

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

FY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

PROJECT: 12

Project Title

Information, Education and Outreach Program

Bureau of Reclamation Agreement Number:

R18PG40023

Project/Grant Period:

Start date: 10/01/2018

End date: 09/30/2023

Reporting period end date: 9/30/2022

Is this the final report? Yes _____ No X

Principal Investigator:

Shannon Nelson, Outreach and Communication Coordinator

P.O. Box 25182

Salt Lake City, UT 84125

Phone: (720) 877-2354

Email: shannon_nelson@fws.gov

Paul Badame, Deputy Director

P.O. Box 25182

Salt Lake City, UT 84125

Phone: (720) 527-9240

Email: paul_badame@fws.gov

Abstract:

The Information and Education (I&E) Program works in close coordination with the I&E Committee and uses a variety of methods to inform targeted publics about threatened and endangered fishes in the upper Colorado River basin and the work of the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Recovery Programs. The Program was established in 1988 and has been responsible for the creation of a variety of outreach documents and promotional products. These include *Swimming Upstream* field report, *Program Highlights* booklet, *Program Highlights Briefing Document* communicating the status of the Recovery Programs, *Nonnative Fish Impact* booklet detailing the impact of nonnative fish in the basin, fish-related magnets, stickers, tattoos, trading and greeting cards, rulers, interpretive exhibits, and a website. The I&E Program takes a proactive approach to working with the news media and holds public meetings and special events as needed. The Upper Colorado River Program works closely with the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program to coordinate outreach efforts and share costs when possible. In 2022 the I&E Element was renamed the Outreach Element and the I&E Committee was renamed the Outreach Committee.

Study Schedule:

1988-Ongoing

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

Relationship to RIPRAP:

General Recovery Program Support Action Plan:

- VI. Increase public awareness and support for threatened and endangered fishes and the Recovery Programs.
- VI.B. Train Recovery Program managers and researchers in media relations.
- VI.C. Plan and implement information and education activities for all significant Recovery Program actions, such as presentations, public meetings, public involvement training.
- VI.D. Promote technical publication of study results.
- VI.E. Produce, distribute, and evaluate information and education products such as the field report, briefing book, rulers, trading and greeting cards, paper and vinyl fish stickers and brochure; manage media relations including contacting reporters, producing news releases and fact sheets.
- VI.F. Participate in development and circulation of educational exhibits about the Recovery Programs and threatened and endangered fishes.
- VI.G. Maintain Recovery Program technical library and library web page.

Accomplishment of FY 2022 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Strategy: I&E Committee to develop strategic public involvement plans for program and related activities and to evaluate and alter plans as needed.

Status: The I&E Committee continued to implement a strategic communication plan that serves as an umbrella for all I&E Program activities. Individual projects that require public involvement are subsets of this plan. The Committee participates quarterly in conference calls. I&E activities are planned and discussed during these calls.

Strategy: I&E Committee and I&E Coordinator to meet with each public involvement plan principal investigator as needed to monitor progress and provide technical assistance when appropriate.

Status: I&E Committee members actively participated in outreach activities (including staffing exhibits) and communicated regularly with the I&E Coordinator.

Strategy: Offer to pay public involvement training tuition costs for up to three key Recovery Program participants.

Status: No one participated in this training in FY 2022.

Strategy: Produce and distribute publications and other educational materials.

Status: The *Swimming Upstream* field report was not produced in 2022 as the program considers how to connect best with target audiences in a mostly digital world. This effort will continue as the I&E Committee looks for ways to reduce postage and printing costs.

The Program Highlights Briefing Document was updated and produced for both the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Recovery Programs and continues to help promote the two programs. This document is historically used by nonfederal partners to brief congressional staff and agency directorates.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

Both Recovery Programs continue to distribute a variety of educational materials to diverse audiences (ie., teachers, students, program partners, education specialists in various locations). These include fish-themed rulers, magnets, trading and greeting cards, paper and vinyl stickers, and tattoos.

Strategy: Proactively seek news media coverage.
Status: The Recovery Programs continued to proactively seek news media coverage to support recovery efforts. During FY22, the larger Colorado River drought eclipsed coverage specific to the recovery programs.

Strategy: Actively participate in local community groups.
Status: A representative of the Recovery Programs attended meetings and maintained active communication with local groups, including the Aspinall Operations Group, the Roaring Fork Conservancy, the Uintah Basin Partners, and the Green River Basin Advisory Group.

Strategy: Maintain and promote a public website.
Status: The Recovery Programs maintain an updated public website: ColoradoRiverRecovery.org. Major efforts were spent revamping the website in FY21 which was launched in FY22. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service no longer had the capacity to maintain a website for the programs, so they were moved offsite to a WordPress platform.

Strategy: Strategically identify opportunities to reach target audiences through participation in special events and public meetings.
Status: The Upper Colorado River Recovery Program has supplied endangered fish to the Palisade High School Fish Hatchery Project and the Eureka McConnell Math and Science Center located at Colorado Mesa University. Thousands of children visit this live fish display annually.

Service Fish Culturist, Michael Gross in Grand Junction, Colorado hosts numerous hatchery tours and assists with a variety of other outreach efforts including helping to maintain aquarium exhibits at Eureka McConnell Science Center and Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant. and serving as an expert during the children's water festivals. He, along with science teacher Pat Steele, pioneered the Palisade High School Fish Hatchery Project.

In FY22 a comparable program was started in Vernal, Utah. After the school district committed to building a structure for the hatchery, the Program committed approximately \$30,000 to install the hatchery equipment.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources office in Vernal, Utah visits 4th grade classrooms in the Unita Basin to provide native fish education.

Public events remained curtailed for the first half of FY22 however Ouray National Fish Hatchery Grand Valley Unit staff were still able to attend several outreach activities in

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

FY22, including: Palisade Heritage Days- providing an endangered fish exhibit in Palisade, Colorado (30 April 2022), Western Colorado Children's Water Festival (sponsored by Ute Water)- presenting and providing razorback sucker and bonytail for the festival in Grand Junction, Colorado (19-20 May 2022), the Yampa Youth Water Festival in Hayden, Colorado (21 September 2022), and provided floats for the Palisade Homecoming Parade (7 October 2022), Palisade Old Fashioned Christmas Parade Of Lights (2 December 2022) and the Grand Junction Parade Of Lights (7 October 2022), passing out thousands of pieces of Information and Education products.

Strategy: Coordinate production and installation of interpretive signs and exhibits.

Status: No new signs were released in 2022.

Strategy: Integrate certain outreach projects with the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program.

Status: The Recovery Programs each have a freestanding exhibit that includes information about the programs and are displayed at various events. The *Swimming Upstream* field report, *Program Highlights* booklet, and *Program Highlights Briefing Document* communicates the status of both programs. Increased communication and coordination between the two programs is an ongoing priority.

Strategy: Coordinate messages with all agencies involved with recovery of threatened and endangered fishes.

Status: A concerted effort is being made to ensure consistent messaging around threatened and endangered Upper Colorado River Basin fishes. A communication plan that was developed in 2001 guide this effort.

Recommendations:

- Recovery Programs should continue to focus on outreach projects that have the greatest impact and reach the most people identified as target audiences.
- Outreach Committee members should continue to find ways to inform stakeholders, the public and elected officials about recovery efforts through their own organizations while seeking opportunities to expand outreach efforts, including utilizing social media as appropriate.
- Recovery Programs should continue to encourage researchers and biologists to provide high resolution photos and videos of their work that can be used in a variety of ways to promote the Recovery Program.
- Bring the Outreach Committee into alignment with other committee standard operating procedures.
- Recruit and fill vacant seats on Outreach Committee with the goal of having 10 active members.
- Implement outreach recommendations from the post-2023 strategic planning exercise in 2019.
- Consider updating/revising the Upper Colorado River Recovery Outreach Program scope of work to reflect new priorities.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM

- Expand outreach efforts by incorporating more activities into station/office scope of work and performance plans.
- Combine or discontinue certain printed publications and increase digital communication efforts.

Project Status:

On track and ongoing.

FY2022 Budget Status

Funds Provided: \$69,538

Funds Expended: \$69,538

Difference: -0-

Percent of the FY2022 work completed, and projected costs to complete: 100%

Status of Data Submission

Signed:

Paul Badame

Principal Investigator

12/29/2022