

Biology Committee Draft Agenda
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Thursday, January 26, 2012
Clarion Inn, Grand Junction, CO

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

1. Review/modify agenda (Crockett, 5 min)
2. Follow-up on Walton Creek confluence GOCO funding opportunity (Crockett, 15 min) – *The Committee will have any needed follow-up discussion to the January 12, 2012 conference call.*
3. Review of 2012-2013 contingency list, NNF SOW revisions, and previous cuts to nonnative fish management budgets (All, 2+ hours) – *The Committee will discuss proposed revisions to nonnative fish management SOWs and other contingency projects.*
 - Nonnative fish SOW revisions (also discuss white sucker removal and otolith analysis [approved])
 - Other contingency projects or project changes
 - 138 3rd backwater
 - Larval trigger study plan
4. Reservoir renovation to remove nonnative fishes (e.g., Red Fleet) (Martinez, Wilson, 30 min.) – *The Committee will discuss potential reservoir renovations, issues, and the many preliminary/regulatory steps that will be required. UDWR may provide a draft scope of work for Red Fleet renovation.*

LUNCH 11:30 – 1:00

5. Complying with new USBR reporting guidelines (Speas, 15 min)
6. Final report reviews (All; 1 hour)
 - a. Westwater humpback chub population estimate (final sent to BC 11/14/11)
 - b. Deso/Gray humpback chub population estimate (final sent to BC 11/21/11, revised version to address R. Valdez comments sent by Paul Badame on 1/11/12)
7. Updates (~1 hour)
 - a. Thunder Ranch (Chart, 10 min.) – *USBR-Provo has estimated the repair will cost \$384K (capital funds). Conversations with the landowner have ruled out the possibility of a temporary earthen plug in the outlet channel.*
 - b. Stationary PIT-antenna to be installed on the White River (McAbee, via phone, 15 min) – *Under consultation with FERC on potential direct impacts of a pipeline rebuild that crosses the White River in Utah, the project proponent (Questar) has*

- agreed to fund a passive antenna at Bonanza Bridge to detect PIT-tagged fish.*
- c. Price River position paper (Chart, 5 min)
 - d. White River flow recommendations (Chart, 5 min)
 - e. Humpback chub ad hoc group (Czapla, 10 min)
 - f. FWS Vernal and Grand Junction offices de-complexed (Ryden or Jones, 5 min)
 - g. Basinwide nonnative fish management strategy (Martinez, 10 min) – *The NNFSC met 11/8/11 to discuss revisions; recommendations included drafting a separate Information/Education section by I&E Committee and inclusion of information from Projects 161 and C-18/19 final reports, which are pending. May also incorporate background, guidance and discussion regarding proposed reclamation (rotenone) of reservoirs to remove problematic nonnative fishes, including pre- and post-PR/I&E, O&M and replacement sport fisheries.*
8. Review previous meeting assignments (see Attachment 1) (All, 30 min)
 9. Review reports due list (Kantola, 10 min) – *Angela Kantola will e-mail the Committee an updated list in advance of the meeting.*
 10. Schedule next meeting (All, 5 min) - *Agenda items may include:*
 - *Review of draft RIPRAP revisions & assessment*
 - *Review of revised C-6/RZ RECR, “Razorback sucker survival and emigration from the Stirrup floodplain, middle Green River, Utah, 2007-2010 by T. Hedrick, A. Breton, and S. Keddy;*
 - *Price River report*
 - *White River report*
 - *Others, tbd*
 11. Consent items: Review and approve: a) revised September 30 webinar summary (sent to BC by Angela Kantola on 12/8/11); b) November 22 webinar summary (posted to fws-coloriver listserver by Melissa Trammell on 12/2/11); and c) January 12, 2012 Biology Committee conference call summary (approval of this summary may be deferred to next meeting).

ADJOURN by 4:00 p.m.?

Attachment 1: Assignments
(Asterisked items also on 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](#).

1. * & The **Program Director’s office** will work with **CDOW** and **Aaron Webber** on the potential to design a permeable, hydrologically-stable (gravel?) berm to prevent pike access to the oxbow slough at RM 151 on the Yampa, and then clean it out once and for all.
 - 9/30/11: Harry said the site has changed and may now be a less formidable backwater.
 - 3/11/11: Harry Crockett provided a list of habitats CDOW would like to work on (attachment 3 to [March 1-2, 2011 BC meeting summary](#)). A rapidly eroding bank at the Yampa SWA is the highest priority, but CDOW can’t access funds to stabilize it until July 1. **Harry and Dave Speas** will talk with Brent Uilenberg about the possibility of getting capital funds; **Harry** will follow up with CDOW to make sure they could move forward with the temporary fix this year. **CDOW** also will look to see if other funds might be available. Other items on the list may be considered after a synthesis of the northern pike data.
 - 5/2/11: *Sherm Hebein at CDOW found funding and the bank stabilization project at Yampa SWA was completed on April 13, 2011, just prior to rapidly-increasing flows. Billy Atkinson reported that the project appears successful and we shouldn’t see further bank erosion this in stretch. Connectivity to the adjacent pond system has potentially been alleviated. CDOW will do more permanent work on this Yampa SWA site later this year. Harry clarified that in an exceptionally high water year like this, there will still be sheetflow over the site from upstream, but hopefully the bank will hold so that the site doesn’t connect in lower water years. CDOW will still be looking for funding for other items on their “bucket list.”*
 - 9/30/11: *Harry said the site held up fairly well in the high flows (no erosion or destabilization to the reinforced portion). Some of the unreinforced portion (downstream) experience erosion (but not back to the ponds) and should be fixed before next spring. With their capital funds currently on hold; CDOW is looking for ways to complete this work.*
 - 11/22/11: **Harry Crockett** will ask Steamboat if they are willing to proceed on the basis discussed by the BC. The **Program Director’s office and CPW** will try to work out some of the details of the proposal to the Recovery Program and get back to the Biology (and Management) committees (and provide something by the Dec. 7 nonnative fish workshop).
 - 1/11/12: *This is the subject of the 1/12/12 BC conference call*

2. * & The **Service and Program Director’s office** will provide the Committee a draft addendum to the White River report that will present the measured flow requirements in a historical hydrologic perspective. The Program Director’s office also will research where we left Schmidt and Orchard’s draft report on peak (channel maintenance) flows and recommend whether to have it reviewed by the geomorphology panel.
 - 5/6/10: *The Program Director’s office will complete the addendum to the White River report and provide a status update and recommendation on the draft Schmidt and Orchard report on peak (channel maintenance) flows for Biology Committee review by July 1, 2011.*
 - *Sent to BC July 1, 2011. 9/30/11: conflicting comments have been received, Tom Pitts has asked Jana for an extension on the comment deadline (extended to Nov. 2). See also agenda item #3c.*
 - *11/22/11 Progress on revising report delayed due to Price River report; Jana Mohrman will*

provide a revised report to BC and WAC by mid-January.

3. *** & Program Director's office (Jana Mohrman and Tom Chart)** expect to provide a draft of the Price River report by the end of August 2009. 7/13/09: *Dave Speas said the goal for the Narrows EIS is to get it out for public review in the fall, so the above schedule should work. The PD's office will keep the Service's SLC-ES shop in the loop on Price River.*
 - *12/12/10 Program Director's office will use the information currently available to >develop a position paper on Price River flow recommendations for Committee review. The Program Director's office will revise the draft Price River position paper and get it to the Biology Committee within the next week, with comments due a month later.*
 - *Price River position paper sent 12/30/10 with comments due Jan. 31/ 11. UDWR may submit a Price River PIT tag proposal for "activities to avoid jeopardy" funding.*
 - *3/11/11: **Tom Chart** will respond to comments and revise the report (in consultation with the Service) and bring it back to the Committee by July 1, 2011.*
 - *6/21/11: Sent to Biology Committee; on 7/12/11 agenda (7/12/11: review/approval deferred to 9/30/11 at Tom Pitts' request); 9/29/11 Pitts' comments submitted; 9/30/11: See agenda item 3a: >**Tom Chart and Jana Mohrman will meet with Tom Pitts** very quickly to try to work out technical issues, and get recommended revisions back to the Committee as quickly as possible. The Committee tentatively approved the report pending Committee e-mail (or potential conference call) approval of changes to be provided via the listserv from Tom Chart subsequent to he and Jana meeting with Tom Pitts. Tom Chart anticipates clarifying hydrologic analyses, but not overall report recommendations. Tom Pitts will still file a report on the non-technical issues. These issues were discussed at the [Management Committee on October 12](#). Potential technical revisions pending.*
 - *11/22/11 **Tom Chart** will circulate Tom Pitts' recent draft technical and programmatic/policy comments and he and **Jana Mohrman** will convene a small group (Tom, Jana, Tom Pitts, Krissy Wilson, and FWS-ES Utah (Amy DeFreese or other) and develop a schedule for the group to review the comments and make recommendations to the Biology Committee on how to proceed.*
4. **&The Program Director's office** will prepare a list of issues to be resolved regarding Tusher Wash screening (e.g., levels of mortality acceptable for what size classes, potential O&M costs, etc.) to help move this decision forward (and provide that to the Biology Committee and the Service). *Done.*
 - *5/6/10: A small group (**Melissa, Kevin McAbee, Dave Speas, Tom Pitts, and Tom Czapl**a) will work with **Kevin Bestgen** to review/build on the risk assessment, focusing on understanding existing impacts and what could be gained by various screening options. Tentatively, it would seem the best choice would be fish friendly runners with a screen on the irrigation ditch (contingent on further analysis). *BC to submit proposal to MC by 12/31/10.**
 - *12/13/10 BC discussion: The Biology Committee recommended >starting with a literature review (there may be good information from low-head structures in the eastern U.S.); working on outlining what would be needed in a mortality study (including engineering considerations); and further investigating whether the owners would consider full or partial decommissioning.*
 - *3/1/11 As **Kevin McAbee** gets engineering info from the irrigators, he will share it with the ad hoc group. **Kevin** also will inquire more about the purpose of the 9" (at riverbank) – 20" (at center) concrete cap, to determine whether it is to benefit the existing diversion, or both the existing diversion and the proposed diversion on river left.*

- 5/13/11: Dave provided a list of questions from Juddson Sechrist; the **Tusher ad hoc group** reviewed and discussed these on April 4 (summary sent to BC 4/20/11), agreed to have another meeting (site visit) this summer, and re-iterated the need for an initial literature search/review focusing on fish mortality at other sites with small hydro-electric facilities and smaller hydraulic head differentials. Krissy Wilson would like to participate in the site visit. >**Tom Czapl**a will schedule the site visit (and talk to Kevin McAbee to see if he can arrange for the group to tour the inside of the facility). The **Program Director's office** and **Reclamation** will discuss how to get the mortality study done after we determine the information needs and timeframe.
 - 9/30/11: The **Program Director's office** will ask if **Brent Uilenberg** and **Bob Norman** can provide description/specifications of the hardware at Tusher to help us understand if it can be retrofitted (11/8/11: awaiting reply). **Tom Czapl**a will send a Doodle request to reconvene the ad hoc group to discuss who should do the literature review.
5. & Tasks related to stocking and genetics have been gathered here under revising the Integrated Stocking Plan. **Tom Czapl**a is convening a group to revise the plan, address humpback chub genetic issues, and develop a humpback chub action plan; he will send out a draft revised stocking plan in early October 2011 and convene a conference call of the ad hoc group to review it in October or early November.
- 5/13/11: Cost-benefit analyses should be included in the revised stocking plan; Tom Chart said he thinks the **Program Director's office** can initiate this analysis. Results of the health condition profile meeting held at Dexter in March should be incorporated into the revised stocking plan. Discussion of humpback chub and back up pikeminnow broodstock were prominent in this meeting. Horsethief pond water may be whirling disease positive, but Krissy said that Utah can apply for a variance from their Fish Health Board since the fish will be stocked where whirling disease is present and razorback are not known to carry WD.
 - 6/2/11: Core ad hoc group identified: Harry Crockett, CDOW; Krissy Wilson, UDWR; and Pete Cavalli, WFG; Dale Ryden and/or Dave Schnoor, Travis Francis, USFWS; Dave Campbell and Scott Durst, San Juan Recovery Program; and input from hatchery managers as needed (particularly as it pertains to space at facilities).
 - 11/22/11: Conference call to discuss humpback genetics and potential refugia/propagation held 11/2/11; draft action plan materials sent to group from Tom Czapl, with comments due back before Christmas.

Humpback Chub

The **Program Director's office** will communicate with Gary White to determine how many and which of the questions from the HBC workshop to focus on. Pending. **Derek Elverud** will provide the database for Westwater for Gary White to combine with Black Rocks, which will require a separate SOW.

- 5/13/11: Black Rocks and Westwater data have been transferred to Gary White; **Program Director's office** will check to make sure we've got this analysis covered.

After the ad hoc group meets, Melissa Trammell will draft an Environmental Assessment of the impacts of the humpback chub captivity management plan (also addresses how to deal with captured roundtail chub); **Krissy Wilson** will work with **Melissa** on the EA. **Tom Czapl**a will send out the briefing paper he received with the humpback chub genetic data to the Biology Committee (done). **Melissa Trammell** will review Dexter's new plan to see if it may impact this (also will talk to Tom Czapl).

- 3/11/11: **Melissa** will talk to the Park about what they want to do with the chubs in captivity at Ouray and Mumma (likely return them to the river after acclimation) if the Program does not want to keep them. Melissa suggested assessing morphology now that the fish have matured somewhat (Travis said he's seen the fish and they don't look like humpback to him). The Committee agreed to keep the fish in captivity for now.
- 5/13/11: >**Harry Crockett** will check with CDOW to be sure the putative humpbacks at Mumma get moved to Ouray NFH – Randlett (requires an import permit from Utah Dept. of Agriculture). (Krissy noted that all states now require imports to have AIS certification (**Krissy** sent the criteria to the Committee on 7/7/11, as well as disease certification.) >**Dale Ryden** will also talk to Dave Schnoor.

*As identified in the 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.

Razorback Sucker

The **Service (GJ-CRFP and the Program Director's office)** will make recommendations for how/where to manage the razorback sucker spawned this year at the Grand Valley facility and bring those back to the Biology Committee.

- 3/11/11 The Biology Committee directed Dave Schnoor to focus on size, not numbers, and not to try to harvest fish in the spring, since additional funds are not available.
- 9/30/11: Ouray NFH has ~100K extra fingerlings. >**Krissy** will find out what UDWR could do at Wahweap; 11/22/11 Krissy said she believes space is available at Wahweap and >will confirm how many they could hold there. 9/30/11: **Dave Schnoor** said Ouray might be able to overwinter the fish that aren't yet 150mm. Some fish also could be held back to grow to 400mm+ next year for stocking. He will plan on doing that and will >get a proposal back to the Committee by mid-October. Survival was very high this year, so the fish are smaller. 11/22/11: Tom Czapla has discussed with Dave, Ouray will hold as many fish as possible with anticipation of meeting a larger stocking size goal next year. >Tom Czapla will check with the lower basin to see if they need any of these fish.

The **Service's CRFP office** is working to salvage as many fish as possible from the soon-to-be-discontinued leased ponds this year. Analyses show fish stocked in the summer have the lowest survival rate, so the **Service** will recapture and stock the fish as soon as possible.

- 9/30/11: In progress; will be in stocking report. 1/11/12: see <http://www.coloradoriverrecovery.org/documents-publications/work-plan-documents/arpts/2011/prop/29a.pdf> In fall 2011, 12,019 razorback suckers were harvested from grow-out ponds and stocked into the Colorado and Gunnison rivers (4,116 were fish above and beyond the target stocking number). Grow-out pond survival remained consistent with previous years' harvest rates, except Peter's Ponds, where harvest rates averaged 68% compared to previous years of 30%. Fish condition from Peter's Ponds was excellent. PI's contribute this result to the active treatment of Learnea. Leases for Morse, Brunett, Heuton and McGuire Ponds expired in FY2010. Morse pond lease renewed for another 3 years. Other (free) ponds available for FY2012 include Elam, Feurborne, and Beswick Ponds.

Dale Ryden and **Dave Schnoor** will write up the Ouray hatchery needs (water source for

Randlett and generator for Grand Valley) and submit this to the Program via Tom Czapla. **Dale** also will seek Service funding for these needs. The report will include a discussion the relative risks of power outages at Grand Valley. Melissa suggested that for the long-term, we need a feasibility study for alternative water sources for Randlett.

- 5/13/11: Dale said Reclamation says alternative water sources would have a \$10M price tag. The Service has been discussing the manganese problem and will convene a group to discuss (Program Director's office, hatchery folks, Reclamation, etc.). Dave Schnoor has explored the idea of a generator for the Grand Valley unit. The **Service** should have a more comprehensive idea about these things in a few months.
 - 7/6/11: Dale e-mailed write-up (discussed briefly at 7/10-11 BC meeting).
 - 8/24/11: Service purchased Grand Valley Unit generator. Service/Reclamation met to discuss manganese; proposal to hire contractor and install additional filters pending.
 - 9/30/11: Proposal for contractor review of alternatives for remediating the manganese problem approved by Management Committee.
6. The **Biology Committee** will work on prioritizing their list of potential additional capital projects at a future meeting. *Ongoing*. By September 22, 2010, **Committee members and others** who suggested capital project ideas will provide short explanatory/descriptive text (preferably just a paragraph), and then the **Committee** will decide when to take the next steps (individual ranking, group discussion of combined ranking, etc.). *UDWR comments submitted; next BC discussion on hold*.
 7. The **Program Director's office** will follow up on establishing a process to track percentages of hybrid suckers using standardized protocol for identification of hybridization at fish ladders and in monitoring reaches. *Pending*. Reclamation approved a CU study (through "other activities to avoid jeopardy") to crossbreed suckers and test fitness. 11/12: *Discussed on 1/5/12 NNFSC call*.
 8. Northern pike synthesis – 5/13/11 **Harry Crockett** will let Billy Atkinson know it will be helpful to compare the recruitment information to Billy's tag records from above Hayden (Harry will ask Billy to make his data available to Kevin Bestgen and Koreen Zelasko).
 9. **Biology Committee members** will review the Research Framework recommendations in advance of reviewing the FY 12-13 work plan in July. *Not done; suggest review for FY 14-15 Program Guidance*. The **Program Director's office** will revise the Research Framework report on the web include a "last updated on" statement and a caveat that clarifies that this was incomplete and was a "point in time" database and direct users to the Program's laserfiche library and Program website. They also will correct the wording at the bottom of the second page of the report that suggests it is a "review draft." *Pending*.
 - 9/30/11: *Committee members will send comments via e-mail (to the entire Committee) by October 31 as to whether they see items in those recommendations that should be captured in our current list of contingency projects or the next round of Program Guidance. 11/7/11: No comments received to date.*
 10. Spring Flows 2011 – aerial photography - 7/10/11: *See Attachment 2 for reaches flown*. The **Program Director's office** will look into potential partners to help fund stitching and georeferencing. 8/24/11: *In progress*. 9/30/11: *CWCB's floodplain mapping unit has offered to assist. COE may help, but hasn't found funds yet. WAPA also may be interested.*

11. **Krissy Wilson** will forward the Committee UDWR's plan for larval light trapping in Flaming Gorge Reservoir (looking for burbot) when she gets it. *9/30/11: this survey for larval burbot couldn't be completed as the likely window was missed this year; willing to consider in next year's work plan. This will be discussed at the nonnative fish workshop. 1/11/12: Gardunio said burbot are attracted to light during larval stage, but such trapping in winter could be difficult.*
12. The **Program Director's office** will make a recommendation regarding whether or not to password protect the PIT tag GIS site. *Pending.*
13. As the FY12-13 budget situation becomes more clear, the **Biology Committee** will review and prioritize current contingency projects and the passes that were cut from nonnative fish projects. *8/25/11: Pending; it may be most efficient to defer this exercise until the 2012 budget picture becomes more clear and the Committee reviews recommendations from the December 7-8, 2011, nonnative fish workshop. 1/11/12: On 1/26/12 BC agenda.*
14. The **PDO** will notify all potentially affected field personnel in the event of future Elkhead releases.
15. **Trina Hedrick** will revise the Stirrup report based on the comments received on 11/22/11 along with any other comments received by December 6, 2011. Trina will provide the revised draft by January 12, 2011 (so that the Biology Committee can review it on January 26). **Dale Ryden** will provide Trina with razorback sucker survival data from the San Juan Program (*done*). *1/12/12: PI is working to address Dave Speas' comments; reviewed deferred to next BC meeting/call.*
16. **Tom Chart and Jana Mohrman and Kirk LaGory** will convene a group fish biologists involved in developing the flow recommendations as well as geomorphologists (e.g., John Pitlick and Cory Williams) to identify logical next-steps (e.g., is MD-SWMS modeling the best way to proceed) to evaluate flow recommendations, particularly on (but not limited to) the Gunnison where sediment transport is so important. *Pending.*