

Biology Committee Draft Agenda
[Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites](#), 2571 Crossroads Blvd
Grand Junction, Colorado, August 17–18, 2010

Tuesday, August 17

CONVENE: 12:30 p.m.

1. Review/modify agenda – (Trammell, All; 5 min)
2. Approve Biology Committee [May 6-7 meeting summary](#), review previous meeting assignments (see Attachment 1), review reports due list. (All, 30 min) *The [summary](#) was posted to the fws-coloriver listserver by Melissa Trammell on May 13. Angela Kantola will send the Committee a revised reports due list in advance of the meeting.*
3. Report review (All, 30 min) - Upper Yampa Yampa River northern pike and smallmouth bass translocation (98a, Martin)
4. Update on draft project #85f sediment report (Mohrman, 10 min)
5. Price-Stubb passive PIT-tag monitoring station (GJ-CRFP, Czapla, 30 min) – *The Committee will receive an update on installation/operation.*

BREAK – 10 min

6. Nonnative Fish Activities and Subcommittee (NNFSC) update
 - a. Biocontrol symposium update (Martinez, 1 hour)
 - b. Nonnative fish strategy (Martinez, 15 min.)
 - c. Other items (e.g. discussion of recent burbot capture in Green River, etc., 15 min.)
 - d. Scheduling December nonnative fish workshop (All, 5 min.)
7. Electrofishing update (Martinez, 20 min)

ADJOURN 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 18

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

8. Aspinall PBO Study Plan update (Speas, 15 min) – The [Aspinall \(Gunnison River Basin\) PBO](#) calls for a Study Plan to evaluate the effects of the proposed operations of the Aspinall Unit and how it improves habitat and thereby contributes to recovery. *The Study Plan is to be completed by December 2010 and should focus on previously identified uncertainties related to geomorphic processes, floodplain inundation, and temperatures (see Uncertainties*

section of the PBO). The Study Plan also should include an evaluation of the effects of reoperation on critical habitat in the Colorado River from the Gunnison River confluence to Lake Powell. A similar [plan was developed for the Green River in 2007.](#)

9. Prioritizing additional capital projects potentially needed for recovery (All, 30 min.) *At their last meeting, the Committee discussed additional potential capital projects the Program may want to consider, including weirs for nonnative fish management, floodplain management/construction/purchase, PIT-tag reader at Maybell Ditch to monitor entrainment (and potential screen or other exclusion device, if needed), Wahweap use/hatchery building, etc. The Committee also brainstormed other potential projects, including: additional propagation facilities for humpback chub (although Horsethief ponds and Ouray may meet some of these concerns), PIT-tag antennas for the bypass (return tubes) on the fish screens, a remote PIT-tag reader at Stewart Lake, reservoir screens, and additional water management options to provide still-unmet instream flows.*
10. Update on Stirrup PIT-tag antenna results (Monroe, 10 min.)
11. Review of FY 11 work plan
 - a. Review of projects in current FY 11 work plan, discussion of contingency projects (Kantola, all, 1 hour)
 - b. Review and discussion of Maybell PIT-tag antenna (Speas, 30 min.)
 - c. Proposal for fixed weir in Ashley Creek and Stewart Lake drains (Wilson, 15 min.)
12. Grand Valley floodplain activities
 - a. Proposed reclamation at Soaring Eagle – *The Soaring Eagle Co. has developed a reclamation plan for their gravel mining site downstream of Walter Walker to connect the gravel pit to the Colorado River with levee breaches.* (GJ-ES, PD's office, 10 min)
 - b. Proposal to remove sediment from Jarvis floodplain site (PD's office, GJ-CRFP, 10 min.)
13. Discuss schedule for floodplain review/site tour (All, 30 min) – *The Committee has scheduled visits to Program floodplain sites with Ryan Mollnow, Ouray NWR for the afternoon of September 28 and all day September 29 (leaving the morning of September 30 for other Committee business). Topics for the review and site tour likely will include: review of management plans for the [Green](#) and [Colorado](#) river basins; discussion of options for Baeser Bend and Old Charley Wash (Modde's rotational floodplain management plan); Reclamation's work to implement recommendations from [Heitmeyer and Fredrickson 2005](#); recommendations from the floodplain synthesis report (sent to BC 6/14/10); and continued work to monitor floodplain sites under C-6 Hydro.*
14. Discuss agenda items for next meeting (morning of September 30) (All, 5 min)

ADJOURN by 12:30 p.m.

Attachment 1: Assignments

1. *Tom Nesler will check on the status of revision of the Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan. 1/15: To be completed by 5/1/09. 7/8: In CDOW review/revision with commitment to MC to provide by early July. 7/13: Draft will be available for internal review by mid-July. CDOW will send the draft out the States and Service (NNFSP) prior to Greg Gerlich's final approval. 9/21: The draft final will be distributed to the Recovery Program office and the NNFSP Agreement signatories as a courtesy copy for review and comment. Pending comments received and further revision, Greg Gerlich and Tom Nesler will approve the plan. 10/6: The plan has been sent to the Program Director's office and the signatories to the NNFSP for courtesy review (comments due by the end of October). 1/15/10: FWS provided comments in early November. Tom Nesler will check with Sherm to see if Wyoming provided any comments; CDOW will respond to comments and copy the Biology Committee. 3/10: **Sherm Hebein** said he **and Tom Nesler** hope to finalize this by March 19. 4/7: Sherm and Tom Nesler reviewed 4/6; Sherm is incorporating changes, reviewing suggested changes that are policy-related within CDOW, and responding to suggested revisions they to which they can't respond. Tom says they expect it will be ready for signature by the end of April 2010 (the 98a synthesis report also will be completed by the end of April). 5/6/10: Sherm still needs to incorporate comments; the Plan will be finalized no later than July 1, 2010. On the 98a final report, CDOW comments are being incorporated and will come to the BC for final review no later than July 1, 2010. 7/28/10: CDOW has committed to provide the revised plan, with response to reviewer comments by 7/31/10.*
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. 10/30 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 (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). 2/20: Recovery Program funds likely available; CDOW working to get engineers on the ground; Nesler considering different approaches (berm, fill the oxbow, etc.). 4/20: Tom Nesler said they've met with the landowner and Reclamation engineers will do an onsite survey as soon as the snow melts. 1/5/10: Project deferred indefinitely; Reclamation cautions that the lesson from the Butch Craig floodplain site is to be very cautious before considering modifying habitats. Based on the channel dynamics in this area of the Yampa River, it would be unwise to construct an impervious dike at the mouth of this backwater. 1/14/10: The Committee discussed other options to eliminate spawning in this area; the >PD's office will provide Mark's trip report to the BC and work with CDOW to outline options for Committee*

discussion at the next meeting (options could include: make the entrance too shallow for adults; a dike set back instead of right at the river; direct removal/net sets; piscicides, etc.) 2/22: PD's office provided Mark's report. 3/10: **CDOW** will work with Reclamation to flesh out their gravel proposal and also will review additional options (e.g., plant eradication, barriers, etc.). This will be on the May 6-7 Committee agenda. 5/6/10: Sherm Hebein said Reclamation will conduct a site visit with CDOW in July.

3. 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. 2/20: Bob Muth said he's making good progress on this and he'll have a draft to the Committee by ~~early March~~ end of April. 7/8: Mohrman and Chart expect to provide drafts of this and Price River report by the end of August 2009. 7/13: Dave Speas said the goal for the Narrows EIS is to get it out for public review in the fall, so the above schedule should work. The PD's office will keep the Service's SLC-ES shop in the loop on Price River. 9/21: Chart and Mohrman have made good progress on this, but other priorities have so far prevented completion. 1/14/10: still pending and the PD's office will continue to communicate with Reclamation re: Narrows. 3/3/10: PD's office is communicating with SLC-ES to determine the best way to move this position paper forward. 5/6/10: The Program Director's office will complete a position paper (or similar construct) on Price River endangered fish flow needs and submit it for Biology Committee review by September 1, 2010. The Program Director's office will complete the addendum to the White River report and provide a status update and recommendation on the draft Schmidt and Orchard report on peak (channel maintenance) flows for Biology Committee review by December 31, 2010.
4. Melissa believes an Environmental Assessment of the impacts of the Humpback chub captivity management plan (also addresses how to deal with captured roundtail chub) will need to be written; Krissy will work with Melissa on the EA. 7/13: Melissa needs to coordinate with the NPS if this is the case and she intends to do that in the next few weeks. 10/6: John Reber reported that **Melissa Trammell** will do the EA for this. 5/6/10 Melissa said she would have a draft for the park by the end of May.
5. **Krissy Wilson** will provide Utah's Health Condition Profile to **Tom Czapl**. 4/20: Krissy has asked for a formal write-up from their hatchery folks. 7/13: Krissy will condense relevant information gleaned from hatchery managers and consider organizing workshop(s) in the future. 10/6: Krissy provided this information to Tom Czapl and will work with Tom to determine if we'll host a workshop for hatchery personnel (pending, will schedule after new hatchery manager is in place at Ouray NFH). 3/10: Workshop on condition measurement for hatchery folks will be scheduled in late summer or early fall, probably in Grand Junction (to allow someone from the Mumma Hatchery to attend); >Tom Czapl will also invite San Juan Program hatchery managers.
6. The **PD's office** will communicate with Gary White to determine how many and which of

the questions from the HBC workshop to focus on. *Pending*. **Derek Elverud** will provide the database for Westwater for Gary White to combine with Black Rocks, which will require a separate SOW. 10/6: **Travis Francis** said they plan to complete the reports, then revisit a SOW for assistance from Gary White. 3/10: *pending*. 4/28: *Derek Elverud has finished compiling the Westwater data to send to Gary White. Travis Francis is going to combine his Blackrocks data set with the Westwater data (when he has time after he gets out of the field in mid-June).*

7. The **Program Director's office** will review the 121a report recommendations (as well as the Gunnison PBO) and determine what items need to be included in the RIPRAP. 2/22: *PD's office recommended this be incorporated into the Gunnison River Study Plan.*
8. **CDOW** will review the Loudy-Simpson escapement data and make a recommendation for where to translocate fish prior to the field season. 3/10: *Sherm said their preliminary work indicated that less than 1% of the fish stocked into Loudy-Simpson 2007-2008 escaped back to the river (p-hat analysis resulted in an estimate of 3 to 8 fish), so they think escapement very minimal. CDOW will continue to evaluate and will defer stocking northern pike into Loudy-Simpson until after the river recedes and no Loudy-Simpson is no longer connected (the same will apply to Yampa R. SWA). In light of likely overwinter survival, Tom Chart asked CDOW to continue to focus on Headquarters Pond as long as it will sustain the number of fish being stocked.*
9. The **Program Director's office** will prepare a list of issues to be resolved regarding Tusher Wash screening (e.g., what levels of mortality are acceptable for what size classes, potential O&M costs, etc.) to help move this decision forward (and provide that to the Biology Committee and the Service). *Done*. 5/6/10 A small group (Melissa, Kevin McAbee, Dave Speas, and Tom Czapl) will work with Kevin Bestgen to review/build on the risk assessment, focusing on understanding existing impacts and what could be gained by various screening options. Tentatively, it would seem the best choice would be fish friendly runners with a screen on the irrigation ditch (contingent on further analysis). *BC to submit proposal to MC by 12/31/10.*
10. **Angela Kantola** will add a reminder to future annual report requests about the importance of PI's supervisors' reviewing recommendations to be sure that they are grounded in the data and that the Program takes these recommendations seriously. *Pending in 2010 annual report request.*
11. **Michelle Shaughnessy** will provide cost comparisons for O&M of the proposed new Grand Valley fish rearing ponds versus existing ponds as soon as the value engineering study is completed. *Pending; Michelle anticipates ~\$30K increase in total costs (primarily fish food).*
12. **Angela Kantola** will post the revised March meeting summary (*done*) and send the Committee a revised reports due list (*included with this agenda*) and revised BC list (*done*).
13. The **Program Director's office** and **Kevin Bestgen** will work with **PI's** to identify sampling shortcomings and remedies for Green River Colorado pikeminnow population estimate and report back to the Biology Committee.

14. The **Program Director's office** will post the revised 2008 and 2009 nonnative fish workshop summaries to the web. *Done.* **Dave Speas** is working to tabulate the recommendations from the 2008 and 2009 workshops and outline how to implement them and the NNFSC will meet to discuss this on June 30. In the future, the **PD's office** will quickly complete these workshop summaries and the recommendations included as part of the annual and final report summaries.
15. The **Service (GJ-CRFP and the Program Director's office)** will make recommendations for how/where to manage the fish spawned this year at the Grand Valley facility and bring those back to the Biology Committee.
16. *The **Biology Committee** will work on prioritizing their list of potential additional capital projects at a future meeting.
17. *By June 1, the **Program Director's office** will provide a review package for Aspinall Study Plan Ad Hoc Group participants, to include: Gunnison River PBO, flow recommendations, floodplain mgmt plan, LaGory's geomorphology report, recent reports (e.g. #121 Gunnison River larval sampling), and a list of uncertainties identified in the flow recommendations, PBO, and draft EIS. *Done; ad hoc met in early June, study plan drafting is underway; next ad hoc meeting September 1-2..*
18. **Sherm Hebein** will provide the Committee a copy of the output/report on CDOW's Gunnison River work (e.g., wherein they captured seven razorback last year in sampling half of the river) as soon as he receives it.
19. The **Program Director's office** will draft a letter from the Recovery Program to EPA asking EPA to update their spill response contingency plans. *7/29/10: Rather than drafting a letter at this point, Barb Osmundson has been working with Bob Stewart (DOI liaison to EPA) regarding updating the sub-area spill response plans. Bob raised this issue at the recent annual meeting and got a verbal commitment from EPA regarding the plans. Barb will follow-up with Bob on this in early August.*