

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT**

Project No.: PIP 12I

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. In the past, local businesses and residents of Basalt, Colorado, have expressed concern that when releases to the local Fryingpan River exceed 250 cfs, the Fryingpan's gold-medal fishery is adversely impacted. Basalt's economy is heavily 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 must periodically release flows greater than 250 cfs. The ECAO maintains an open and continuous dialogue with local businesses and residents on these issues.

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

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

VI. **Accomplishment of FY 2007 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:**

Tasks: In FY 2007 we:

1) Conducted our annual water year-in-review presentation at our annual public meeting in May: what happened at Ruedi last year (2006) compared to what was anticipated for this year (2007). Because we did not run Coordinated Reservoir Operations this year, but had run it briefly in 2006, there were numerous questions about possible high releases and a long discussion on reservoir fill dates and philosophy. We also once again staffed our meeting with representatives from operations, the Recovery Program, natural resources, and etc., so that we had someone knowledgeable to address specific subject

questions. The meeting was also held locally, in Basalt. Approximately 20 people attended.

2) Continued e-mail notifications to better communicate frequent operational changes and continued to expand e-mail notification list.

3) Stepped up internet notifications on Ruedi Reservoir operations by joining two message boards interested in Ruedi and also by joining the Eagle County Internet Alert System, message board, and e-mail notification program.

We continue to work with the Roaring Fork 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. This year, a tour of Ruedi Dam and the power plant was conducted in October. We attended and presented the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project and Ruedi operations, in brief.

Also, Reclamation once again participated in the Colorado River Water Conservation District's "State of the River" meetings on both the Colorado and the Roaring Fork Rivers.

This year, the mudslide on the Fryingpan by the Castles provided yet another opportunity to come together as a river community and arrive at the best solutions for running the Fryingpan River and removing the debris. For a brief period of time we, together with the Recovery Program and the River District, enabled a higher release to help flush some of the mud on downstream while at the same time providing deliveries for endangered fish. Larger releases to flush debris were discussed with the same entities, emergency management, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife at length, but have been put on hold for re-evaluation in the spring. Meanwhile, the Conservancy is putting together a riparian and economic study to help assess the best approach for debris management. Reclamation is helping fund that study and will provide any needed information. Our office, in particular, worked closely with local print media to help accurately convey information regarding Ruedi operations as they pertained to the mudslide.

VII. Recommendations: To continue building outreach and public communications programs in support of our operations and the Recovery Program.

VIII. Project Status: On track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2007 Budget Status: The Ruedi Public Involvement Plan does not receive Recovery Program funds. It is supported through operations of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project under the Eastern Colorado Area Office of the Great Plains Region of Reclamation.

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

XI. Signed: Kara Lamb 11/15/07
Public Involvement Specialist Date