

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

August 12, 2008

[Hilton Garden Inn](#), 16475 East 40th Circle, Aurora, Colorado

CONVENE: 9:30 a.m.

1. Introductions, review/modify agenda and time allocations, appoint a timekeeper, miscellaneous items – The agenda was modified as it appears below. Angela Kantola distributed [Seasons' End](#), a publication from the Wildlife Management Institute on the threat of global warming to hunting and fishing recently provided to Fish and Wildlife Service project leaders. Dan McAuliffe said Colorado's governor is hosting a [conference on managing drought and climate risk](#) in Denver at the Grand Hyatt October 8-10 (preceded by the [Colorado Conservation Summit](#) in Keystone). Both will focus on water issues. Angela Kantola will speak on the recovery programs at the conservation summit. Dan suggested that Program participants meet with assistant DNR Director [Doug Robotham](#); >Tom Pitts will arrange this meeting (also to include John Shields, Tom Iseman, Bob Muth, and perhaps others), focusing on nonnative fish issues and the status of the legislation.
2. Approve [June 4](#) meeting summary – Angela Kantola noted revisions suggested by Tom Chart regarding the annual reporting and evaluation of progress under the Yampa Nonnative Fish Strategy. Leslie James attended the meeting, but was left off the attendees list, so that also has been corrected. The summary was approved as revised; >Angela Kantola will post the revised summary to the list-server (*done*).
3. Review of sufficient progress items – The Committee reviewed the status of these action items (see Attachment 2). The Committee will keep this on future meeting agendas.
4. Proposed Green River Pumping Project – Engineers for the Uintah Water Conservancy District have contacted the Service about a proposed from the Green River just upstream of Duchesne confluence called the Green River Pumping Project. This 8,500 af diversion is part of the 51,800 af of the Flaming Gorge water right awarded to Uintah WCD. Robert King distributed a map showing the pumping location. The new depletion (~ 6,500 af of the ~8,500 af diversion) would be from the Green River mainstem. Some of the return flows would come back to the Uintah and Duchesne rivers before entering the Green River (a slight benefit). Uintah WCD plans to begin constructing pipelines this fall; depletions would not occur until 2010. The consulting Federal agency could be COE (404 permit) or Reclamation (service contract from Flaming Gorge). The Committee discussed the implication of the Service's 4,500 af threshold as it applies to Sections III.4-6 of the [Section 7 Agreement](#), but did not come to consensus. Tom Pitts noted that the Section 7 Agreement doesn't reference the threshold and said he believes that Section III.5, not Section III.6, applies in this case. Therefore, he doesn't believe Management Committee input to identify specific actions in the RIPRAP is needed; rather the Service should simply follow the Section 7 Agreement. >The Service will provide (informal) clarification to the Management Committee on how they interpret the Section 7 Agreement to apply in the case of this >4,500 af depletion.

5. Proposed amendments to the Recovery Programs' legislation and draft Report to Congress – Tom Pitts said the draft Secretary's Report to Congress went to OMB on June 25; OMB's Matthew Siegel is reviewing it and last week told Tom it *could* clear OMB within the next 3-1/2 to 4 weeks. Matthew said they are aware of the October 1 deadline (but didn't indicate if it is a concern for them). Amendments to the Program's legislation ([P.L. 106-392](#)) were introduced by Senator Bingaman as [S. 3189](#) in the Senate, there was a hearing July 8, and answers to follow-up questions have been provided. Representative Udall has not yet introduced the legislation on the House side, but might do so in September. The House Water and Power subcommittee staff said they don't want to deal with the annual funding portion until the Secretary's Report is completed. The Senate has been asked to remove the annual funding portion, as well. At best, we might get a bill through this year dealing with the capital funding portion of the Program. At minimum, we will have to address the annual funding next year (and very possibly the capital portion, as well), and will need to begin working on that very early (relying on the >States to brief their new members shortly after the election). Dave Mazour said he thinks the process was hampered by including the annual funding portion before the Secretary's Report was completed. CREDA envisioned the Secretary's Report would be submitted in October, and then following that, participants would have the opportunity to determine the next phase (similar to the way the legislation was handled in 2000). CREDA solidly supports the first two issues addressed in the legislation as it was drafted for this year, but believes the third (annual funding), is not ripe until the Secretary's Report is completed. The decision to lump all three together was not made by the Implementation Committee, which is supposed to address policy issues in the Program. John Shields said that he felt vetting this item on the Implementation Committee agenda in February had provided the Implementation Committee input on the legislation; John noted that our process was similar to that we followed with previous amendments to the legislation. That said, getting legislation passed is never an easy process. Leslie affirmed what Dave's comments and said we now need to determine what we're going to do and how with regard to this legislation in the next Congress. Questions include whether we'll have a drafting committee like we had in 2000 and the role of the Implementation Committee. John Shields said he assumed the 2008 bill would be reintroduced in 2009, since the Program agreed at the end of April that we had the right language. Dave said they agreed it was the correct language, but not necessarily *complete* (e.g., it doesn't address CREDA's concern regarding continuing to provide funding if the Basin Fund is jeopardized). Tom Pitts said the issue is whether you address programs beyond the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River programs (e.g., Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program) in this legislation or not. Robert King and others suggested the larger Basin Fund issue needs to be addressed by the seven Basin states. Clayton Palmer insisted that we can't address backstopping *just* the Upper Colorado and San Juan funding from the Basin Fund, we have to address backstopping the entire Basin Fund (as it is one fund, not a set of separate funds). > The non-Federal members of the Management Committee will form an ad hoc legislative committee and will ask their Implementation Committee members if they also want to participate. The ad hoc committee will begin discussion in September with the goal of having draft legislation for the Implementation Committee's approval by the first of December. The legislative ad hoc committee will meet either September 19th in Salt Lake (9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. perhaps at WAPA) or September 23rd (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. in Denver at DNR). >Tom Pitts will work with San Juan Program participants and finalize the date for this meeting. >John Shields and Leslie James will provide advance briefing materials.

6. 2009 Congressional briefing trip – John Shields suggested tentative dates of March 4-10, with March 3 and 10 as travel days. >The Program Director’s Office will check to see if rooms would be available at the Capitol Hill Suites the nights of March 3-9. CREDA can’t attend the full 7 days, but should be able to attend a portion (they have a Board meeting the 11th and 12th). Most of the delegation staff meetings would be scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday (March 4th and 5th).
7. Flaming Gorge tiered decision-making process – Bob Muth said the Flaming Gorge Technical Work Group and the Biology Committee had some process questions when the Program made base flow recommendations this year. Tom Ryan said we went through an extra review this year, but would prefer to get all research recommendations or other flow requests early in the process. Further discussion deferred to next meeting. The process is outlined in Appendix A, from the “[Annual Report of Operations for Flaming Gorge Dam Water Year 2007.](#)”
8. Updates
 - a. Razorback sucker status – Bob Muth outlined the history of the decline of razorback suckers in the upper basin, development of stocking plans, and the current integrated stocking plan. Recent evaluation of stocked fish by Koreen Zelasko of CSU indicates only 20% first-year survival of fish stocked at 300mm (the current standard), rather than the 50% anticipated in the integrated stocking plan; however, after the first year, survival is 75% (greater than that anticipated in the stocking plan). Large numbers of razorbacks have been captured in Colorado pikeminnow population estimate and other studies; ripe razorback have been observed in both the middle and lower Green rivers and in the Colorado River near the Gunnison River; larval razorbacks are being captured (>2,000 in the middle Green River in 2007); and three age-1 razorback were captured in the lower Green River this year (the first capture of juvenile razorbacks in riverine habitats since the 1980’s). Next steps are to:
 - Use CSU’s new survival estimates and revisit assumptions of Integrated Stocking Plan;
 - Estimate current abundance of stocked fish;
 - Consider a razorback sucker monitoring program for all life stages;
 - Consider continuing the CSU study using 2007-2008 stocking/recapture data and analyze other dataset comparisons (e.g., floodplain or grow-out pond “acclimated” fish vs. hatchery-raised fish) for guidance on improving survival;
 - Review existing hatchery capacities to potentially produce more or bigger fish vs. status quo (cost/benefit analysis);
 - Continue adaptive management actions to achieve self-sustaining populations.
 - b. Recovery goals – Bob Muth said the Service’s draft revised recovery goals went out to stakeholders in July with comments due in September. After comments are received and revisions mad, the draft revised goals will go out for both public and peer review. Leslie James asked about Biology Committee comments and Bob said that the Committee may comment as a body, but those comments won’t carry more weight than individual agency comments, for example. Clayton Palmer said Shane Capron has provided him with substantive draft comments. Western’s biggest issue is the Grand Canyon (Clayton also noted the draft revised goals reference the old 1994 Biological

Opinion, so that needs to be updated). Tom Iseman noted that tamarisk wasn't addressed and asked about its affect on floodplain access. With regard to MVP's, Tom Iseman asked if the recent article in *Nature* by a CU professor regarding MVP's would affect our calculations. Bob Muth replied that this depends on which geneticist you consult. John Reber asked about the Recovery Team and Bob said Chuck McAda has been tasked with seeking their comments, which the Service will consider along with all other comments received. Leslie James asked about the downlisting clock and Bob replied that recovery goals revision is tied to the status review and that the recovery goals don't determine when the clock starts.

c. Capital projects

- i. Contracts – Brent Uilenberg said their Washington solicitor is reviewing the modification to the Elkhead repayment contract.
- ii. Tusher Wash – Robert King reported that a consultant has been selected for design of the dam rehabilitation.
- iii. Grand Valley Hatchery facility – Brent Uilenberg said they had an evaluation done by a mechanical engineering firm regarding solving the humidity problem. They considered two alternatives, and over a 20-year life-cycle, installation of a dehumidification system is the most economical, at an estimated cost of ~\$350K (or replace the whole building at \$500K). The Program Director's office is working with the hatchery, Reclamation, and others to outline pros and cons and make a recommendation for FY 09.
- iv. Price-Stubb – Brent Uilenberg said significant debris was entrained after the high flows, making the passage inoperable. Reclamation has exercised their maintenance contract with Mesa County and Palisade Irrigation Districts and the passage will be cleared with a trackhoe as soon as flows recede after the recent monsoon rains.
- v. Grand Valley Project fish screen – The O&M contract was signed June 5 and Reclamation is working with Grand Valley to get the screen operational.
- vi. July 1 dedication – Debbie Felker said the dedication was a great success and she thanked Brent Uilenberg for all Reclamation did to make this possible. Debbie distributed copies of the program for the dedication and a resulting editorial in the Grand Junction Sentinel. John Shields said this editorial is a real kudo to the Program and its participants. Debbie quoted from Kris Polly's thank you note to the Program: "It was a great event celebrating a tremendously successful program. You have really done a great job making the Recovery Program work for everyone—especially the fish."

- d. Flows update – Tom Chart reviewed base flows targets we're managing for in the Yampa, Colorado and Green rivers. In the Yampa, recent storm events have increased flows above 500 cfs; we likely will manage to maintain 120 cfs at Deerlodge. Flows in the Colorado are above average and we're working to maintain 1,640 cfs at Palisade; the HUP calls began last week. On the Green, the Program request from Flaming Gorge translates to 1,500-1,700 cfs base flow releases from Flaming Gorge through the end of September to try to create better pikeminnow nursery habitat and potentially create conditions to delay smallmouth bass spawning. The Recovery Program assumed that Reclamation would need to drop winter baseflows to meet their March 1 reservoir

drawdown target; however, Reclamation indicated they are considering using stored water to provide Western with their requested winter flows for power generation (resulting in a 2 foot drop in reservoir elevation).

- e. [10,825 Alternatives](#) – Tom Pitts said Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District has a proposal for 2,700 af from Granby Reservoir which is getting favorable review as a key component of the “kitchen sink” alternative (with OMID improvements and water from Ruedi Reservoir as the other components). Dan McAuliffe said CWCB will be making recommendations for the Native Species Conservation Trust Fund, so it may be appropriate to request funding for the 10,825 alternatives. This may be the last year that Trust Funds are available for awhile. The next 10,825 Steering Committee meeting is at 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. September 29 in Eagle or Summit County.
 - f. Proposed whitewater park at Palisade – Bob Muth said Palisade asked the Corps to initiate formal consultation, but the Corps has encouraged Palisade to continue to work with the Service informally to work out concerns. The design has been changed again, incorporating baffles like those at Price-Stubb to reduce velocities; the effectiveness of this design still needs to be analyzed.
 - g. November 18-20 [Colorado River Basin Science & Resource Management Symposium](#) – Angela Kantola distributed the flyer and draft agenda for the meeting. John Shields urged as many Management Committee members as possible to attend this important symposium. >Angela Kantola will find out if all the funding needs have been met (Dan McAuliffe said Colorado may have some funds available, if needed).
 - h. Reports status – Angela Kantola distributed an updated reports list. No reports are on the Biology Committee agenda for review/approval next week, but several are anticipated at the following meeting.
9. Work planning
- a. Duchesne River transit loss study – Deferred to next meeting.
 - b. Aerial photography – Bob Muth said ~\$55K for FY 08 and \$10K for FY 09 was allocated in a [scope of work](#) to BOR to collect aerial photography and videography during high flows on the Colorado, Gunnison, Green and Yampa rivers and during base flows on the Gunnison and Green rivers. This will be used to identify extent of flooding, look at channel changes, etc. The final product will be digital files and mosaics (stitched-together frames) of digital high resolution imagery organized by river mile into ‘map book format’, and also provide a digital version, which the Program Director’s office will make available on request.
 - c. FY 08-09 work plan – Angela Kantola said she and Dave Speas are working to close out the FY 08 budget and starting on FY 09 activities. Angela reviewed new starts and uncertainties for FY 09. Although there is ~\$700K of “flex” at this point, the planned new starts and unknowns will quickly use all of those funds.

- d. Incorporating RIPRAP assessment into RIPRAP tables – Angela Kantola showed the Committee a draft table that adds a RIPRAP assessment column to the standard RIPRAP tables and imports the tables from Excel into Word so that the track changes function can be used for commenting. If all goes well, the plan is to use this format when the Program Director’s office sends out the draft RIPRAP assessment and draft revised RIPRAP in February. >Angela will continue to work on this transition and get it ready for the 2009 RIPRAP revisions and assessment.
10. Upcoming Management Committee tasks, schedule next meeting – The next meeting will be December 11 in Grand Junction at the Holiday Inn; >the Program Director’s office will arrange the meeting room. The nonnative fish workshop will be moved to December 9-10, and the principal investigators will provide briefings to the Management Committee on December 11. Other agenda items will include: amendments to the legislation; 2009 Congressional briefing trip (and updates from the States regarding briefing new Congressional representatives); Duchesne River transit loss study; FY 09 work plan items; Flaming Gorge tiered decision-making process; and updates on sufficient progress items, recovery goals, capital projects, flows, 10,825 project, Palisade whitewater park, Section 7 consultations, and the Colorado River Basin Science and Resource Management Symposium. >The Program Director’s office and John Shields will work to better scrutinize this and future agendas to be sure adequate time is allowed for each item, handle less weighty items via e-mail updates, and focus the agendas on the more substantive items. Leslie James suggested that when we send out e-mail updates, we also ask if there are any follow-up questions that need to go on a meeting agenda. John noted that in some cases, where we have particularly heavy agendas, a two-day meeting may be in order.

ADJOURN 3:45 p.m.

Assignments

Carry-over from previous meetings:

1. The **Service** will meet to consider if it would be acceptable to screen the irrigation water and not the low-head hydropower water at Tusher Wash or if there are other ways (e.g., a weir wall) to achieve our objectives for screening Tusher Wash. *Discussions underway; but pending decisions on dam rehabilitation.*
2. The **Program Director's office** will provide a more specific recommendation regarding establishing a basinwide recovery/conservation oversight team for the endangered fishes.
3. The **Service** will provide written notification that they believe recent humpback chub sampling in the Grand Canyon has verified the GCMRC model (after they've reviewed the final report on concurrent sampling). *Pending receipt of final report.*
4. **Brent Uilenberg** will provide revised RIPRAP budget table ASAP. *Pending outcome of capital funds indexing discussions.*
5. The prioritized list of nonnative fish workshop recommendations will come to the **Management Committee** after it goes through the Biology and I&E committees.

New assignments:

1. **Tom Pitts** will arrange a meeting of Program participants with assistant Colorado DNR Director [Doug Robotham](#) (to include John Shields, Tom Iseman, Bob Muth, and perhaps others), focusing on nonnative fish issues and the status of the legislation.
2. The **Program Director's staff** will provide an update on status and delivery date of the research framework project.
3. The **Service** will provide (informal) clarification to the Management Committee on how they interpret the Section 7 Agreement to apply in the case of the potential >4,500 af Green River Pumping Project depletion.
4. The **States** will need to brief their Congressional representatives on the Recovery Program and proposed legislative amendments shortly after the election.
5. The **non-Federal members of the Management Committee** will form an ad hoc legislative committee and will ask their Implementation Committee members if they also want to participate. **Tom Pitts** will work with San Juan Program participants and finalize the date for this meeting. **John Shields** and **Leslie James** will provide advance briefing materials.

6. The **Program Director's office** will check to see if rooms would be available for the 2009 Congressional briefing trip at the Capitol Hill Suites for the nights of March 3-10.
7. **Angela Kantola** will find out if the funding needs of the [Colorado River Basin Science & Resource Management Symposium](#) have been met (Colorado may have some funds available, if needed).
8. **Angela Kantola** will continue to work moving the RIPRAP tables from Excel to Word and adding an assessment column to prepare for the 2009 RIPRAP revisions and assessment.
9. The **Program Director's office** and **John Shields** will work to better scrutinize future agendas to be sure adequate time is allowed for each item, handle less weighty items via e-mail updates, and focus the agendas on the more substantive items. When sending out e-mail updates, we'll also ask if there are any follow-up questions that need to go on a meeting agenda. In some cases, where we have particularly heavy agendas, a two-day meeting may be in order.

Attachment 1
Attendees
Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado
August 12, 2008

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg	Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Ryan	Bureau of Reclamation
Dan McAuliffe	State of Colorado
Robert King	State of Utah
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
John Shields	State of Wyoming
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	<i>(Bob Muth filled in; Carol Taylor has retired and USFWS has not yet appointed a new representative to the Management Committee)</i>
Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
John Reber	National Park Service
Tom Iseman	The Nature Conservancy
Clayton Palmer	Western Area Power Administration was not represented

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
Tom Chart	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Debbie Felker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Leslie James	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Steve Miller	Colorado Water Conservation Board

Attachment 2
Action Items from 2008 Sufficient Progress Memo

General (Upper Colorado River and Green River Subbasins)

ACTION ITEM (1): The Service will continue to closely follow the effectiveness of nonnative fish management actions and the responses of the endangered and other native fishes. Data should continue to be reported annually, and necessary changes to nonnative fish management actions should be made in a timely fashion. The Program needs to initiate second-level synthesis of nonnative fish removal data beginning in 2008. *The Nonnative Fish Subcommittee has been working on this and the Program Director's Office expects to recommend issuing an RFP.*

ACTION ITEM (2): The Program Director's office will coordinate with the Wahweap hatchery to ensure that the middle Green River bonytail are stocked near Jensen (in the alluvial reach) rather than at Island Park. The Mumma hatchery will continue to expose bonytail to flows for as long as two weeks prior to stocking. *On track.*

ACTION ITEM (3): Principal investigators and the Program Director's Office should meet to further scrutinize initial population estimates, techniques, and environmental influences (at least for humpback chub in 2008). A [research framework project](#) (building on results and recommendations of previous population estimates and information developed as a result of previous population estimate workshops) is conducting additional data analyses to further understand environmental variables and life-history traits influencing the dynamics of Colorado pikeminnow and humpback chub populations. The draft research framework report is expected in August 2008. Results will be used to refine hypotheses and direct management actions. *Draft research framework report may be late (pending Rich Valdez work). John Shields asked if we've considered starting this with a subbasin approach (e.g., Green River) first, then developing the larger report. >The Program Director's staff will provide an update on status and delivery date.*

Green River Subbasin – Green River

ACTION ITEM (4): The Flaming Gorge Technical Work Group (Reclamation, the Service, and Western) needs to continue to provide brief updates on current and projected Flaming Gorge operations at each Biology Committee meeting. In 2008, the Program will initiate a Request for Proposal to synthesize the physical and biological information on backwater nursery habitats. *RFP pending.*

ACTION ITEM (5): The Recovery Program and the Utah's State Engineer's office will work on mechanisms (extending the existing subordination) to protect year-round flows in the Green River below the Duchesne River to the Colorado River confluence. *In progress since this summer; anticipated to take about one year.*

Green River Subbasin – Yampa River

ACTION ITEM (6): The Program's Yampa nonnative fish management program needs to be modified in 2009 to match the [Yampa River Nonnative Fish Management Strategy](#). In particular, northern pike removal efforts need to focus on reproduction/recruitment sources and the Program needs to take advantage of every opportunity to remove smallmouth bass (e.g., remove smallmouth bass wherever northern pike removal occurs). *Pending. John Shields noted Colorado also needs to complete their Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan by May 2009, as promised.*

Green River Subbasin – Duchesne River

ACTION ITEM (7): Following completion of the Myton Diversion rehabilitation, the Program, Service, and Duchesne Work Group will work together to determine changes in ongoing monitoring efforts necessary to further evaluate the flow recommendations. *Construction begins this fall and will be completed before irrigation season next spring.*

Green River Subbasin – White River

ACTION ITEM (8): The Service and the Program Director's Office will revise and finalize [flow recommendations for the White River](#). The program should emphasize timely completion of the flow recommendations and work with Colorado to protect the recommended flows. *The Program Director's office will bring recommendations on finalizing the White River flow recommendations report to the Biology Committee next week. John Shields emphasized the importance of this report in light of the scrutiny it will receive from the energy industry. Dan McAuliffe asked if the Program contemplates acquiring water rights, noting that CWCB has \$500,000/year available to acquire instream flows to protect endangered species (an acquisition plan is required).*

Upper Colorado River Subbasin – Colorado River

ACTION ITEM (9): Closer coordination will be maintained by meeting twice a year with Grand Valley water users and conducting conference calls as needed to discuss river conditions prior to the weekly Historic User Pool calls. The focus should be on taking full advantage of water savings brought about by operation of the Grand Valley Water Management project for late summer flow augmentation. *Brent said the HUP calls began last week. Tom Pitts asked about the meaning of the last sentence; Brent Uilenberg said at issue is arriving at a consensus on Green Mountain Reservoir surplus early enough in the process to do the most good for fish habitat. Brent said Eric Kuhn has suggested an arrangement with FWS in which if too much water is released early on, FWS would back-stop that with water from the "fish pools" in Ruedi, Wolford and/or Williams Fork; another approach would be to get better predictions (based on snow pack) of expected base flows at Cameo.*

ACTION ITEM (10): The goal of the [10,825 Project](#) is to have agreements signed with the Service prior to December 2009 committing east slope and west slope water users to permanent sources of Ruedi replacement water, as required by the Colorado River programmatic biological opinion. *Tom Pitts said this is on track.*

Upper Colorado River Subbasin – Gunnison River

ACTION ITEM (11): Pending completion of the [Aspinall EIS](#) (and while continuing to emphasize timely completion of the EIS), Reclamation, the Service, and Western Area Power Administration and other cooperators need to determine how they can better manage Aspinall spring flows to meet endangered fish needs within existing operational procedures. *Brent Uilenberg said the draft EIS may go out to the cooperators this week, to the public by late October or early November. The last formal schedule from BOR contemplated a final EIS and ROD by the end of 2008; however, given the required review timeframes it is more likely that these will be in place before spring 2009. Clayton Palmer said that based on their review of the alternatives, Western is likely to have substantive comments on the draft released to the cooperating agencies.*