

CR/FY-03 UCRRIC
Mail Stop 65115

Memorandum

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

From: Assistant Director, Upper Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program

Subject: Revised Draft October 15, 2002, Recovery Implementation Committee Meeting
Summary

Attached are the revised (once again) draft action and assignment summary and the general meeting summary from the recent Implementation Committee meeting. Please review these documents and contact me (ext. 221) if you think any changes are necessary.

Attachment

- Summary -

Actions and Assignments
Recovery Implementation Committee—October 15, 2002

COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

1. Approved the May and June conference call summaries as written.
2. Approved the revised FY 2003 work plan.
3. Scheduled the next Implementation Committee conference call for December 9 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and the next meeting for March 11, 2003, in Denver near DIA from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Future Program Director's updates will include a status update on recovery of the fish in the San Juan River and in the lower basin.
2. The Management Committee will discuss the potential distribution list for transmitting the Program Director's update to staffers and others the Program met with in Washington, D.C.
3. The Management Committee will provide a recommendation on Elkhead enlargement to the Implementation Committee by December 1.
4. The Program Director's office will make minor revisions to scopes of work #110 and #126.
5. The Program Director's office will make arrangements for the next conference call and meeting and post that information to the fws-coloriver listserver.

- Summary -
October 15, 2002, Implementation Committee Meeting
Denver, Colorado

CONVENE: 9:37 a.m.

1. Introductions and modifications to the agenda.
2. Approve May 29, 2002 and July 23, 2002 conference call summaries - The Committee approved the summaries as written.
3. Environmental group representation - The environmental groups have been working to find a way for Dan Luecke to continue to represent them in the Recovery Program. Tom Iseman reported that they're nearing an agreement with Dan and the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies. A remaining challenge is to find funding. Tom said The Nature Conservancy realized they have never signed a supporting resolution for the Program and so have drafted one they hope to sign (the Land and Water Fund likely would sign one also). Tom Pitts and Ralph agreed it would be appropriate for whatever group Dan affiliates with to sign a resolution. Ralph said Dan had told him the agreement he would have with Land and Water Fund is that he (Dan) would have the policy making authority. Greg Walcher agreed, saying he'd like the seat to represent the environmental community rather than a particular organization. Ralph and Tom agreed that is everyone's intent. Tom Iseman said that they try to update and incorporate the perspectives of other environmental groups, but they can't formally represent those groups or bind them to any position.
4. Program Director's update - Bob Muth highlighted items in the October 2002 Program Director's update (posted to the fws-coloriver listserver on October 9, 2002). Bob thanked the Program partners for their assistance in getting the recovery goals done. Bob said population estimates for Colorado pikeminnow are robust estimates, measuring both adult numbers and recruitment. Estimates for humpback chub have high variability from year to year and we need to take additional steps to understand these estimates and make sure we're adequately documenting recruitment. Also, because of low flows this year, only two of three population estimate passes could be completed in Desolation and Gray canyons and no work could be done in Cataract Canyon. Tom Pitts asked that future Program Director's updates include a status update on recovery of the fish in the San Juan River and in the lower basin. The Program Director agreed to include this in future updates. In discussion of the Gunnison River flow recommendations report, Greg Walcher agreed there is concern about the draft peak flow targets. Responding to a question from Leslie James about the timing of NEPA, Brent Uilenberg said Reclamation has assumed it would not begin until after the Black Canyon settlement, but the National Park Service was not as committal. John Shields suggested we might want to transmit the Program Director's update to the staffers and others the Program met with in Washington, D.C. Tom Pitts suggested the Management Committee discuss the potential distribution list.

5. Achievement of recovery goals in the lower basin for razorback sucker, humpback chub and bonytail - Bob Muth said he's been working with the Glen Canyon personnel (USGS) to make sure their population estimates will be adequate. They've also met several times with the lower basin states. The Program Director's office is currently reviewing lower basin biological opinions to see where they match or don't match what's in the recovery goals and plans to have an assessment of that completed in about a month. Ralph said Dale Hall, the new regional director in Region 2, has expressed an interest in discussing upper basin/lower basin recovery efforts to see what Region 2 can do differently and be more engaged than they have been in the past. Ralph said he believes there will be a greater commitment on the part of Region 2, but he doesn't yet know exactly how that will be expressed. A show of some external interest in a recovery program in the lower basin may be needed to help Region 2 with this. It may be helpful to have the Implementation Committee meet with Dale Hall and his staff, so this might be an agenda item at a future meeting. Tom Pitts said that since the recovery goals are now published, any activities in the lower basin should now be directed to meeting those goals. What's needed are the resources and organization to make that happen. Tom said he would like to see commitments and leadership from the Department of Interior to accomplish the tasks necessary to achieve the recovery goals in the lower basin. John Shields pointed out that the description of this agenda item should have said that not achieving recovery in the lower basin *may* prevent downlisting or downlisting in the upper basin, due to the fact that if distinct population segments are designated for the Upper Basin and Lower Basin, the species could be separately delisted and downlisted in the Upper Basin and Lower Basin."
6. Update on capital projects budget - Brent reviewed changes in the capital budget:
 - 1) Elkhead reservoir enlargement and screen estimate has gone up ~\$3.6M to \$11.4M in light of the proposed increased enlargement (12,000 af instead of ~8,500 af);
 - 2) our "acquire new water to enhance flows" placeholder is now down to ~\$1M, a decrease of \$8.5M, which severely limits our flexibility in the overall capital projects budget;
 - 3) bottomlands restoration has been reduced to ~\$7.7M with no activity after 2003.Brent said the Price-Stubbs fish passage cost now reflects the new preferred alternative (rock ramp), which is about \$1M higher than the previous preferred alternative (dam removal). Leslie James and Shane Collins asked if the change in the preferred alternative was more to benefit the fish or for other reasons, and if for other reasons, could there be some cost-sharing. Brent said the considerations were biological (concerns about fish negotiating two concrete chutes in close proximity), related to stability, and compatibility with hydropower development if Jacobsen ever gets a FERC license. Brent said Reclamation has agreed to build the basic rock ramp, but if the recreational community wants features to make it more suitable for kayaking, they would need to provide the additional funds for that. Brent said Redlands, Government Highline, and Tusher Wash screens have each increased by more than \$1M based on what we've learned at the GVIC screen. Brent emphasized that we have pretty much reached full allocation of our capital funds. The legislation does have a provision for indexing the Federal contributions, which could increase the budget somewhat. (The CPI has been running about 3%, which compounded over three years would yield an increase of ~\$3.5M.) Ron Everhart asked

about the wisdom of Elkhead enlargement and the high cost of the water (~\$1,900/af if we pursue the bigger enlargement, and ~\$2,500/af if we pursue the smaller enlargement). Brent referred to the brief economic evaluation they ran and said Steamboat Reservoir might be less expensive (if costs don't escalate), but we also have to consider several other factors (delivery of the water, willingness of Colorado State Parks to continue the lease, etc.). Bob Muth said Elkhead enlargement seems to be the most effective way to provide the needed augmentation of base flows. Tom Iseman said Dan Luecke has concerns about the enlargement, especially by 12,000 af. Tom Pitts said he believes the 8,500 af enlargement would cost almost as much as the 12,000 af enlargement. The 8,000 AF enlargement at \$2,500/AF would provide 5,000 AF of storage for the Recovery Program at a cost of \$11 million. A 12,000 AF enlargement would provide 6,000 AF for the Recovery Program at a cost of \$1,900/AF, or \$11.4 million. Tom said a decision on the enlargement needs to be made in 2002. The Management Committee will provide a recommendation to the Implementation Committee by December 1 and the Implementation Committee will discuss it on a conference call on December 9. The NEPA process would begin in ~January/February 2003. Greg Walcher said some component of storage is clearly the only way to provide additional water in the relatively free-flowing Yampa River. With regard to "acquiring new water to enhance flows," Greg noted that Colorado can now purchase senior water rights and convert them to instream flows, so there may be some possibility for the State to pursue water acquisition. Shane Collins suggested that as we prioritize activities, we may want to reconsider the need for passage at Hartland. John Shields noted the recurring cost of replacing the nonnative fish barrier net at Highline Reservoir and the net proposed at Elkhead.

7. Status of extending the period of authorization for the long-term funding legislation - Tom Pitts said the House passed H.R. 5099. It was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee which passed it and it's now ready to go to the Senate floor. An omnibus bill (H.R. 5569) that includes our legislation hopefully will be voted on in the House either this Thursday or Friday or in a lame duck session. Sherm Hoskins said Program participants need to make some support calls. Tom Pitts said the water users are working "both angles" (both 5099 in the Senate and 5569 in the House).
8. Approval of revised FY 2003 work plan - Tom Pitts asked that the computer in scope #110 be justified. Tasks 2-5 in scope #126 need to be shown as one task. The Program Director's office will see that these changes are made. John Shields expressed concern about the cost rates in scope #122. The Committee approved the work plan.
9. Ruedi Reservoir water cost repayment - Brent said Reclamation inquired about obtaining credit for the water from Ruedi; however the 1999 biological opinion says only operation and maintenance costs would be paid and the 15-Mile Reach PBO is silent regarding repayment of capital costs. Brent discussed these issues with Brian Person and Mary Ann Bach last week and clarified some misunderstandings they had about credit in the Program. Brent said he is hopeful this issue will go away.

10. Scheduling future Implementation Committee meeting - Conference call on December 9 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m to discuss Elkhead enlargement. The next meeting will be March 11, 2003, in Denver near DIA from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The Program Director's office will make the necessary arrangements. The D.C. trip will likely be March 12 - 18th.

ADJOURN: 11:40 p.m.

Attendees

Colorado River Recovery Implementation Committee: October 15, 2002

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ralph Morgenweck, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chairman)
Brent Uilenberg for Carol DeAngelis, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Greg Walcher, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Clayton Palmer, Western Area Power Administration
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin Water Users
John Shields for Pat Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
Sherm Hoskins for Robert Morgan, Utah Department of Natural Resources
Ron Everhart for Karen Wade, National Park Service
Leslie James, Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Program Director Bob Muth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (nonvoting)

OTHERS:

Shane Collins, Western Area Power Administration
Debbie Felker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program
John Reber, National Park Service
Bob McCue, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Iseman, The Nature Conservancy
Tom Blickensderfer, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Margot Zallen, U.S. Department of the Interior Solicitor's Office
Jennifer McCurdy, Denver Water
Robert King, Utah Division of Water Resources
Angela Kantola, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Recovery Program