

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY 2012 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

RECOVERY PROGRAM  
PROJECT NUMBER: 3

- I. Project Title: Fish and Wildlife Service Program Management
- II. Bureau of Reclamation Agreement Number(s):  
R10PG40079  
Project/Grant Period: Start date (Mo/Day/Yr): 10/01/2006  
End date: (Mo/Day/Yr): 9/30/12  
Reporting period end date: 9/30/12  
Is this the final report? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
- R11PG40042  
Project/Grant Period: Start date (Mo/Day/Yr): 9/16/2011  
End date: (Mo/Day/Yr): 9/30/2016  
Reporting period end date: 9/30/12  
Is this the final report? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X
- III. Principal Investigator(s): Tom Chart, Program Director, P.O. Box 25486, DFC, Denver, CO 80225. Phone: 303/969-7322, ext. 226. FAX: 303/969-7327. E-Mail: tom\_chart@fws.gov.
- IV. Abstract: The ongoing work of the Recovery Program Director's office is to ensure timely and effective planning, implementation, coordination, and administrative support of the Recovery Program by: 1) coordinating and implementing recovery activities; 2) conducting Program planning and evaluation; 3) managing the Recovery Program annual budget; 4) providing staff assistance to [Program committees](#); and 5) directing and coordinating Service Recovery Program activities. These tasks were carried out by Recovery Program staff including the director, deputy director, coordinators for the major recovery elements, and administrative staff. FY12 accomplishments include: completing [Larval Trigger Study Plan](#) and [Price River Position Paper](#); development of a proposed e-barrier solution for screening the Tusher Wash Diversion; continued refinement of draft basinwide nonnative strategy; revisions drafted to Genetics Management Plan (related to humpback chub broodstock development) and integrated stocking plan (modifications already being implemented); completing 5-year status reviews for [razorback sucker](#) and [bonytail](#); and designating recovery teams for upcoming revised recovery plan review (beginning with Colorado pikeminnow).
- V. Study Schedule: 1989-ongoing.
- VI. Relationship to RIPRAP:
- General Recovery Program Support Action Plan:  
VII.A.1 Assure consistency of RIPRAP with currently approved recovery plans.  
VII.A.2 Recognize the role of the UCREFRP in revised recovery plans

- VII.A.3 Update, refine, and prioritize recovery actions (RIPRAP) annually.
- VII.A.5 Update recovery goals/plans.
- VII.A.5e Conduct species status review and update recovery goals at least every 5 years.
- VII.A.7 Monitor and assess Recovery Program accomplishments annually.
- VII.A.8 Develop biennial work plan to address priority needs.
- VII.B Actively participate in Recovery Program committees and secure funding for annual work plan and larger projects.
- VII.C Manage, direct, and coordinate Recovery Program activities.

VII. Accomplishment of FY 2012 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

A. Program Director & Staff

1. Directed and coordinated implementation of recovery efforts as described in the RIPRAP and the Annual Work Plan in the areas of: a) instream flow protection b) habitat restoration and nonnative fish management; c) propagation/genetics and research, monitoring, and data management; and d) information, education, and public involvement. Program coordinators are: Vacant (vice-Tom Chart) for instream flow protection and floodplain restoration/management (with Jana Mohrman of the Service's Water Resources office coordinating hydrology-related issues and fish passages and screens); Pat Martinez for nonnative fish management; Tom Czapla for propagation/genetics, research, monitoring, and data management; and Debbie Felker for information, education, and public involvement.

Maintained tracking system of Program reports and due dates to ensure timely accomplishment of Program objectives.

Significant Program accomplishments/activities in 2012 included:

- Maintaining critical flows and operating fish screens and passages as conditions allowed during the 2012 record low-flow year.
- Augmenting late summer flows in the Yampa River for the sixth year using releases from [Elkhead Reservoir](#).
- Continued operation of Flaming Gorge Dam under the Biological Opinion and ROD to meet spring flow targets and recommended base flow temperatures in Reach 1 and at the confluence with the Yampa River.
- Completed [Study Plan to Examine the Effects of Using Larval Razorback Sucker Occurrence in the Green River as a Trigger for Flaming Gorge Dam Peak Releases](#), describing experimental conditions and studies needed to build on recommendations from the Bestgen et al. 2011 floodplain synthesis to time releases from Flaming Gorge Dam to provide floodplain connection in Reach 2 of the Green River coincident with the presence of wild-produced larval razorback sucker. 2012 met the "extremely dry condition" for the Study Plan.

- Reclamation completed the Aspinall EIS and ROD. Releases from the Aspinall Unit on the Gunnison allowed continued operation of the Redlands fish ladder despite low flows. Monitoring to evaluate effects of Aspinall operation as per the [Aspinall Study Plan](#) is ongoing.
- Continued augmentation of Colorado River flows. The Program's investment in Grand Valley Water Management project proved very valuable in the extreme drought year of 2012. Grand Valley water users reduced irrigation diversions in October by > 600 cfs (~38%); 2012 total in diversions will likely total 50-60KAF. The average 2012 summer flow at Palisade (July 1 - Sept 30) was 482 cfs (compared to 174 cfs in 2002).
- Reclamation completed repairs to 2011 high flow damage at the Price-Stubbs fish passage and Thunder Ranch floodplain dike. Screens were operated this season on the Government Highline canal, but low flows prevented operating the passage facility there. Similarly, at GVIC low flows precluded use of the the passage channel and a cobble bar deposited during the high flows of 2011 near the fish return precluded the use of the screen. GVIC was able to remove the cobble bar near the end of the 2012 irrigation season. Development of a proposed solution for screening the Tusher Wash diversion on the Green River. The recommendation involves installing a low-voltage electrical barrier to deflect fish away from the diversion canal.
- The Nonnative Fish Subcommittee continued to revise the draft *Upper Colorado River Basin Nonnative and Invasive Aquatic Species Prevention and Control Strategy*. The Management Committee requested an expedited schedule so that lack of an effective strategy doesn't result in postponement of potential Colorado pikeminnow downlisting.
- Recognizing the difficulty of nonnative fish issues, local interests in the Yampa Basin (from Steamboat, Craig, Bassmasters, Trout Unlimited, Upper Yampa Conservancy, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Program Director's office) began meeting to discuss ideas to: 1) protect endangered fish; 2) enhance native fish; and 3) find compatible sportfish opportunities.
- Began discussing reclaiming certain reservoirs to prevent detrimental nonnative fish escapement (e.g., Red Fleet Reservoir in Utah and Paonia and Miramonte reservoirs in Colorado). Colorado rotenoned Paonia at the end of October 2012.
- Initiated removal of smallmouth bass from the White River.
- Continued good hatchery production and numbers of stocked bonytail and razorback sucker with almost all stocking goals met or exceeded.
- Revisions drafted to Genetics Management Plan (related to humpback chub broodstock development).
- Revised [integrated stocking plan](#) drafted (and modifications are already being implemented).
- Five-year status reviews for [razorback sucker](#) and [bonytail](#) completed.
- Recovery teams designated for upcoming revised recovery plan review (beginning with Colorado pikeminnow).

- Continued standardization of Program electrofishing fleet, began transition to improved electrofishing equipment, proposed and began preparations for 2013 Program-specific electrofishing course.
2. Conducted Program planning and evaluation:
    - a. Reviewed and updated the RIPRAP and documented changes; submitted recommended RIPRAP revisions to the technical, Management, and Implementation committees for review; published final, revised [RIPRAP](#) (with progress information included) to web.
    - b. Modified 2012-2013 biennial work plan as needed and posted revised [scopes of work](#) to web.
    - c. Requested, revised as needed, and posted FY 2011 [project accomplishment reports](#) to the web. Summarized and distributed FY 2011 report recommendations.
    - d. Continued to implement peer review to ensure the technical and scientific integrity of Recovery Program activities.
    - e. Provided updates of [depletion consultations](#).
    - f.
  3. Monitored the FY 2012 Recovery Program annual budget and modified as necessary.
    - a. Developed annual funding tables (Program, Reclamation, and Service). Worked with Reclamation to maintain funding for all FY12 and 13 projects while awaiting legislation extending authorization for use of power revenues for all recovery actions.
    - b. Developed and administered various cooperative agreements and contracts.
    - c. Monitored payment and expenditure of Section 7 funds in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation account.
    - d. Calculated [FY 2013 annual agency contributions and depletion charge increases](#) based on the 2011 CPI.
    - e. Assisted with [Recovery Program trip to Washington, D.C.](#) to brief key people in the Department of the Interior, the Office of Management and Budget, national environmental groups, Congressional delegations, and authorizing and appropriation committees. Prepared [Program Highlights briefing book](#).

Began work with Program participants to refine data on additional cost-sharing for 2013 briefing book pie chart.

4. Provided staff assistance to the [Implementation](#) and [Management](#) committees:
  - a. Prepared and distributed agendas and related documents in coordination with committee chairs. Arranged meetings and conference calls. Continued using web conferencing where applicable. Prepared Implementation Committee resolution supporting DOI Jan. 28, 2011 policy “[Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities](#)”.
  - b. Prepared and promptly distributed concise, accurate meeting summaries. Took notes at [Biology Committee meetings](#) and promptly provided drafts meeting summaries to the Committee chair. Coordinated presentations at [Annual Researchers’ Meeting](#).
  - c. Maintained Recovery Program administrative record (primarily on [web](#)).
  - d. Provided staff assistance to committees as needed.
  - e. Recovery Program committee and related activities publicized on the Program listserv and posted on [Program web pages](#).
  - f. Attended Implementation, Management, and technical committee meetings.
  - g. Maintained Recovery Program [technical report library](#) and database. Library documents also served on [CWCBLaserFische website](#) (but need to bring up to date with reports from last two years).
  - h. Continued to maintain the fws-coloriver electronic mailing list for Program participants.
  - i. Continued to revise and maintain [Program website](#).
5. Directed and coordinated Service activities related to the Recovery Program.
  - a. [Recovery goal](#) revision and species’ status reviews underway.
  - b. Administered funding for Service Recovery Program activities.
  - c. Conducted monthly Service conference call.
  - d. Coordinated with and provided staff support to Service management on Recovery Program activities and issues. Drafted basis for annual [Sufficient](#)

[Progress memo](#) and worked with Recovery Program participants and Service to finalize. Worked with Service's Utah Ecological Services Office to get a passive PIT antenna installed on the White River as part of the Section 7 consultation with Questar on a pipeline crossing.

- e. Provided annual Recovery Data Call information.

B. Fish and Wildlife Service

- 1. Provided technical expertise and recommendations to the Biology Committee as requested.
- 2. Participated in Biology Committee meetings.

VIII. Recommendations: 1) work with State fishery chiefs and Management Committee to achieve consensus on action items from December 2012 draft basinwide nonnative strategy which can be incorporated into 2013 RIPRAP revisions; 2) work with NRCS, project proponents, and Recovery Program to finalize screening solution for Tusher Wash Diversion; 3) fully staff Program Director's office by hiring instream flow/habitat restoration coordinator (currently under consideration by Service management); 4) update 1994 Program *Organization, Mission and Staffing Plan* and add Program Procedures; 5) maintain strong communication with [Southern Rockies LCC](#).

IX. Project Status: On track and ongoing.

X. FY 2012 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$1,103,101 project funds (USBR & USFWS funds)
- B. Funds Expended: \$856,655.
- C. Difference: \$246,446 direct (\$273,555 including overhead) from R11PG40042 carried forward to FY13.
- D. Percent of the FY 2012 work completed, and projected costs to complete: All work completed.
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: None.

XI. Status of Data Submission: Not applicable.

XII. Signed: Tom Chart 11/19/12  
Principal Investigator Date