

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

PROJECT NUMBER: PIP 12H

I. Project Title: Interpretive Signs and Exhibits about the Endangered Fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin

II. Principal Investigator:

Debbie Felker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225
303-969-7322, ext. 227
Fax: 303-969-7327
debbie_felker@fws.gov

III. Project Summary: Interpretive signs and exhibits at museums and visitor centers are key tools used to educate the general public. Numerous opportunities exist for the Recovery Program to partner with public and private organizations to develop signs and exhibits that will explain the importance of recovering the endangered fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin and some of the actions taking place to accomplish this. Priority for placement of interpretive signs and exhibits is given to geographic locations where the majority of Recovery Program efforts are taking place, including Vernal, Utah; Grand Junction, Colorado; and Page, Arizona.

IV. Study Schedule:

Initial year: FY 2001
Final year: Ongoing

V. Relationship to RIPRAP:

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

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2006 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Tasks: Pursue the following new projects in targeted communities, seeking funding support from other organizations whenever appropriate:

- a. Colorado River State Park, Fruita, Colorado. The visitor center for this park is located next to the dinosaur museum in Fruita along the Colorado River. In FY 2005, the park contacted the Recovery Program to inquire about establishing an aquarium with endangered fish to exhibit. This is an ideal location as it hosts both local and

- out-of-town visitors. The Recovery Program worked with the park and the Colorado Division of Wildlife to establish an aquarium with accompanying interpretive messages. CDOW continues to provide regular support to park staff to maintain the exhibit and ensure the health of the endangered fishes. (The Grand Valley Endangered Fish Facility and the J.W. Mumma Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility provided fish for the exhibit.)
- b. Angler Notification Signs – Colorado, Gunnison, and White Rivers in Colorado. The Recovery Program ordered signs to post along sections of the Gunnison, Colorado and White rivers. Colorado Division of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management personnel installed the signs at locations where anglers are most likely to catch endangered fish.
 - c. Taylor Draw Dam at Kenney Reservoir, Rangely, Colorado. This section of the White River contains numerous large Colorado pikeminnow which congregate at the base of the dam. The Recovery Program worked with the Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District to remove two outdated and vandalized information signs that addressed the endangered fishes. Because endangered fish are no longer being placed in the lake, it was determined that replacement interpretive signs were not needed. Instead, the Colorado Division of Wildlife posted angler notification signs at areas along the White River, including the base of the dam, that alert anglers to be careful when fishing and to return any endangered fish they might catch to the river.
 - d. Audubon Property, Grand Junction, Colorado. The Recovery Program restored floodplain wetlands for endangered fish nursery habitat at the Audubon's Lucy Ferril Ela Wildlife Sanctuary along the Colorado River in 2004. In 2005, a custom-designed park bench featuring a silhouette of a Colorado pikeminnow was installed overlooking this area. In 2006, the Recovery Program worked with Grand Valley Audubon to produce and install two interpretive signs that address this restoration and provide information about the endangered fishes. This project used the remaining funds held by the Intermountain Natural History Association as part of the Colorado Riverfront Trail Interpretive Project.
 - e. Page, Arizona. The Recovery Program worked with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to establish an interpretive exhibit about the endangered fish at the Carl Hayden Visitor Center at Glen Canyon Dam. The exhibit includes a large, built-in aquarium that displays endangered razorback suckers, bonytails and humpback chubs. Accompanying interpretive messages provide information about the endangered fishes and efforts to recover them. Quent Bradwisch with UDWR was instrumental in establishing the exhibit, providing the fish for display and training the staff on the daily care of the fish and interpretive messages.

- f. Dinosaur National Monument, Jensen, Utah. In 2005, the Recovery Program purchased the aquarium and accompanying supplies to establish an interpretive exhibit in the Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument. In 2006, the Recovery Program provided funds to pay for minor equipment needed to maintain this exhibit. Unfortunately, the visitor center was closed indefinitely in 2006, pending the completion of repairs to the facility. The aquarium equipment is in storage and the endangered fish that were housed at the aquarium were returned to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Vernal. Plans to install a custom-shaped Colorado pikeminnow bench were also delayed. It is anticipated that this will occur in 2007.
- g. The Montrose Pavilion. The aquarium at this conference center in Montrose, Colorado, was the first that the Recovery Program established with a private organization. While the fish on exhibit remained extremely healthy, the appearance of the aquarium and accompanying interpretive signs had declined over time. In 2006, a new director to the conference center did not like the look of the exhibit and wanted it removed. A local biologist, Steve Woodis, who had helped establish the aquarium saved the day. He worked closely with the director and her staff to clean the aquarium and to improve the appearance of the entire interpretive exhibit. In addition, Dave Hampton, from Dexter National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center, delivered humpback chubs (retired research fish) from that facility to add to this display. To date, this is the only public facility with all four species of endangered fish on exhibit. The Colorado Division of Wildlife also continues to provide hands-on support.

VII. Recommendations: Continue to support the organizations that have established interpretive exhibits to ensure the exhibits are well maintained. In FY 2008 and beyond, continue to seek opportunities to partner with other organizations to establish interpretive exhibits.

VIII. Project Status: On-Track and Ongoing.

IX. FY 2006 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$7,725 (\$2,000 carry-over from FY 05; \$725 FY 06; \$5,000 directly to BOR)
- B. Funds Expended: \$7,725 (See also budget notes on PIP 12)
- C. Difference: \$ -0-
- D. Percent of the FY 2006 work completed, and projected costs to complete: 100%, none
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

X. Status of Data Submission (Where applicable): n/a

XI. Signed:
Debbie Felker

November 29, 2006

Information & Education Coordinator

Date