

**Biology Committee Webinar Summary  
February 2, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm (MST)**

**BC Members:** Dale Ryden (chair), Pete Cavalli, Jenn Logan, AJ Keith, Tom Pitts, Derek Fryer, Sarah Seegert

**Participants:** Kevin Bestgen, Katie Creighton, Darek Elverud, Travis Francis, Matt Breen, Mike Gross, Kate Lawry, Cat Adams, Tyler Swarr, Jared Smith, Don Tuttle, Colleen Cunningham, Lee Traynham, Sam Brockdorff, Tory Eyre, Saidee Hyder, Brian Scheer, Zane Olsen, Chris Smith, Ben Felt, Kristina Morben, Ed Kluender, Kara Scheel, Mike Berg, Ben Williams, Matt Haworth

**Program Director's Office:** Julie Stahli, Tildon Jones, Kevin McAbee, Paul Badame, Koreen Zelasko, David Graf, Shannon Nelson, Chris Michaud, Emily Berchem

**CONVENE: 8:30 am MST**

**Introductions & requests to modify agenda** – The agenda was revised prior to the meeting

Matt Breen provided personnel updates from the Utah Division of Wildlife (UDWR) Vernal field office. Two new biologists were hired this winter. Saidee Hyder will take over the projects that Mike Partlow previously led, including management of Stewart Lake. Josue Hernandez will run projects previously led by Keena Elbin. In addition, UDWR-Vernal hired a new maintenance technician, Ben Carswell. Matt Breen announced that his last day with the UDWR serving as the Vernal Project Leader for Aquatic Recovery and Conservation programs would be March 10. Matt worked with UDWR for 15 years and served in the Project Leader role for the 12 years. The Committee and the Program Director's Office (PDO) gave thanks to Matt for his dedication and wide array of contributions to the Recovery Program.

Jenn Logan introduced new staff at Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW). She introduced Tyler Swarr who will oversee bonytail stocking and projects on the Yampa and White rivers. Kristina Morben joined as a new biologist stationed in Grand Junction. Rachel Gonzalez will join the Outreach Committee representing CPW.

**Program Director's update** – Julie Stahli shared with the group that the federal partners and states are nearing an agreement for the post-2023 reauthorization legislation and funding. The Sufficient Progress memo is moving through FWS Regional Director's approval process. She then shared an update that the 15-MR flow recommendations planning process held their kickoff meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was well attended, and participants were happy with the path that Tom Chart and Don Anderson have laid out. Julie asked for assistance from the group in spreading future outreach messages that will be coming out this year. Shannon Nelson is working with FWS Office of Communications to release a series of recovery program success stories throughout this year.

**Razorback monitoring 2023** – Koreen Zelasko relayed follow-up information regarding capture and data collection for razorback sucker during Colorado pikeminnow abundance estimation

sampling in the Green River this year. At the last meeting, it was agreed that this year's priority would be encountering wild-produced individuals (both tagged and untagged). The most likely location for that is the middle Green reach, where processing all razorback suckers has become unmanageable on some days. Kevin Bestgen and Donald Tuttle (LFL, CSU) will provide two crew members to allow for a chase boat that will aid processing. LFL wants the committee and all involved to understand this will come at some cost to their Yampa River sampling, but should be minimal, since they don't need to provide boat operators. The additional help will (1) determine if it's possible to process all razorback suckers encountered during the normal course of pikeminnow sampling in that reach and, if so, (2) identify the resources needed to attain that level of effort in future years.

Razorback Stocking Discussion: Koreen opened a conversation about future stocking needs relative to achieving monitoring objectives. Sampling and fully processing all the razorback sucker encountered during the normal course of Colorado pikeminnow abundance estimation sampling, specifically in the middle Green River, are challenging due to the number of fish encountered. Furthermore, physical sampling included in past analyses, and even the addition of antenna detections during the most recent sampling period, produced very few recaptures, resulting in very imprecise population estimates with little value. All of this may indicate a large population in the Green River, where each individual fish does not have a high likelihood of encounter. After juvenile production from the 2022 Green River wetlands, we want to be able to find wild-produced fish (both tagged and untagged) and potentially measure that recruitment. Koreen asked the group if we are we going to hamper that effort by continuing to stock razorback sucker at current levels in the Green River.

Dale Ryden noted that changes to stocking levels for razorbacks would need approximately two years of lead time due to grow-out time and the number of fish currently in production.

Regarding the difficulty in scanning all razorback sucker encountered, Kate Lawry said they mounted a PIT tag reader to their boat's electrofishing boom and scanned the fish in the net after capture and then returned them to the river without direct handling. This method meant they couldn't record lengths and weights, but they do have PIT tag numbers and locations to calculate recaptures. Although this rapid release method was successful, there were lingering concerns about the loss of focus in capturing pikeminnow, which were extremely rare events in places like Desolation Canyon, therefore the method was discontinued. Travis Francis said they typically see 3-5% untagged razorback now and it may be time to take a different strategy to see if that level changes with adjustments to stocking numbers. Julie Stahli asked if Koreen has thoughts about whether the recommendation would be to change the stocking on the Green and Colorado or just the Green. She noted the sampling issue and potential to encounter wild-produced individuals are currently on the Green River. Koreen also recalled the survival estimate spreadsheet that she produced while working for CSU that estimates future population size based on stocking numbers and survival rates. Koreen entered into the spreadsheet a hypothetical existing population of 30,000 fish and added 6,000 each year with survival rates of 0.46 in their first years and 0.80 in subsequent years (the most robust rates estimated for 350-mm-TL fish stocked in autumn, the most common scenario). That population would plateau around 20,000 fish over 30 years. If we reduced stocking to 3,000 fish, the population would plateau around

10,000 fish. Dale inquired if we need to add the topic to a subsequent agenda. Koreen recommended waiting to see what information on wild-produced fish results from this year's full effort in the middle Green River.

**White River Management Plan update** – David Graf discussed the status of the White River Management Plan. David provided a summary of what a PBO does, which can provide programmatic coverage so water depletion projects can go through streamlined compliance for implementation. Most of the plan is complete now and we are looking to engage in a discussion around management actions that can occur in the White. Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker are the primary species, but all species are continued. The Management Plan reflects the decisions outlined in the Phased Approach Document. Phase 1 was designed to contemplate additional agricultural use, municipal & industrial use, cultural and habitat maintenance, and energy development. Phase 2 would be considered once depletions reach the limits contemplated or Wolf Creek Reservoir is permitted. The amount of depletions considered in Phase 1 is substantially less than both the 15 Mile Reach PBO and the Yampa River PBOs. Those depletions are planned to be offset by management actions and conservation measures. A few other organizations are also working in the White River to create improvements. David reviewed the content of the management plan and a schedule for finalization. The document components, specifically with regard to management actions needs to go through the technical and Management committees. David needs feedback from the BC on management actions that fall into three categories: what we are already doing, what is hypothetical and not feasible, what we should be working on to enhance recovery of the listed species in the White River.

**Nonnative Fish 2022 summary and 2023 planning** – Kevin McAbee reviewed the highlights of the nonnative fish summaries presented during the Researcher's meeting. The bullets below are Kevin's notes for this discussion.

- Thanks to Sam Brockdorff for presenting the walleye work. He described higher captures of young walleye this year than previous years.
  - The capture of 15 juvenile (<300mm) walleye during 2022 work is important.
  - In project 126 two fish less than 300mm collected, which were aged to year-1 by Ike.
  - This is something we will need to monitor in future years. If we begin to catch more young walleye, we may need to spend more time investigating if in-river recruitment is occurring or if smaller fish are emigrating from reservoirs.
  - We continue to catch large numbers of walleye during pikeminnow population estimates, but our catch rates are much higher in targeted removal. This speaks to the benefit of both projects for removing walleye.
- Thanks to Tory Eyre for presenting the northern pike work. He described the success we are having in reducing pike numbers.
  - Northern pike catch rates continue to decline in the Yampa River.
    - Backwater gillnetting catch rate was lowest since inception and electrofishing resulted in the lowest or 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest catch rates since inception.
    - It appears that the northern pike population is expanding in Lily Park in years where catch rates are generally decreasing in other reaches.
  - Backwater gillnetting work will transition to CSU/FWS next year.

- We continue to recommend re-gaining access to the 151 backwater.
  - Conducting another northern pike mark-recapture study in the middle Yampa is warranted to statistically verify the decline in catch rates. CSU/CPW recommend this occurs in 2025 when pikeminnow abundance estimates are complete.
  - Northern pike are present but uncommon in other reaches in the Green River basin.
  - In the Colorado River crews typically remove one or no northern pike.
  - Containing northern pike in reservoirs is still important. Northern pike continue to be illegally introduced in new water bodies.
    - Mack Mesa was drained and all pike were eliminated.
    - One pike captured in Kenney this year. Rio Blanco Lake was drained.
    - Removal of pike from East Rifle Municipal pond is ongoing. This waterbody would benefit from a screen. >CPW and the PDO will work together to determine if the potential cost would merit addition to the capital projects list.
    - 1,042 pike removed at Catamount, which is a 40% reduction compared to 2021. HOA bought a vegetation mower, which appeared to reduce pike spawning.
- Thanks to Kate Lawry for presenting the smallmouth bass work.
  - Smallmouth bass catches are concerning in certain reaches, as the 2020 year class continues to dominate. Catches of sub-adult bass were very high this year.
    - In the Yampa River, we need to investigate reallocating effort into Lily Park in collaboration with other agencies to suppress the dispersal of Smallmouth Bass into Yampa Canyon. (Similar recommendation for pike in this reach)
    - Smallmouth bass were the most abundant species in Yampa Canyon fish community monitoring for the first time since project 110 began, another indication of smallmouth bass expansion in Yampa Canyon within the past three years. 88% of catch were less than 200mm.
    - Catch rates and estimates did decline from record levels in the Green River, but remain at concerning levels. Increased catch in Gray Canyon is concerning.
    - In the Colorado we documented lower year class production during the last 2 years, despite overall lower hydrology. Specific hydrologic features (double peaks and monsoons) likely suppressed some reproduction.
  - One anomalous location is the White River. Catch rates decreased dramatically in 2022. In addition to natural flow disturbance events, the Taylor Draw Dam's hydroelectric facility was closed for maintenance during the Spring and early Summer in 2021 and 2022. These closures directed most of the reservoir's outflow through the center and right channels immediately downstream of the dam. The resulting increased velocity in these channels likely limited smallmouth bass occupation and spawning in what is optimal habitat and could have contributed to the reduced CPUE recorded in 2022. Kevin McAbee advocated for a solid management plan to monitor the effects of any changes in dam operations at Taylor Draw Dam.

Matt Breen added that reduced White River catch in 2022 could also be attributed to repeated monsoon/flash flood activity in 2021 from July through September, after crews had conducted

removal passes. For the Colorado River reach, Travis added that they are seeing the highest catch rates for adults, with the population extending downstream of Moab (Wall St. Area). Tildon Jones said Kate's analysis showed changes in bass populations that corresponded to geographic reaches with monsoonal/flash flood events. Travis asked if it would be possible to modify Taylor Draw Dam to change how water is released to disadvantage smallmouth bass. David Graf said those conversations have started and those are the things we need to identify as part of the White River planning effort.

- Other species and location of interest
  - No striped bass collected in the Colorado River in 2022.
  - Two burbot and one lake trout were documented this year in the Green River just below Flaming Gorge Dam. Increased outreach to anglers and other forms of monitoring may be warranted to document escapement from Flaming Gorge.
  - Largemouth bass are still common in the Colorado River but are dominated by smaller individuals. Catches have declined in recent years. Screening local water bodies with resident largemouth bass population is highly recommended, such as Clifton Nature Pond and East West Pond. Efforts are ongoing to screen these smaller locations.
- Brown trout catch rates are very high in Lodore Canyon. Kevin Bestgen said this may be a response to the summer base flows we implemented for Colorado pikeminnow. Ed Kluender is happy to provide additional information to any BC members who are interested in further details. >**Ed Kluender** will contact Melissa Trammell to ensure she is aware of those dynamics. As we look to 2023, we need to make some adjustments to work where possible.
  - Increased work in Lily Park, if possible, is advised.
  - Increased removal in Yampa Canyon should be considered in the next work plan.
  - Screening small off-channel ponds on the Colorado is advised using capital funds.
  - We should plan for another abundance estimate of pike in 2025 and continue to work on screening Lake Catamount. Reclamation is currently working on design plans that can be considered for that location.

Sarah Seegert asked if we have a coordinated outreach strategy to talk about the negative effects of illegal introductions. Kevin McAbee said a multi-state group (Fisheries Chiefs within the Colorado River has been working to develop a toolkit to coordinate outreach messages, like what was done with quagga/zebra mussels. The group is currently working on gaining approval from the Fish Chiefs in all the western states. Once that group has something a little more tangible, it will be brought back to our Outreach Committee for consideration. Tom Pitts noted that illegal introductions cause a lot of damage and yet have far more lenient penalties than those for poaching large game species. He recommended considering advocacy for greater penalties within the state framework.

Tom Pitts asked about the zebra mussel infestation at Highline Lake. Ben Felt said CPW is mapping the distribution of mussels, and they are planning a copper-based treatment to attempt eradicating the species. It is a recreational and ecological issue for this reservoir. Highline is the first place in Colorado where this species of invasive mussel has been found.

Travis noted that gizzard shad continues to be a problem along the Colorado River, but the catch rates have declined in recent years. He believes this is because the Colorado has been fairly dry over the last few years which has reduced the amount of backwater and off-channel habitat that is available for in-river reproduction and recruitment.

- PI's discretion in taking smallmouth bass weights – The PDO provided PI's guidance for 2023 and into the future regarding the collection of weights from smallmouth bass. Because the Program does not use weights for any analysis and taking weights is a cumbersome process for the high catches of smallmouth bass, we recommend that PIs no longer take weights for smallmouth bass. If PI's determine they have the time and a warranted need, we support recording weights for a subset of individuals. However, we do not want smallmouth bass weights to cause long days or be prioritized over other data. Pete Cavalli and Dave Speas said they fully supported this recommendation. No BC members objected to this change.
- Proposal for hiatus in tagging in Yampa Canyon – The Vernal FWCO and Kevin McAbee are proposing a hiatus on tagging roundtail chub as part of Yampa Canyon smallmouth bass removal. High catches of smallmouth bass have increased the workload in this project. Low roundtail chub recapture rates produced by this project to date warrant the examination of the utility of PIT-tagging efforts. Roundtail chub marking will likely be a necessary monitoring component if humpback chub is reintroduced, but tagging is not needed until that management action is planned. Jenn Logan said she has discussed this with the Vernal FWCO and supports the change. CPW may attempt three species monitoring passes in the future and that effort would include tagging roundtail.

**Open Discussion of Key Finding from Annual Reports & Researcher's Meeting** – Dale opened the floor to anyone who wanted to discuss key findings from 2022.

Kevin Bestgen relayed that Colorado pikeminnow (CPM) numbers continue to decline in the Green River. Capture numbers are lower than we have seen, but maybe comparable to the low numbers of 2018. There may be a few older individuals persisting, with small numbers of young fish recruiting. Throughout the Green River subbasin, crews captured just over 100 CPM. There was one reach where no individuals were recaptured.

Tildon reviewed a suggestion from the ISMP data collection: to conduct a rapid assessment of sediment conditions in each backwater in concert with the larval collections. In short, this entails setting a transect across a backwater and measuring the total depth from the solid substrate (i.e., the bottom) to the top of the water column as well as the depth of suspended mud/silt to depict the amount of usable habitat within a given backwater. Matt Breen noted that this could be accomplished with the current ISMP staffing levels. It may be a quick way to assess sedimentation in each reach. Sam Brockdorff noted that data may also be relevant to the pikeminnow broodstock collection efforts. Chris Michaud said the Moab office implemented something similar based on a study by Melissa Trammell. He did find the effort valuable but noted that it did take additional time that needed to be accounted for. Katie Creighton agreed that the effects on the Moab UDWR office may be greater than for the Vernal office based on backwater structure and the total mileage covered by the Moab office. Matt Breen said that a

possibility may be to select a subset of habitats to address time constraints and still address the need for this information. >**Tildon Jones** will work with PIs and bring those recommendations back to the BC.

Humpback Chub from Desolation - Kevin McAbee noted that we did successfully collect humpback chub for a refuge population from Desolation Canyon. Three passes collected 25 fish (18 of which remain at the hatchery). Zach Ahrens requested reconvening the Valdez et al group to discuss whether goals can be met based on last year's success rates. >**Kevin McAbee and Katie Creighton** will schedule those discussions during the coming year. One broodstock pass is all that is planned this year. Zane Olsen noted that an Ich outbreak occurred at the Ouray-Randlett hatchery. Pete requested that bass populations and water availability in Yampa Canyon be considered before any stocking plans are finalized.

Wetland Successes in Green River - Tildon acknowledged again the successes in the middle Green wetlands. He thanked all the PIs for the herculean efforts they put in to keep those systems operating. Many of the wetlands have needs to help make managing them easier. >**Tildon Jones** will be coming back to the BC with specific requests for improvements. Katie highlighted the explosion of green sunfish that occurred in Matheson and noted a need for mechanisms to address that problem. Tildon said that the water control gate issues are likely contributing to the green sunfish.

Green River Canal – Reclamation and Tildon would like to meet with the Green River Canal Company to discuss operations and maintenance of the screen and try to find ways to make things easier on them and establish expectations for cleaning and maintenance. Also, there is an opening at the end of the screen that may allow bonytail to jump from the screen into the canal. The number of bonytail documented in the canal remains low, but entrainment is still possible. Changing the height of the metal plate may be possible. Cat Adams said there is also a small gap at the bottom of that plate that should be investigated as well. Pete noted that fish are likely remaining stuck between the screen and the return channel after the big debris flows are done for the season, since Canal Company employees likely remove them daily when debris flows are high – he said that Cat Adams suggested changing water levels may be an option to prevent fish from sitting on the screen for too long (this needs to be put on Reclamation's capital project list).

Fish passage maintenance – The seals have been fixed at Government Highline and there are plans to deal with the sediment bar in front of the passage.

Lake Powell – the Grand Junction office is returning to the San Juan arm this year to see if smaller razorbacks (that do not meet stocking guidelines) can survive in that environment.

DeBeque Canyon – The Grand Junction office is planning to continue to sample in the area around DeBeque to get a better idea of the extent of this humpback chub population. Hoop nets seem like the most appropriate gear. Travis will work with Jenn Logan to coordinate on Three Species (flannelmouth sucker, bluehead sucker, and roundtail chub) efforts that will be occurring in that area this year. Travis noted that six individual humpback chubs were collected this last year and four were fin clipped. All captured fish were untagged. The office will now fin clip all

humpback chub going through the fish passages to give us more genetic information from that group of fish.

**Data management and STReAMS Update** – Chris Michaud shared accomplishments from revisions the Program made to data collection and management in 2022. The bullets below represent Chris’ notes for this meeting.

- Simple - complicated - highly complex -> Reduce complexity increase program efficiency
  - Parse complexity
    - Accidental - reduce - restructure workflows incorporate modern tools
    - Inherent - acknowledge and manage, be transparent
  - Automate whatever possible
- Data collection - 15 digital collection apps -> 1 "standardized" app
  - Inconsistency within and between field offices

Voluntary adoption by the PIs created a standardized app that was used for Project 128 and many nonnative fish projects. The standardization allowed Chris to take most of the repetitive work off the shoulders of the PIs and into the PDO. This allowed for a completely different way of generating information – in some cases that information was while projects were still going. Chris recalled the three summary reports that were presented at the researchers meeting for the large nonnative presentations. This year, all of the information for those reports were provided by Chris in a single file. It allowed the PIs to start answering questions rather than spending time on pulling data together. Chris noted Kate’s presentation that allowed for the incorporation of both flow and temperature data into the smallmouth bass analysis.

- Data processing - above standardization of data collection allowed...
  - Development of code first data processing workflow
    - Collection to STReAMS upload
  - Responsibility of PDO
- Information generation - above bullets and change in submission deadlines
  - Rapid info generation to modify projects in-season/work planning
    - Adapt effort to changing conditions on the ground
  - Standardized figures across projects
    - Reduce cognitive burden of understanding the problems
    - Groundwork for possible future changes in annual reporting
  - Unified dataset creation across projects
    - Interoperable basin scale datasets
      - Inclusion of disparate datasets (discharge/temperature)
    - Single to multiple year temporal scales

#### Direction for 2023 Data Management

- Continue refining workflows and working with PI's and coordinators to improve information system
- Address data collection needs (crisis)



- Hardware and software solution NOW
- Address information management deficiencies
  - Larval/small fish project data
    - Evaluation of CPM baseflows

Chris expressed a desire to make this data and the subsequent information more quickly and easily accessible for all parties. Chris is concerned our antiquated hardware and glitchy software will require crews to go back to paper if machines go down. Over the next few months, Chris is working on a plan to resolve that problem before things break for field crews. In addition, we do not have good access to small fish and seining data that can be evaluated over large spatial extents or time spans. Chris is focused on developing a resource to share that information.

Pete asked why we use the hardware and software that we do. Chris explained that the Program never had a standardized system, so each field office made the decision of when and how to implement digital data collection. Most of the hardware (field computers) were purchased in the early 2010's. The interface between our current hardware and software are now beginning to pose significant issues especially as older software is no longer supported. The primary example of this is that the popular Allegra field computers are running software (DataPlus) which will have discontinued support soon and is currently causing problems with allowing direct read of PIT tags into the field computers. Pete asked how many field computers would be needed. Chris noted the total need for field computers is around 25-30 units and then ran through some general options but noted that cost would be dependent on the type of field computers selected by the Program as unit cost vary from \$700 to \$2,700. >Chris is currently leading and effort with the PI's to determine the best viable options for field computers and data collection software moving forward. Pete expressed support for both data efforts, specifically getting larval data accessible to all parties.

AJ asked if hydrologic data was also a priority. Chris said most of the data collected by the Program is temperature data which is currently stored in excel sheets. He is also working to develop a database to store and query that data. In addition, Chris is looking at USGS/GCMRC resources and how we can move those into our analyses. AJ noted that hydrologic modeling data would be especially helpful. Chris agreed and highlighted models from the River Forecast Center data and others that could help us look at patterns. Water supply, demand, and depletion expectation could help us with decision making. David noted that CWCB may be another great source for a lot of modeling data in the state of Colorado.

**2022 RIPRAP Assessment Update** – Paul Badame covered the process for reviewing and eventually approving the 2022 RIPRAP assessment. Paul said there are no major changes to the RIPRAP this year. For the sake of clarity, the *period of assessment* for this and all future RIPRAP documents will be a single calendar-year. So, for this year the 2022 RIPRAP assessment will cover only calendar-year 2022 and will be referred to as such. We are hoping to have the review draft available to the technical committees within 2 weeks (Feb 17). We would like to return to an in-person review of those tables if the committees support that. Pete supported an in-person meeting for RIPRAP. Paul noted that any suggestions or changes are welcome in a digital format as well.

**2024-25 Workplan Process** – Julie walked through proposed changes in the scoping phase of the annual work planning process. She reminded the Committee of the proposal to reorganize the scoping and reporting process for the six field offices that implement multiple projects: study plans, annual reports (by biologically relevant topic/area), and scopes of work (by office). It was highlighted that these changes in scoping only apply to offices that have multiple field projects; specifically, UDWR-Vernal, UDWR-Moab, CSU, CPW, FWS-Grand Junction, and FWS-Vernal. Those offices will likely combine existing, multiple SOWs into one or two comprehensive scopes per office. Current negotiations for the future of the Programs are leading toward an increase in funding, which we will need to allocate in a short amount of time. The first step will be for PIs to write SOWs that reflect the actual cost of performing existing work. The second step will be proposing “new starts” or additions to existing work that was not funded in the most recent workplans. Julie provided a list of proposed new starts the PDO has identified as areas in need of attention (to be distributed with scoping guidance).

Julie asked if the Committee had additions or input on the list. Pete asked if the list identified items that would be funded or considered for funding. Julie explained that we are breaking SOWs into two components because of the uncertainties in what the new Program agreement will look like and how much conducting the existing (or future) work might cost. Travis asked about the status of the 5-year USBR agreements. We believe those can be amended if budget amounts change in the future. Kevin Bestgen asked about how to propose funding for work that is currently occurring but not funded. Julie said current work should be accounted for in offices’ baseline budgets and SOWs.

Julie continued with a list of potential new starts that would be short-term and defined in nature to accomplish research types of projects to address specific questions or needs.

Dale asked about the timelines for submitting these SOWs. Program Guidance will come out in mid-February. SOWs submitted by the end of April.

Julie then went on to describe the new format for SOWs and budgets. The PDO will work with a subset of offices that perform multiple projects to create a template for future SOWs. Individual projects that are not part of the smaller subset of offices will continue to do business as usual.

>**The PDO** will distribute Program Guidance for SOW’s which Julie summarized in the meeting.

#### **Administrative Tasks – Badame**

- Schedule next two in person meetings
  - BC RIPRAP review was scheduled for: **March 28-29, in Grand Junction**
  - BC Workplan reviews was scheduled: **July 12 (full day) and 13 (morning 1/2 - day) in Grand Junction**
- Next Researcher’s Meeting will be hosted by FWS Grand Junction January 30-31, 2024
- The reports due list was reviewed and updates were provided by Kevin Bestgen the following day.
- Consent Agenda:
  - i. Approve November 29 summary – *The summary was approved as final and will be posted on the website.*

- ii. Reinstate the running Actions or Assignments list – to be created for this meeting and reviewed for the first time at our next meeting.
- iii. Move the approval of meeting summaries and review of the actions list to the open of future meetings.

**ADJOURN 12:30 PM MST**

### **Assignments List**

1. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: Ed Kluender** will contact Melissa Trammell to ensure she and NPS are aware of changes in 2022 brown trout capture rates and other species composition dynamics within Lodore Canyon.
2. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: Tildon Jones** will work with ISMP investigators to develop a recommendation for implementing a rapid sediment assessment to data collections and bring that recommendation back to the Biology Committee for consideration.
3. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: PDO** will distribute Program Guidance for the development of scopes of work for FY24-25 by February 17.
4. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: PDO with input from PI's** will develop a proposal for upgrading field computers and software and present the proposal to the Management Committee for funding.
5. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: Reclamation and Tildon Jones** will meet with the Green River Canal Company to discuss operations and maintenance and try to find ways to make things easier on them and establish expectations for cleaning and maintenance. Recommendations will be added to the Program's capital project list as appropriate.
6. **Assigned 2-Feb-23: CPW/PDO** to determine if a fish screen is needed for the East Rifle Municipal Pond and add to the Program's capital projects list if needed.