



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

May 2, 2011

Draft

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL SUMMARY

April 29, 2011

CONVENE: 11:30 a.m.

1. Legislation – John Shields said many of the non-Federal Program participants held a preliminary legislative matters call this morning. They propose a Management Committee call the week of May 16, as the non-federal participants to the two recovery programs would like to discuss their proposal for amending the recovery programs’ federal authorization to extend the expiring authority to use Upper Colorado River Basin Fund power revenues for non-operation and maintenance and non-monitoring annual base funding purposes with the rest of the Committee. The Committee set the call for Monday, May 16, from 10 a.m. – 11:30, on the usual call-in line.
2. Review of draft elements of Service’s 2011 sufficient progress letter – Tom Chart said the draft builds on the Program’s recent RIPRAP assessment, focusing on items that the Program Director’s office expects the Service will view as most important.
 - A. Status of the Species – Tom Chart said we’ve tried to provide more graphic representation as requested last year by the environmental groups. Mike Roberts said the revised review process also responds to their concern expressed last year to have an opportunity to comment earlier in the process. Mike noted that Brandon has been in the field and not yet able to review the draft. Tom Pitts asked about the assessment of survivability that indicated stocking rates are too low. Tom Czapla said we’re planning to revisit and potentially modify the 2003 stocking plan in light of information from Koreen Zelasko’s analyses. With regard to humpback chub genetics, Tom Czapla said he plans to convene an *ad hoc* group to address *Gila* genetics (as referenced in the Concerns table).

With regard to Tom Pitts’ question as to what the stability of the Colorado River Colorado pikeminnow population indicates, Tom Chart said the revised recovery goals will address these kinds of questions. John Shields asked about “In 2007, the Recovery Program brought 400 young-of-year *Gila* spp. caught in Yampa Canyon into captivity as a research activity to determine the best methods for capture, transportation, and holding at two different hatchery facilities.” Melissa Trammell said that because the Park Service will require NEPA analysis on a captivity plan, this was introduced as a pilot research (rather than captivity) project. Melissa is working on a draft EA for a captivity plan, but the Program still needs to discuss the issue of hybridization. Tom Czapla said this will be part of the *ad hoc* group’s task. Mike Roberts suggested briefly capturing that explanation here in the sufficient progress document. Tom Pitts asked when we need bring humpback chub into captivity; Melissa said she thinks we added bringing fish into the Ouray NFH - Grand Valley unit to Program Guidance, and the *ad hoc* group also will address this. Tom Czapla and Tom Chart agreed that the *ad hoc* group needs to look at worst-case scenarios and develop an action plan. Mike urged the *ad hoc* group to think explicitly about alternative hypotheses for each life stage. Tom Chart added that the numbers of roundtails and humpback chub in Black Rocks and Westwater seem to shift over time, with roundtails more abundant in periods of low water. The Program begins sampling Black Rocks and Westwater again this year, and Tom hopes to see increased numbers as a result of the recent wetter hydrologies. Black Rocks and Westwater are still referred to as two populations, though they are discussed in RG’s as a potential

combined population from a core population perspective. They are treated separately for trends, but combined for the core (MVP) component. Melissa asked if Figure 6 is the correct graph for the Grand Canyon (page 10); Tom Czaplá said Bill Persons said they haven't run the age-structured mark-recapture for the past two years of estimates. Tom Czaplá and Tom Chart asked why we include San Juan and Grand Canyon numbers. Management Committee members were ambivalent about this inclusion. The Program Director's office will ask the Service's opinion on this matter and take San Juan and Grand Canyon numbers out if the Service approves. If it's taken out, we will re-title the first section "Status of the Species in the Upper Basin." Mike suggested another alternative would be to leave it in, but summarize this conversation. Tom Pitts asked why we haven't linked adult razorback numbers to the recovery goals, as reported for other species in this assessment? Tom Czaplá we're further out on razorback; Tom Chart said we could include the number of razorbacks we're tracking as part of our other monitoring activities (e.g., Colorado pikeminnow) and explain why we don't have the same level of detail for razorback.

With regard to whether or not demographic criteria are met, Mike Roberts suggested the piece still missing is the length of time over which populations are sustained (has the clock started ticking toward monitoring toward delisting?). >Tom Chart will ask the Service if they're comfortable with stating this in the document, but from his perspective, the clock started when we started doing population estimates. (However, this is most appropriately captured in a status review.)

- B. Accomplishments, Concerns, and Recommended Action Items – Tom Chart responded to the NPS comment re: tie to criteria and noted while it had resulted in some wording challenges that he thought that incorporating the suggestion had provided useful value to the document.

Accomplishments

General - The PD's office also would like to recognize 2011 CDOW fishing regulation changes that lifted bag and possession limits on many nonnative fishes in several reaches¹. (However, the PD's office is concerned that Kenney Reservoir and the tailrace was left out of these changes and is discussing this with CDOW.)

Mike Roberts and Melissa Trammell suggested adding Utah's work on the Green River water plan as an accomplishment. The Committee agreed.

Brent Uilenberg offered a correction to the GVWM numbers. Angela said those numbers will be corrected here, in the RIPRAP tables, and in the Service's 15-MR PBO review spreadsheet.

Concerns/Action Items

Melissa asked if continuing work on preventing oil and gas spills, etc. should be reflected as a continuing concern; Tom Chart said we're getting an annual report from the Service and have the sense

¹ Green River in Moffat County; Yampa River from headwaters to Green River confluence in Moffat and Routt counties; White River from the confluence of the North and South Forks of the White River downstream to Kenney Reservoir, and from 400 yards below Taylor Draw Dam downstream to the stateline in Rio Blanco County; Colorado River in Garfield, Eagle, Grand and Mesa counties, from the confluence with the Eagle River downstream to the stateline; Eagle River in Eagle County from the I-70 EXIT 147 bridge in Eagle downstream to the confluence with the Colorado River; North Fork Gunnison River from the confluence with Anthracite Creek downstream to the confluence with the Gunnison River, in the Uncompahgre River from Ridgeway Dam downstream to the confluence with the Gunnison River, and in the Gunnison River from the confluence with the Smith Fork downstream to the confluence with the Colorado River, in Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and Ouray counties; San Miguel River from the Colo. 90 bridge at Pinion downstream to the confluence with the Dolores River, and in the Dolores River from McPhee dam downstream to the stateline in Dolores, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, and San Miguel counties.

they are tracking this. Melissa said the Biology Committee learned last fall how little control we actually have and that a number of spills that occur without reporting or treatment. Tom Chart said water quality issues are important and we track them as they relate to recovery goals, but they are primarily other agencies' responsibilities, thus he doesn't think the Service needs to evaluate *Program* efforts in addressing contaminant concerns. Brent Uilenberg agreed, saying he doesn't like to see items in this document over which Program participants have no control. Shields added that eventual state conservation plans will have to address contaminant issues prior to de-listing.

Melissa asked about the discussion section and Service emphasis on nonnative fish concerns. Angela said the Service hasn't yet written conclusion section, but she anticipates that it will again mention nonnative fishes and emphasize the need to get action items done.

Angela said the Program Director's office also would like to add a concern about inadequate penalties for illicit introductions, which was discussed under General, III.B.7.a. (develop plan to increase law enforcement activity to prevent illicit stocking) in the RIPRAP assessment: "Recommend Utah and Colorado emulate Wyoming and adopt strict and severe penalties for illegal introduction of nonnative aquatic species and facilitate education, enforcement and incentives to promote compliance and prosecution as needed." Illegal stocking increases threat of extinction by increasing numbers and species of nonnative fish in critical habitat. The recommended action item would be to "Encourage collaboration between states to adopt education, regulations, penalties and enforcement with a cohesive message and cooperative strategy to combat this illegal activity."

On the concerns table, John Shields suggested it would be more appropriate to say that late reports are *delaying our ability to...* not that they are *hampering our ability to...* Mike Roberts preferred the hampering language in light of the fact that we eventually will run out of resources to accomplish recovery actions. John said the implementation of action items is being delayed rather than hampered. Angela Kantola said she realized that criteria would be open to interpretation. The Management Committee urged the Service to apply as much logical consistency as possible.

Tom Pitts suggested including two additional concerns:

- The Water Acquisition Committee was scheduled to complete a 5-year depletion analysis for the Yampa River in 2010 (not done yet). The State of Wyoming has submitted an assessment of depletions.
- Water Acquisition Committee review of the need for an instream flow filing every five years by the Water Acquisition Committee is overdue.

Melissa agreed. The Program Director's office will add those with draft action items. Melissa recommended mentioning that we may need to develop peak flow recommendations for the Yampa (as was mentioned in the RIPRAP table).

Clayton said the recent Aspinall meeting notes say that the EIS will be completed by April 2012; >Brent Uilenberg will confirm this date.

>Angela Kantola will e-mail Becky Mitchell to ask if Colorado will have any comments on the draft for the Service to consider.

>Management Committee members will submit any additional comments to the Program Director's office by c.o.b. Wednesday, May 4. Mike Roberts will provide any additional comments from the environmental groups as soon as he gets input from Brandon Albrecht next week.

ADJOURN: 1:15 p.m.

Attachment 1
Participants
Colorado River Management Committee Conference Call
April 29, 2011

Management Committee Voting Members:

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| Brent Uilenberg | Bureau of Reclamation |
| (The State of Colorado was not represented.) | |
| Robert King | State of Utah |
| Tom Pitts | Upper Basin Water Users |
| John Shields | State of Wyoming |
| (The Service was not represented.) | |
| Leslie James | Colorado River Energy Distributors Association |
| Melissa Trammell | National Park Service |
| Mike Roberts | The Nature Conservancy |
| Clayton Palmer | Western Area Power Administration |

Nonvoting Member:

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| Tom Chart | Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
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Recovery Program Staff:

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| Angela Kantola | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Pat Martinez | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Tom Czapla | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |

Others:

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| Gene Shawcroft | Central Utah Water Conservancy District |
| Jana Mohrman | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| John Reber | National Park Service |
| Dave Speas | Bureau of Reclamation |
| Shane Capron | Western Area Power Administration |
| Krissy Wilson | Utah Division of Wildlife Resources |

Attachment 2: Assignments

1. **Program Director's office** will provide a more specific recommendation regarding establishing a basinwide recovery/conservation oversight team for the endangered fishes. 8/10/09: *Tom Czapla said the Program Director's office believes that continuing coordination by Service staff in California/Nevada and Regions 2 and 6 is the best way to accomplish this. As with recovery goals, these Service offices would maintain communication with their stakeholders and then coordinate with one another. Tom will ask that Service group for their suggestions on how they would like to continue this coordination role as the recovery goals revision process wraps up. 2/25/09: Service Solicitor recommended revising the full recovery plans (which will include the recovery goals). Tom Pitts asked if the recovery team would be reconvened; >the Service will look into this and also into Tom's question as to whether recent regulations have expanded potential recovery team membership. 4/7: The Service will maintain consistency with what has been done so far on recovery goal revisions, that is, relying on Service personnel to work with the partners in each program (e.g., Upper Colorado, San Juan, GCDAMP, etc.) throughout the Colorado River Basin. The Service does not plan to reconvene a recovery team at this time. Tom Pitts and others asked >the Service to provide a process and schedule for completing the recovery plans to the Recovery Program as soon as possible (request reiterated 11/9/10). 6/7/10: This schedule will be out shortly. Tom Czapla met recently with Lower Basin folks from the two Reclamation and two Service regions. The group recommended a meeting or conference call of the Program Directors with Reclamation and the Service in both regions twice a year to maintain coordination. Leslie James asked if Glen Canyon would be addressed in those meetings and Tom Czapla said that Sam Spiller participated in the meeting via phone. Tom Pitts asked for a short summary of the difference between recovery plans and recovery goals (provided by Tom Czapla 6/14/10). 2/16/11: Tom Chart said the Service is working with Bob Muth and Rich Valdez to revise just the recovery goals at this point (having re-negotiated this point with the Solicitor and Regional Office).*
2. The **Program Director** will further discuss with the Service developing a programmatic biological opinion for the White River Basin 8/10/09: *We need to review the flow recommendations. Tom Pitts also suggests reviewing water demand data from the state (unclear if that's been updated to include projected needs for oil and gas development). Dan McAuliffe said a pending roundtable report should address oil and gas development and associated water demand estimates. (Dan Birch can provide status update). 4/7: The Service will begin discussing a White River PBO during their sufficient progress review next week. 5/2/11: The draft White River flow recommendations report is now expected 7/1/11; an Ad hoc group on a proposed White River Management Plan held their first conference call 4/26/11.*
3. The **Program Director's Office (Tom Czapla)** will alert the committee when the 5-year species status reviews are completed and provide a link to the documents. *Pending; no change in listing status anticipated. The Program Director's office confirmed these will be done before the end of the calendar year, as was reported on the Washington, D.C. trip. 11/9/10: In review by FWS Regional Office; Julie Lyke to prioritize review to meet deadline. 2/7/11: Julie Lyke secured a final round of Regional Office input on the HBC 5-year by mid-November, 2010. The HBC 5-year was subsequently revised and submitted back to the RO for surnaming (on Jan 31, 2011). The CPM 5-year was revised similarly and submitted for surnaming on Feb 7, 2011.*
4. The **Management Committee** will consider naming a floodplain site for Pat Nelson.
5. The **Program Director's office** will ask Ouray NWR to document their floodplain management recommendations in their draft FY 12-13 easement scope of work (and also ask how the Program might better participate in the Refuge's planning process).
6. By September 31, 2011, as required in the PBO's, the **Water Acquisition Committee** will review mechanisms of current flow protection under the PBO's for the Yampa and Colorado rivers to determine if

additional mechanisms or instream flow filings are needed at this time (and this will be reviewed every 5 years). This discussion will include whether or not depletion accounting is working (are we able to adequately document depletions); however, the depletion accounting does not need to be completed in order to determine if additional mechanisms or instream flow filings are needed at this time. Peak flows on the Yampa should be discussed, but a peak flow recommendation may be the first step in this process.

7. **Tom Chart** will ask the Service if they're comfortable with stating in the sufficient progress memo that the clock was started toward monitoring toward delisting when we started doing population estimates.
8. **Brent Uilenberg** will confirm the currently anticipated Aspinall EIS completion date (April 2012?).
9. **Angela Kantola** will e-mail Becky Mitchell to ask if Colorado will have any comments on the draft elements of the sufficient progress letter for the Service to consider.
10. **Management Committee members** will submit any additional comments to the Program Director's office by c.o.b. Wednesday, May 4.