

I. Project Title: Colorado Non-native Fish Stocking Regulations Evaluation

II. Principal Investigators:

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III. Project Summary:

A Cooperative Agreement for implementation of the Procedures for Stocking Nonnative Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin was approved by the Directors of the state wildlife agencies in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6, on 6 November 1996. The Agreement requires “all State and private stocking of nonnative fishes in the Upper Colorado River Basin [to be] in compliance with the Procedures. This will include, but not be limited to, enacting/clarifying appropriate regulations for stocking of public and private waters.” The Colorado Wildlife Commission met the requirement of this Agreement on 14 January 1999 with the passage of regulatory language restricting the release of nonnative fishes in waters of western Colorado surrounding critical habitat portions of the Colorado, Gunnison, White, Yampa and Green rivers. The Colorado Wildlife Commission conditioned their approval of these stocking regulations by requiring an evaluation of their effectiveness in achieving a biological response. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has been charged with developing an approach and criteria upon which this evaluation will be based. The approach to provide this evaluation includes three components, two of which are presently being implemented. These include: 1) determining if the administration of fish stocking regulations and permits is contributing to the reduction in riverine abundance of these fishes; and 2) monitoring trends in distribution and abundance indices for target fish species in riverine habitats for comparison to concurrent public/private fish stocking data. To accomplish these first two components, several actions have been undertaken to date.

- a) Negotiation is underway with the Fish Health Board (Colorado Department of Agriculture) and private sector representatives to acquire and incorporate their stocking data in the evaluation while maintaining client-list confidentiality.
- b) A contract to obtain expert assistance in producing a Geographic Information System (GIS) framework for incorporating pond distribution, sampling, reclamation, screening and stocking data in relation to fish densities/composition in adjacent riverine habitats has been prepared and awaits approval.
- c) Equipment and personnel services needed to acquire/compile data for this evaluation are being pursued. Upon completion of items 1) and 2), the third component, conducting a risk analysis of nonnative fish stocking to identify its relative

significance and potential for introducing nonnative fish into critical habitat, will be performed in the last year of this study, FY 2002/03.

IV. Study Schedule: Initial year: 2000.
Final year: 2003.

V. Relationship to RIPRAP:

III.A.2.c. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of viable active control measures
III.B.4.a.(1) Evaluate effectiveness of Colorado's stocking regulation

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2000 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

- Met with Fish Health Board to request its support in acquiring private sector stocking data for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. Discussions led to a letter signed jointly by CDOW's Chief of Fisheries and the Chairman of the Fish Health Board requesting cooperation from private vendors in voluntarily providing stocking records for nonnative, nonsalmonid fishes stocked in western Colorado.
- Compiled list of in-state and out-of-state vendors supplying nonnative, nonsalmonid fishes for stocking of private waters in western Colorado.
- Prepared a draft Statement of Confidentiality to reassure private sector of the use of its stocking data. Concerns include issuing of citations for violations of newly adopted regulations, disclosure of clientele lists to competitors or the public, and the manner/timeframe in which the data will be collected, used and disposed of. The draft Statement provides clarification/reassurance regarding cooperation in supplying pertinent data for use in this study.
- Prepared a contract to obtain expert performance of the GIS portion of the study. Seeking a contract to commence 1 January 2001 through 31 December 2001. The contract presently awaits various agency approvals.
- Identified equipment and personnel needs for data collection and transfer to GIS contractor. Presently pursuing hiring of an assistant for one-year to assist data compilation. Acquisition is underway for a laptop computer to be used for ARCVIEW manipulations and presentation of data, and for a portable photocopier for use in obtaining stocking records.

VII. Recommendations: Time constraints/delays for contract approvals/implementation and data acquisition/volume may extend need for GIS evaluation into FY 2001/02.

VIII. Project Status: Project is on track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2000 Budget Status:

- A. Funds Provided: \$50,000 GOCO
- B. Funds Expended: \$39,675 for GIS contract
- C. Difference: Remaining \$ 10,325 to be used for purchase of laptop computer,

portable photocopier and to help fund assistant for data acquisition.

D. Percent of the FY 2000 work completed, and projected costs to complete: Not applicable.

E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: None.

X. Status of Data Submission: Not applicable.

XI. Signed: Patrick J. Martinez
Principal Investigator

19 December 2000
Date