

**UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM  
BIOLOGICAL REPORT REVIEW PROCESS**  
*Revised August/September, 2001; June 2002; April 2006*

**RECOVERY PROGRAM REPORTS**

**STEP 1 - INFORMAL REVIEW.** Principal Investigator (PI) submits a draft report for in-house/agency review.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this step is to provide the author with initial input on the rough draft prior to initiating the formal review process by the Program. Specific objectives of this step include:

- Initial scientific and editorial review of the product.
- Provide the opportunity for the responsible agency or other entity to see the report prior to formal submission to the program.
- Check for compliance with format requirements, statement of work, and objectives.

**Responsibilities:**

- The PI initiates the in-house review in a timely manner to meet project completion deadlines and revises the draft report based on comments received.
- In-house/agency staff are responsible for providing initial review so that a quality product is available for the formal review process. Please refer to the final draft report evaluation form for review criteria.

**STEP 2 - PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REVIEW (30 days).** The PI submits the revised draft report from Step 1 to the appropriate coordinator in the Program Director's office along with names of a minimum of three recommended peer reviewers (who the PI has contacted to make sure they agree to review the report *in the necessary time frame*). The coordinator reviews the report to make sure it meets Program requirements and has no major problems that would preclude adequate peer and Biology Committee review. The coordinator approves the selected peer reviewers (or works with the PI to select other acceptable reviewers).

**Objectives:** Step two initiates the formal review process within the Program. It is intended to assure that a high quality product is provided for peer and Biology Committee review.

- Technical and editorial review of the report by the appropriate coordinator in the Program Director's Office.
- Compliance with Program format requirements.
- Identification of peer reviewers.

**Responsibilities:**

- The PI sends the draft report and a copy of the most recently approved scope of work to the coordinator. The PI recommends at least three individuals of his or her choice for peer review and contacts them to make sure they're willing to review the report *in the necessary time frame*. The reviewers must be outside of the PI's immediate office and two of the three reviewers must be outside the PI's agency. Naturally, none of the subject report authors may be included among these peer reviewers.
- Within 10 working days of receiving the report, the coordinator will approve the peer reviewers (or work with the PI to agree on alternative reviewers) and review the report to make sure that the project objectives have been met and that the report does not have any major problems that would preclude peer review. (If major problems are detected, the coordinator will ask the PI to correct them before the report is sent out for peer review.) If the coordinator finds that the goals and/or objectives of the most recent approved scope of work are not adequately addressed, they will provide a written statement to the PI identifying the deficiencies and actions that need to be taken to rectify the report.
- The coordinator is responsible for tracking the review process beginning in Step 2 and for providing a scientific and editorial review of the draft report. In addition, the coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the report meets Program format requirements and addresses the goals and objectives in the most recent approved scope of work. Results of the coordinator review should be documented on the report review form and as written comments and provided to the PI.

**STEP 3 - PEER (30 days) AND BIOLOGY COMMITTEE REVIEW (45 days)**. Once the coordinator and the PI have agreed the report is ready (Step 2), the PI sends the report to the peer reviewers and the Biology Committee and interested parties, accompanied by the project's most recent approved scope of work, the Program's report evaluation form, and reviewer checklist. The PI also informs the Biology Committee who has been selected to peer review the report.

**Objectives:** Step two is intended to provide the PI with a substantive technical review of his or her report. Objectives of this step include:

- Thorough technical and editorial review of the report by knowledgeable individuals.

### **Responsibilities:**

- The PI sends the report out to the peer reviewers and the Biology Committee along with the most recent approved project scope of work, and the report evaluation form with the reviewer checklist. It is preferable that the report be sent electronically (but *not* via the listserver) and in PDF format. The PI asks the peer reviewers to return their comments, the review form and the checklist in electronic format to the PI within 30 days, with a cc: to the coordinator and the Biology Committee and interested parties (whose e-mail addresses are shown on the report evaluation form). A minimum of 3 peer reviewers must be people willing to share their comments with the Committee. The PI also tells the Biology Committee who has been selected to peer-review the report. (Biology Committee members have 45 days to submit their comments because they will likely submit their comments after seeing the peer reviewers' comments. If Biology Committee members do not submit comments within the 45 day period, the PI may assume they do not have major concerns with the report or with peer reviewers' comments.) The PI will clearly identify in a cover letter the dates that peer review and Biology Committee comments are due.
- Peer reviewers and Biology Committee members are responsible for providing primarily a scientific review of the report and submitting comments electronically (but *not* via the listserver), using the Recovery Program report evaluation form, directly to the PI (with a cc: to the Biology Committee and interested parties and the appropriate coordinator in the Program Director's Office [e-mail addresses are shown on the report evaluation form]). If reviewers provide a marked-up draft in addition to their electronic comments, the mark-up only needs to go to the PI. All substantive comments should be contained in the electronically submitted Recovery Program report evaluation form.
- The coordinator is responsible for submitting draft reports to any additional independent peer review panels such as the Genetics Management Panel, geomorphic experts review group, and other appropriate reviewers as needed.
- If two or more reviewers suggest that major revision is needed, then the report will be sent back out for peer review after the author has made the necessary changes. If only one reviewer suggests major revision, then it will be the coordinator's call as to whether the report will need to be sent out again for peer review.

**STEP 4 - BIOLOGY COMMITTEE FINAL APPROVAL.** The PI revises the draft report based on comments received from peer reviewers and the Biology Committee in Step 3. Within

30 days of the end of the Biology Committee review period, the PI submits a final draft report to the Biology Committee and interested parties and the appropriate coordinator along with a discussion of how comments were addressed. The Biology Committee considers the report at their next scheduled meeting (assuming that meeting is at least 2 weeks after the date Biology Committee members receive the report) and makes recommendations to the Management Committee as appropriate.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this step is to finalize the report. Specific objectives include:

- Provide a forum for discussion by the Program.
- Final review of the report.
- Ensure that report recommendations are substantiated by the report.

**Responsibilities:**

- The PI is responsible for revising the report as appropriate based on input received in Step 3 and submitting it to the Biology Committee and coordinator for approval. In addition the PI provides a discussion of how reviewer comments were addressed.
- The Biology Committee is responsible for providing a final review of the report and either approving or rejecting it within a 45 day period from the time it is submitted in final draft form to the Biology Committee. If there are still any major outstanding concerns with the report, Biology Committee members will notify the PI of those at least one week prior to the Biology Committee meeting.
- In the event that the report is approved pending specific revisions, the PI is required to make those revisions and submit the final report to the Program in a timely manner.
- In the event that the report is rejected, the Biology Committee will give the PI specific comments on changes required and the PI will provide a revised report for discussion and approval by the Biology Committee by a mutually agreeable date.
- The Biology Committee considers the report recommendations separately, and has the option to approve the report without accepting some or all of the recommendations. (However, Committee members may, and often do, request that recommendations that are not based in the data presented in the report be revised.)

## **NON-RECOVERY PROGRAM REPORTS**

Entities submitting non-Program reports to the Biology Committee are asked make clear what they want the Committee to do (e.g., approve the report, consider the recommendations, etc.). The Biology Committee will determine if they are willing to review the report and if so, inform the requesters of the timeframe in which the Committee can consider the report. The Committee also will ask the requesters to go through the Recovery Program report review process of peer review, revision, etc (see above). Non-Program reports are not required to conform to Program report format, but it is helpful if they do.

SAMPLE REPORT REVIEW SCHEDULE

* PI submits report to coordinator	January 1
* PI submits report to peer and Biology Committee review	February 1
Peer reviewers return comments	March 1
Biology Committee members return comments	March 15
* PI revises report for Biology Committee consideration	April 15
Biology Committee considers report for approval	June 1

\* These dates should be included in the scope of work.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FORMAT FOR BIOLOGICAL REPORTS

Final draft reports submitted to the Biology Committee will contain:

1. Cover page stating the title of the report, Recovery Program project number, author and organization, submittal date, and designation of draft, final draft, or final report. When the report is printed and distributed in final by the author, it should have a cover and binding with the Recovery Program logo and agency logo on the front. PI's also will submit an electronic copy to the Program Director's office in PDF format.
2. Standard acknowledgment statement regarding Recovery Program:

“This study was funded by the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The Recovery Program is a joint effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Western Area Power Administration, states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, Upper Basin water users, environmental organizations, the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, and the National Park Service.”

Where trade names or commercial products are mentioned, the following disclaimer also should appear: "Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the authors, the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior, or members of the Recovery Implementation Program.”

3. Table of contents.
4. List of tables.
5. List of figures.
6. List of key words.

7. Executive summary, generally limited to three pages, that includes a statement of the objective of the effort, an assessment of whether or not the objective was achieved, a brief description of methods, a statement of conclusions, a statement of recommendations, and other pertinent summary information.
8. Report contents including objectives, methods, results and discussion (combined or separate, per the author's preference), conclusions, and recommendations.
9. Bibliography.
10. Appendices
11. All pages should be numbered (except the cover page). Until a report is finalized, it also should have line numbers to facilitate review.
12. Units of measure should be metric except for water volumes and velocities and river miles, which should be reported in English.

Reports which do not conform to this format will be returned to the author without further consideration until they are revised.

All other standards of style should generally follow the most recent American Fisheries Society publication guidelines (unless the report topic suggests following guidelines from another professional journal). If a report contains chapters from different disciplines (e.g., fisheries and geomorphology), all chapters should adhere to AFS guidelines for consistency. These guidelines are published in the first issue of each volume of the Transactions of the American Fisheries Society, and are available online in PDF format at <http://www.r6.fws.gov/crrip/doc/TAFS.pdf>