

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY-2008 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Project No.: PIP 12L**

**I. Project Title:** Communications/Public Involvement Plan for Nonnative Fish Management

**II. Principal Investigator:**

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**III. Project Summary:**

In 2008, the Recovery Program continued management actions to minimize or remove the threat of nonnative fishes to survival of the endangered fishes as described in the recovery goals. Efforts expanded to include additional river sections and removal trips. As in the past, the Recovery Program prepared and implemented a comprehensive communications plan to raise public awareness of the purpose and nature of nonnative fish management.

**IV. Study Schedule:**

Initial year: 2003  
Final year: Duration of Recovery Program.

**V. Relationship to RIPRAP:**

VI. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE  
ENDANGERED FISHES AND THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.

**VI. Accomplishment of FY 2008 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:**

- Tactic: Maintain Action Planning Teams  
Status: Three communication teams were formed in FY 2003 -- two for Colorado and one for Utah. The teams represent agencies conducting nonnative fish management actions. The Yampa River Basin Partnership was involved with the Action Planning Team for the Yampa River. These teams have not been convened to meet in person since FY 2003, however the Recovery Program continues to provide team members with all written outreach materials and asks them to distribute them to the appropriate people in their respective organization. In addition, the Recovery Program asked team members to provide feedback re: public reaction to nonnative fish management actions.
- Tactic: Develop and Promote Key Messages  
Status: Key messages were developed and approved by Recovery Program partners and the action planning teams in FY 2003. These messages were reviewed and updated for accuracy in FY 2008 and remain the basis of all communication.
- Tactic: Maintain Active Communication with Members of Congress and their Staffs (Local and D.C.) and Local Elected Officials  
Status: A news release and updated questions/answers and fact sheets were prepared and distributed in advance of field activities to key members of congress, local sheriffs and county commissioners in communities where the majority of work occurred.
- Tactic: Actively Seek News Media Coverage of Nonnative Fish Management Actions and Public Meetings  
Status: A news release was issued before field work began.
- Tactic: Identify and Seek Permission from Landowners to Access Their Property as Part of Recovery Actions  
Status: Principal investigators sought permission on an as-needed basis.

Tactic: Establish Local Spokeperson(s)  
 Status: Key people from the Recovery Program and agencies conducting the field work were identified to address news media inquiries. Their names and contact information were provided on all fact sheets and in the question/answer handouts.

Tactic: Train Appropriate Staff/Volunteers Who Might Receive Questions from the Public and Congressional Staff  
 Status: The Recovery Program staff asked agencies involved with the nonnative fish management activities to brief their staff and volunteers about the nature of the work and who to direct inquiries to. To the best of our knowledge, this occurred.

Tactic: Participate in Angler Roundtables and/or Public Meetings  
 Status: Although the Colorado Division of Wildlife addressed nonnative fish issues at angler roundtables, no formal presentations or public meetings specific to this issue occurred. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources revised its fishing guide to include a regulations that requires all anglers to remove any smallmouth bass caught in the Green River. To implement this policy, UDWR held a series of Regional Advisory Council public meetings.

Tactic: Post Information on Agency Websites  
 Status: The Recovery Program posted a news release, questions/answers and fact sheets on its website.

Tactic: Distribute Information to Fishing and River Guides/Sporting Goods Stores  
 Status: This did not occur in FY 2004, and was pursued in FY 2005. Action Planning Team members and principal investigators continue to recommend that this strategy not be implemented.

Tactic: Work with Bureau of Land Management and Dinosaur National Monument staff to prepare appropriate materials that explain this project for inclusion with boat permit distribution.  
 Status: The Recovery Program continued to work with Dinosaur National Monument staff to distribute a bookmark-size handout with boat permits. The handout explains the nature of the work and provides contact information. Fish and Wildlife Service and monument staff report improved relationships with boaters as a result of this effort. This effort did not occur with BLM staff.

Tactic: Publish Articles in Agency Publications  
Status: Information about nonnative fish management was included in the *Program Highlights 2007-2008* document and the Recovery Program's fall 08 newsletter.

**VII. Recommendations:** In FY 2009, proactive communication efforts should continue in an effort to ensure that target audiences are well informed of nonnative fish management activities before, and while, they occur. The Recovery Program should continue active communication with members of the Action Planning Teams. The Recovery Program should continue to seek feedback from principal investigators to try to gauge public reaction of research efforts and to identify ways to improve communication with target audiences. The Recovery Program should continue to seek support from Recovery Program partner agencies to help with outreach efforts, particularly in the areas of participating in public meetings and publishing articles in agency publications.

The Biology Committee reviewed and prioritized recommendations from past nonnative fish workshops. Through that activity the Biology Committee recognized the need for better coordination with the I & E Committee to develop signage and other communication tools to educate the public on the purpose and intent of nonnative fish management activities. This should continue in FY 09.

**VIII. Project Status:** On-track and ongoing.

**IX. FY 08 Budget:**

- A. Funds provided: \$5,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$ -0-
- C. Difference: \$5,000 (carry forward to FY 09)
- D. Percent of FY 08 work completed and projected costs to complete: 100%, none
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

**X. Status of Data Submission:** Not applicable.

**XI. Signed:** Debbie Felker  
Information & Education Coordinator

January 13, 2009  
Date