

CR/FY-08 UCRRIC
Mail Stop 65115

Memorandum

To: Implementation Committee
Management Committee, Consultants, and Interested Parties
Meeting Attendees

From: Director, Upper Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program

Subject: Draft February 27, 2008, Recovery Implementation Committee Meeting
Summary

Attached are the draft action and assignment summary and the general meeting summary from the recent Implementation Committee meeting. Please review these documents and contact Angela Kantola or myself (angela_kantola@fws.gov, robert_muth@fws.gov) if you think any changes are necessary.

Attachment

- Summary -
Actions and Assignments
Recovery Implementation Committee–February 27, 2008

ACTIONS:

1. The Implementation Committee elected Steve Guertin, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6), as chair (replacing former Committee chair, Mitch King).
2. The Committee approved the [December 10, 2007 draft conference call summary](#) with minor editorial revisions
3. The Committee granted the Management Committee their proxy to approve the RIPRAP revisions, assessment, and related documents on March 31.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The Program Director's office will post the final December 10, 2007, conference call summary to the fws-coloriver listserver. *Done.*
2. On March 31, the Management Committee will discuss in more depth the potential relationships/impacts of a wild and scenic river designation on the Yampa River.
3. The Program Director's office will work with Committee members to schedule the next Implementation Committee meeting for the last half of February 2009.

CONVENE: 10:30 a.m.

1. Introductions, modify/review agenda – Bob Muth introduced Steve Guertin, who has replaced Mitch King as the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6).
2. Election of new Committee chair – The Committee elected Steve Guertin as the new chair (replacing former Committee chair, Mitch King).
3. Approve [December 10, 2007 draft conference call summary](#) – The summary was approved with minor editorial revisions. The Program Director's office will post the final summary to the fws-coloriver listserver.
4. Program Director's update on the Recovery Program and the status of the fish – Bob Muth discussed recent Program activities, with reference to the [2007-2008 Program Highlights](#) document and the draft [Report to Congress](#). Bob began with the Recovery Goals, which are reviewed and revised as needed at least every 5 years. That review is

underway with completion expected this year. Service review is nearly complete; and stakeholder review will be initiated in March. Dan Luecke asked how climate change will be addressed, and suggested that redundancy is one way to guard against uncertainty. Clayton Palmer said Western will provide comments regarding needed specificity of requirements for recovery of humpback chub in Grand Canyon. Bob reviewed recent program activities by recovery element. Dan Luecke asked about efforts to declare surplus water in Green Mountain Reservoir earlier each year in the HUP process; Brent Uilenberg said Reclamation is working with the National Weather Service to develop better predictive tools and also is working on the concept of an “insurance pool” from Ruedi Reservoir. Dave Mazour noted that a portion of the Yampa River has been proposed for wild and scenic river designation and asked if there would be implications for the Recovery Program. The Management Committee will discuss this in more depth at their March 31 meeting.

5. Update on Management Committee activities

- Cooperative Conservation Award – John Shields said the Upper Colorado and San Juan programs are recipients of the Department of Interior’s Cooperative Conservation Award. The award ceremony will be on April 21, followed by a workshop on April 22-23 at which presenters will share their experiences and best practices for collaboration and partnering to achieve conservation outcomes. John noted that this past January 21 was the 20th anniversary of the signing of the cooperative agreement for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program.
- Washington, D.C. briefing trip; proposed legislation – The annual briefing trip begins next week, with over 30 meetings scheduled. Tom Pitts emphasized the importance of this annual trip and Steve Guertin concurred. In addition to support letters, the non-Federal partners also are working this year to get appropriation request forms completed. John reviewed the 2009 funding requests (which support what is in the President’s budget). Tom Pitts said part of the visit this year will involve discussion of proposed amendments to the programs’ long-term funding legislation (P.L. 106-392) to: 1) add \$15M to the Upper Basin program for any needed rehabilitation and replacement of capital facilities and additional costs of construction of the Tusher Wash fish screen; 2) add \$12M to the San Juan program for protection of critical habitat from the rock slide west of Farmington and any needed repair and replacement of capital facilities; 3) recognize additional non-federal cost-sharing of \$56M (in the form of credits for lost power revenues); and 4) extend the authorization period for both programs to 2023.
- [Report to Congress](#) – The report is still in the approval/transmittal process in Interior. Reclamation and the Service are discussing whether or not OMB review is needed prior to completing the surnaming process. Tom Pitts said the report recommendations will require additional changes to the programs’ authorizing legislation and he hopes to have a draft outlined for Program participants by Friday.

Although this won't be presented to Congress during the briefing trip, trip participants will want to let Congress know that something will be forthcoming. Dave Mazour emphasized that it likely will take considerable time and review for Program participants to agree on language for this legislation. Tom Pitts said that if possible, it would be good to get the legislation introduced in this session of Congress, preferably in combination with the amendments related to capital funds. Steve Guertin noted that Congress has a much accelerated schedule for legislation this year (with the goal of getting everything "in the hopper" by April or May).

- RIPRAP revisions and assessment – The Program Director's office drafted the revisions and assessment which are now in the technical committee review process. These documents will come to the Management Committee for review in advance of the March 31 meeting; the Implementation Committee granted the Management Committee their proxy to approve these and the related documents on March 31.
 - Upcoming review of sufficient progress – Subsequent to the Program's annual assessment of the RIPRAP, the Service will conduct its annual review of Program activities to determine if progress continues to be adequate for the Program to serve as a reasonable and prudent alternative to jeopardy. The Service intends to complete this review by late spring this year (with a draft expected in April).
6. Update on nonnative fish management activities – Tom Chart reviewed the history of nonnative fish management in the Recovery Program; described how the threat of nonnative fishes has changed and increased; and provided an update on recommendations from nonnative fish workshops and the Yampa River Nonnative Fish Management Strategy.

In the mid- to late 90's, the Program focused on channel catfish, nonnative cyprinids, and centrarchids. At the 2002 nonnative fish workshop, it was reported that generally, no measurable, lasting reduction was made in channel catfish populations through mechanical-removal efforts targeting young fish; however angling and electrofishing targeting subadults and adults are effective methods for reducing catfish channel catfish numbers in Yampa Canyon. Similarly, no measurable, lasting reduction was made in nonnative cyprinid populations through mechanical-removal efforts, and treatment areas were rapidly recolonized. Although cyprinids seemed to be concentrated in backwaters, the main channel served as a source of re-colonization. For centrarchids, of 335 ponds investigated in the Grand Valley, studies showed rapid re-invasion of most reclaimed ponds by small cyprinids and green sunfish; limited use of sampled ponds by largemouth bass; and difficulty in maintenance and enforcement of maintenance of outlet screens. This project subsequently morphed into an investigation of nonnative fish provenance.

The Program now is focusing on northern pike and smallmouth bass management, and has been able to affect the northern pike population with mechanical removal efforts. Most northern pike reproduction in the Yampa River appears to occur upstream of critical habitat. The jury is still out on smallmouth bass removal, although promising

results have been seen in the Green River Echo to Split Mountain reach (14 removal passes). These efforts will continue, along with assessment of tag loss, and work to reach the annual 65% exploitation level throughout the Upper Basin.

The Yampa River Nonnative Fish Management Strategy responds to the Implementation Committee's October 13, 2006, directive and was drafted by Dr. Rich Valdez. It has been through considerable review and revision and will be submitted to the Management Committee for approval in March. The strategy has six elements: 1) information and education; 2) prevention; 3) early detection and reporting; 4) information and data management; 5) mechanical removal; and 6) research and development.

7. Wrap up and schedule next Implementation Committee meeting – The Program Director's office will work with Committee members to schedule the next meeting for the last half of February 2009. One or more conference calls may be scheduled prior to that time.

ADJOURN: 3:15 p.m.

Attachment 1 - Participants
Colorado River Recovery Implementation Committee Meeting, February 27, 2008

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Steve Guertin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chairman)
Carol DeAngelis, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Janet Wise, National Park Service (via phone)
Dan Luecke, Environmental Groups
Dave Mazour for Leslie James, Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Mike Styler, Utah Department of Natural Resources
Clayton Palmer, Western Area Power Administration
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin Water Users
Pat Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer's Office (via phone)
Tom Blickensderfer (via phone) for Harris Sherman, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Program Director Bob Muth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (nonvoting)

OTHERS:

Larry Walkoviak, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
John Shields, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
John Reber, National Park Service
Brent Uilenberg, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Angela Kantola, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program
Tom Chart, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program
Darin Bird, Utah Department of Natural Resources
Robert King, Utah Division of Water Resources
Gene Shawcroft, Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Melissa Trammell, National Park Service
Tom Nesler, Colorado Division of Wildlife (via phone)