

I. Project Title: Fish salvage from Grand Valley irrigation canals

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III. Project Summary:

The purpose of the project is to retrieve native and endangered fishes that become entrained and stranded in Grand Valley irrigation canals, and transport them back to the Colorado River. Several thousand native fish including one razorback sucker were salvaged.

IV. Study Schedule:

Initial Year: 2002
Final Year: TBD

V. Relationship to RIPRAP:

Colorado River Action Plan: Mainstem

II. Restore Habitat

II.B.1.b. Screen GVIC Diversion to prevent endangered fish entrainment.

II.B.3.b. Screen Government Highline Diversion to prevent endangered fish entrainment.

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2003 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

A cooperative effort to salvage fish from Grand Valley irrigation canals was conducted during the week of November 18–22, 2002. Sampling crews consisted of personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Grand Junction CRFP, Grand Junction Ecological Services, and Recovery Program) and Colorado Division of Wildlife. Sampling efforts were concentrated on the Grand Valley Irrigation Company's main canal between the diversion dam and just west of 22 Road. More limited sampling was done on the Grand Valley Water User's Highline Canal between Lewis Wash siphon and Horizon Drive.

Grand Valley Irrigation Company. The entire length of the canal from the diversion dam to just west of 22 Road was sampled using an electrofishing barge. Crews traveled the canal road and sampled every pool that could hold fish within that reach. A total of 3,371 native fish (1,337 flannelmouth sucker; 65 bluehead sucker; 1,779 roundtail chub; 189 speckled dace) was salvaged from the canal and transported to the Colorado River. Most fish captured were adults or sub-adults and the majority of fish were found within the first two miles of the canal. One hatchery-produced razorback sucker was found in the upper part of the canal; it had been stocked into the Colorado River near Rulison in 2001.

Grand Valley Water Users Association. The Lewis Wash siphon was sampled using a seine similar to work done by CDOW in previous years. Most fish captured were age-0 and age-1 flannelmouth sucker or roundtail chub. Fish were not counted but several hundred native fish were removed and returned to the Colorado River. In addition, the shocking barge was used to sample pools between Lewis Wash and Horizon Drive. A total of 934 native fish (92 flannelmouth sucker; 7 bluehead sucker; 404 roundtail chub; 431 speckled dace) was collected from the canal and returned to the Colorado River. Most of these fish were age-0 or age-1.

The sampling effort did not quantify all fish that entered the canal over the course of the 2002 irrigation season, but did give an indication of the large number of fish that enter the canals every year.

VII. Recommendations: None

VIII. Project Status: Ongoing until screens are in place and functioning properly (~2005).

IX. FY 2003 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$0
- B. Funds Expended: \$0
- C. Difference: \$0
- D. Percent of the FY 2003 work completed, and projected costs to complete: 100
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: NA

X. Status of Data Submission (Where applicable): Not applicable

XI. Signed: /s/ Pat Nelson for Chuck McAda March 10, 2004
Principal Investigator Date