

Biology Committee Draft Agenda  
Vernal, Utah, September 28-30, 2010

Topics for the review and site tour 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 Bestgen's floodplain synthesis report (in BC review); and continued work to monitor floodplain sites under C-6 Hydro. The group also will discuss overall floodplain management strategy as part of this review.

**Tuesday, September 28**

***CONVENE: 1:00 p.m. @ [Ouray National Wildlife Refuge](#) Headquarters***

Visit floodplain sites on the west side of the river, mostly on the refuge proper, i.e., Leota Bottoms (4 and 10 for sure) and Sheppard; possibly meet with Jay Groves at the confluence of the Duschense River to review COE proposal for floodplain ecosystem restoration/fish entrainment-passage project.

**Wednesday, September 29**

***CONVENE: 8:00 a.m. @ Vernal UDWR Office, 152 East 100 North***

Carpool to Thunder Ranch, then to Stirrup, Baeser Bend, Johnson, and Old Charley floodplain sites (all on river left).

**LUNCH:** Box lunches will be arranged.

If time, conclude with floodplain discussion in Vernal (at UDWR south conference room). If time does not permit, this discussion will take place Thursday morning.

- Discussion of Vernal CRFP floodplain SOW – *USFWS will send out a draft for review by Friday, September 17.*

**Group dinner social:** 6:30 p.m. Casa Rios Restaurant, 2750 W Highway 40, Vernal, UT.

**Thursday, September 30**

***CONVENE: 8:00 a.m. @ Vernal UDWR, South Conference Room***

1. Continue discussion of floodplains from Wednesday afternoon)

- Discussion of GJ area floodplains (Patty Gelatt)

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.* Mark Wernke (BR) and Bruce Smith (consultant) will join by phone.

Proposal to remove sediment from Jarvis floodplain site

2. Approve Biology Committee August 17-18 summary – *The summary was posted to the fws-coloriver listserver by Melissa Trammell on 8/20/10.*
3. Report review (All, 30 min) #138?
4. Discussion of research framework review (Czapla, 15 min)
5. Update on Nonnative fish strategy (Martinez, 15 min.)
6. Review previous meeting assignments (see Attachment 1)
7. Review reports due list. (All, 30 min) *Angela Kantola will send the Committee a revised reports due list in advance of the meeting.*
8. Discuss agenda items for next meeting, December 14 in Grand Junction from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (unless the agenda lends itself to a web conference). (All, 5 min)

***ADJOURN by 12:30 p.m.***

## Attachment 1: Assignments

1. **Sherm Hebein** said he **and Tom Nesler** hope to finalize the Yampa River Aquatic Management Plan 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.* 8/17/10: *Plan complete; CDOW completing transmittal letters. CDOW will incorporate comments and finalize the 98a report (in about a month in light of field season).*
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.* 8/18: *Sherm hopes to schedule a visit after the landowner cuts the grass in the next 2 weeks.*

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~~ September 6.*
5. **Krissy Wilson** will provide Utah's Health Condition Profile to **Tom Czapla**. *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 Czapla 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 Czapla will also invite San Juan Program hatchery managers. 8/18/10: Scheduled for Oct. 5; **Krissy Wilson and Michelle Shaughnessy** will determine the best location (perhaps at the hatchery).*
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 Black Rocks data set with the Westwater data and his report (when he has time after he gets*

out of the field). 8/18/10: Michelle said we can get this to Gary White this winter.

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 (Kyle's) Pond as long as it will sustain the number of fish being stocked (which so far doesn't appear limiting).*
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, Tom Pitts, and Tom Czapla)** 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.* 8/18: **Tom Czapla** will take the lead to get a conference call scheduled.
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).* 8/18: *Current est. is an increase of \$30K to the FY 11 SOW. If a new vehicle is needed, another \$11K would be needed. All of this will depend on actual construction/completion dates.*
12. 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 prior to the 2011 sampling season. *Pending.*
13. 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. *Done.* 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.

14. 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. *8/18: Will be discussed during the health condition profile meeting. The PD's office needs to schedule discussion//revision of the integrated stocking plan.*
15. The **Biology Committee** will work on prioritizing their list of potential additional capital projects at a future meeting. *Ongoing. By September 22, Committee members and others who suggested capital project ideas will provide short explanatory/descriptive text (preferably just a paragraph), and then the Committee will decide when to take the next steps (individual ranking, group discussion of combined ranking, etc.). UDWR comments submitted; next BC discussion likely not before December.*
16. 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. The Program Director's office will post the summary of the June Aspinall Study Plan meeting to the fws-coloriver listserv. Done.*
17. **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. *8/18: Sherm will send to Angela this week to distribute to the Committee.*
18. 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 followed up with Bob on this and EPA plans to begin updating the sub area plans no later than spring 2011. The Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) appears to be complete and is going out for one last review/comment period.*
19. **Angela Kantola** will send out a revised reports due list.
20. **Angela Kantola** will modify the final report format document and put a note in future scope of work formats specifying that authors are to provide electronic versions of draft final reports which can be commented on directly (via track changes or through Adobe, but preferably through track changes in Word [if a Word file like this is too large, the embedded Excel files can be compressed]).
21. Requirements/process for the next round of synthesis reports should be discussed by the **Nonnative Fish Subcommittee** and at the upcoming **nonnative fish workshop**.

22. **Jana Mohrman** will make sure the BC received Tom Pitts' and Dan Luecke's comments on the sediment report. *Done.* **Jana** also will contact Bob Muth and George Smith about how they see the report results and how those can guide us in future evaluation of flow recommendations. *In progress.*
23. **Pat Martinez** will schedule a conference call among the signatories to the 2009 Nonnative Fish Stocking Procedures to discuss clarifications. *Pending.*
24. Annual reports will be due November 15; the **Program Director's office** will get the updated report templates posted to the fws-coloriver listserver and on the Program's website.
25. **Pat Martinez and the PD's office** will work with the PI's to determine ETS electrofishing units to be ordered and where they'll be deployed. *In progress.* **Pat** will capture the essence of his electrofishing powerpoint presentation with Larry's paper to document the rationale for our decision and share that with the San Juan Program (recognizing, of course, that only rafts, not aluminum boats, are used on the San Juan). *Pending.*
26. **Angela Kantola** will modify the work plan budget table to reflect the changes to UDWR's scopes of work (#128 and #138). *#138 done; awaiting PI's approval to replace #128 SOW.*
27. **Dave Speas** will ask **Peter McKinnon** to estimate the cost for a PIT tag system with two antennae and satellite uplink and multiplexer (prior to the meeting Tom Chart and Tom Pitts have with the Ditch owners). Patty Gelatt has suggested that the Service would like to see two years of data, with the hope that different hydrologic conditions might be observed. **Tom Chart** will check on this with **Patty Gelatt** and also will ask her about using two antennae versus one. >**Dave** will ask **Peter** to make a presentation on his techniques at either DFC, the Researchers Meeting, or both.
28. The **Committee** will consider the proposal for fixed weirs at Ashley Creek and Stewart Lake drain a contingency at this time, get any comments on the scope of work to the PD's office, and have more discussion at/after the nonnative fish workshop.
29. **Patty Gelatt** will discuss the Soaring Eagle Co. plan for their gravel mining site downstream of Walter Walker with the Committee in September, as well as the proposal to remove sediment from Jarvis floodplain. **Tom Chart** will send out Patty's report on Jarvis. *Done.*
30. **Aaron Webber** will outline a set of options for management of Green River floodplain sites. **Melissa Trammell and Angela Kantola** will work on arrangements and logistics for the September 28-29 floodplain site tour/discussion and September 30 Biology Committee meeting.