

March 27, 2009

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WEB CONFERENCE AGENDA

April 2, 2009

Those who have the lead for the agenda items listed below are expected to post a synopsis of your report on the list-server or to the Management Committee in advance of the meeting. We appreciate your compliance with this expectation – it will make for a better meeting.

CONVENE: 9:00 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper (5 min.)
- The Committee will consider the agenda, allotted time for each item, and make any necessary additions or revisions to the subject matter or the allocation of time for each agenda item.
2. Approve [December 11 meeting summary](#) (All) (10 min.) – *The summary was posted on the Recovery Program list-server on December 15.*
3. Review of 2009 Congressional briefing trip (Pitts, all) (15 min.) – *John Shields will send out a trip summary in advance of the web conference.*
4. Proposed amendments to the [Recovery Programs' legislation](#) and draft Report to Congress (Pitts) (15 min.)
5. Extending the Program's cooperative agreement through 2023 (Pitts) (15 min) – *The Implementation Committee concurred with extending the [Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program cooperative agreement](#). The Management Committee will discuss signatories' willingness to sign before June 1, 2009 and logistics for getting the signatures. Angela Kantola forwarded materials from Tom Pitts to the Management and Implementation committees on 3/2/09.*
6. 2009 work plan update (Kantola/Muth) (5 min.) – *An update will be provided on implementation of the [FY 09 work plan](#), including modification of upper Yampa River habitat to reduce nonnatives, potential Elkhead lease, Price-Stubb PIT-tag antennae, nonnative synth RFP, GV hatchery repair, Program library to CWCB, 85f \$ from WAPA.*
7. Review of draft revised [RIPRAP](#) and assessment (Kantola/Muth) (45 min.) – *The Implementation Committee has again given the Management Committee their proxy to approve these documents. Draft documents from the Program Director's office were posted to the fws-coloriver listserver on 2/7/09; revised draft documents incorporating technical committee comments were posted on 3/19/09.*
8. Review/approval of draft FY 2010-2011 Program guidance (Kantola/Muth) (30 min.) – *The Implementation Committee has again given the Management Committee their proxy to approve this document. Draft documents from the Program Director's office were posted to the fws-coloriver listserver on 2/7/09; revised draft documents incorporating technical committee comments were posted on 3/19/09.*

9. Updates

- a. Sufficient progress items (Muth) (10 min.) – *The Committee will review the status of these action items (attached).*
- b. [10,825 Alternatives](#) (Pitts) (10 min.)
- c. Environmental groups Biology Committee representative (Iseman) (5 min.)
- d. Reports status (Kantola/Muth) (5 min.) – *An updated reports list will be provided and the Committee will be alerted as to Biology Committee's actions on recent reports.*
- e. Updated list of Section 7 consultations – *The [list through 12/31/08](#) is available on the web.*

10. Upcoming Management Committee tasks, schedule next meeting (All) (5 min.)

ADJOURN by 1:00 p.m.

Action Items from 2008 Sufficient Progress Memo

General (Upper Colorado River and Green River Subbasins)

ACTION ITEM (1): The Service will continue to closely follow the effectiveness of nonnative fish management actions and the responses of the endangered and other native fishes. Data should continue to be reported annually, and necessary changes to nonnative fish management actions should be made in a timely fashion. The Program needs to initiate second-level synthesis of nonnative fish removal data beginning in 2008. *The Nonnative Fish Subcommittee has been working on this and the Program Director's Office expects to recommend issuing an RFP (released 2/20/09).*

ACTION ITEM (2): The Program Director's office will coordinate with the Wahweap hatchery to ensure that the middle Green River bonytail are stocked near Jensen (in the alluvial reach) rather than at Island Park. The Mumma hatchery will continue to expose bonytail to flows for as long as two weeks prior to stocking. *Being done.*

ACTION ITEM (3): Principal investigators and the Program Director's Office should meet to further scrutinize initial population estimates, techniques, and environmental influences (at least for humpback chub in 2008). A [research framework project](#) (building on results and recommendations of previous population estimates and information developed as a result of previous population estimate workshops) is conducting additional data analyses to further understand environmental variables and life-history traits influencing the dynamics of Colorado pikeminnow and humpback chub populations. The draft research framework report is expected in August 2008. Results will be used to refine hypotheses and direct management actions. *Draft research framework report may be late (pending Rich Valdez work). 8/12: John Shields asked if we've considered starting this with a subbasin approach (e.g., Green River) first, then developing the larger report. 12/8: The work completed to date on the research framework project has been an Access database of the literature, and two draft reports dated December 2006 and October 5, 2007 to the Program Office. The draft reports contain conceptual life history models for each endangered fish species that identify and describe principal environmental stressors to various life stages and an initial spreadsheet identifying principal Recovery Action Plan management actions and monitoring programs. A final draft report will be submitted to the Program Director's Office by April 1 and to the Biology Committee by May 1, 2009. This report will link RIPRAP activities with hypotheses for each species by life stage, analyze how well we're addressing those hypotheses, and make recommendations for future management, research, and monitoring.*

Green River Subbasin – Green River

ACTION ITEM (4): The Flaming Gorge Technical Work Group (Reclamation, the Service, and Western) needs to continue to provide brief updates on current and projected Flaming Gorge operations at each Biology Committee meeting. In 2008, the Program will initiate a Request for Proposal to synthesize the physical and biological information

on backwater nursery habitats. *RFP pending. 11/26/08: PD's office reconsidering need for RFP; may pursue a collaborative proposal by recognized experts, instead. 2/23/09: Will be conducted by Argonne and Larval Fish Laboratory; 3/19/09: BC to review scope of work 3/24/09.*

ACTION ITEM (5): The Recovery Program and the Utah's State Engineer's office will work on mechanisms (extending the existing subordination) to protect year-round flows in the Green River below the Duchesne River to the Colorado River confluence. *In progress since this summer; anticipated to take about one year. 11/26/08: On track down to Duchesne/White confluence, the next step will be to pursue protection down to Green/Colorado confluence. (2/23/09: The 1994 subordination was only for summer-fall flows to the Jensen gage.)*

Green River Subbasin – Yampa River

ACTION ITEM (6): The Program's Yampa nonnative fish management program needs to be modified in 2009 to match the [Yampa River Nonnative Fish Management Strategy](#). In particular, northern pike removal efforts need to focus on reproduction/recruitment sources and the Program needs to take advantage of every opportunity to remove smallmouth bass (e.g., remove smallmouth bass wherever northern pike removal occurs). *Pending. John Shields noted Colorado also needs to complete their Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan by May 2009, as promised. 11/21/08: On track; based on recent data, CDOW seriously considering expanding smallmouth bass removal throughout critical habitat in the Yampa River (to be decided by January 2009). CDOW will provide an outline of a conceptual framework for upper Yampa River northern pike strategy for December 2008 nonnative fish workshop. CDOW will complete Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan and upper Yampa northern pike strategy by May 2009. 2/23/09: Conceptual framework of strategy was provided prior to January 2009 researchers meeting.*

Green River Subbasin – Duchesne River

ACTION ITEM (7): Following completion of the Myton Diversion rehabilitation, the Program, Service, and Duchesne Work Group will work together to determine changes in ongoing monitoring efforts necessary to further evaluate the flow recommendations. *Construction begins this fall and will be completed before irrigation season next spring. 11/25/08: Construction work on the Myton Diversion Dam Rehabilitation is proceeding on schedule. Concrete placements will be completed fall 2008. Gates and associated controls will be installed in February 2009 and the entire project completed in March 2009 prior to the 2009 irrigation season.*

Green River Subbasin – White River

ACTION ITEM (8): The Service and the Program Director's Office will revise and finalize [flow recommendations for the White River](#). The program should emphasize timely completion of the flow recommendations and work with Colorado to protect the

recommended flows. *The Program Director's office will bring recommendations on finalizing the White River flow recommendations report to the Biology Committee next week. John Shields emphasized the importance of this report in light of the scrutiny it will receive from the energy industry. Dan McAuliffe asked if the Program contemplates acquiring water rights, noting that CWCB has \$500,000/year available to acquire instream flows to protect endangered species (an acquisition plan is required). 11/26/08: 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 by the end of January 2009 (also will recommendations for the Price River). 2/23/09: Behind schedule, but will be sent to the Biology Committee for review by 3/31/09.*

Upper Colorado River Subbasin – Colorado River

ACTION ITEM (9): Closer coordination will be maintained by meeting twice a year with Grand Valley water users and conducting conference calls as needed to discuss river conditions prior to the weekly Historic User Pool calls. The focus should be on taking full advantage of water savings brought about by operation of the Grand Valley Water Management project for late summer flow augmentation. *Brent said the HUP calls began last week. Tom Pitts asked about the meaning of the last sentence; Brent Uilenberg said at issue is arriving at a consensus on Green Mountain Reservoir surplus early enough in the process to do the most good for fish habitat. Brent said Eric Kuhn has suggested an arrangement with FWS in which if too much water is released early on, FWS would back-stop that with water from the "fish pools" in Ruedi, Wolford and/or Williams Fork; another approach would be to get better predictions (based on snow pack) of expected base flows at Cameo.*

11/25/08: An HUP Managing Entities and Water Managers Meeting was conducted on June 25, 2008, to begin coordination activities for the 2008 irrigation season. The first HUP weekly conference call was conducted on August 5, 2008, and continued through October 29, 2008. Green Mountain Reservoir releases to augment flows in the 15-Mile Reach were initiated on August 27, 2008, and concluded on October 29, 2008. A total of 73,024 acre-feet of water was released from Green Mountain Reservoir. Additionally, 20,423 acre-feet, 10,431 acre-feet and 10,377 acre-feet were released from Ruedi, Wolford Mountain and Williams Fork reservoirs respectively. These releases were the result of the cooperative efforts of participating reservoir operators and Grand Valley irrigation entities, 9,586 af of which were to address the unique circumstances caused by operational issues at the Shoshone Power Plant. Diversion records for the 2008 irrigation season have not yet been compiled for the Grand Valley Water Users Association; however, based upon preliminary information irrigation diversions were reduced by a substantial amount as a result of the operations of the Grand Valley Water Management Facilities. A report on actual results will be provided when irrigation diversion records are available from the Colorado Division 5 Office of the State Engineer. Fish and Wildlife Service 15 Mile Reach flow targets were met or exceeded for the majority of the irrigation season. (This data is based upon early provisional data provided by the Colorado Division 5 Office of the State Engineer.)

ACTION ITEM (10): The goal of the [10,825 Project](#) is to have agreements signed with the Service prior to December 2009 committing east slope and west slope water users to permanent sources of Ruedi replacement water, as required by the Colorado River programmatic biological opinion. *Alternative selected and this is on track.*

Upper Colorado River Subbasin – Gunnison River

ACTION ITEM (11): Pending completion of the [Aspinall EIS](#) (and while continuing to emphasize timely completion of the EIS), Reclamation, the Service, and Western Area Power Administration and other cooperators need to determine how they can better manage Aspinall spring flows to meet endangered fish needs within existing operational procedures. *Brent Uilenberg said the draft EIS may go out to the cooperators this week, to the public by late October or early November. The last formal schedule from BOR contemplated a final EIS and ROD by the end of 2008; however, given the required review timeframes it is more likely that these will be in place before spring 2009. Clayton Palmer said that based on their review of the alternatives, Western is likely to have substantive comments on the draft released to the cooperating agencies.*

11/25/08: Cooperating agencies have completed reviews of the preliminary draft EIS on Aspinall Unit operations. Reclamation has tentatively identified a preferred alternative in informal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many issues have been resolved with the cooperating agencies and an operation plan including peak flow targets, duration targets, and base flows is generally agreed upon. A programmatic biological assessment is being prepared concurrently with the draft EIS. The assessment would address public and private water uses in the Gunnison Basin. The selenium issue is the major factor in delaying completion of the BA, and consequently the EIS. The issue includes the significance of selenium levels in fish recovery and the significant costs associated with accelerating selenium reduction programs. At the present time, the draft EIS is scheduled for release in January 2009 with a final EIS and Record of Decision in June and July of 2009 respectively. 12/11: Brent said there will be an internal review draft of the draft EIS and biological assessment next week, then it will go to the printer with possible release to the public in January 2009. Reclamation will have a pre-consultation meeting with the Service on the biological assessment, particularly related to the selenium issue. 2/23/09: The [draft EIS](#) was released 2/13/09.