The PDO is working with UDWR to develop outreach for the flow spike experiment to communicate with anglers in the tailrace reach below the dam, since they would be most interested and potentially affected by this operation. Shane said WAPA has supported the experiments in the past, but WAPA is disappointed in how this has worked out. WAPA only recently received monthly volumes from USBR's modeling to analyze the hydropower operations, and they anticipate hydropower costs might increase based on decreases in hydrology and high energy rates. Shane

suggested changes in notification and decision points might be needed to better inform the process. Leslie said she learned much about the Flaming Gorge decision process by attending the Working Group meetings. She also said the information is not always available for assessing impacts until late in the year, and it is complicated by the many units in the CRSP system. Jojo asked if there was a way for the MC to review the hydropower analysis. Shane said WAPA is providing comments to USBR for the Operations Plan and will make that available to the MC. Jojo asked if there was written report for the hydropower impacts analysis. Shane said they have been working with changing numbers for volumes and the analysis has changed with those underlying data. Melissa asked about the expected timelines for the hydropower analysis and the original deadline for this report. She also expressed concern about costs being an overriding consideration in implementing experiments. Finally, she asked about using experiments to provide water to Lake Powell in an attempt to avoid drought operations next year. Tom Chart explained that we did consider impacts when developing our annual flow request, e.g., foregoing the LTSP experiment in favor of the smallmouth bass flow spike based on the best available information. Tom offered, in the future, to provide an assessment of the recovery benefits of these experiments to assist WAPA in determining the overall cost. Shane explained the difficult financial situation that WAPA is experiencing this year, and that the costs of Flaming Gorge experiments are considered reimbursable (passed on to the customers) unlike those at Glen Canyon dam that are considered non-reimbursable. Melissa stressed the importance of finding an acceptable way to implement flow spikes in the future, since they could be an important tool, particularly in drier years. Edalin agreed and recognized that these experiments are important in an adaptive management context.

- b. GREAT Report - update on GREAT hydropower analysis – Derek Fryer thanked USBR for their earlier model presentation and the work that went into the modeling. WAPA has contracted Argonne to work on the larger hydropower analysis for the GREAT report recommendations. Derek anticipates a draft from Argonne in August. Derek said they requested the CRSS models in fall 2019 but were only able to get those data in early 2021 after working through the assumptions and parameters associated with the modeling.
- c. Green River Stakeholders – Todd requested we share Conor’s presentation with the Green River stakeholders. Jojo asked about the management plan referenced in HCR1. Todd explained the group wants to work on flooding, sediment erosion, and working with the fish, but Utah DNR has not received specifics in writing. Tom Chart talked about how the resolution emphasized the need for open communication, and he recognized USBR’s outreach efforts via the Flaming Gorge Working Group (FGWG). From the March FGWG meeting, Tom felt the participants generally agreed that the Working Group was and would be the forum to continue that open communication. Tom also mentioned some of the stakeholders presented information on the resolution to the Board of the Colorado River Water Conservation District and solicited their (the Board’s) support. District

General Manager Andy Mueller agreed to set up a small team to better understand the Stakeholder's Resolution.

10. Capital Projects Update – Ryan provided an update on capital projects and provided a tracking spreadsheet via email to the list-serv. *>Also distributed via email with other attachments prior to the meeting.* The Ridgway spillway screen appears to be on schedule for construction this autumn. The Red Fleet koanda screen is scheduled for the modifications later this year. The Starvation Reservation screen has been through a value engineering study, and results will be forthcoming. The Stirrup floodplain renovation project is still moving along through NEPA and permitting, with construction anticipated this summer or fall. There is also a proposal for significant repairs to the water control structures at the Old Charley floodplain being developed for future consideration. Ryan said he plans to schedule a meeting with members of the Grand Valley Irrigation Co. to discuss ideas for fish screen improvements. Reclamation is also working on a new powerplant project for the Grand Valley powerplant, with additional funds from a grant.

11. Consideration of NFWF Fund approval for Elkhead water – Don presented a funding request to lease water from Elkhead Reservoir this summer. Don reviewed 2018 Yampa River hydrology and Elkhead Res. fish pool releases. He reminded the group that the Program has 5000 ac-ft available each year with the option to lease an additional 2,000 ac-ft. In 2018, even with the entire 7,000 ac-ft available, the Program was unable to maintain minimum flow targets but provided much better conditions than if the supplemental water had not been available. This year, we can only lease ~ 1200 ac-ft because we have some carryover water from 2020. Therefore, at a cost of \$50/ac-ft the request in front of the MC is for an expense of ~\$60K from the Section 7 NFWF account. Don reminded the MC that the Program did not use any of the approved funds last year for leasing Ruedi Reservoir water to support Colorado River flows. Todd Adams asked about the carryover amounts in Elkhead and how it relates to the current request. Don confirmed the carryover water is available, reducing the total amount required to lease the full amount for this year. Melissa asked about the Colorado River District and their activities in the Yampa Basin, specifically that the District recently approved funding for a pilot project to support Yampa River flows this year with additional releases from Elkhead Reservoir. Don explained that the water was from a different pool and would not be specifically for listed fish. The District is attempting to alleviate the impacts of the river going under administration for a third year since 2018, but it appears those flows would have some fish benefits in the reach where they are being delivered. Michelle added that some of the details should be available later this week, but specifics are still being discussed. Don also mentioned the Colorado Water Trust has applied for funds from the Yampa River Fund to assist with 2021 flows in the Yampa, but those discussions are also underway. Steve thanked Don for the summary he sent to the committee. The Committee

approved Don's funding request. Earlier in the meeting Tom Pitts approved the request for a 2021 Elkhead Reservoir lease before he left the meeting.

12. Approval of meeting summaries – the committee approved the revised December 2020 and February 2021 summaries provided.

Tom McDowell thanked the group for the experience in working with this committee and offered kudos to the group.

ADJOURNED: 1:07 PM

Attachment 1: Meeting Attendees

In Attendance:

Steve Wolff, chair	State of Wyoming
Todd Adams	State of Utah
Michelle Garrison	State of Colorado
Jojo La	State of Colorado
Tom Pitts	Water Users
Edalin Koziol	The Nature Conservancy
Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distributors Assoc.
Shane Capron	Western Area Power Administration
Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
Ryan Christianson	U.S. Bureau of USBR
Kathy Callister	Bureau of USBR
Tom McDowell (Acting for Marj Nelson)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Chart (non-voting)	Program Director, Upper Colorado Program

Upper Colorado Program Office Staff:

Kevin McAbee	Nonnative Fish Coordinator
Julie Stahl	Deputy Director
Don Anderson	Instream Flow Coordinator
Melanie Fischer	I&E Coordinator
Tildon Jones	Habitat Coordinator

Interested Parties:

Dave Speas	Bureau of USBR
Derek Fryer	Western Area Power Administration
Chris Keleher	State of Utah
Colleen Cunningham	State of New Mexico
Bart Leeflang	Central Utah Water
Katie Duncan	Colorado AG's office
Ed Warner	Bureau of USBR
Greg Johnson	State of Colorado
Paul Badame	State of Utah
Valerie Deppe	Bureau of USBR
Craig Hansen	USFWS
Conor Felletter	Bureau of USBR
Christopher Breidenbach	Colorado AGs Office
Rob Billerbeck	NPS
James Prairie	Bureau of USBR
Malcom Wilson	Bureau of USBR