

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Craig, CO, August 8-9, 2006

### Tuesday, August 8

CONVENE: 3:15 p.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, and appoint a timekeeper – The agenda was modified as it appears below.
2. Approve [June 13, 2006 meeting summary](#) and review assignments – The summary was approved as written.
3. Updates
  - a. Capital projects
    - Price-Stubb fish passage – Brent Uilenberg reviewed concerns about the cost of the whitewater park portion being much higher than anticipated. Reclamation is getting ready to issue the preliminary notice for bids, but the contract award could be delayed if Reclamation is operating under continuing resolution at the beginning of FY 07. The Recovery Program will host a public meeting to discuss Price-Stubb on August 22 at 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Grand Junction (Bob Muth leading).
    - Status of Water 2025 grant application for rehabilitating the Myton townsite diversion dam – Brent Uilenberg said it's possible this could be funded as end of year or FY 07 funds become available.
    - Floodplain habitat – Robert King mentioned that someone has purchased Curtis Island (between Thayne's and Swayze's) where we may be able to participate in restoring a good oxbow area (no funding needed, just technical advice).
    - Grand Valley projects (discussed on Wednesday, April 9) - Brent said the Obermeyer gate for GVIC fish passage will be installed by the end of summer. Reclamation has been waiting to see how the Redlands fish screen performed before modifying GVIC fish screen. Redlands is working well and scheduling for work on the GVIC fish screen will depend on when Price-Stubb construction begins. The SCADA system on the Grand Valley Project screen should be operational by next summer. The GVWM pumping plant should be online within the next week or two. Brent Uilenberg expressed concern about Xcel Energy and Denver Water discussing relaxing the Shoshone hydropower call (which could provide a basis for reopening the Orchard-Mesa check case which the Program/Reclamation depend upon to declare a surplus in Green Mountain Reservoir and deliver and protect the GVWM water). George

Smith said that if the agreement were relaxed, it could create a bigger “hole” in April flows, for which we don’t have augmentation water.

- b. Flow and runoff conditions – George Smith gave an update on flow conditions, noting that it appears we will generally meet the flow recommendations throughout the basin (see Attachment 1). >George will post an update on this report to the fws-coloriver list server as soon as the 24-month study is available.
- c. Nonnative fish management and community update meeting summary – Pat Nelson reported on the public meeting on Yampa basin nonnative fish management held here in Craig last night. Pat said he believes the meeting went well: it was helpful to present the broad picture of Recovery Program issues and perspectives to the public and to let the anglers know that we’re doing our best to provide quality alternative sportfishing opportunities. With regard to this year’s activities, Pat said the first sampling trip on the Gunnison River hasn’t shown any new nonnative fish problems. We’re conducting the first year of a smallmouth bass population estimate on the Colorado River to help understand the scope of the problem there. A few gizzard shad have shown up in the Colorado River, which is disconcerting. Green River pike levels seem about the same. Kevin Bestgen is still finding young pike up in the Brown’s Park area. Yampa River sampling from Hayden to Craig (upstream of critical habitat) indicates that there are less than half (maybe a third) the number of pike found in last year’s estimate and there are too few bass to do a population estimate, so that’s encouraging. Pike numbers downstream appear somewhat less and the pike appear smaller than in years past. Our interim target for northern pike within critical habitat on the Yampa River is 3 fish per mile (currently there are 8 fish per mile). Interim criteria for smallmouth bass are to reduce the bass to a point where we have 20-30% native fish in slack water habitats (currently only at ~1%). In Yampa Canyon, last year’s population estimate was ~25,000 smallmouth bass and ~86,000 channel catfish; conducting removal passes only this year, we’ve removed ~5% of those numbers. Pat said CDOW has recommended holding a public meeting in Craig each year; Bob Muth agreed this is a good idea. Pat said CDOW would prefer we hold the meeting in April before crews are in the field. Robert King said he thought it was very helpful to have the researchers at the public meeting; Pat agreed. Tom Pitts added it was helpful to have CDOW chair the meeting and noted that he believes the success of last night’s meeting illustrates the utility of our ongoing public information efforts. Bob Muth and Tom Nesler will be giving an update on Program activities to the Colorado Wildlife Commission in Steamboat Springs this Thursday.
- d. Green River study plan – Bob Muth said the group developing the study plan got about 2/3 the way through when they met in Vernal in July and will meet again August 15-16 in Denver (with a draft study plan to be delivered to the Biology and Water Acquisition committees shortly thereafter). This could be on the Biology Committee’s October 3 agenda. The study plan will identify research needed to fill information gaps in the flow and temperature recommendations. Melissa added that attempts to modify temperatures below Flaming Gorge went very well this year.

## Wednesday, August 9

CONVENE: 8:30 a.m.

- e. Aspinall EIS process – Brent said the hydrological modeling is going well, and Reclamation continues to receive input on action alternatives. The outcome of Black Canyon case is still an unknown (Melissa said a ruling is expected any time). Bob Muth said the primary topic of the last EIS meeting was how to incorporate the Service’s flow recommendations (particularly the flow recommendations table and the footnote that identifies the table as one way to achieve the long-term recommendations). The Aspinall EIS group agreed to move forward with alternatives to achieve the same goals as the flow recommendations. Bob added that the Service has asked in the sufficient progress memo for a schedule of milestone events. Tom Pitts said Reclamation just prepared that schedule. On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the hydrology & EIS groups will meet, and the operations group meets on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- f. Reports status – Angela Kantola distributed an updated reports list. The Yampa humpback chub population estimate report (Finney) is being finalized.
- h. Status of Program funding included in Federal appropriations bills – John Shields said he understands the House has passed all 13 appropriation bills and the Senate has passed one, but no Conference Committee meetings have yet been held. John believes our funding requests are met in full in the House bills and in the Senate committee marks. John and Robert King are still working on getting a copy of this year’s Senate joint delegation letter. The Committee discussed dates for the 2007 Washington, D.C., trip and decided to hold their meetings March 19-23 (Monday-Friday), with Sunday, March 18 and either late Friday March 23 or Saturday March 24 as travel days. Meetings with NGO’s will be scheduled for Monday, and congressional office meetings will be scheduled for Tuesday – Friday (this tighter schedule will require the meetings be scheduled further in advance). The Committee agreed the Mexican restaurant doesn’t work well for the appreciation lunch and discussed the possibility of the Chinese restaurant about a block east of the Library of Congress or the Jefferson Room on the top floor of Library of Congress (Madison Building), which has a reasonable buffet and meeting room. >Dave Mazour will check on the Jefferson Room and get the details to John Shields. >John Shields and others who typically participate in the trip will discuss this and other options and make a recommendation for the appreciation lunch. We need to reserve 10 hotel rooms at the [Capitol Hill Suites](#) to get the \$188 rate. >Trip participants should submit their information to Kathy Wall no later than February 1, 2007, and she will make the hotel reservations.
- i. Energy development – >Bob Muth hasn’t yet drafted a letter to the BLM state directors regarding coordination on energy development, but will do so. Bob said there are several subsurface mineral rights at Ouray NWR, including under Leota. Dan Alonso has said he’ll provide a list of the leases to Bob Muth. Directional drilling has about a half-mile access limit, but we don’t yet know if the lease-

holders will be able to drill under the floodplain from outside the floodplain. John Shields said a tour of oil shale sites and facilities in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah is scheduled for August 21-25 (contact Kathy Walker at the Wyoming State Geological Survey for more information). Larry Gamble is drafting a list of Service employees (~7 total) who are part of the energy pilot project; and >will send it to the Committee within the next 2 weeks, as well as a more comprehensive list of contacts in other agencies (e.g., BLM). Al Pfister said there are two of these pilot offices in Wyoming and one each in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, they're currently concentrating on the Roan Plateau EIS. BLM also is developing EIS's on oil shale and west-wide pipeline corridors (drafts expected this fall). The Service has requested that they incorporate shut-off valves. Tom Iseman said the basin roundtables have been discussing water depletion impacts of oil shale; and asked the Committee to keep this on our agenda. Bob Muth and Robert King noted that some of the new oil shale technologies may use considerably less water, but actual impacts aren't yet known.

#### 4. Section 7 Consultations

- a. Sufficient progress – Larry Gamble distributed part one of the Service's draft sufficient progress memo and summarized the findings (progress has been sufficient for the Program to continue to serve as the RPA). Part two of this memo will be a review of status of items in the Yampa PBO. >Angela Kantola will e-mail this draft (and part two) to the Committee within the next week. >Committee members will submit comments on the draft by August 31 (preferably to Bob Muth, Larry Gamble and Angela Kantola). Robert King suggested that there may be greater reason for concern for flow protection in the White River than in the Green River. John Shields asked if the "procedural vacation" ruling on the humpback chub recovery goals should be mentioned in the letter; Tom Iseman agreed, noting that it leads into review and revision of the recovery goals for all four species. Bob Muth said he doesn't see this as something that falls under the criteria the Service uses to evaluate sufficient progress and asked for specific recommendations from those who think it should be included. Robert King suggested this might more appropriately be an item for the Program Director's update (Tom Pitts and Gary Burton agreed).
- b. Section 7 consultation process – Larry Gamble distributed a white paper discussing a potential change in the Service's approach to the consultation process under the Recovery Program, noting that by August 31, the Service would like the Committee's comments on how they believe this would affect the Program's Section 7 Agreement. Historically, the Service has issued jeopardy biological opinions with the Recovery Program serving as the RPA. The Service has recently moved toward more active coordination with project proponents to include conservation measures up front as part of their proposed action resulting in non-jeopardy opinions, and so is considering taking this approach in Colorado River depletion consultations. Tom Pitts asked how the applicant/Federal agency would make the Recovery Program actions part of their proposed action; Al Pfister and Larry agreed that this is the kind of detail the Service still needs to work out in this proposed approach and welcomed comments in that regard. Tom

noted that this doesn't apply to the 15-Mile Reach and Yampa PBO's; Al and Larry confirmed that this is true. John Shields asked if it might be better if the Service fleshed this concept out more before asking for comments, noting that he would like to see specific details of how this would look in a biological opinion. With regard to accomplishments being included as conservation measures; John expressed concern that this would de-emphasize the collective role of the Program in allowing projects to proceed and shift more responsibility back onto the project proponent. Tom Pitts agreed, and emphasized that it is important to the water users that the Program continue to rely on the Program as a whole, rather than calling out basin-specific actions in biological opinions. Al agreed and said the Service's intent is still to rely on the Recovery Program as a whole. John questioned whether it's appropriate to require the Recovery Program to fit the Service's new approach and said he believes such revision would require revising the Section 7 Agreement. Tom Pitts noted that for projects depleting less than 4,500 af, it's almost as if there were a programmatic biological opinion, anyway, and it would seem that the project proponent could simply cite (and perhaps attach) the Service's most recent sufficient progress letter. Tom added that >this needs to be brought up at the San Juan Program, also (meeting next week). Tom Pitts asked the Service to provide a comparison of what a biological opinion looks like now and how it would look in the future under this approach. John Shields asked if the Service would consider foregoing this approach and maintaining the status quo for consultations under the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. Larry Gamble asked Committee members to provide specific comments and questions that they have at this point on the proposed change as soon as possible (including how this would affect the Section 7 Agreement) and he will discuss their concerns with Mitch King. This will be an item for discussion at the Implementation Committee meeting. John also asked if there would be legal ramifications for relying on *accomplishments* when the Section 7 handbook says conservation measures are actions that *will be* implemented. >Larry Gamble will e-mail the white paper to the Management Committee with a specific request for comments (and will include a comparison of what a BO looks like now and what it would look like under the proposed new approach).

- c. Consultation list update – Angela Kantola distributed the consultation list through June 30, 2006. The ditch bill consultations have been added, each of which covers numerous ditch facilities, so the total number of projects has increased substantially. In total, since January 1988, the Service has consulted on 1,395 actual projects depleting a total of 2,069,457 af of water from the upper Colorado River basin (1,799,466 af of which are “historic” depletions which were occurring prior to the Program's inception). >Angela will post the list to the Program website. >The Service will check into the status of Gross Reservoir project.

## 5. Funding/Budget

- a. Work plan/budget status – Angela Kantola said implementation of the FY 06 work plan has gone well and she and Dave Speas are working to be sure any remaining funds (~\$250K) are carried FY 07.

- b. \*\*Capital funds reporting process for State cost-share accounting – Brent Uilenberg said they still need to provide historical (99 - 05) expenditures, a draft a recommended Program position on funds expended to date; documentation for the \$251.8K of Colorado funds in question (from Colorado); and any changes/corrections to Reclamation’s capital funds budget table (see assignments #3-6 from the June 13 meeting). This will be done before the Implementation Committee meeting. >Also, Brent will be sending a letter to Wyoming and Utah requesting their FY 06 contributions.
6. Implementation Committee meeting schedule for 2006 and agenda items -  
The Implementation Committee meets Monday, September 11, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Denver near DIA. Currently planned agenda items include:
- Flaming Gorge ROD and approval of a RIPRAP amendment to address the Green River study plan (the study plan likely will not finalized, so the Management Committee can approve the RIPRAP amendment to address the Green River study plan at a later date);
  - Formal decision on the Elkhead cost overrun - although the Program is only obligated to \$8.7M+5%, beyond which we could opt to accept less water instead of paying more, the Recovery Program anticipates, but has not formally approved, paying up to ~\$13.129M (>Brent Uilenberg will provide a specific cost summary);
  - Briefing on capital projects (what’s been built, what’s left, timeframe, acknowledgement of State capital expenditures, etc.);
  - Discussion of initiating preparation of the report by the Secretary of DOI which is due to Congress in 2008, and the need to extend the authorizing legislation beyond 2011 (for purposes other than monitoring and O&M [e.g., research]);
  - Updates on:
    - species status;
    - recovery goal revision;
    - Aspinall EIS and Gunnison PBO;
    - San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program (Dave Campbell)
    - Lower Basin recovery activities

Tom Pitts suggested organizing the meeting by these categories: capital projects (including a map showing project locations); ESA compliance (proposed new approach to biological opinions, sufficient progress, summary of consultations); overview of what’s been accomplished and where we’re going over the next several years; history of the Federal legislation; and recovery goal revisions (include species status, San Juan Program and lower basin recovery activities here). Some of this will need to be accompanied by PowerPoint slide presentations.

7. Upcoming Management Committee tasks and schedule next meeting. The meeting will be Monday, November 20 in Denver near DIA from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. With regard to previous meeting assignments, Angela noted that she will finalize the RIPRAP and post it to the list server shortly and that she also is working on the funding summaries requested by Tom Pitts (Program participant contributions and NFWF expenditures since the Program’s inception). >John Shields will send letters of

appreciation to the City of Craig, CRWCD, and TNC for their help with the tours, etc.). John Shields suggested holding a Management Committee meeting in Grand Junction just before or after the annual Researchers Meeting (perhaps even scheduling a joint Management and Biology Committee meeting). >The Program Director's office will draft a suggested agenda.

ADJOURN 12:30 p.m.

HYDROLOGY UPDATE for the August 9 Management Committee Meeting

**CURRENT RESERVOIR CONDITIONS** as of August 7, 2006

RESERVOIR	STATUS	CURRENT RELEASES cfs
Dillon	Filled	107
Green Mountain	Filled	371
Williams Fork	Filled	293
Wolford Reservoir	Filled	22
Ruedi Reservoir	Very close to filling	110 NF 150 Fish
Flaming Gorge*	Did not fill*	800
Aspinall Unit**	Filled	1,280

**CURRENT RIVER CONDITIONS** as of

	Aug 8 7:00	Median
Colorado at Cameo	2580	2690
Colorado River at Palisade	1070	1040
Gunnison River at Grand Junction	2040	2200
Colorado Utah Stateline	6100	7500
Yampa River at Maybell	248	389
Yampa River at Deerlodge Park	221	298
Green River at Flaming Gorge Dam	888	2060
Green River at Jensen	1150	2880
15-Mile Reach flow target	1,240 cfs	
Yampa flow target at Maybell	96 cfs	
Green River Flow target at Jensen	1,100-1,500 cfs	

Weather Outlook for August: Periods of warm temperatures' intermixed with monsoon conditions. Source - FYI Here is a link to Klaus's webpage...

<http://www.cdc.noaa.gov/people/klaus.wolter/SWcasts/index.html>

**FLAMING GORGE** – Releases from Flaming Gorge Dam were reduced to 800 cfs on average per day on July 11, 2006. This was in reaction to lower than expected inflows in June as well as a reduced forecast for the April through July period. It now appears that under the Flaming Gorge Record of Decision, this year will be classified as moderately dry year rather than average as was projected earlier in the year.

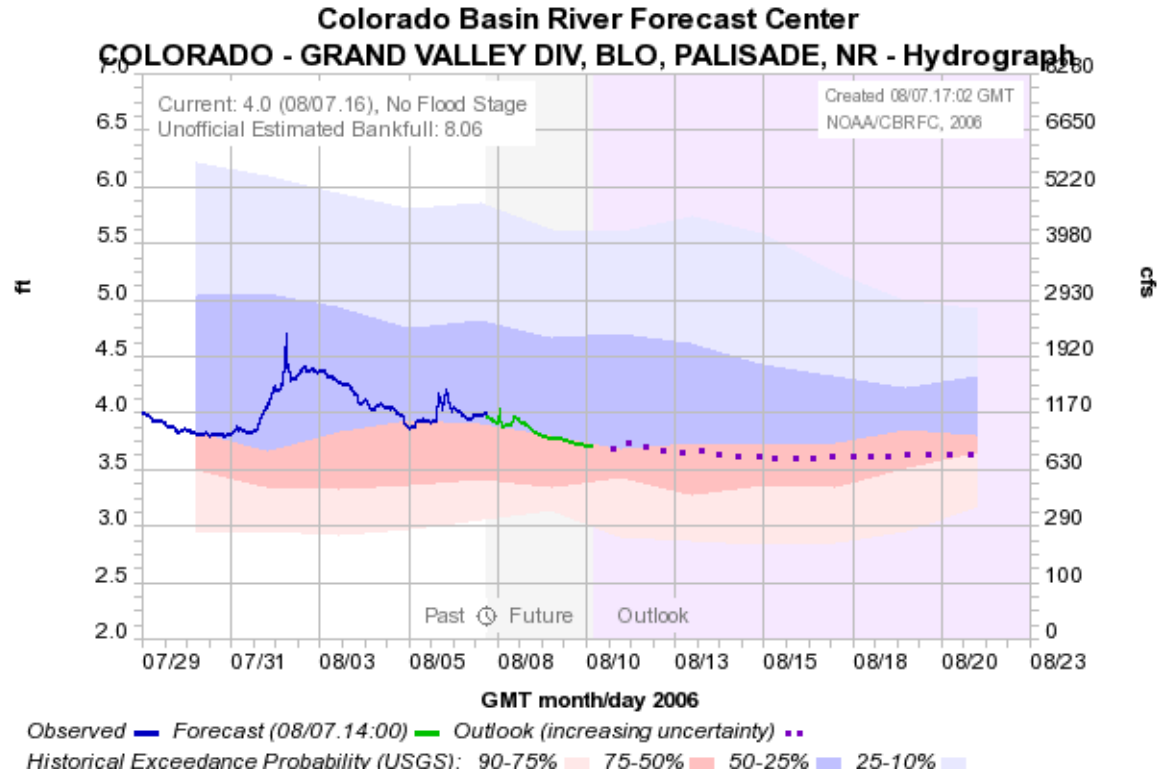
The next Flaming Gorge Working Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday August 22, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in Vernal, Utah. The location of this meeting will be at the Western Park Convention Center located at 302 East 200 South in Vernal.

**ASPINALL**

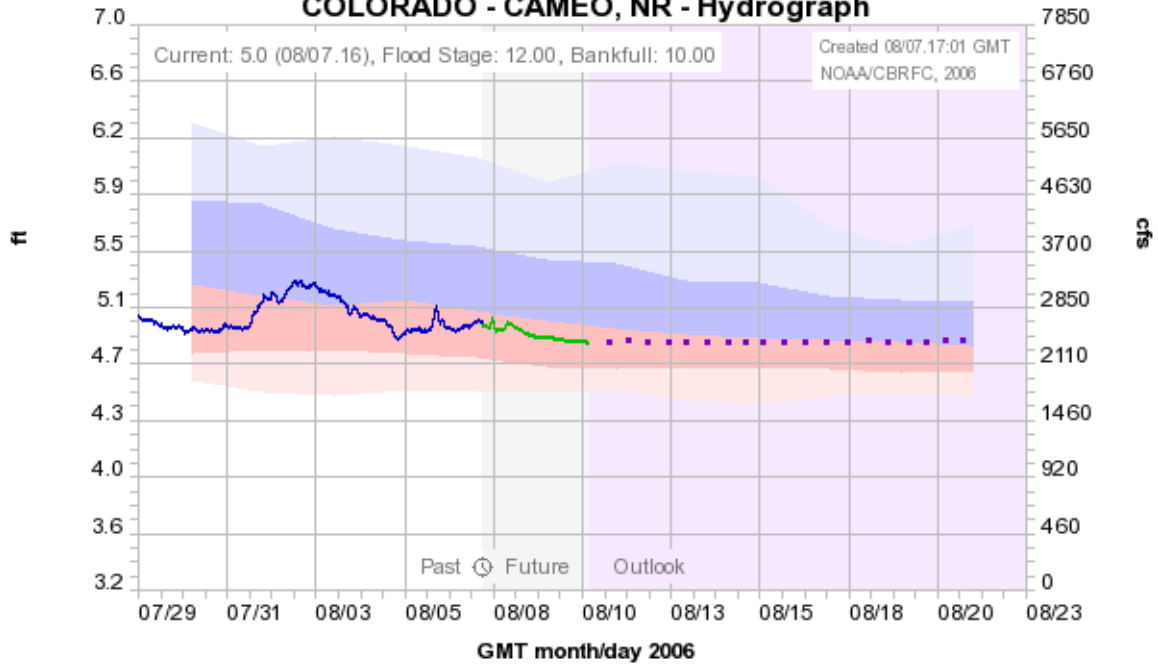
The next meeting of the "Aspinall Unit Working Group" will be held on Thursday August 24<sup>th</sup> in the Elk Creek Visitors Center at Blue Mesa Reservoir. Spring and summer operations will be reviewed and future operations discussed.



Colorado River Forecast Center outlook for the next 15 days at the 15-Mile Reach, Stateline, Deerlodge Park and Jensen.

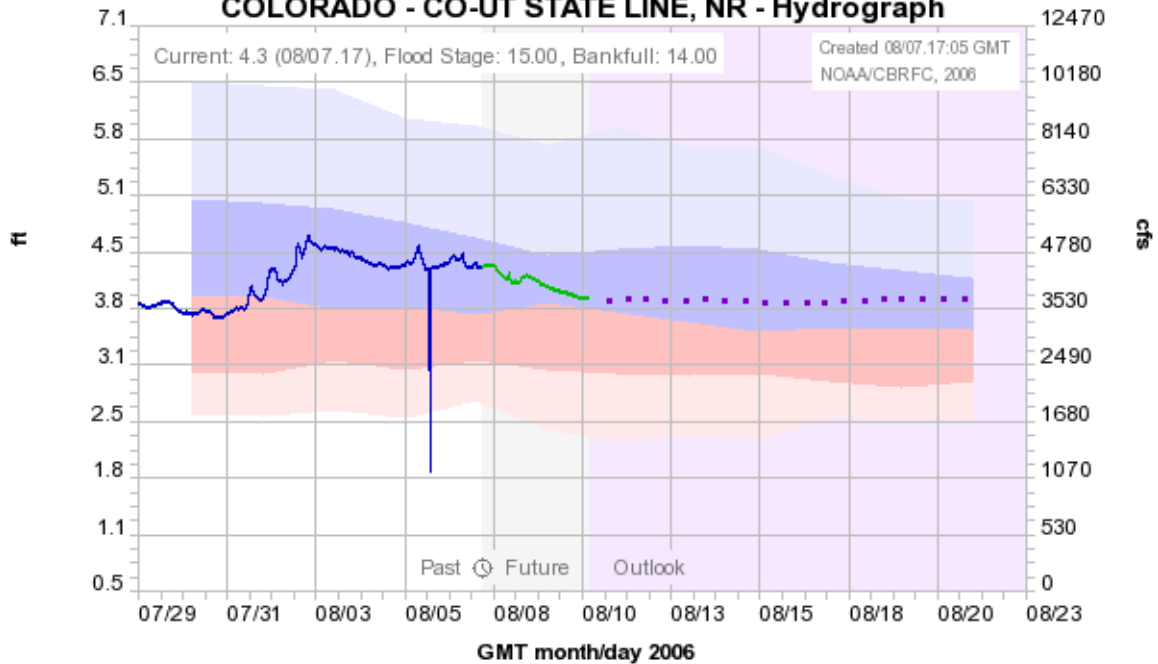


**Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
COLORADO - CAMEO, NR - Hydrograph**



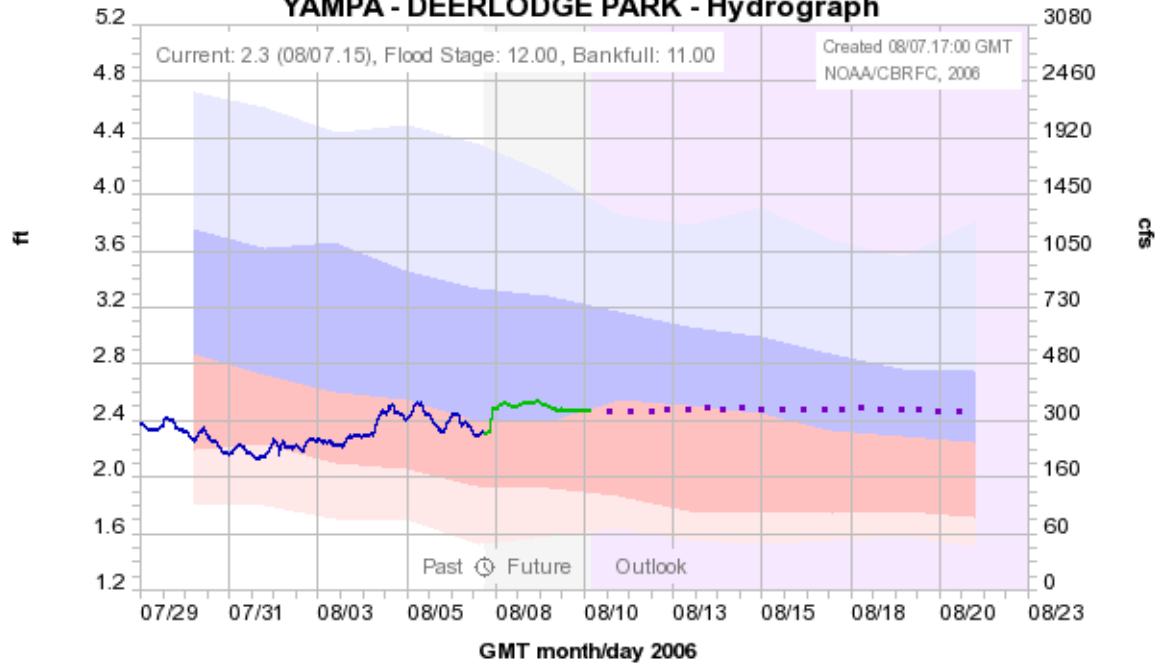
Observed — Forecast (08/07.14:00) — Outlook (increasing uncertainty) - - -  
 Historical Exceedance Probability (USGS): 90-75% 75-50% 50-25% 25-10%

**Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
COLORADO - CO-UT STATE LINE, NR - Hydrograph**



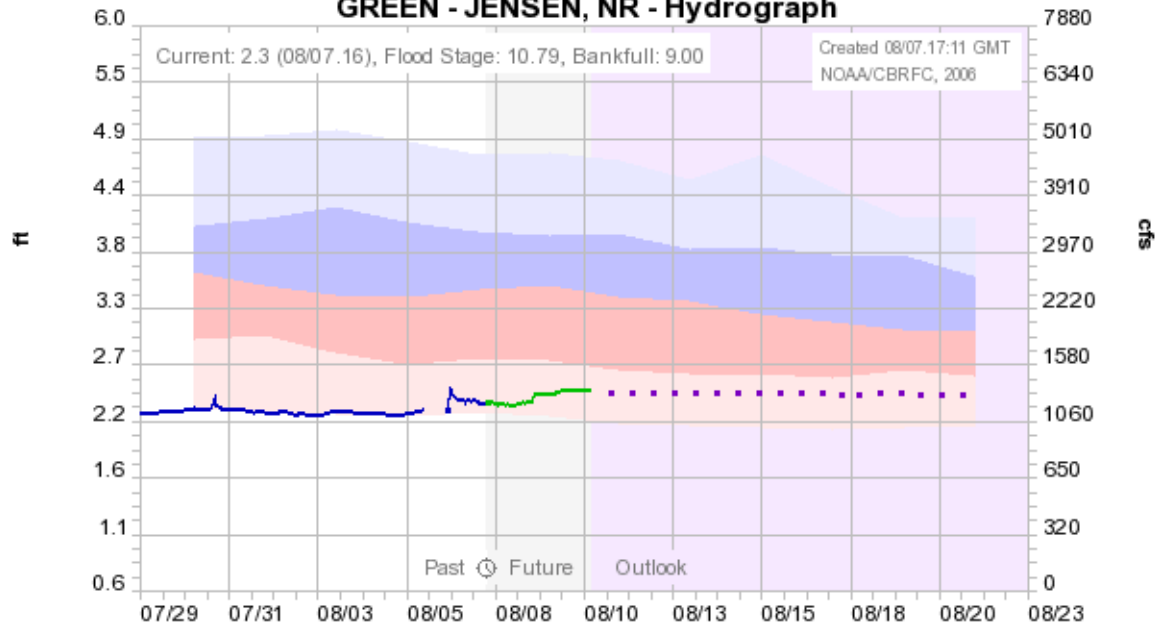
Observed — Forecast (08/07.14:00) — Outlook (increasing uncertainty) - - -  
 Historical Exceedance Probability (USGS): 90-75% 75-50% 50-25% 25-10%

**Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
YAMPA - DEERLODGE PARK - Hydrograph**



Observed — Forecast (08/07.14:00) — Outlook (increasing uncertainty) ⋯  
 Historical Exceedance Probability (USGS): 90-75% ■ 75-50% ■ 50-25% ■ 25-10% ■

**Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
GREEN - JENSEN, NR - Hydrograph**



Observed — Forecast (08/07.18:00) — Outlook (increasing uncertainty) ⋯  
 Historical Exceedance Probability (USGS): 90-75% ■ 75-50% ■ 50-25% ■ 25-10% ■

## Assignments

1. George Smith will post an update of his flow conditions report to the fws-coloriver list server as soon as the 24-month study is available.
2. Dave Mazour will check on the Jefferson Room in the Library of Congress for the Washington, D.C. appreciation lunch and get details to John Shields. John Shields and others who typically participate in the trip will discuss this and other options and make a recommendation for the appreciation lunch.
3. Washington, D.C. trip participants should submit their information to Kathy Wall no later than February 1, 2007, and she will make the hotel reservations.
4. Bob Muth will draft a letter to the BLM state directors regarding coordination on energy development.
5. Larry Gamble is drafting a list of Service employees (~7 total) who are part of the energy pilot project and will send it to the Committee within the next 2 weeks, as well as a more comprehensive list of contacts in other agencies (e.g., BLM).
6. Angela Kantola will e-mail the draft Sufficient Progress memo (and part two) to the Committee within the next week.
7. Committee members will submit comments on the draft Sufficient Progress memo by August 31 (preferably to Bob Muth, Larry Gamble and Angela Kantola).
8. The Service needs to bring up their proposed change to the Section 7 process at the San Juan Program meeting next week.
9. Larry Gamble will e-mail the Section 7 process white paper to the Committee (*done*) with a specific request for comments, and will include a comparison of what a BO looks like now and what it would look like under the proposed new approach (*pending*).
10. Angela Kantola will post the updated consultation list to the Program website.
11. The Service will check into the status of Gross Reservoir Hydro project.
12. Before the Implementation Committee meeting, Brent Uilenberg, Angela Kantola, Tom Blickensderfer, et al will follow up to provide historical (99 - 05) expenditures, a draft a recommended Program position on funds expended to date; documentation for the \$251.8K of Colorado funds in question; and any changes/corrections to Reclamation's capital funds budget table (see assignments #3-6 from the June 13 meeting).
13. Brent Uilenberg will send a letter to Wyoming and Utah requesting their FY 06 capital contributions.
14. John Shields will send letters of appreciation to the City of Craig, CRWCD, and TNC for their help with the tours, etc. associated with this meeting.

15. John Shields suggested holding a Management Committee meeting in Grand Junction just before or after the annual Researchers Meeting (perhaps even scheduling a joint Management and Biology Committee meeting). The Program Director's office will draft a suggested agenda.

Attendees  
Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado  
August 8-9, 2006

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Blickensderfer	State of Colorado.
Robert King for Darin Bird	State of Utah
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
John Shields	State of Wyoming
Larry Gamble	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
John Reber	National Park Service
Tom Iseman	The Nature Conservancy
Gary Burton	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
Debbie Felker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pat Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Czapl	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kathy Wall	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Melissa Trammell	National Park Service
George Smith	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Irving	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Al Pfister	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service