

## BIOLOGY COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

May 14, 2003

Biology Committee: Frank Pfeifer, Tom Pitts, Randy Seaholm for Tom Nesler, Dan Luecke for John Hawkins, Tom Chart, Mark Wieringa for Gary Burton, Melissa Trammell, Paul Dey, and Bill Davis and Kevin Christopherson.

Other participants: Chuck McAda, Bob Muth, John Wullschleger, Kirk LaGory, Gerry Roehm, Angela Kantola, John Reber, Brent Uilenberg, and Tom Iseman

Assignments are indicated by ">" and at the end of the document.

1. Gunnison River flow recommendations report (McAda) – Dan Luecke asked for explanation of the footnotes that have been added to the tables in Section 4. Chuck said the footnotes are intended to explain where the numbers come from. Randy Seaholm said he hasn't seen the revised footnotes, but Colorado doesn't want the cited instantaneous peak flows to be recommendations. Chuck and Frank clarified that they *are* recommendations, but the footnote says we have a recommendation for a peak within a wet year, for example, that should be between 15,000 and 23,000 cfs. Chuck said the intention is to evaluate the system annually and make decisions based on previous hydrologic conditions. Randy repeated that the instantaneous peaks in the table are not acceptable from Colorado's standpoint. Chuck clarified that there is no requirement to achieve 23,000 cfs and the footnote acknowledges that flows above 20,000 cfs could cause flooding at Delta. Tom Chart emphasized the biological importance of the flows above the thresholds. Tom Pitts said the peaks, the clarifying language in the footnotes, and the commitment to adaptively manage flows with a working group are acceptable to the water users. Randy said that as long as the instantaneous peak flows remain a recommendation, then Colorado can't accept it given their other responsibilities. Kevin Christopherson said he views these recommendations as the best technical understanding of what the fish need; whether or not those can be met will be determined through the NEPA process. John Wullschleger added that the recommendations represent a compromise among the Biology Committee members as to the best technical recommendation. Mark Wieringa and Randy Seaholm requested more time to review the revised tables Chuck sent out yesterday. >Chuck will send out clarifying footnotes to the tables. The Committee will reconvene via conference call on Thursday, May 15, at 4:00 p.m. for a vote: call 1-888-469-0495, passcode 33329, leader Bob Muth. >If Randy is going to propose alternate language, he will send that out today.

Note: please send these items to the Biology Committee or to the fws-coloriver listserver. For this occasion, also please send items to Mark Wieringa ([wieringa@wapa.gov](mailto:wieringa@wapa.gov)). The Biology Committee list is:

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(And for this occasion, also wieringa@wapa.gov).

Randy Seaholm asked for clarification on the technical committee and how it would interact with Aspinall operations group. Chuck McAda said it would be make up of technical people to evaluate fish and habitat priorities and make recommendations to Reclamation who would take that to the Aspinall operations group. Randy said he would like Chuck take the recommendation to the Aspinall operations group (rather than Reclamation); Chuck countered that under a biological opinion, it would be more appropriate for Reclamation to do that. Tom Pitts said he wants to make sure there are defined relationships and roles, but he doesn't believe we need to write it into the flow recommendations. Randy said he believes we have a level playing field for all interests now, and he wants to be sure we don't put language in the recommendations regarding the technical group that tilts the playing field. Tom Chart said he assumes language defining the group would be in the Aspinall EIS.

2. Other items - Kevin Christopherson said a northern pike just caught on the Green River had a stocked razorback sucker in its stomach (photo and details forthcoming to the listserver). Tom Chart said the peak flows from Flaming Gorge won't be as stated in the previous Biology Committee meeting summary. Instead, they will release powerplant capacity to match the Yampa peak (we should still see a peak ~14,000 cfs at Jensen).

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. Chuck will send out clarifying footnotes to the tables.
2. If Randy is going to propose alternate language, he will send that out today.