

**RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2020-2021 SCOPE OF WORK for:
Price River Flow Enhancement**

Recovery Program Project Number: FR-171

Reclamation Agreement number N/A
Reclamation Agreement term N/A

Note: Recovery Program FY20-21 scopes of work are drafted in May 2017. They often are revised before final Program approval and may subsequently be revised again in response to changing Program needs. Program participants also recognize the need and allow for some flexibility in scopes of work to accommodate new information (especially in nonnative fish management projects) and changing hydrological conditions.

Lead agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Category:

- Ongoing project
 Ongoing-revised project
 Requested new project
 Unsolicited proposal

Expected Funding Source:

- Annual funds
 Capital funds
 Other *[explain]*

I. **Title of Proposal:** Collaboration in Review of Price River Water Management Activities Potentially Benefitting Endangered Species

II. **Relationship to RIPRAP:**

Green River Action Plan: Mainstem

1.C Price River

I.C.3 Work with State of Utah and local water users to develop a plan to provide and enhance summer base flows (either increase average daily flows thresholds or increase the frequency that those flows occur) in the lower Price River that are conducive to pikeminnow use. For example, consider securing an emergency pool of water to avoid periods of dewatering in the lower Price River.

I.C.4 Implement plan to provide and enhance summer base flows (in the lower Price River

III. **Project Background/Rationale and Hypotheses:**

The lower Price River provides two important roles in the recovery of endangered fish. First, the lower river provides seasonal habitat for juvenile and adult Colorado pikeminnow (i.e. a direct role in recovery). Secondly, the Price River provides year-round habitat for all life stages of several species of native fish (Cavalli 1999; Tyus and Saunders 2001). Since these species provide a forage base for the Colorado pikeminnow, the Price River also provides this indirect role in recovery. Native flannelmouth sucker and bluehead sucker are commonly found in the Price River and are the subjects of a Range-wide Conservation Agreement (along with roundtail chub); collectively the *Three Species* (UDNR 2006). The Price River therefore provides a direct role in the conservation of two of the Three Species, and could reduce the likelihood of future listings of native fishes under the Endangered Species Act.

In its 2012 position paper, *Role of the Price River in Recovery of Endangered Fish and the Need for Minimum Flow Management*, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program recommended securing an emergency pool of water to avoid periods of dewatering in the lower Price River. For instance, an emergency pool of 600 ac-ft would provide 5 cfs for 60 days. Native fish water would need to be delivered to the Green River to avoid periods of dewatering (most likely in July and August). That paper also provided a summary of July-September flow conditions presumed to support Colorado Pikeminnow use, including a 90% flow exceedance of 15 cfs, and a 50% flow exceedance of 37 cfs.

The white paper further recommended that the Recovery Program work with Utah Water Users, the State of Utah, and local groups (e.g., the Price River Enhancement Committee) to maintain summer base flow conditions that support current levels of Colorado pikeminnow seasonal use of the lower Price River.

IV. Project Goals, Objectives, End Product:

Project Goal: To support efforts by the State of Utah, local water users, environmental interests, and cooperating Federal agencies to identify, evaluate, and implement enhancements and/or protections to flows in the lower Price River for the benefit of Colorado Pikeminnow and for state fishes of concern (target fishes).

Project Objectives:

1. Provide a Recovery Program point-of-contact for updates on water development or water management activities being considered in the Price River basin which could be implemented in a manner that benefits the target fishes.
2. Update the Recovery Program and its technical committees as relevant water-related proposals are formulated in the Price River basin (e.g., changes in operations associated with Olsen Reservoir upgrades and water acquisition actions).
3. Coordinate Recovery Program input regarding proposed water management strategies and specific project proposals in the Price River basin.

- V. **Project Area:** Price River, Utah, with a focus on some or all of the lower 88 miles of this Green River tributary where endangered fish captures have been documented.

VI. Project Methods/Approach: The Service Hydrologist, in coordination with Utah Ecological Services Office staff, will serve as the point-of-contact, the conduit of updates to the Recovery Program participants, and the coordinator of input from the Recovery Program regarding proposed water management projects and activities affecting instream flows. Opportunities will be sought to promote an enhanced quantity, frequency, and/or certainty of a minimum amount of instream flow in the lower Price River from April through October in general, and from July-September in particular.

VII. Schedule: The activities described above will be performed on an as-needed basis.

VIII. Deliverables, Due Dates, and Budget by Fiscal Year:

The activities described under Project Methods/Approach would be one of the Service Hydrologist's responsibilities on an as-needed basis. No Recovery Program dollars are requested for this activity.

IX. Budget Summary: N/A

X. Reviewers: Tom Chart

XI. References:

Cavalli, P. A. 1999. Fish community investigations in the lower Price River, 1996 – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Publication No. 99-21, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Chart, T. and J. Mohrman, 2012. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Position on the Role of the Price River in Recovery of Endangered Fish and the Need for Minimum Flow Management. Prepared for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Service, Utah Field Office. 42 pp.

Tyus, H.M. and J.F. Saunders 2001. An Evaluation of the Role of Tributary Streams for Recovery of Endangered Fishes in the Upper Colorado River Basin, with Recommendations for Future Recovery Actions. Final Report, Upper Colorado Endangered Fish Recovery Program Project No. 101. Center for Limnology, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Studies, Univ. of Colorado at Boulder. 121pp.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). 2006. Range-wide conservation agreement and strategy for roundtail chub *Gila robusta*, bluehead sucker *Catostomus discobolus*, and flannelmouth sucker *C. latipinnis*. Publication number 06-18, Salt Lake City, UT.

Walker, C.A., P. Badame, and P.W. Birdsey, Jr. 2007. Minimum flow recommendation for passage of Colorado pikeminnow in the lower Price River: Farnham Diversion to the Green River confluence. Draft Final Report Submitted to the Upper Colorado River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program Project No. 108. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Salt Lake City, Utah.