

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

II. **Principal Investigator(s):**

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III. **Project Summary:** Since 1990, 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, CO, have expressed concern that when these releases to the local Fryingpan River 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 (who 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:**

Colorado River Action Plan

1.A.5.a. Pursuant to Ruedi Biological Opinion, deliver 5,000 af annually and an additional 5,000 af, 4 out of 5 years (ongoing and protect by short-term agreement)

1.A.5.b.(1) Provide water annually pursuant to long-term lease.

VI. **Accomplishment of FY 2004 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 our annual public meeting in May to explain Ruedi operations, including releases under the Recovery Program. We also began discussions with the Colorado River Water Conservation District for developing a water basin education-outreach program and/or forum for the region. In FY 2004 we:

1) Conducted our annual year-in-review presentation at the public meeting: what happened at Ruedi last year (2003) compared to what is happening this year (2004). This was particularly important this year because of the continuing drought conditions and the

attention those conditions have drawn to our operations.

2) Continued e-mail notifications to better communicate frequent operational changes due to drought. Continued to expand the e-mail notification list.

3) Once again, had staff representatives present at public meetings for all applicable areas of public concern including fish biology, operations planning and contracting.

4) Once again held the public meetings as locally as possible (this year in Carbondale). We had approximately 30 people attend this year.

5) Included a public outreach and education program on regular maintenance work at Ruedi Reservoir and Dam. We included a maintenance update in the annual operations meeting and received fair coverage in the local press.

Tours of the top of Ruedi Dam for 4th and 5th graders through the Roaring Fork Conservancy were postponed from this fall to the spring of 2005. We continue to work with the Conservancy as a cooperating partner in the areas of public outreach, education, and natural resource studies based on the concerns of Basalt and surrounding areas.

VII. Recommendations: Because of the drought, the turn toward positive media coverage of Ruedi and the Recovery Program has changed. Drought is driving a new “headline” agenda with the local media. In response, we are stepping up our cooperative public communication efforts with the Roaring Fork Conservancy, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the River District in order to keep positive stories of water management in the local news.

VIII. Project Status: On track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2004 Budget Status

A. Funds Provided: 0

B. Funds Expended: n/a

C. Difference: n/a

D. Percent of the FY 2004 work completed, and projected costs to complete: n/a

E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: 0

X. Status of Data Submission (Where applicable): n/a

XI. Signed:

Kara Lamb

11/09/04

Kara Lamb
Public Involvement Specialist

Date