

**Biology Committee Conference Call**  
**January 29, 2004**

Biology Committee: Frank Pfeifer, Tom Pitts, John Hawkins, Melissa Trammell, Tom Chart, Gary Burton, Kevin Christopherson, Bill Davis, and Kevin Gelwicks.

Other participants: Mike Hudson, Chuck McAda, Dave Speas, Bob Muth, Tim Modde, Kevin Bestgen, Pat Nelson, Angela Kantola, and George Smith.

1. Review of revised scopes of work - The Committee discussed concerns regarding additional electrofishing pressure on native fishes as a result of the intense nonnative fish control efforts. They concluded that study authors have taken this into consideration, that the methods are reasonably cautious, and that the potential risk nonnative fishes pose to the endangered fishes is worth the additional risk of increased electrofishing.
  - a. BT/RZ - Evaluation of middle Green River floodplains for bonytail and razorback sucker restoration. Melissa asked about larval availability and Frank said at least 300,000 larvae should be available from the Grand Junction facility and the study would be contingent upon that availability. Frank said they eliminated smaller sites that don't need further evaluation and the study now focuses on three sites at Ouray NWR and Thunder Ranch. Bill Davis said he thinks the work is premature until the adult razorback population is significantly increased. Frank said their goal is to determine level of larval survival in these floodplains to help us understand what sort and size of floodplains we should focus on restoring (levee breaching, etc.) The scope of work is now for one year only.
  - b. RZ/BT - Evaluate survival and growth of larval RBS and BT stocked into middle Green River depressions - This study would need ~?18,000 (11,600?) larvae. Frank asked what we will learn from another year of cage studies, and Kevin said it's to improve information on what kind of native/nonnative densities (and therefore, how many adults need to be spawning) result in what level of survival. Frank asked how this would direct management actions. Kevin said they put larvae in at a slightly larger size than you would expect if they'd drifted in naturally last year. Tom Chart said he thinks both of these studies are going to provide helpful information, noting that we need to determine as many variables as possible. Melissa agreed. Kevin said he thinks the two studies complement each other. The first ?18,000 larvae from Ouray will go to this study.
  - c. RZ Recr. - Evaluate razorback migration and recruitment - The PI's cut \$40K from this study for remote sensing of PIT tags. This study attempts to understand the factors involved in when the fish leave the floodplain. Frank supported funding this in FY 04, but wants to see results before committing funds beyond that. Kevin argued for a lengthier study period to cover year-to-year variability. Pat said he believes it's important to learn what percentage of fish leave in first year, second year, etc. The study as outlined would be contingent upon availability of larvae. Bill Davis asked how the authors determined what parameters to monitor and suggested that the environmental cues could involve multiple parameters and, in fact, be more complex than this study can tease out. Kevin agreed there might be other parameters to monitor and that when the report

is written, they'll need to state their conclusions carefully. Frank proposed the study only be approved for one year at this time with no additional larvae being stocked in 2004. Long discussion ensued, but the Committee finally agreed to Frank's proposal.

- d. RZ entr. - Frank said he's hopeful he can get Kevin the 500,000 larvae needed for this study (work is contingent upon availability of larvae). Frank suggested that the model refinement doesn't need to be in this study. Committee agreed to remove the Valdez portion (including reporting). Remaining larvae from Ouray would go to this study. Tom Chart noted that if larvae were limited, they should go to the entrainment study first. The Committee agreed.
- e. e Committee agreed.

The Committee approved the foregoing SOW's with the changes shown.

- f. 109 - Committee supported.
- g. 110 - Committee supported.
- h. 98a/125 - Delete "pike" from objective #3. Note what color Floy tags will be used. Fix computation of FY 05 budget (correct computation should reduce 05 budget by \$3,135). Committee supported.
- i. 98b - Committee supported.
- j. 98c - When we develop criteria that would trigger removal of pike in this reach, that will be added to this scope of work.
- k. 123 - Green River nonnative fish removal - Pat noted that the budget table is a little hard to read.
- l. 124 - Duchesne - Committee supported. (Pat will post revised Duchesne SOW).
- m. 126 - Committee supported. The Osmundson pikeminnow population estimate SOW also needs to be revised to say it will also remove all smallmouth encountered (Chuck said they also will do this on the Redlands SOW and humpback chub population estimate SOW.) Chuck also will delete the final report and cut outyear budget from this SOW.

The Committee accepted the nonnative fish control scopes of work with the foregoing revisions. To each SOW, >PI's should add a note that all crews will be aware of all types of tags deployed under all studies and be looking for all those. Also, PI's need to check details in each SOW (e.g., budget accuracy, etc.).

- n. USGS Sediment monitoring - George Smith described the study, saying that based on Biology Committee comments in Moab, he asked USGS to revise their proposal. It now has some funding to collect bedload information. Since the Program is not pursuing habitat monitoring this year, it's true that we don't need basin-wide sediment collecting, so that work will only be at the Palisade gage

(Plateau creek and small tributaries), the Gunnison River at Grand Junction, and the Yampa River at Deerlodge. = \$127.8K from Program and 79K from USGS in FY 04. The SOW contains automatic sediment sampling equipment for suspended sediment, plus data collection to build a rating curve when the automated data is retrieved. George will put the proposal in SOW format for final Committee approval. The Committee tentatively approved the work, contingent upon review of full SOW at next BC meeting. >George will post the SOW by the middle of next week.

- o. 115 - Effects of Flaming Gorge releases - Committee approved.
- p. 130 - HBC population estimate in Cataract Canyon - Mike said he was only able to reduce the 2004 budget by \$2,000, but 2005 was reduced by \$16,800 with the elimination of a final report. Committee approved.

>PI's will revise the SOW's and send them to PD's office by Feb. 13. >The PD's office will send them out in final by end of February.

- 2. Next meeting - February 10-11 in Grand Junction, starting at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10 and adjourning by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11) will include:
  - a. Report reviews: Birchell & Christopherson - evaluation of survival and growth of razorback sucker stocked into middle Green River depressions; Modde - development of White River flow recommendations; Martinez - pond reclamation; and possibly Kitcheyan's report. Ray Tenney will bring a proposal on what will happen with the 15-mile reach bug report.
  - b. Review of Program Director's recommended RIPRAP revisions and assessment and any modifications to FY 05 work plan.
  - c. Elkhead screen design option and Colorado's Elkhead lake management plan.
  - d. Recommendation for population estimate/monitoring workshop.
  - e. Criteria for upper Yampa nonnative fish management.
  - f. Elect new vice-chair
  - g. Sediment monitoring SOW review

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. Principal investigators will revise the scopes of work discussed by the Committee and send them to Program Director's office by Feb. 13. To each nonnative fish control scope of work, PI's should add a note that all crews will be aware of all types of tags deployed under all studies and be looking for all those. Also, PI's need to check details in each scope (e.g., budget accuracy, etc.).
2. George Smith will send out the sediment monitoring scope of work by February 4.
3. The Program Director's office will send the revised scopes of work out in final by the end of February.