

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

REMOVAL AND CONTROL OF NON-NATIVE CARP

IN UTAH LAKE

TO SUPPORT JUNE SUCKER RECOVERY

State Wildlife Grant Project U2-1-D

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared this document in accordance with the procedures for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act as it applies to the Federal Aid in Fish and Wildlife Restoration Acts (64 Stat. 430; 16 U.S.C. Sec. 777 et. seq. and 50 State 916; 16 U.S.C. Sec. 669 et. seq.).

The Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) proposes to enhance environmental conditions in Utah Lake, Utah, to improve the recovery potential for June sucker (*Chasmistes liorus*), a species Federally-listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, by reducing the population of common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) by mechanical means.

The need for the proposed action is that current environmental conditions, including: 1) a lack of habitat complexity in the form of rooted aquatic plants; 2) degraded water quality; and 3) low bio-diversity, limit recovery potential. The goal of the proposed action is to reduce the current population of common carp in Utah Lake by a minimum of 75 percent; maintain the population at or below this reduced level; and, to monitor and evaluate the ecological response of the Utah Lake system. Progress towards recovery of the endangered June sucker has been positive over the past decade in areas such as water management, habitat enhancement, and augmentation. Ultimately, however, ecosystem, community, and species-specific impacts associated with the non-native common carp population limit the recovery potential for the species.

This action would be undertaken cooperatively by the Utah Ecological Services Office of the Service, the Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR), UDWR, and in coordination with partners to the June Sucker Recovery Implementation Program (JSRIP).

The No Action and Preferred Alternative were considered. Each alternative considered is summarized in Chapter 2 of the Environmental Assessment (EA). The following is a list of alternatives considered:

No Action Alternative: A carp removal program would not be implemented on Utah Lake by the JSRIP. This alternative would result in greatly diminished recovery potential for June sucker.

Alternative A (Preferred Alternative): Mechanical Removal of Common Carp: Commercial fishing operations would use boats, large nets (primarily seines), and hand labor to capture and remove about five million pounds of common carp annually from Utah Lake over a six year period. The use of trapping, electricity, trawling, or baiting may also be used in specific, localized situations such as tributaries, canals, near shore areas or other areas

where larger seines cannot be effectively deployed. Carp would be transported to various existing access locations around the lake for offloading and disposal outside of the lake environment. Carp would not be disposed on the shores of Utah Lake. Environmentally compatible disposal options are discussed in Chapter 2 of the EA.

Additional alternatives considered but not analyzed (The alternatives and the justification for non-selection are described in Chapter 2 of the EA.)

- Improve Water Management
- Temporary Drawdown
- Improve Water Quality
- Use of Piscicides
- Use of Biological Control
- Implement Carp Bounties

In preparing this EA, the Service and the JSRIP consulted with the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior, DNR, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Central Utah Water Conservancy District Provo River Water Users Association, Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, Utah Lake Commission, and UDWR.

The Draft EA was made available to the public on November 18, 2009. A public comment period extended from the release date until December 17, 2009. A summary of public comments on the Draft EA and agency responses can found in Appendix A of the EA. Where appropriate, the EA was revised to include information provided in the comments.

Based on review of the final EA and evaluation of the effects of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. I also find that all reasonable alternatives were considered in the evaluation of this project and that this project complies with the intent of Executive Order 11988, "Floodplain Management," and Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands." Consequently, I have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The EA is on file in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration, 134 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, Colorado 80228, and is available for public review upon request, or available online at:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/federalassistance/nepa/index.html>

APPROVAL:

Mike Stempel

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6

1/28/2010

Date

Acting

References:

Draft Environmental Assessment For Removal And Control Of Non-native Carp In Utah Lake To Support June Sucker Recovery, Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, January 2010

Application for Federal Assistance, Utah U2-1-D-1, Narrative Statement