

I. Project Title: **Retrieval of native fish from GVIC and GVP canals**

II. Principal Investigator(s):

Charles W. McAda, Project Leader
764 Horizon Drive, Building B
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506
(970) 245-9319; FAX 245-6933
chuck_mcada@fws.gov

III. Project Summary:

A fish screen was constructed on the Grand Valley Irrigation Company (GVIC) irrigation canal in winter 2001 – 2002. However, the fish screen has not been operated for a full field season since its installation. Operational problems or lack of ‘fish water’ has meant that it has been pulled for at least part of the irrigation season every year since its installation. This program was originally intended as a monitoring program to compare numbers of fish collected from the canals pre and post implementation of the screen. However, since the screen has never been fully operational, it is primarily a fish salvage operation. Fish salvage is also done on the Government Highline canal which does not yet have an operational fish screen on it. The screen was completed in summer 2005, but is not yet operational.

Fish salvage is conducted by driving major portions of the canals looking for pools of water that contain fish after the irrigation water is turned off for the year. The irrigation diversions are halted in early November. The pools are sampled with electrofishing or seines. All native fish collected are identified and loaded into a hatchery truck for release in the Colorado River. Total numbers of fish collected and transported are recorded.

IV. Study Schedule: 2007 - 2008

V. Relationship to RIPRAP: Colorado River Action Plan: Mainstem

II.B.1.b. Screen GVIC diversion canal to prevent endangered fish entrainment.

II.B.3.b. Screen Government Highline diversion canal to prevent endangered fish entrainment.

VI. Accomplishment of FY 07 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

The work reported here was done in November 2006, shortly after the beginning of the FY 07 fiscal year. Work is currently being conducted in November, 2007 (FY 08) and will be reported in next year's annual report.

Grand Valley Irrigation Company. Parts of the canal were sampled from the diversion dam in the Colorado River to just west of 16 Road. Sampling was limited to areas where the roads were dry enough to travel with our heavy vehicles without doing damage to the surface. Crews traveled the canal road and sampled every pool encountered that could hold fish. A total of 2,252 flannelmouth suckers, 1,322 roundtail chubs, 123 bluehead suckers, and 1 razorback sucker were collected from the canal and stocked into the Colorado River. As in previous years, most of the fish were collected in the upper portion of the canal. The single razorback sucker collected had been stocked into the Colorado River downstream from the diversion dam in September of 2006. It moved upstream over the dam and into the canal during the intervening period.

Grand Valley Water Users Association. The Highline Canal was sampled from just downstream of the diversion dam to about 18 Road when the roads were dry enough to travel. As with the GVIC canal, sampling crews traveled the canal roads searching for pools of water that might hold fish. Pools were sampled using either electrofishing or seines. A total of 2,163 flannelmouth sucker, 15,108 roundtail chub, and 131 bluehead sucker were collected from the canal. No endangered fish were collected from the Highline Canal in 2006.

VII. Recommendations: Operate the fish screens as soon as possible.

VIII. Project Status: Project is on track.

IX. FY 07 Budget

A. Funds Provided:	25,343
B. Funds Expended:	25,343
C. Difference:	0
D. Publication Charges:	0

X. Status of Data Submission: Tagging data from 2006 has been added to the upper basin database.

XI. Signed: C.W. McAda, November 19, 2007

Literature Cited

Burdick, B.D. 2003. Evaluation of stocking sub-adult Colorado pikeminnow via translocation in the upper Colorado River between Palisade and Rifle, Colorado. Final Report to the Recovery Program for the Endangered Fishes of the Upper Colorado River, Project Number 105. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Grand Junction, Colorado.