

Biology Committee Conference Call
March 9, 2006, 3:00 p.m.

Participants: Dave Speas, Tom Chart, Melissa Trammell, Bill Davis, John Hawkins, Gary Burton, Tom Pitts, Kevin Gelwicks, Angela Kantola, Trina Hedrick, Kevin Bestgen, Kirk LaGory, and John Hayse.

Assignments indicated by a “>” and at the end of the document.

1. 2006 Green River flow request discussion - Kevin Bestgen said he and Kevin Christopherson have agreed it would be good repeat sampling at the same flows as last year flows to help answer remaining questions on entrainment (either by selecting flows out of a naturally rising hydrograph or by requesting specific flows). They also will recommend focusing more tightly on individual sites believed to be important, sampling more in the breach and less in the main channel (perhaps at 14,000 cfs 16,000 cfs and 18,000 cfs and perhaps another sample at 16,000 cfs on the descending limb of the hydrograph). This would require less manpower, but they would sample more intensively with more people on each site. This approach will allow us to really nail down the entrainment rate. Likely candidate sites are Thunder Ranch, Stewart Lake, and perhaps one or two others. >Kevin Bestgen and Kevin Christopherson will revise the larval entrainment scope of work and then the Committee can discuss it in April. Trina Hedrick said it might make it easier to analyze the data if we could request specific flows, but they wouldn't need to be held at each requested level more than 1-2 days. Kevin Bestgen suggested that since flows at Flaming Gorge are two days removed from Jensen and given the vagaries of Yampa flows, it doesn't make much sense to try to request specific flows (better to simply try to anticipate the flows). The sampling duration should be short enough to make this work. The Committee agreed they have no specific flow request for the entrainment study.

With regards to the flow recommendations in general, Tom Chart and Melissa Trammell suggested said this would be a good year to try to reach two weeks at 18,600 cfs, if possible, whether it's a moderately-wet or average year (if average, it will be a wet-average year and so a good year to be the one out of four years to reach 18,600 cfs). It's also a good year because we have resources in place to evaluate larval entrainment. The Committee supported this. Gary Burton suggested that if it is a wet-average year, we not try to use bypass flows to reach a peak beyond 18,600 cfs so we will have enough capacity to maintain 18,600 for two weeks. The Committee agreed. The Biology Committee basically is just supporting the flow recommendations, so >Dave Speas will send out a summary of this recommendation tomorrow afternoon for Committee review; if the Committee agrees (members should discuss with their Management Committee members), it will be forwarded to the Management Committee (and also to the technical work group in draft at the same time, as their first conference call is Wednesday).

Dave Speas added that we also need to be mindful of effects of these flows at the razorback bar just upstream of Thunder Ranch. Tom Chart said the Program will need to look at all the different effects the flows may have for the fish, including geomorphic

changes; and they are considering this as they develop the study plan.

The Committee continued discussing the entrainment study. Gary Burton asked if there's a need for aerial photos this year, but the group seemed to think not. Tom Chart suggested that Reclamation will likely operate near 18,600 cfs for an extended period of time, which would allow for some extended study of flows at this duration. Gary asked where the near-shore sampling sites were and Trina said she thinks they were mostly downstream of the breaches; Dave Speas and Melissa agreed. Gary asked if the beads counted near-shore were included in entrainment total and Trina said no. Dave Speas said Kevin Bestgen said that Kirk LaGory's beads per minute information (e-mailed by Speas earlier this afternoon) is probably the most helpful. Sites with more than one breach seemed to entrain more larvae. Dave recommended that the PI's make sure that they have working flow meters with the right props, and suggested they also pull the nets at more frequent intervals (write into budget, if needed). Kirk LaGory noted that Stewart Lake appeared to have closed the outlet before the flows came up, so it wasn't a flow-through situation. Old Charlie Wash was similar (but inlet closed and outlet open, because they were worried about sedimentation). >The Biology Committee will discuss this with Dan Alonso at the April meeting, and also identify Stewart Lake managers who need to be kept in the loop to make sure the sites are operated for optimum results. Gary Burton asked when we'll get the larval data; Dave said Kevin Christopherson believes some of the samples were lost through degradation (beads have to be separated from larvae before the larval samples can be preserved in alcohol), but the more focused study design in 2006 should help with this. Melissa asked if we could deploy additional nets – some for larvae and some for beads. John Hawkins suggested we let the PI's determine if this is feasible. Apparently we haven't yet fully shown that beads are an adequate enough surrogate for larvae such that we don't need to use larvae to test entrainment. This discussion can be continued when the SOW is reviewed.

ADJOURN: 4:00 p.m.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Kevin Bestgen and Kevin Christopherson will revise the larval entrainment scope of work and then the Committee can discuss it in April.
2. Dave Speas will send out a summary of this recommendation tomorrow afternoon for Committee review; if the Committee agrees (members should discuss with their Management Committee members), can it will be forwarded to the Management Committee (and can also go to the technical work group in draft at the same time, as their first conference call is on Wednesday).
3. The Biology Committee will discuss spring operation of Old Charlie Wash with Dan Alonso at the April meeting, and also identify Stewart Lake managers who need to be kept in the loop to make sure the sites are operated for optimum results.