

Biology Committee Webinar Draft Agenda
8:30 a.m. – 12:15 pm, Tuesday, November 22, 2011

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) if you want to do a trial run (~5 min.). This will help us start our meeting promptly at 8:30 a.m. with no delays.

Meeting Time: 8:30 AM - 2:00 PM MOUNTAIN DAYLIGHT TIME (With a short break for lunch). Angela will start the web portion of the meeting by 8:15 a.m. so that everyone can get connected and work through any technical difficulties before the 8:30 a.m. start time.

Web Conference Details:

Meeting Number: 742936817

Meeting Passcode: (None)

Meeting Host: ANGELA T KANTOLA

1. To join the meeting, 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).
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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: 8:30 a.m.

1. Review/modify agenda (Trammell; 5 min)
2. Flaming Gorge Larval Trigger Study Plan / Program's Spring, 2012 Flow Request (Wilhite, LaGory, Chart; 45 min) – *The Ad hoc committee will discuss the draft study plan (sent to group by Kirk LaGory Nov. 3) on Nov 10 and likely will share something with the Biology Committee prior to the webinar.*
3. Report reviews (All; 1 hour)
 - a. Review of draft final report 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 (All, 20 min) – *Trina Hedrick sent the final report and response to reviewers to the Committee on 11/2/11.*
 - b. Review of draft final report: Price River (Chart; 20 min) – *Discussion of additional technical revisions resulting from Tom Chart’s and Jana Mohrman’s conversation with Tom Pitts (if available in advance of webinar).*
 - c. Update on White River flow recommendations report (Mohrman; 5 min)
 - d. Review reports due list (All; 10 min) – *Angela Kantola will e-mail the Committee an updated list in advance of the meeting.*

10:20 a.m. BREAK (10 min.)

4. Update on stationary PIT-antenna to be installed on the White River (Kevin McAbee; 5 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 to detect PIT-tagged fish.*
5. Thunder Ranch update (Speas or Uilenberg, Webber 15 min) – *Update on schedule for levee repair and temporary earth fill plug; northern pike captured during fall sampling.*
6. Razorbacks found in Green R. floodplain sampling (and issue of releasing untagged fish) (Webber, Czapla, Speas 25 min)
 - a. Floodplain Management, the ‘Modde Plan’ and current stocking policies. (Speas, all, 10 min). – *In practice, stocking of floodplain wetlands in recent years suggests that we may need to update our guidance (i.e., the annual implementation plan that Tim Modde drafted and BC adopted some years ago).*
7. Potential GOCO matching funds for Yampa R habitat restoration (Crockett, 15 min) – *Steamboat Springs provided a conceptual proposal for GOCO’s River Corridors Initiative to reconfigure the Walton Creek site on the south / upstream end of Steamboat. It is a large and complex backwater area that Billy Atkinson has documented to harbor pike year-round (his data also strongly suggest it is functioning as a pike nursery). CPW ranked this project as #2 on the “bucket list” of Yampa river habitat projects to disadvantage non-natives, but has since found internal funding for the #1 project (Yampa State Wildlife Area bank stabilization), making the Walton Creek complex effectively their top priority. The GOCO board will issue invitations to submit full proposals in December, to be due in January. CPW would like to discuss this opportunity with the Biology Committee so that if Steamboat gets an invite they can be poised to make a commitment on this time frame, should the Recovery Program decide to offer matching funds. Reclamation has concerns about manipulations in such an active river channel (in light of problems we’ve experienced at Butch Craig and most recently at Thunder Ranch). Reclamation, CPW, and the Program Director’s office will discuss these concerns prior to the webinar.*
8. Humpback chub action plan update (Czapla, 5 min)
9. Review previous meeting assignments (see Attachment 1) (All; 30 min)
10. Finalizing October 13, 2011, WAC/BC webinar summary (wherein the Committees reviewed/approved the sediment report) (All, 5 min) – *Jana Mohrman sent the draft summary to the Biology and Water Acquisition Committees on 10/17/11.*
11. Agenda items for next meeting (January 26 in Grand Junction, the day after the January 24-25 researchers meeting, which Colorado Parks and Wildlife is hosting.) (All; 5 min) – *Agenda items may include:*
 - o Final report reviews:
 - o Review of White River flow recommendations
 - o Westwater humpback chub population estimate

- Native fish response to nonnative fish management in the middle Green
- Humpback chub action plan
- Basinwide nonnative fish management strategy
- Review of 2012-2013 contingency list and cuts to nonnative fish management budgets (this review will be most timely after the 2012 budget picture becomes more clear and the Committee reviews recommendations from the December 7-8, 2011, nonnative fish workshop)

12. Consent items: Review and approve July 11-12, 2011, meeting summary: *A revised summary (revising Kevin McAbee's statement near the bottom of page 2) was distributed with this agenda. As this is a consent item, Committee members are to communicate any items of concern to Angela Kantola in advance of the meeting.*

ADJOURN by 12:15 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.*
 - 11/7/11 – See agenda item #7.
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.*
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 Pitt's request); 9/29/11 Pitts' comments submitted; 9/30/11: See agenda item 3a: >**Tom Chart and Jana Morhman 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. See also agenda item #3b.
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 Czapla**) 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 Czapla** 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 Czapla** 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 Czapla** 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).
- 11/8/11: Conference call to discuss humpback genetics and potential refugia/propagation held 11/2/11; action plan pending from Tom Czapla.

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 Czapla** 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 Czapla).

- 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. 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.*

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.*

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 Czaplá. **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.*

Bonytail

Tom Czaplá and **Krissy Wilson** will develop recommendations for where and when to stock the Wahweap bonytail (e.g., floodplains before spawning) and send those to the Committee.

- *5/4/11: ~6,780 bonytail were stocked at the Stirrup in early April 2011 (because movement will be detectable by the remote antennae).*
- *5/13/11: UDWR has an additional 13,000 fish that are not PIT-tagged yet that need to go out in the fall (and will convene a **group** to discuss where they should be stocked – may be discussed along with integrated stocking plan revisions).*
- *9/30/11: Wahweap normally stocks 10,300 bonytail in 3 sites in the upper, lower Green and*

the Colorado. Discussions about improving survival have centered on finding backwater or off-channel sites close to these planned stocking locations. The Lower Green stocking site is normally at Green River State Park, but just downstream is the Grand Wash, an oxbow in the river that backs into the wash and is always connected. Utah has chosen that as the Lower Green River stocking site for 7,781 fish (Krissy will send a map). Upper Green fish are normally stocked at the Jensen Bridge; many backwaters in this area don't remain connected. They've discussed stocking fish into Leota 4, but Tim Modde had difficulty removing fish from Leota in the past. Stirrup or Stewart Lake are other options. Tildon Jones has recommended Johnson Bottom, which they believe will overwinter fish (based on several cohorts of black crappie) and will connect to the river (with other options being Wyasket or Old Charlie) Another location is Red Wash. The Colorado River site is Dewey Bridge or Cisco Beach just downstream of the CO/UT border. There is no suitable slackwater site nearby (without going into Colorado, which presents a permitting problem), so those fish may still go in at Cisco Beach. Over 19K fish will be stocked (making up for the shortfall last year due to bird predation at the Hatchery). >By next Wednesday, Krissy and Tom Czapla (working with field folks) will draft a 1-page recommendation describing where the fish should be stocked and why. Done, Utah recommended stocking:

- 7781 to Grand Wash, Lower Green River. This is to replace the Green River State Park location.
- 3890 to Johnson Bottom, Upper Green River. This is to replace the Jensen Bridge location.
- 3890 to Cisco Beach, Lower Colorado River. A suitable alternative was not determined for this site without going upstream into Colorado (which is not feasible at this time due to import permit requirements).

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.*
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.
 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.
 14. ***Reclamation** will provide comments on the current draft responses to questions on the Flaming Gorge larval trigger by October 14 (**others** may comment as well). Comments on the document outlining topics for Biology Committee consideration regarding evaluating the Green River flow and temperature recommendations also are due by October 14. Western offered to have **Kirk LaGory** chair an ad hoc group to address questions of a larger study plan (and Tom Chart said he thinks that the flow request letter should tier off of that). Ad hoc participants will include: Kirk LaGory, Kevin Bestgen, Tom Chart, Shane Capron, Dave Speas, Brandon Albrecht, and perhaps Melissa Trammell; Jana Mohrman also is willing to help. The **ad hoc group** will let the Biology Committee know how much time they'll need on the November 22 webinar/conference call. See agenda item #2.
 15. **The PDO** will notify all potentially affected field personnel in the event of future Elkhead releases.
 16. NNFSC items: **Pat Martinez** will draft something to lead the NNFSC discussion on the topic of sustainable sportfisheries. **Krissy Wilson** will check flight times for Monday morning to help determine the start time for the NNFSC meeting on November 28 - done. **Pat Martinez** will add Jerry Wilhite from Western Area Power Administration to the NNFSC list.
 17. *As part of determining if a water control structure should be installed at Thunder Ranch, **Reclamation** will assess notch elevations when they fix the levee. Brent Uilenberg suggested making a site visit and drafting a comprehensive work plan (and subsequently sent the Committee an e-mail outlining the overall approach). The work to install an earthen plug

to test seepage likely would occur next March. **Aaron Webber** will review and photograph the notches when he samples in October. **Matt Breen** will forward post-peak flow photos of the notches - *Done*.

18. Dave Speas will send a price list to folks who may be writing SOWs involving PIT tag and detection equipment.