

ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM FY-2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Project No.: PIP 12L

I. Project Title: Communications/Public Involvement Plan for Nonnative Fish Management

II. Principal Investigator:

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III. Project Summary:

In 2010, the Recovery Program continued management actions to minimize or remove nonnative smallmouth bass and northern pike in sections of the Colorado, Duchesne, Green and Yampa rivers in the states of Colorado and Utah. The Recovery Program prepared and implemented a comprehensive communications plan to raise public awareness of the purpose and nature of nonnative fish management. In 2010, the Recovery Program worked closely with the Community Agriculture Alliance in an effort to raise awareness about the Recovery Program in the Yampa River Basin. The Committee also determined other tasks to continue increased visibility in that location. In addition, the Recovery Program updated and issued fact sheets, questions/answers and news releases.

Study Schedule:

Initial year: 2003
Final year: Duration of Recovery Program.

IV. Relationship to RIPRAP:

VI. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE
ENDANGERED FISHES AND THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2010 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Tactic: Maintain Action Planning Teams

Status: The Recovery Program continues to provide team members with all written outreach materials to distribute to the appropriate people in their respective organizations. In addition, the Recovery Program asked team members to provide feedback re: public reaction to nonnative fish management actions.

Tactic: Develop and Promote Key Messages

Status: Key messages were reviewed and approved by Recovery Program partners and the action planning teams. These messages remain the basis of all communication.

The Recovery Program's nonnative fish coordinator worked with the I & E Committee to review and evaluate ways to improve visibility and understanding of the Recovery Program and recovery efforts in Yampa River communities. The Committee considered having a booth with an aquarium at the Routt and Moffat county fairs. After evaluating the pros and cons of this idea, the Committee decided it was too time consuming and staff intensive to participate in these fairs and determined other efforts would be more effective. The Recovery Program provided materials to the Community Agriculture Alliance for 3 out of 4 of the organizations' water forums. One forum included a bus tour (July 21) of the Yampa River Basin. Yampa River/Elkhead State Park Manager Ron Dellacroce provided information about the Program as a speaker on the bus. Stuffed briefing books were provided to bus tour participants. Stuffed briefing books and the banner stand were used at two other forums -- September 24 and November 5.

Ideas to be pursued in 2011 and possibly beyond: Provide copies of the Phoebe and Chub children's book to libraries (South Routt, Hayden, Steamboat Springs, Craig and Oak Creek); possibly set up exhibit or banner stand at library(ies) and advertise a weekend when a biologist would be on site with an electrofishing boat to answer questions (or set up this equipment in a grocery store parking lot on a weekend); ask water districts to help tell the public why the program is important.

Tactic: Maintain Active Communication with Members of Congress and their Staffs (Local and D.C.) and Local Elected Officials

Status: A news release and updated questions/answers and fact sheets were prepared and distributed in advance of field activities to key members of congress for both Colorado and Utah, and to local sheriffs and county commissioners in Rio Blanco, Routt and Moffat counties in Colorado.

- Tactic: Actively Seek News Media Coverage of Nonnative Fish Management Actions and Public Meetings
 Status: A news release, fact sheets and questions/answers were issued in the spring before field work began. The news release and questions/answers were customized for the states of Colorado and Utah. An article by Tom Chart about nonnative fish management was published in *Colorado Water* (a publication of Colorado State University's Water Center. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources issued a news release about finding burbot in the Green River.
- Tactic: Identify and Seek Permission from Landowners to Access Their Property as Part of Recovery Actions
 Status: Principal investigators sought permission on an as-needed basis.
- Tactic: Establish Local Spokeperson(s)
 Status: Key people from the Recovery Program and agencies conducting the field work were identified to address news media inquiries. Their names and contact information were provided on all fact sheets and in the question/answer handouts.
- Tactic: Train Appropriate Staff/Volunteers Who Might Receive Questions from the Public and Congressional Staff
 Status: The Recovery Program staff asked agencies involved with the nonnative fish management activities to brief their staff and volunteers about the nature of the work and who to direct inquiries to. To the best of our knowledge, this occurred.
- Tactic: Participate in Angler Roundtables and/or Public Meetings
 Status: The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Recovery Program considered whether or not to hold public meetings on this subject in 2010. Because the nature of the work taking place had not changed from the previous year and there was no new information to present about research findings, the decision was made not to hold public meetings.
- Tactic: Post Information on Agency Websites
 Status: The Recovery Program posted a news release, questions/answers and fact sheets on its website. CDOW and UDWR did not post this information on their respective websites, however, they plan to do this in FY 2011.
- Tactic: Distribute Information to Fishing and River Guides/Sporting Goods Stores
 Status: Action Planning Team members and principal investigators continued to recommend that this strategy not be implemented. For this reason, this tactic was not included in the Nonnative Fish Management Outreach scope of work for 2010-2011.

Tactic: Work with Dinosaur National Monument staff to prepare appropriate materials that explain this project to include with boat permit distribution.
Status: Dinosaur National Monument continued to distribute a bookmark-size handout with boat permits. The handout explains the nature of the work and provides contact information. Service and monument staff continue to report improved relationships with boaters as a result of this effort.

Tactic: Publish Articles in Agency Publications
Status: Information about nonnative fish management was included in the *Program Highlights 2010* document and the Recovery Program's winter 09 *Swimming Upstream* newsletter. The Recovery Program became concerned about the content in an article published in the May/June 2010 issue of the Colorado Division of Wildlife's *Colorado Outdoors* magazine. The article, "Pursuing Spring Pike," highlighted fishing for northern pike at Elkhead Reservoir and the Yampa State Park Headquarters pond. While the article was generally well written and accurate, the Recovery Program thought CDOW missed an opportunity to educate readers that northern pike are a nonnative species and to explain the agency's dual responsibilities to manage both nonnative sportfish and native fishes. The Recovery Program should work more closely with CDOW in 2011 to encourage the agency to write an article that explains the big picture of nonnative fish management and why it is needed to recover endangered fish and protect other native fish species.

VII. Recommendations: In FY 2011, proactive communication efforts should continue in an effort to ensure that target audiences are well informed of nonnative fish management activities. The Recovery Program should continue communication with members of the Action Planning Teams. The Recovery Program should continue to seek feedback from principal investigators regarding public reaction to research efforts and to get their ideas on ways to improve communication with target audiences.

The Recovery Program should be more active with asking for support from Recovery Program partner agencies to help with outreach efforts, including placing information on agency websites, including articles in agency publications, and incorporating key messages whenever possible, such as asking water managers to promote the benefits of the program to their constituents.

Continued efforts should be made to raise awareness about the Recovery Program in the Yampa River Basin. Specific tasks to be pursued in 2011 and possibly beyond: Provide copies of the Phoebe and Chub children's book to libraries (South Routt, Hayden, Steamboat Springs, Craig and Oak Creek); possibly set up exhibit or banner stand at library(ies) and advertise a weekend when a biologist would be on site with an electrofishing boat to answer questions (or set up this equipment in a grocery store parking lot on a weekend); ask water districts to help tell the public why the program is

important.

The Information and Education Committee should work closely with the Recovery Program's nonnative fish and I&E coordinators to review and prioritize recommendations from the annual nonnative fish workshop and Biology Committees.

VIII. Project Status: On-track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2010 Budget:

- A. Funds provided: \$ 5,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$ -0-
- C. Difference: \$ 5,000 (returned to Recovery Program budget)
- D. Percent of FY 10 work completed and projected costs to complete: 100%, none
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

X. Status of Data Submission: Not applicable.

XI. Signed: Debbie Felker
Information & Education Coordinator

November 26, 2010
Date