

ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM FY-2011 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 2011, 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. In addition, a concerted effort was made with the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming to implement policies based on prevention of the introduction of nonnative fishes. The Recovery Program began to shift messages away from the focus on nonnative fish control to raising awareness of the importance of prevention. Fact sheets, questions/answers and news releases were updated and widely distributed.

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 2011 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.

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, Mesa, 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.

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 2011. 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, CDOW and UDWR posted a news release, questions/answers and fact sheets on their websites.
- 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. At the request of monument staff, endangered fish magnets and stickers were also provided.
- Tactic: Publish Articles in Agency Publications
 Status: Information about nonnative fish management was included in the *Program Highlights 2010-2011* document and the Recovery Program's winter 10 *Swimming Upstream* newsletter.

VII. Recommendations: In FY 2012, proactive communication efforts should continue in an effort to ensure that target audiences are well informed of nonnative fish management activities and why they are needed. 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.

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, Biology Committee meetings and the Nonnative Fish Strategy group.

VIII. Project Status: On-track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2011 Budget:

- A. Funds provided: \$ 5,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$ -0-
- C. Difference: \$ 5,000 (returned to Recovery Program budget)
- D. Percent of FY 11 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

December 1, 2011
Date