

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

February 8, 2007, Denver, Colorado

CONVENE: 10:10 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper – The agenda was modified as it appears below.
2. Approve November 20, 2006 meeting summary and review assignments – The summary was approved as written. Assignments were reviewed and carry-over assignments are noted at the beginning of the assignment list for this meeting.
3. Nonnative fish workshop – Pat Nelson said the December workshop was organized to model the Implementation Committee’s October directive, with one of the goals being to develop a Yampa River nonnative fish management strategy. The workshop went well and the strategy is in draft (and should be out for review within a couple of weeks). Eventually, there will be a strategy for each basin, and the Yampa strategy can serve as a model for the others. Workshop participants also worked on criteria for native and nonnative fish responses. Bruce Haines has begun working with stock recruitment models (based on Yampa Canyon data) to help determine how much we need to reduce smallmouth bass populations to keep them from “bouncing back”; preliminary results indicate we will need to reduce the populations by at least 65% over a certain period of time, so part of the criteria is to achieve that level of reduction. (Kevin Gelwicks commended Bruce’s work, noting that Bruce is retiree and working on this voluntarily. Tim Modde also has been helping with work related to these models.) Bob Muth added that empirical data for the middle Yampa River from the 1980s through present match the model predictions fairly well. Pat said that achieving needed levels of reduction will require a significant increase in effort in certain reaches, and areas of emphasis will be shifted somewhat this year to make that possible. Most of the 2007 scopes of work have been revised. In addition to removal by electrofishing, other methods such as electric seines in backwaters, disturbing nesting areas, etc. will be tested. Tom Iseman said the environmental groups were particularly encouraged by the quantitative goals in the criteria and reallocating effort to achieve those goals. John Reber agreed that the workshop and subsequent reallocation efforts are positive responses to concerns expressed at the Implementation Committee. Pat said a public meeting is planned in Grand Junction, probably in July, and he would like to invite the Management Committee. Perhaps the Management Committee will hold a meeting in Grand Junction in conjunction with this. Tom Blickensderfer said some frustration remains within CDOW regarding whether we’re adhering as close to the science as we need to (particularly with regard to northern pike). Tom Iseman agreed with the need for sound science, but emphasized the need to err on the side of recovery with an appropriate sense of urgency in response to serious native fish declines. Bob Muth agreed with the need for an aggressive approach, but added that we also bear some increased risks to the endangered fish with the increased number of electrofishing passes. John Shields asked if it would be helpful for the Management Committee to meet with the Colorado’s Wildlife Commission to best deliver a unified Recovery Program message about nonnative fish management. Tom Blickensderfer said we might consider this (and/or other ways to brief the Commissioners) after the new Commissioners are seated in March

(and before July). >Tom Blickensderfer will determine when it might be most appropriate to brief the new western slope commissioners. Tom Pitts noted that the Commissioners are accustomed to getting briefed by CDOW staff; Tom Blickensderfer agreed, noting that staff like Tom Nesler, Steve Yamashita, and Sherm Hebein carry considerable weight with the Commission. Tom Blickensderfer added that there are probably some new west slope State legislators who should be briefed; >Tom will provide a list of these new legislators to the Committee. Kevin Gelwicks said the Biology Committee would really appreciate anything Colorado can do to speed up the process to place a new representative on the Biology Committee. Tom Iseman said The Nature Conservancy will hold a workshop on aquatic invasive species in the west at the end of March and he's encouraged the workshop organizers to include folks from the Recovery Program working on nonnative fish removal. >Tom Iseman will post an announcement of this workshop to the fws-coloriver listserv. John Shields suggested we prepare a brief summary of what we've accomplished to date with nonnative fish management as background information for D.C.; >Bob said his office would do that.

4. Environmental groups funding – Tom Iseman reviewed the difficulty they've had funding their participation in the Program. NFWF turned down the grant request from Western Resource Advocates (WRA) this year which funds Dan Luecke's and John Hawkins' work. Program participants have been working to remedy this and John Shields sent a letter to NFWF on behalf of the Management Committee. Tom said they very much appreciate the help of the Program partners. The environmental groups have scraped together a bare bones budget and are working to find any other available funding sources. John Shields has spoken with Don Glaser (formerly with NFWF) and with Kristyna Wolniakowski (now the Western Partnership Office Director). It appears that reorganization within NFWF may have resulted in some lack of familiarity with our Program and the importance of NFWF's funding for environmental group representation. NFWF has agreed to reconsider WRA's proposal within their Bring Back the Natives (BBN) initiative. >John will speak with Kristyna again, and D.C. trip participants will visit with the Service's representative on the BBN committee (John Castellano), and perhaps USBR's representative, as well. Brent Uilenberg is working to determine USBR's representative on the BBN committee. John said he gets the sense from NFWF that it may be best to return this grant request to something other than the BBN initiative in the future. Tom Pitts emphasized the importance of environmental groups' participation in the D.C. trip and on the Biology Committee.
5. Flaming Gorge ROD 4-tier communication process – Brent said Randy Peterson gave a presentation on this in April 2006. The idea is that the Biology Committee would formulate recommendations concerning any needed research in relation to the upcoming runoff year and operation of Flaming Gorge; those recommendations would go to the Management Committee as an information item so everyone is aware of and in support of them (in some years, flow recommendations may be quite controversial, so support of all Program participants is very important). Then the Program Director would send the recommendations to the Technical Work Group (TWG) and the Flaming Gorge Work Group for implementation as the season progresses. Brent said a letter from the Program Director outlining any deviation from the flow recommendations would be needed by the end of February. Any base flow requests would need to come in at the same time (or shortly thereafter). Dave Speas sent and Angela forwarded the 2006 Flaming Gorge

annual operations report to the Management Committee. >Brent said Reclamation will work to improve the Flaming Gorge operations communication process with the Recovery Program. Bob Muth said that the Biology Committee said in November that they have no specific research needs for 2007. Since the RIPRAP discusses evaluation of different flows, Dave Mazour asked why we aren't requesting specific flows this year. Bob replied that we're wrapping up previous research and there will be future studies beginning in 2008, but in 2007, no specific research needs were identified. Tom Pitts suggested it would be helpful to lay out the process at the beginning of each season (not just for the Biology Committee, but also for the Management Committee); >Brent Uilenberg said they will do that (now and in the future). >The Management Committee will discuss and approve the communication process at their next meeting. Reclamation would like > a letter from the Program Director by the end of February whether or not there are special recommendations.

6. Green River Study Plan and incorporation into RIPRAP – Bob Muth said the study plan was developed by an ad hoc committee led by Rich Valdez which included representatives from Reclamation, Western, the Service, and Argonne. Principal investigators and the Biology Committee also have provided input to the plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify studies needed to evaluate the Green River flow and temperature recommendations. The Biology Committee approved the plan with minor revisions on February 1 and the revised draft was sent to the Management Committee on February 5. Recommended RIPRAP revisions are on page 38. Misti Schriener said she sees opportunity for study of low flows in the Green River Study Plan, but because Clayton Palmer doesn't see that explicitly stated, there's a disconnect. With regard to low flows, Bob Muth pointed to the paragraph on page 28, which says:

“The magnitude and duration of spring flows necessary to optimize larval entrainment under the full range of hydrologic conditions (e.g., wet, moderately wet, average, etc.) is an outstanding information need. This includes, but is not limited to, the analysis of possibilities for meeting the goals of the flow recommendations at various peak flows (including peak flows that minimize spillway use and the risk of nonnative fish escapement from Flaming Gorge Reservoir). The synthesis of these studies should be used to assess differences in floodplains that translate to year-to-year variability in configuration and larval entrainment. Understanding annual variability of floodplains will help to better understand timing and magnitude of dam releases that most benefit the endangered fish.”

Tom Pitts asked if/when physical modifications to floodplain entries will be considered, and suggested we may need some hydraulic monitoring at those floodplain entries. Bob Muth said the work TetraTech has done will be brought together in the new start that integrates all that information. Misti said that Clayton is concerned that the report does not say “low flows.” Brent and Dave and Melissa disagreed and pointed out the numerous places where lower peak flows are cited in the plan. Misti said that although page 29 says “Benefits of lower peak flows for longer duration vs. higher peak flow for a shorter duration for a given volume (U14),” Clayton's concern is that this doesn't match the ROD, which only mentions lower peak flows. Western is explicitly interested in lower peak flows. This doesn't mean they're not interested in higher peak flows scientifically, but they want to make sure lower peak flows are fully evaluated. Bob Muth added that we have data on entrainment from low flows, but the 2004-2006 entrainment data have not yet been fully analyzed, and a synthesis of those data with other peak-flow and floodplain information will be part of the recommended new start in

FY08. Misti said that Western won't stand in the way of approving the study plan, but they want to go on record that they are specifically interested in evaluating lower peak flows. Tom Iseman said they want to be sure we explore the full range of the flow recommendations. Bob Muth said there are 18 hypotheses to be evaluated and they run the whole gamut. John Shields endorsed the process that went into this plan and said it's an excellent example of how the Program should work. The Committee approved the RIPRAP revisions and the study plan. >Bob Muth will talk to Argonne and make a recommendation to the Program regarding any studies for this year.

7. Washington, D.C., Trip – John Shields reminded participants to get their travel information to Kathy Wall immediately if they've not already done so. Trip participants will include: John Shields, Tom Pitts, Bob Muth, Dave Campbell, Brian Millsap, Randy Kirkpatrick, Robert King (and perhaps Darin Bird), Dave Irving, Pat Martinez, Tom Iseman, Leslie James, Dave Mazour, and Dan Birch. Brent Uilenberg said Reclamation can't participate in the Hill visits, but he will participate in the Interior briefings if those can be consolidated into a couple of days. John Shields reviewed the draft itinerary he's prepared and discussed additional folks the group will want to meet with this year. The briefing book is in preparation. >Bob Muth will work on getting a copy of the language on the Service's FY 08 budget and Brent Uilenberg will do the same for Reclamation's budget.
  - a. Report to Congress - A **subcommittee** of the Management Committee and the San Juan Coordination will to begin to draft the schedule and process, as well as an outline of content for the report to Congress. Dave Mazour, Tom Iseman, John Shields, Tom Blickensderfer, Tom Pitts, Misti Schriener, Robert King, Brent Uilenberg, and Robert Muth will serve on this subcommittee (additional San Juan participants to be determined, but Dave Campbell and John Whipple would certainly need to participate). The subcommittee will begin their work in February and then provide an update to the Management Committee. John Shields recommended the group prepare an outline of the report's contents prior to this year's D.C. trip. >Bob Muth will schedule a conference call with the group to discuss the outline. (Bob and Tom Pitts, John Shields, and Tom Iseman will prepare an initial draft.) Terry Hickman said the Central Utah Project works with DOI to prepare an annual report.
8. Updates
  - a. Funding/Budget
    - i. FY 07 work plan update – Angela Kantola said that some of the FY 07 nonnative fish management projects are still being finalized and most of the funds remaining in the FY 07 budget are expected to go towards those projects. Other projects which may require additional FY 07 funds include growout pond leases (only \$5K currently targeted), coordinated reservoir operations (no funds currently targeted, but some will be needed if coordinated reservoir operations are possible this year), Grand Valley hatchery repairs (no funds currently targeted), and maintenance/stocking activities at the Stirrup floodplain site (in preparation for an expanded recruitment study in FY 08). The Program has been able to keep

Program management costs below 15% of the total budget in past years (per Management Committee wishes). However, the estimated overall Program budget is significantly lower in FY 07 (~\$10.4M as compared to \$16.3M in FY 06, \$20.2M in FY 05, and \$18.9M in FY 04, for example) and Program management costs have not changed; therefore, the estimated Program management percentage is 18% for FY 07. The Committee decided to make Program management (14%) and capital projects management (4%) separate slices of the D.C. briefing book pie chart showing percent of projected expenditures by recovery element.

- ii. Capital projects and budget update – Brent Uilenberg reviewed capital projects and the capital projects budget as of January 29, noting that this is budget is a work in progress and there will be some changes. Angela Kantola said she believes this draft table mistakenly includes \$160K and \$148K of Utah direct contributions in FY 02 and 03, respectively. As she understood it, these were disputed credits that were determined not to apply, which is why Utah made an additional \$304.7K payment to NFWF in FY 05. (This affects what is shown for Utah in capital contributions in FY 07 and beyond.) Also, Angela said she believes the \$272K direct contribution shown for Colorado in FY 02 is a mistake (this was a one-time contribution which is already shown in FY 01). This error notwithstanding, Angela noted that the Committee has previously agreed Colorado has already made its full capital contribution to the Program. Brent added that the table also may be in error with regards to Wyoming’s contributions if Wyoming contributes \$275K in FY 07.
  - (1) Green Mountain Municipal Recreation contracts – Brent said these contracts have expired and Reclamation is working on renewal (in Solicitor’s office for approval, then to the three municipalities in anticipation that one will sign).
  - (2) Grand Valley Water Management – We’d been averaging 40KAF+ in annual reduced diversions, but it was only 18KAF this year. Reclamation and the water users have been working with the appropriate parties to get this back on track.
  - (3) Myton Diversion rehab funding – Brent said there will be no grant awards under the Water 2025 initiative in FY 07 if we stay under a continuing resolution. Terry Hickman said the 2005 Duchesne biological opinion allows ~3 years to find an alternate water source. If this funding isn’t received in FY 07 or FY 08, we’ll have a funding issue. (Tom Pitts noted the Program has already agreed to ~55% cost share [\$172.7K] from Section 7 funds.) Brent Uilenberg said the only place remaining to cut funds in capital projects is on the Tusher Wash.
  - (4) Price Stubb – Brent said several contractors have bid on the two proposals, and this will be a negotiated procurement, both of which make this quite complex. Reclamation hopes to know the difference between the two proposals next week. Reclamation FY 07 and 08 appropriations also will be a factor for consideration. Any relief that the Wyoming or Utah can offer through accelerated capital funds contributions would be helpful.

- (5) Elkhead repayment timeframe – Brent said he’s remained concerned regarding the ability to make repayment by November 10, 2008. In discussions with the River District, they have said that if we modify the contract, they need to at least cover their costs (~\$244K through November 2008, then ~\$33K/month after that). This is within the ceiling authorized by the Implementation Committee. >Brent will ask Dan to ask the District’s attorneys to draft a contract modification along those lines.
- b. Flow protection
  - i. Report on December 14 meeting with Grand Valley irrigators – Summary forthcoming.
  - ii. Protection of Green River flows – George Smith distributed an update and said he is working to set up a meeting of the WAC.
- c. Bringing young Yampa Canyon *Gila* into captivity – Tom Czapla is working on a proposal to bring young *Gila* from Yampa and Green rivers into captivity (up to 200 *Gila* to each of Mumma and Ouray hatcheries) as an experimental effort to learn how to best transport and culture these fish in light of recent apparent declines of wild humpback chub in Yampa Canyon. (Only a few of these 400 fish to be captured are likely to turn out to be humpback chub, *Gila cypha*, most will likely be roundtail chub.) John Reber said Parks has approved the proposal, discussed it with the appropriate county commissioners, and made the appropriate permit requests. This would be done under a NEPA categorical exclusion. Tom Czapla said the schedule is still up in the air, but this might not occur until fall. Melissa Trammell noted that Parks has asked that the roundtail chub be returned to the river at the end of the study; disposition of any humpback chub would need to be determined.
- d. Grand Canyon humpback chub population estimate – Tom Czapla reported that the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center will do a concurrent mark-recapture sample this spring in the mainstem Colorado River.
- e. Sufficient progress assessment for 2007 – Carol Taylor reported that the Service has scheduled their sufficient progress review meeting for April 4, 2007 and believes this will facilitate getting this assessment back on schedule.
- f. Status of 2007 recovery goal update and species status review – Tom Czapla distributed a draft strategy, saying the three Service regions held a conference call yesterday and approved the strategy. Region 6 of the Service will take the lead, but the revisions will involve the Service basinwide. Each Region will reach out and contact the appropriate stakeholders, biologists, etc. in their Region. The Program Director’s office will have the lead for the Service (Tom Czapla, with Rich Valdez as the contractor). The goal is to have the revisions completed by early 2008. A revision team of people who would do the outreach in their Region was identified during the conference call. Tom Pitts asked about the role of the revision team; Bob said they would gather information from local stakeholders and biologists, compile that, and draft the revisions. Team members would be: R6 - Chuck McAda, Tom Czapla, Rich Valdez; CNO - Diane Elam and

perhaps someone from the Reno office (Bob Williams?); R2 - Dave Campbell, Sam Spiller, Leslie Fitzpatrick, Glen Nolls, Chuck Minckley, and Pam Sponholtz. Tom Pitts asked why the team needs seven people from Region 2. Carol Taylor said Region 2 was adamant about having their biologists on the team, but noted that Region 6 retains the lead for the revision. Tom Pitts expressed concern about the ability of such a large group to accomplish the task and suggested that perhaps the upper and lower basins should have a technical team that's not part of this revision team. Carol said that may be what actually happens as we move forward in this and >she'll take that recommendation back to the Service. John Shields concurred with Tom Pitts' concern. Tom Blickensderfer asked about the approach for determining time and cost estimates; Bob Muth said we'll just make the best estimates we can. Tom Pitts said the recently approved Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery Plan may provide an example of time and cost estimates. Tom Czaplá said the revision will focus on new information and the time and cost estimates. Concurrently, the Service will do a status review on all four species (that announcement should appear in the Federal Register in March).

- g. Reports status – Angela Kantola distributed an updated reports list.
  - h. Web conferencing – Angela Kantola described the Program's new web conferencing ability using Verizon WebEx. Angela said she believes this new tool can help Program participants take care of routine Committee business and increase collaboration. The Flaming Gorge Study Plan *ad hoc* group used it very successfully, and the Biology Committee tried it out for the first time during their February 1 conference call. Examples of areas where it can be used include collaborative work on the briefing book, drafting an outline for the report to Congress, the Service's sufficient progress meeting, and more.
  - i. Nonnative Fish Stocking Procedures – Carol Taylor said the Service has begun a review of these (they're past due for review/renewal). The Program Director's office will have the lead and the Service hopes to complete this by the end of 2007.
9. Upcoming Management Committee tasks and schedule next meeting (All) (10 min) – The Committee needs to schedule their meeting to review a draft RIPRAP assessment, recommended RIPRAP revisions, and FY 08-09 Program Guidance. (The Biology Committee was not able to schedule their meeting to review and comment on these documents until March 7-8.) The next meeting will be April 5, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Denver, near DIA. >Management Committee members will request that their Implementation Committee members delegate approval of the RIPRAP assessment, revised RIPRAP, and Program Guidance to the Management Committee.

ADJOURN 4:05p.m.

## Assignments

Carry-over from previous meetings:

1. **Bob Muth** will draft a letter to the BLM state directors regarding coordination on energy development (*pending*).
2. **The Service** will prepare a comparison of what a BO under the Recovery Program looks like now and what it would look like using a no-jeopardy approach (*pending*).
3. **Tom Blickensderfer** will provide Bob Muth a copy of the package the Colorado Wildlife Commission was provided on nonnative fish issues (*pending*).
4. A **subcommittee** of the Management Committee and the San Juan Coordination will to begin to draft the schedule and process, as well as an outline of content for the report to Congress. Dave Mazour, Tom Iseman, John Shields, Tom Blickensderfer, Tom Pitts, Misti Schriener, Robert King, Brent Uilenberg, and Robert Muth will serve on this subcommittee (additional San Juan participants to be determined, but Dave Campbell and John Whipple would certainly need to participate). The subcommittee will begin their work in February and then provide an update to the Management Committee. John Shields recommended the group prepare an outline of the report's contents prior to this year's D.C. trip. **Bob Muth** will schedule a conference call with the group to discuss the outline. (**Bob and Tom Pitts, John Shields, and Tom Iseman** will prepare an initial draft.)
5. The **Water Acquisition Committee** needs to discuss Green River flow protection and develop solutions. The **Program Director's office** will send them a summary of the recent conference call.

New Assignments:

1. **Tom Blickensderfer** will determine when it might be most appropriate to brief the new western slope Wildlife Commissioners. There are probably some new west slope State legislators who should be briefed, so Tom also will provide a list of these new legislators to the Management Committee.
2. **Tom Iseman** will post an announcement of TNC's March aquatic invasive species workshop to the fws-coloriver listserver.
3. The **Program Director's office** will prepare a brief summary of what we've accomplished to date with nonnative fish management as background information for the D.C. trip
4. **John Shields** will speak NFWF's with Kristyna Wolniakowski again, and the **D.C. trip participants** will visit with the Service's representative on the BBN committee (John Castellano), and perhaps USBR's representative, as well.

5. Flaming Gorge operations: **Reclamation** will work to improve the Flaming Gorge operations communication process with the Recovery Program. Tom Pitts suggested it would be helpful to lay out the process at the beginning of each season (not just for the Biology Committee, but also for the Management Committee); **Reclamation** will do that (now and in the future). The **Management Committee** will discuss and approve the communication process at their next meeting. Reclamation would like a letter from the **Program Director** by the end of February whether or not there are special recommendations. **Bob Muth** will talk to Argonne and make a recommendation to the Program regarding any studies for this year.
6. **Bob Muth** will work on getting a copy of the language on the Service's FY 08 budget and **Brent Uilenberg** will do the same for Reclamation's budget.
7. **Brent Uilenberg** will ask Dan Birch to ask the River District's attorneys to draft a contract modification on Elkhead repayment.
8. **Carol Taylor** will take the recommendation that perhaps the upper and lower basins should have a technical team that's not part of the recovery goal revision team back to the Service.
9. **Management Committee members** will request that their Implementation Committee members delegate approval of the RIPRAP assessment, revised RIPRAP, and Program Guidance to the Management Committee.

Attendees  
Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado  
February 8, 2007

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg ( <i>via phone due to weather/flight difficulties</i> )	Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Blickensderfer	State of Colorado.
( <i>Not represented due to weather/flight difficulties</i> )	State of Utah
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
John Shields	State of Wyoming
Carol Taylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
John Reber	National Park Service
Tom Iseman	The Nature Conservancy
Misti Schriener for Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration

Nonvoting Member:

Bob Muth	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Recovery Program Staff:

Angela Kantola	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pat Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Czapla	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Debbie Felker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Melissa Trammell ( <i>via phone</i> )	National Park Service
George Smith	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Campbell	San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program
Kevin Gelwicks	State of Wyoming
Terry Hickman	Central Utah Water Conservation District
Dave Speas ( <i>via phone</i> )	Bureau of Reclamation