

## Osmundson named outstanding researcher of the year

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fishery Biologist Doug Osmundson is the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Outstanding Researcher of the Year.



RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR DOUG OSMUNDSON SAMPLES THE RIVERBED FOR AQUATIC INSECTS AND OTHER INVERTEBRATES.

"Doug is a person of conviction who believes in his work," said last year's recipient, Rich Valdez, who presented the award. "He has contributed tremendously to the body of knowledge about the Colorado River and the endangered fish. He provided us with the first reliable population estimate of Colorado pikeminnow and has set the standard for population estimates of the endangered fishes. Doug epitomizes the dedication of biologists who work with the Recovery Program."

Doug has researched endangered fishes in the Colorado and Gunnison rivers near Grand Junction, Colo., for 20 years. He first came to the

area in 1983 as a graduate student from Utah State University to work on a thesis project involving largemouth bass predation on young Colorado pikeminnow. After earning his master's degree in aquatic ecology, he returned to work full time for the Service. He is now one of the foremost authorities on the Colorado pikeminnow.

"Doug has published some important literature about the Colorado pikeminnow and river ecology and developed some of the first flow recommendations for the endangered fishes in the upper basin," said Service Biologist Chuck McAda.

Doug was lead author of a scientific paper published in *Ecological Applications* in 2002 which describes how reductions in spring runoff result in increased sedimentation of the riverbed, which in turn reduces pro-

duction of aquatic insects. Native fishes rely on these insects for food, and the Colorado pikeminnow, the river's top predator, rely on these fish for their food. By limiting insect and fish production, sedimentation ultimately affects the number of Colorado pikeminnow the river can support.

His recent work has allowed him to work with experts in other fields.

"As a scientist, it is important to not only capitalize on your strengths, but also to recognize your areas of weakness, and be willing to fill those voids by reaching out and collaborating with others," Doug said. "The final product is really strengthened by collaborative efforts. Probably the most rewarding and educational aspect of my career has been the

opportunity to work with other scientists."

Doug said he is honored to be recognized by his peers. "I appreciate that other people have noticed and recognized my efforts. If I have had some measure of success, it attests to the fact that even someone of very average intelligence can make a worthwhile contribution. One needs only to be willing to work hard, remain motivated, and above all, be persistent."

The Recovery Program presents this award each year to an individual who has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the recovery of the endangered fishes and who has made significant contributions to understanding their biology and environmental needs. ←