

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY 1999 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT**

**PROJECT NUMBER: PIP-6**

**I. Project Title:** Ruedi Reservoir Releases Public Involvement Plan

**II. Principal Investigator:** Kara Lamb (970) 962-4326  
Public Involvement Specialiste-mail: [klamb@gp.usbr.gov](mailto:klamb@gp.usbr.gov)  
11056 W. County Rd. 18E  
Loveland, CO 80537

**III. Project Summary:** Local businesses and residents of Basalt, CO have expressed concern that Ruedi Reservoir releases to the Fryngpan River (for endangered fish in the Colorado) exceeding 250 cfs adversely impact their famous gold-medal fishery. Basalt economy is based on its fishing reputation and resulting tourism. However, in managing Ruedi to meet multi-purpose needs of the Fryngpan-Arkansas Project, Reclamation's Eastern Colorado Area Office (who owns and operates Ruedi) must periodically release flows greater than 250 cfs. Progress to the satisfaction of the local public is difficult to measure. To promote understanding of the Colorado River Recovery Program, the Fry-Ark Project, and to help address stakeholder concerns, the ECAO maintains an open and continuous dialogue with local businesses and residents.

**IV. Study Schedule:** 1995-present

**V. Relationship to RIPRAP:** Action Plan item 1.A.4c(1)(b)

**VI. Accomplishment of FY99 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:**

*Tasks:* The ECAO timely disseminated information on related activities through news releases, individual mailings, customer request responses, and notification of meetings. We provided the Ruedi Reservoir Annual Operations Plan to the public, upon request; and, held an annual public meeting in June to address releases and general Ruedi Reservoir operations.

*Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:* Our primary goal for FY99 for the PIP was to provide better communication of the Colorado River Recovery Program's value to the public. We believe part of the reason Ruedi Reservoir releases have met resistance from the fishing community in the past is because the role of Ruedi releases and the value of the Recovery Program had not been adequately explained to those affected. Our hope was that a new communication of the Project's value would build more public support.

To this end, we restructured our annual public meeting agenda. We opened the meeting with information on the Recovery Program, instead of a presentation of releases scheduling. Representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented the history, goals, importance and benefits of the FWS and the Recovery Program. Then, ECAO staff explained how and when Ruedi is involved in releases. This was followed by the annual operations review. We closed with the public forum.

in We believe this new approach has been more effective than anything else we have tried recent years. When the floor was opened to the public, attendees calmly asked questions relevant to the new information and gave us feedback on some of our other efforts. For instance, the faxing of press releases and notifications directly to places of business generated some satisfaction from the fishing community. It was perceived as a straightforward effort to keep all stakeholders "in the loop," and some outfitters expressed their appreciation.

The public meeting also provided the ECAO an opportunity to begin building a solid working relationship with the Roaring Fork Conservancy, an environmental agency dedicated to responsible river management. Together, we came to an informal agreement that their organization could serve as a kind of "middleman" for our public involvement work. As one of our shortcomings in the PIP for Ruedi is that our office is located in a completely different geographical region, a relationship with the Conservancy helps us fill a gap in our plan. They have become the "local face" of river management. They are trusted by the public. By keeping them constantly informed of our activities, they are able to have a more complete notification of the public and are able to answer the majority of the questions people ask. This is beneficial because sometimes the answers, although undesirable, sound much better coming from a local contact who lives nearby, than a remotely located government employee who visits once a year.

**VII. Recommendations:** The Conservancy occasionally presents opportunities for us to become more visibly involved with river management in the Basalt area by recommending we participate in or attend various forums, and by referring new concerns to us. We received other recommendations at our public meeting. Those included:

- 1) A year in review presentation: what happened at Ruedi last year compared to what is happening this year (for perspective).
- 2) Distribute evaluation forms post-meeting for comments from the public to "randomly selected" stakeholders for a more honest assessment of our performance.
- 3) Distribute an evaluation pre-meeting to "randomly selected" stakeholders at the end of the season (October) to assess "What Would You Like to see Covered at the Spring Meeting?"
- 4) An environmental specialist from Reclamation needs to attend the annual meeting to provide answers to the more environmentally based questions.
- 5) Invite the Division of Wildlife to answer questions Reclamation can't. DOW questions made up probably a quarter to a third of the questions answered at the public meeting.
- 6) Set-up a 1-800 number for Ruedi updates so information is more readily accessible. This would be more handy for the public than Internet updates as more people have phones than Internet access.
- 7) Hold the public meeting IN BASALT. Same time of day. Glenwood is a 45 minute drive stakeholders don't care to make.

Many of the above recommendations can be accommodated at the time of our annual public meeting which we will hold again in late spring, 2000.

**VIII. Project Status:** "On-going." Currently, however, we are "on-hold" to some degree. Because our budget was completely cut for FY2000, the expansive work that began in FY99 may need to be curtailed. We have been asked that Ruedi PIP work for FY99 be charged to our own reservoir operations account. Unfortunately, only those activities that directly apply to operations (like the public meeting and faxing of press releases and notifications) can be charged and will continue. Most of the public involvement work of a proactive nature is more specifically applied

to the Recovery Program than Operations (for example, suggestions 2, 3, and 6 above, as well as working directly with the Conservancy). Currently, we are exploring other charging possibilities for this work.

**IX. FY99 Budget Status:**

- A. Funds Provided: \$10,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$10,000
- C. Difference: \$0
- D. Percent of the FY99 work completed and projected costs to complete (continue):
  - FY99: 100%
  - Continuing: \$8000
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: 0

**X. Status of Data Submission:** n/a

**XI. Signed:**

Kara Lamb	12/8/99
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Kara Lamb	Date
Public Involvement Specialist	