

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY-2001 ANNUAL REPORT**

Project No.: PIP 12C (CAP 14)

I. Project Title: Ruedi Reservoir Releases Public Involvement Plan

II. Principal Investigator:

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III. Project Summary: Since 1989, Reclamation has released water from Ruedi Reservoir to benefit endangered fish species in the 15-Mile Reach of the Colorado River. Local businesses and residents of Basalt, Colorado, have expressed concern that when these releases to the local Fryingpan River (which feeds into the Colorado) exceed 250 cfs, the Fryingpan's gold-medal fishery is adversely impacted. Basalt's economy is based on the fishery reputation and resulting tourism. However, in managing Ruedi to meet multi-purpose needs of the Fryingpan-Arkansas project of which Ruedi is a part, Reclamation's Eastern Colorado Area Office (which owns and operates Ruedi) must periodically release flows greater than 250 cfs. 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 FY 2001 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Tasks: The ECAO timely disseminated information on related activities, including meetings, through news releases, frequent e-mail notifications, customer request responses, and public notifications. We held one public meeting in May to address releases under the Recovery program, progress on the Year 2012 Agreement, and general Ruedi Reservoir operations.

Our main goal in FY 2001 was to address concerns voiced by the public at last year's public meeting and in year-round correspondences. We did our best to respond to those concerns. In FY 2001 we:

- 1) Conducted a year-in-review presentation: what happened at Ruedi last year (FY00) compared to what is happening this (FY01) (for perspective).
- 2) Had a natural resource specialist from Reclamation attend the annual meeting to provide answers to the more environmentally based questions.
- 3) Held the public meetings as locally as possible (this year in Carbondale) instead of asking the public to drive 45 minutes to Glenwood Springs. Once again, we had a very large crowd for this meeting (about 40).

Our second goal for this year was to continue our public involvement on the Year 2012 Agreement to provide 10,825 acre-feet a year of water to benefit the endangered fish. The Agreement is an action in the RIP and the PBO. We have continued our work with various groups to review hydrologic modeling and public involvement.

Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

This year we again combined the annual Coordinated Reservoirs Operations meeting and the annual Ruedi Reservoir Operations meeting. Hosting one meeting rather than two has generated a very positive response from the public and our partners. This way, all questions are answered at the same meeting.

Some of the requests made at past year's public meetings were not implemented in 2001. We have not:

- 1) Distributed an evaluation at the end of the season (October) to "randomly selected" stakeholders to assess "What Would You Like to see Covered at the Spring Meeting?"
- 2) Distributed evaluation forms post-meeting for comments from "randomly selected" stakeholders for a more thorough assessment of our performance.
- 3) Completely worked around conflicting schedules for meeting times and locations.
- 4) Set-up a 1-800 number for Ruedi updates so information is more readily accessible. This could be handier for the public than e-mail updates. It depends on how many more people have phones than email.

Of these, items #1, #2, and #3 are definite possibilities for 2002. Item #4 may no longer be necessary due to the frequency and wide circulation of e-mail notifications and our continued work with the Roaring Fork Conservancy—Basalt non-profit agency dedicated to local environmental issues.

VII. Recommendations:

We did not receive any written suggestions from the public this year. However, based on our experiences and the success of our e-mail notification system, we intend to focus on lessons learned in 2001 and apply them to the following year: maintain communications not only with local businesses, but with their support industries; and keep the public up-to-date as often as possible on the progress of the Year 2012 Agreement. We will continue to work on implementing items #1-3 for public meetings. Lastly, we will also strive to improve our public notification and celebration of achievements in the Program.

Many of the above recommendations can be accommodated by the time of our annual public meeting, which will be held in late spring, 2002.

VIII. Project Status: Ongoing.

IX. FY01 Budget Status:

A. Funds Provided: \$0

B. Funds expended: n/a

C. Difference: n/a

D. Percent of the FY01 work completed and projects costs to complete

FY01: n/a

Continuing: n/a

E. Recovery program funds spent for publication charges: n/a

X. Status of Data Submission: n/a

XI. Signed:

1/04/02

Kara Lamb

Date

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