

**Biology Committee Meeting Agenda, Thursday, January 16, 2014
Clarion Inn, Grand Junction, Colorado**

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

1. Review/modify agenda (Speas, 5 min)
2. Nonnative Fish Strategy final approval (Chart, 30 min)
 - a. Review of addition of wipers to compatible list
 - b. Committee approval – *After Biology Committee approval, the Strategy moves to the Management Committee for final approval in light of policy implications.*
3. Nonnative Fish Workshop review (1 hour)
 - a. Outcome of workshop, post-workshop, PI discussions and plans for next year (McAbee)
 - b. State updates (McAbee, Crockett, Wilson, Cavalli)
 - c. Requested modification to UDWR SOW (#123a) for work in lower Green River
 - d. Scheduling smallmouth bass projection tool workshop
4. Discussion of options for dealing with Starvation Reservoir walleye & smallmouth bass escapement (Badame, 30 min)

BREAK (10 min)

5. Final report review/approval: Project C-18/19 “Chemically fingerprinting nonnative fishes in reservoirs” (McAbee, Brett Johnson, 30 min) – *Revised final draft sent to Committee 1/2/14.*
6. Tusher Wash update (McAbee, 45 min)
 - a. Update on potential entrainment solution concept design (McAbee, Norman, 25 min)
 - b. Research to support e-barrier operation (Objective 1 of Jackson Gross proposal) (Gross, 20 min)

LUNCH (11:30 – 12:15)

7. Cooperative Recovery Initiative proposal (Tildon Jones, McAbee 20 min.) – *Description of proposal being submitted for Johnson Bottom on the Ouray NWR under the Service’s CRI initiative. In FY 2014, the Service proposes to spend \$4,326,000 on restoration and recovery of federally listed species on National Wildlife Refuges and surrounding lands through this initiative. The CRI provides opportunities for focused, large-scale conservation efforts that typically have few venues for funding, and leverages Service resources towards higher priority endangered species. Projects must implement on-the-ground actions that lead directly to recovery or reduce the likelihood of extinction and whose results can be measured.*
8. Discussion of action plan for establishing refugia for humpback chub (e-mailed to Committee)

on 10/22/13, with subsequent e-mail discussion). (Czapla, 20 min)

9. Discussion/approval of RFP/FOA for web-based database development (e-mailed to Committee on 11/8/13, with subsequent e-mail discussion) (Speas, 20 min)

10. Elect 2014 Biology Committee vice-chair (All, 5 min)

BC chair rotation through time

1998-1999	BOR	Larry Crist
1999-2000	FWS	Frank Pfeifer
2000-2001	WAPA	Art Roybal
2001-2002	WY	Paul Dey
2002-2003	BOR	Tom Chart
2003-2004	Utah	Kevin Christopherson
2004-2005	NPS	Melissa Trammell
2005	CDOW	Tom Nesler (1/2)
2005-2006	BOR	Dave Speas (1.5)
2006-2007	WY	Kevin Gelwicks
2007-2008	Utah	Krissy Wilson
2009	FWS	Dave Irving
2010	NPS	Melissa Trammell
2011	NPS	Melissa Trammell
2012	CPW	Harry Crockett
2013	WAPA	Jerry Wilhite
2014	BOR	Dave Speas
2015		

11. Review previous meeting assignments (All, 15 min) – *See Attachment 1.*

12. Review reports due list. (All, 10 min) – *Angela Kantola sent an updated list to the Biology Committee with this agenda.*

13. Schedule next meeting and outline agenda (All, 5 min)

14. Review and approve October 10, 2013, Biology Committee meeting summary (All, 10 min) – *Comments were received from Dave Speas (who could not participate in the call) and Harry Crockett. A track changes revised draft was sent to the Biology Committee with this agenda. Some of Dave’s comments/questions may warrant Committee discussion; therefore, this is not a “consent item” on this agenda.*

ADJOURN: 2:00 p.m.

Attachment 1: Assignments

(Asterisked items on meeting agenda; items preceded by a “*” are on the meeting agenda)

Note: the order of some assignments has been changed to group similar items together. For earlier history of items preceded by an ampersand “&”, please see [previous meeting summaries](#). Items preceded by a “-“ can be deleted after this reading.

1. * & **Tusher Wash Screening: 1/26/12: Tom Czapla, Dave Speas and Kevin McAbee** will draft a Tusher Wash mortality study and literature review RFP (or similar) for review by folks who would not be submitting a proposal. 7/12/12: *no proposals were submitted in response to the RFP, >the ad hoc committee will work on completing the literature search portion of the mortality study (which will aid the discussion in the biological opinion). Need to assign lead.*
 - *When the final engineering designs are provided (Kevin McAbee will send the Biology Committee any plans he receives), key Committee members should make another site visit (Site visit completed 12/6/13).*
 - *The **Biology Committee** will review Jackson Gross’s proposed scope of work (to evaluate potential e-barrier impacts) (done). Tom Czapla will work with Kevin McAbee and Dave Speas (and keep Tom Pitts in the loop) on developing a recommendation for how to accomplish Objective 1 of the proposal (determine the minimum electric gradients needed to prevent downstream passage while minimizing the risk of injury). 11/1: Kevin sent list of BC/PDO questions, comments, and ideas to make the proposal for Obj. 1 more complete to Jackson Gross (who responded he’d begin laying out a strategy to answer the questions). Smith-Root/Program will discuss if this study needs to be accomplished before e-barrier installation (to determine potential effectiveness levels, barrier configuration, or velocity requirements) or only after installation (to determine effective electrical gradients for an existing e-barrier design and structure).*
2. & Revise the Integrated Stocking Plan (ISP) and related issues. **Tom Czapla** is convening a group to revise the ISP.
 - *9/27/12: Revised draft ISP sent to ad hoc group by 9/27/12; comments due by the end of October. 5/2/13: Comments received from Zelasko, Wilson and Cavalli; 7/10/13: Czapla will incorporate comments and try to have to Biology Committee by end of July 2013. 9/27/13: Czapla sent revised draft to Committee for review July 31; Cavalli comments submitted September 26, McAbee September 27; 10/10/13 Tom Czapla incorporated comments and sent to Biology Committee). 1/7/13: No comments received to date; plan to finalize?*

Humpback Chub (population estimates)

- *3/7/13: **Program Director’s office** will check with Kevin Bestgen on a revised due date for the humpback chub combined population estimate from Gary White. 3/14/13: LFL will turn this around as quickly as possible after they receive the most recent data from the Service (scheduled for 3/19/13). 3/19/13: The **Program Director’s office** will discuss with Kevin Bestgen what it would take to use the 131 analysis of Westwater/Black Rocks to identify clues as to early life history dynamics and recruitment failure. >**Dale Ryden** will provide revised due date. 6/28/13: Three reports are pending: a 2011-2012 Black Rocks report, a 2011-2012 Westwater report, and a 1998-2012 combined analysis report. Previous discussion indicated the combined analysis would be provided by LFL and tacked onto the Black Rocks*

report, but it doesn't fit neatly into either the 2011-2012 Black Rocks or 2011-2012 Westwater reports because it has data from both. Further, Grand Junction CRFP's SOW only covered writing a Black Rocks report, not a combined report. 10/10/13: Biology Committee will discuss later after Kevin, Travis et. al recommends how to proceed with reporting (after Travis completes this year's fieldwork).

&Humpback Chub (broodstock development / genetics)

- 3/6/12: **Tom Czapl**a will remind the humpback chub genetics ad hoc group to submit comments (7/13/12 comments still pending). 1/17/13: Some comments received and incorporated; comments still pending from **Trammell**.
 - *As identified in the 2012 sufficient progress assessment and requested by the Management Committee, the **Program** will develop an action plan for establishing refugia for humpback chub (avoiding getting bogged down in genetic analysis). Mike Roberts has recommended building in limiting factor/life history studies to better understand what's going on in the system that's affecting humpback chub populations. 5/2/13: **Program Director's Office** will provide outline to Biology Committee in advance of the July 10, 2013, meeting. 7/10/13: **PDO** will forward the document that a smaller group has worked on and the Biology Committee will discuss in October 2013. 10/22/13: PDO sent out and will put this on the next meeting agenda.
 - 10/16/12: Age-0 Gila from Westwater were going to be brought to the Horsethief Canyon ponds this fall, but river conditions won't allow safe transport until spring (timing will depend on hydrology). Tissue samples from those humpback and fin clips collected from humpback in the field in 2012 will be analyzed by Wade Wilson to provide information needed to determine if we can use local humpback chub for broodstock development, if needed, or if we will need to incorporate fish from the backup broodstock at Dexter NFH (from the Grand Canyon). Fish will be brought in fall 2013. 10/10/13: Dale said they brought ~40 fish they caught into ponds, but have less than a dozen at this point. They will try to build these numbers in future years if the Biology Committee supports that.
3. & Flaming Gorge/Green R burbot: **Melissa Trammell and Pat Martinez and Krissy Wilson and Jerry Wilhite** will work on a Flaming Gorge burbot risk assessment. 10/16/12: They held a conference call August 30 and October 15; will have another call November 20, and Melissa will present something to the nonnative fish workshop (done). UDWR is funding two studies (food web and early life history). Late this season, Tildon tried baited hoop nets and other methods in the Green River and did not capture burbot. 12/7/12: **Melissa** will provide a draft to the ad hoc committee members in early February. 1/29/13: **Melissa** asked if **UDWR** could include larval burbot sampling near the spillway in their current work in Flaming Gorge; **Krissy** thought they could. Tildon asked and **Krissy** said they're not doing any sampling in the tailrace for burbot. **Melissa** will provide a draft assessment to the Committee by the end of July 2013.
4. & Nonnative fish management follow-up:
- **Melissa Trammell** offered to work with **Travis** in summer 2013 and report other nonnative fish data (e.g. gizzard shad, nonnative fish captured during Colorado pikeminnow estimates to the Committee each year. The **Program Director's Office (Pat)** will provide specific protocol for handling nonnative fish during other work like Colorado pikeminnow estimates (i.e., which species to target, measure, take otoliths

- from, etc.) and reporting the data (5/2/13: *done; main question was when to take otoliths and Pat has informed PIs to take otoliths from new species or new occurrences of established species in new areas*). Walleye, pike, gizzard shad, and other anomalous fish all should be removed. The **Committee** will review the report Melissa provides in working with Travis and then discuss what further analysis may be needed.
- In 2013, population estimates for smallmouth bass will only occur in Project 125. The **Committee** will reconsider resuming the smallmouth bass population estimates throughout the current Yampa River population estimate reaches in 2014, based on an analysis from André.
 - The **Committee** agreed to suspend all mark / release of northern pike Program-wide in 2013. They made a **firm agreement** to revisit this issue (northern pike population estimates) when results of the northern pike synthesis are available.
 - **Harry Crockett** will check to see if Colorado's Parks folks might be interested in administering a harvest incentive program. 7/10/13: *response pending*. 10/10/13: *Harry said CPW is open to considering this in some situations and will discuss further with the Program Director's office (Kevin McAbee, Harry, and Vernal CRFP to discuss and consider bringing proposal on this and a potential White River incentive program to the nonnative fish workshop)*.
 - **98c & Upper Yampa: Potential PIs** and the Biology Committee will discuss possibilities for 2014 and make a recommendation for consideration during the 2013 nonnative fish workshop. **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** will review landowner permission for access. Meanwhile, **Harry** also will see if by any chance Billy could add an electrofishing pass from Steamboat to Hayden to the 98c work they've been funding (in 2013). 5/2/13: *The 2-3 passes in the upper third of 98c that were done last year will be repeated this year, but Harry doesn't know yet if they'll have landowner permission to work in the remainder of the reach. Three to four times as many pike were collected in 2004-2005 in the upper third of the reach where CPW knows they can sample, however. 7/10/13 – Harry said they worked the upper reach, but won't be able to access the lower reach this year.*
 - The **Program Director's office and Vernal-CRFP** will work to develop a proposal for a smallmouth bass harvest incentive program on the White River. *Pending; see above.*
 - Harry Crockett will discuss tube net and rigid weir options for screening the Highline Lake outlet works in future test operation with the engineer.
5. *Database Management: The **Program Director's office** will work to define the overall problem/need to improve data management in light of the increased PIT antenna data, draft an overall schedule, and bring that back to the Committee in advance of the December meeting for discussion. 3/8/13: *PD's office provided draft prior to the March Biology Committee meeting. Tom Czapla will work with Scott Durst, Travis Francis, and Kevin Bestgen, to develop a problem statement. 5/2/13: Conference call scheduled for May 24. Dave Speas will talk to Mark McKinstry about collaborating with this group to develop a scope of work. 10/10/13: Travis Francis, Koreen Zelasko, Scott Durst, Tom Czapla and Dave Speas have held -3 conference calls developed list of requirements. They're reviewing a draft RFP that will go to the Biology Committee, perhaps by the end of next week (sent to Committee 11/8/13).*
6. **The Program Director's office** will work with States to compile a list of Lake Management Plans. *Pending.—McAbee*

7. **The PD's office** will work with **Harry Crockett, Krissy Wilson, Dale Ryden, and Pete Cavalli** to review the otolith analysis situation and make recommendations for FY14-15. *Deferred pending available funding.*
8. - **Dave Speas** will get a revised due date for the Maybell report. *7/10/13: Dave still working to get revised due date. 9/27/13: Draft report submitted to PD 9/5; revisions sent to PI 9/9; next to peer review. 10/10/13: Waiting on Patty to be able to review after furlough. Sent to Committee 1/6/13.*
9. After the nonnative fish workshop, the **Program Director's office** will recommend boilerplate language (including identifying reduction targets) to be used across applicable nonnative fish management scopes of work. *Pending.*
10. **Kevin Bestgen** and **Dale Ryden** will work up estimated costs for addressing additional razorback data being collected (need for additional data analysis on both Green and Colorado rivers). *Dale said Kevin wants to wait until after the end of the field season to ascertain the number of records to be analyzed (probably ~150,000 fish records). This may be a fairly involved effort.*
11. - Electrofishing course – Various assignments were made related to finding appropriate venue for 2014 electrofishing course. The course was set for the week of August 18, 2014, with classroom time and lodging at the Clarion Inn, Grand Junction and field work on Highline Lake.
12. - **Tom Czapla** will send out a request for abstracts for the January 14-15, 2014 researchers meeting in Grand Junction. *Done.*
13. - **Dale Ryden** will check on whether any of their razorback ponds (GJ Pipe, Morse, and maybe Audubon) would work for stocking untagged bonytail. *10/17/13: Done; none of these ponds suitable. The fish were given to the Lower Basin for experimental and propagation purposes.*