



**Biology Committee Webinar Agenda, Thursday, October 10, 2013**

To join the webinar, please follow the directions below. If you have not previously used Verizon Web Ex conferencing software, please test it prior to the meeting. Contact Angela Kantola ([angela\\_kantola@fws.gov](mailto:angela_kantola@fws.gov)) if you want to do a trial run (~5 min.). This will help us start our meeting promptly at 9:00 a.m. with no delays.

Meeting Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM MOUNTAIN DAYLIGHT TIME. The agenda includes a half hour break for lunch. Angela will start the web portion of the meeting by 8:45 a.m. so that everyone can get connected and work through any technical difficulties before the 9:00 a.m. start time.

Web Conference Details:

Meeting Number: 742936817

Meeting Passcode: (None)

Meeting Host: ANGELA T KANTOLA

1. To join the meeting, **using the Internet Explorer browser**, go to:

<http://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=742936817&p=&t=c>

2. Enter the required fields (name, e-mail, company) (no passcode required).

3. Indicate that you have read the Privacy Policy.

4. Click on Proceed.

Phone Conference Details:

Please dial in using the toll-free number: 866-762-0576, Participant Passcode: 2759325# **(NOTE: THIS IS A DIFFERENT NUMBER THAN THE ONE TYPICALLY USED FOR PHONE-ONLY CONFERENCES)**

**CONVENE Webinar: 9:00 a.m.**

1. Review/modify agenda (Wilhite, 5 min)
2. Presentation/update on humpback chub Westwater/Black Rocks analysis (1 hour Bestgen, Francis)

BREAK (10 min)

3. Nonnative fish management update (Chart, McAbee 1 hour)
  - a. Review/discussion of nonnative fish addendum to RIPRAP
  - b. Review schedule for approving final basinwide strategy
  - c. Review/discuss plans for nonnative fish workshop (format, agenda, etc.)
  - d. Highline lake spill (Crockett)
  - e. Update on field activities
    - i. Work on pike in the Little Snake (Cavalli)
    - ii. Other field reports from project PI's or Biology Committee representatives

BREAK (10 min)

4. Stewart Lake operation and preliminary discussion of 2014 LTSP operations (All, 30 min) – *The Committee will have a preliminary discussion on the approach to gate operations at Stewart Lake for the 2014 spring peak. 2013 operations featured some debate as to priority*

*of objectives and when and how long the gates should remain open.*

LUNCH (1 hour)

5. Tusher Wash update (McAbee, 30 minutes) *(Keep this item the first thing after lunch to allow others to call in)*
  - a. Update on concept design
  - b. Research to support e-barrier operation (Objective 1 of Jackson Gross proposal)
  - c. Progress of e-barrier planning
  - d. Green River Canal PIA update
6. Electrofishing course plans for 2014 (Speas, 15 min) – *Subsequent to drawdown for dredging anticipated this October, Highline Reservoir isn't expected to refill in 2014 until the canal starts running (usually in early April). This would make boat access difficult and muddy for the electrofishing course previously planned for the last week of March, but moving the course any later would create conflicts with fieldwork. The Committee will discuss possible alternative venues.*
7. 2014 Upper Basin Researchers meeting update (Czapla, 5 min) – *The meeting has been scheduled for January 14-15 in Grand Junction, hosted by the Program Director's office.*
8. Review reports due list. (All, 10 min) – *Angela Kantola will provide an updated list prior to the meeting.*
9. Review previous meeting assignments (All, 15 min) – *See Attachment 1.*
10. Schedule next meeting and outline agenda (All, 5 min)
11. Consent Item: Review and approve July 10, 2013, Biology Committee meeting summary *(No comments were received on the draft summary Angela Kantola sent to the fws-coloriver listserv by Jerry Wilhite on July 19, 2013 [copy attached to the e-mail with this agenda].)*

**ADJOURN: 4:00 p.m. or earlier**

## 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](#).

1. \* & **Tusher Wash Screening: 1/26/12: Tom Czapl, 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.*
  - *The Biology Committee will review Jackson Gross’s proposed scope of work (to evaluate potential e-barrier impacts) (done). Tom Czapl 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).*
  - *Jana Mohrman will work with Kevin McAbee and Utah to determine if any of the Tusher Wash components will require a water right. Releases from Flaming Gorge could be designated for this purpose, but we would need to ask Utah if they would administer the water for that purpose. Tom Chart recommended that this be part of our “punch list” we discuss with the Green River group. 7/25/13: Marc Stilson, UDWR water rights specialist thought it could be treated as a canal flushing maintenance use of water or Utah would have to develop an instream flow and be the water right holder. Marc and Boyd Clayton discussed and determined the project would not need a water right because it will act as an operational use to assist in canal cleaning.*
2. & **Revise the Integrated Stocking Plan (ISP) and related issues.** Tom Czapl is convening a group to revise the ISP.
  - *5/13/11: Cost-benefit analyses should be included in the revised ISP; 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.*
  - *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: Czapl will incorporate comments and try to have to Biology Committee by end of July 2013. 9/27/13: Czapl sent revised draft to Committee for review July 31; Cavalli comments submitted September 26, McAbee September 27.*

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. Biology Committee should discuss.

&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.
  - 10/16/12: 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.
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:

From January 14 and 29 meeting/webinar:

- **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*.
  - **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*.
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 Czapl 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.*
6. Protocol for documenting fish captures: **Tom Czapl** will provide protocol for the scope of work format (or other appropriate venue) for how Program PIs will consistently document significant fish captures with photos, etc. (E.g., new nonnative species, information from fish kills after fires, etc.) Krissy suggested the protocol also should include checking for ripeness and noting if fish are tuberculated. 12/7/12: *The PDs office will provide a due date. The Committee discussed how to document in the database things like fish kills, oil spills, etc. Access software allows linking to all kinds of information (including photographs). Information on mortalities may include things like PIT tags. Our existing database can*

clearly handle information on mortalities; we need to emphasize that these data need to be collected and submitted. 5/2/13: the PD's office expects much of this type of data to be captured in annual reports. 5/2/13: Dale suggested adding an item to the annual report format to capture "Any additional observations." >**Angela Kantola** will add this to the annual report format beginning with FY13 reports (including direction on what data should be reported). Tom Chart suggested that population estimate annual reports also incorporate more of these kinds of observations from the individual researchers. **The PD's office** will post a heads up about this to the listserver (done).

7. RIPRAP

- **The Program Director's office** will work with States to compile a list of Lake Management Plans. Pending.

8. FY 14-15 Program Guidance

- **The PD's office** will work with **Harry Crockett, Krissy Wilson, Dale Ryden, and Pete Cavalli** will review the otolith analysis situation and make recommendations for FY14-15. Pending.

9. **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. **Tildon Jones** will ask **Aaron Webber** if he has any Baerer summaries he can provide to the Biology Committee at this point.

11. 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.

12. **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).