

February 10, 2009

Biology Committee Draft Agenda
Doubletree Hotel, Grand Junction, Colorado
February 20, 2009

CONVENE 7:00 a. m.

1. Review/modify agenda (Irving, All; 5 min.).
2. Approve Biology Committee meeting (January 15, 2009) and conference call (February 4, 2009) summaries. (All, 5 min.) *Posted to the fws-coloriver listserv by Dave Irving on ?*
3. Review assignments (Irving, All; 20 min.). *The status of assignments is annotated at the end of this agenda (please review in advance of the meeting to reduce discussion time).*
4. Discussion and review of new/revised FY 09 scopes of work (PD's Office, all; 2 hours). *The Program Director's office will be e-mailing materials to the Committee.*

BREAK

5. RIPRAP revisions and assessment (PD's Office, all; 1 hour) *See the three e-mails posted to the fws-coloriver listserv by Angela Kantola on 2/7/09.*
6. Program Guidance (PD's Office, all; 1.5 hours) *See the three e-mails posted to the fws-coloriver listserv by Angela Kantola on 2/7/09.*

LUNCH 12:00 – 1:00 (Alternatively, the Committee may want to work through lunch and adjourn early.)

7. Review reports due list (Kantola, All; 15 min.). *Angela Kantola will e-mail an updated list to the Committee in advance of the meeting.*
8. Schedule next meeting (All, 10 min.).

ADJOURN by 2:00 p.m.

Attachment 1

Assignments carried over or modified from previous meetings:

1. Tom Nesler will see if CDOW can provide a report on Billy Atkinson's work on pike in Catamount and the river below. Update provided at nonnative fish workshop; workshop participants recommended CDOW provide some kind of management plan. 1/17: Billy will provide a Catamount pike removal document/strategy by the end of February. 4/15: Nesler will provide update at BC. 4/28: Tom has reminded Billy that this is overdue and will try to get it to the BC as soon as possible. 6/13: Nesler received the draft today and provide it to the BC by the end of July. 8/18: Nesler will provide Billy Atkinson's upper Yampa "strategy" report to the Biology Committee by September 18 (Nesler's and Chart's birthday). 10/30: Tom Nesler and Sherm Hebein will revise Billy's report and provide that to the Recovery Program (Biology Committee, NNFSC, PI's, etc.) along with an outline of CDOW's strategy for nonnative fish management in the Yampa River above the diversions for discussion as part of the nonnative fish workshop. Tom Chart said it would be very helpful to have that outline before the December. 9-10 workshop. Sherm noted that Billy removed >2,000 np from Catamount this year (>4,000 np total). 1/15: The upper Yampa strategy has been separated out and provided to the Committee; Billy's report is still being revised.
2. The Program Director's office will work with CDOW and Aaron Webber on the potential for designing a permeable, hydrologically-stable (gravel?) berm to prevent northern pike access to the oxbow slough at RM 151 on the Yampa, and then clean it out once and for all. 2/15, 4/15: Pending. 4/28: Chart has discussed with Nesler and with the Partners for Wildlife Program, also. Will focus on this summer/fall. 6/13: CDOW will be contacting the landowner regarding access, if they are amenable, then CDOW and Program will determine a feasible solution (before the end of spring runoff). 8/18: Tom Chart said Sherm will try to get someone from CDOW on this as soon as possible. The Biology Committee would like a date certain on this; >Sherm Hebein will accelerate this. 10/30 said CDOW has contacted the property owners of the RM 151 backwater, but hasn't been able to meet with them yet. Mark Wernke from Reclamation is willing to take a look at the property with CDOW. A fairly long berm would be required (>3,000') and we'll need to determine the best type of berm (more permanent configurations could be very expensive). The funding source would need to be determined, with Partners for Fish and Wildlife, lottery funds, grant funds, etc. as possible sources to be explored. 1/15: Tom Nesler said they plan to get engineers develop specs/estimates this spring for something like a 10-year berm structure; the next step will be to find funding (perhaps as a habitat project through GOCO). This would be the first of three or four such projects. Tom Pitts suggested that if the Program provides some matching funds (annual or capital), it might improve the probability of getting GOCO money. Tom also suggested that if we have a project in the hopper, we might be able to compete for end-of-year Reclamation funds. 2/10: The PD's office considers this a high priority and will contribute funds, if available (see revised FY09 budget). This project also was submitted in the Service's list of potential projects for the Economic Stimulus Package.
3. Tom Chart will review the latest draft of the nonnative fish stocking procedures and get comments back to the States no later than February 15, then Krissy, Kevin, Tom, and the Service will submit it for agency review (one month review time). 2/15: Dates need to be modified. 4/14: Group discussing a few more revisions before seeking agency approval.

4/28: Krissy said a bill passed in Utah's latest legislative session (the Aquaculture Revitalization Act) took away Utah's ability to issue a COR to anyone with a private pond; Krissy will provide language incorporating that within two weeks. Kevin Gelwicks should have comments back from Wyoming by early June, but doesn't expect anything substantive, and will try to expedite their comments. Tom Chart said Tom Nesler realized we may have missed stipulations that would apply to private pond owners within critical habitat outside the 100-year floodplain. Krissy will review that; she thought that a private pond outside the 100-year floodplain would still be covered if it had the potential to connect. Melissa suggested including language regarding extending and revising the document; Tom Nesler said we're on a 5-year revision schedule. 6/13: A subgroup met yesterday, Wyoming has reviewed and provided comments, and Utah also has reviewed it. Further streamlining is underway. 7/11: Utah and Wyoming have reviewed; Colorado and FWS reviewing (FWS comments due 9/5/08). Colorado has shared the draft Procedures with their legal counsel and expects to provide any comments within two weeks. Krissy said Utah's legal counsel still needs to review this. 10/16: The PD's office is responding to Wyoming's recent comments, then will send these revisions to the States and Service for review, with the goal of beginning the surnaming process in November. 10/30: Tom said Bob Muth sent the revised stocking procedures to the States and the Service on October 22. Krissy said Utah has some new concerns about moving fish from one body to another and potentially spreading quagga mussels. >UDWR will provide draft language for review. Dave Irving said we also need to be sure we're not transferring mussels on equipment. Colorado and Utah have equipment-cleaning protocol in place. Sherm said they're using Sparquat for disinfection and Krissy said UDWR is using Quat128. Tom Nesler added that where the draft Procedures suggest certain stocking may become routine, we need to consider potential mussel transfer. 1/15: Tom Chart said Nesler has addressed the quagga mussel spread issue along with some other minor revisions; they've met with Krissy and UDWR is okay with the changes. After double-checking with Kevin Gelwicks in Wyoming, the Program Director's office will move this forward for NEPA compliance (should be able to rely on the original document) and the Regional Director's signature. 2/10: Bob Muth discussed the need for additional NEPA with the Service's solicitor – not needed. Final revisions addressing a lingering State's concern over regulatory requirements was resolved Feb 10, 2009. We are now seeking signatures.

4. Researchers are to submit all their nonnative fish data to Chuck McAda by April 1 (the Program Director's office will send out an e-mail notification on this). 4/28: Tom Chart said Chuck had only received data from Tim Modde ten days ago. Trina said they're making sure their data is in the right format. Tom Chart said that at a minimum, he would like the data sent to Chuck even if it's in the old format. >Tom Nesler will check on Lori's data; >Krissy will check on Moab's data. All the data on captured nonnative fish should be submitted, not just data on tagged fish; >Chuck will make sure the correct data are submitted and work with principal investigators if anything is missing. 6/13: Krissy said Utah has submitted their data. Tom Chart said Tim Modde submitted Vernal's data; Tom will get with Chuck to determine what data are still needed and e-mail the PI's. Tom Nesler will check on Lori's data. Sherm suggested cross-checking with CDOW's data system to be sure all data is in both places (Chuck's database and CDOW's). 7/11: Data have been submitted by Vernal CRFP, Badame, Hedrick, Hawkins, Bestgen, Bestgen/Zelasko and Burdick. 4 August 2008: Harry Vermillion submitted an extract from ADAMAS in the appropriate format to Chuck McAda on August 4th. The extract included Colorado River data from 2003 and 2007; Gunnison River data from 2007; and Yampa River data from years 2004 - 2007. 8/18:

>Chuck will send the most recent version of the database to the NNFSC; and the NNFSC will review status of the data with Chuck and Travis after the Biology Committee meeting. 10/30: Tom Chart said the NNFSC will follow-up on this at the workshop, most of the data are in; we need to determine how quickly we can get the 2008 data added. 1/15: Chuck said all the data are in through 2007. Delete all foregoing text. Researchers need to have all their 2008 data **IN THE CORRECT FORMAT** to Travis by March 1, 2009 (data not submitted in the correct format will be sent back with a copy to the appropriate Biology and Management committee members). Similarly, Biology and Management committee members will be notified of any data not submitted by March 1. 2/10: Pending

5. Tom Nesler will check on the status of revision of the Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan. 4/14: Colorado's new completion date is May 1, 2009. (In the interim, CDOW will need to produce an Upper Yampa River strategy to assist the Program in our prioritization of 2009 field activities. This strategy should ultimately be incorporated into the Aquatic Wildlife Management Plan for the Yampa River Basin. 4/28: Tom Nesler said they don't plan to provide a formal strategy, but will describe what they [primarily Billy Atkinson] are doing down through Steamboat and with regard to isolating sloughs in Sam Finney's reach. See #3, above.) 1/15: The Upper Yampa strategy will be directly incorporated into the Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan (which will be completed by May 1, 2009).
6. The PD's office needs to schedule a humpback chub population monitoring workshop. Pending (the Program Director's office will discuss this with Rich Valdez); a workshop might also include discussion of humpback chub broodstock. 10/30: Tom Czaplá said this is still pending. He would like to see the workshop address the issue of first acceptable population estimates.
7. The Program Director's office and CDOW will send letters of thanks to Sherriff Tim Jantz for the use of the Craig Justice Center Ponds for nonnative fish translocation (with a cc: to the County commissioners and others, as appropriate). Pending. 1/15: John Hawkins suggested a thanks to Ron Dellacroe and his supervisor in State Parks who provide a translocation site, facilitate our putting fish into Elkhead, and allow access to the boat launch areas critical to Yampa River management efforts. 2/10: Muth and Chart will work with Debbie Felker to get letters out prior to the 2009 translocations.
8. 1/15: Melissa suggested following up on signage at the translocation ponds acknowledging that the Recovery Program has provided the fish (but keeping in mind the concern re: potential elevated Hg levels; which CDOW will investigate). 2/10: Chart will discuss this with the I&E Committee at their meeting Feb 12, 2009.
9. Within the next month, >the Service and Program Director's office will provide the Committee a draft addendum to the White River report that will present the measured flow requirements in a historical hydrologic perspective. The Program Director's office also will research where we left Schmidt and Orchard's draft report on peak (channel maintenance) flows and recommend whether to have it reviewed by the geomorphology panel. The Program Director's office will use the information currently available to >develop a position paper on Price River flow recommendations for Committee review. 10/16 Pending; out by the end of ~~November~~ 1/5: February 2009.

10. Dave Irving will call the Mantle Ranch landowner to give him an update on work to raise *Gila* in captivity (since the Ranch's cooperation made it possible for the Service to get the fish out to the hatchery quickly). *10/30: Dave Irving sent him a letter.* CDOW and the Park need to discuss the future of the captive *Gila* in light of plans for those fish as broodstock under Three Species conservation and Colorado's Management Use agreement with the Park (Tom Nesler and Melissa will work on this). *10/30: Pending.* The Program Director's office will move forward to establish a Yampa River humpback chub broodstock using young fish. Tom Czapla will work with Melissa on a letter to the Park. *10/30: Pending. Czapla said he's been drafting a refuge/broodstock plan for discussion within the Service, then for sharing with the Park Service and the Recovery Program. Tom Nesler and Krissy Wilson also are working on related roundtail plans. 1/15: Dave Irving said the landowner is open to our returning, as long as we coordinate with Ron Velarde. The fish are doing well at the Ouray hatchery and they believe they have 29 humpback chub. Dinosaur National Monument has asked what our plans are for the other fish. Dave will try to set up a conference call on this on February 5. Tom Nesler said disease testing will be required before any fish can be returned to the wild. Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado are considering a proposal for use of the roundtails for broodstock. Tom Czapla said he'd like to keep the humpback chub in captivity and conduct genetic testing (perhaps on some of the roundtail, also).*
11. John Hawkins will talk to Grant Wilcox in CDOW's Fort Collins office to see if smallmouth bass movement data can be mapped.
12. Krissy Wilson will work with Zane Olsen to make sure that Wahweap's budget for FY 09 is accurate. *1/15: Krissy said UDWR now has Wahweap under their hatchery system. The FY 09 budget is still \$237.8K, but may be reduced in future years as they carefully track costs.*
13. Trina Hedrick, Dave Irving, et al. will prepare a rough draft SOW for removal of small nonnative fishes in the Green River in advance of the nonnative fish workshop. *1/15: Dave Irving said they met yesterday to discuss the draft scope of work; Leisa said they'll revise the draft to scale the scope back somewhat and include drift net samples. Tildon said the focus will be on verifying larval drift and arrival into the nursery reach and manipulating a few backwaters (blocking, etc. after removing all nonnative fish) to determine subsequent fish community effects. The revised scope will be reviewed by the PD's office, then it will come to the BC for approval in advance of the next meeting. UDWR and USFWS revised this SOW and it will be sent to the BC in time for their discussion of the FY09 Work Plan on Feb 20, 2009.*
14. Tom Nesler will check on the status of Lori Martin's report (98a). *No word as of Feb 10, 2009; this will be an issue in the Service's upcoming Sufficient Progress Review.*
15. Tildon Jones will draft objectives for potential catfish removal from the Green River for NNFSC review. *Tildon Jones provided objectives, which were reviewed by the NNFSC on Jan 29, 2009; Utah (Krissy Wilson) approved this addition to Project 123a on an experimental basis. Vernal-CRFP and UDWR will revise their SOW accordingly.*
16. Kevin Bestgen will let the Committee know within the next month if there are ways of using recaptures on subsequent passes in the population estimate (when the tagging pass isn't done first).

17. The PD's office and CRFP-GJct will coordinate with CDOW on the development of a Colorado River native fish monitoring component for Program Guidance.
18. Tom Nesler will find out why CDOW is limiting upper Yampa in-river electrofishing to the 2.5 miles of the Yampa River south of Steamboat Springs.
19. Tom Nesler will look into existing fines and enforcement for illegal stocking (suggestions were made that the disincentives needed are real possibilities of CDOW closing sportfisheries like Elkhead and significantly fining those who illegally stock fish).
20. The PD's office will e-mail PI's and the Committee with instructions for revising nonnative fish scopes of work.
21. Leisa will finalize and distribute the report for project 123. *Done.*
22. Tom Chart will provide Kevin Bestgen's smallmouth bass presentation to the BC for review prior to the February 4 conference call. *Done.*
23. The Program Director's office will draft a Flaming Gorge flow request letter and circulate it to the Biology and Management committees for review next week.
24. John Hawkins will work with Shane Capron on a small revision to the #125 report, send that revision to the Biology Committee for final review no later than early next week (*done*), then finalize the report when the revision is accepted.
25. Trina and Kevin will revise and finalize the entrainment report. *Done.*