

Grand Junction *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office*

Interior Region 7



Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office crew sampling at a known spawning bar for endangered Razorback Sucker on the Colorado arm of Lake Powell, Utah, near Trachyte canyon- Photo by USFWS staff

Highlights - March, 2020

- Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Grand Valley Unit (Ouray NFH-GVU) educational outreach totals
- Ouray NFH-GVU March activities: water line repair, Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) system repair
- Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) March activities: Lake Powell Submersible Ultrasonic Receiver (SUR) retrieval trip
- 2020 San Juan River survey for age-1 Razorback Sucker postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19
- Grand Junction FWCO March draft reports completed
- Grand Junction FWCO coordination with partners update

March, 2020

Ouray NFH, Grand Valley Educational Outreach

Total Participants Feb 2019 - Feb 2020



Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Grand Valley Unit (Ouray NFH-GVU) takes great pride in educating the public about issues surrounding endangered fish of the Upper Colorado river. Between February 2019 through February 2020, Ouray NFH-GVU provided 39 tours and/or presentations about endangered fish at the 24 Rd. Hatchery facility which included roughly 3532 people. Of these 39 tours and presentations given, they included 33 school groups and 6 professional or community groups. Aside from the hatchery tours and endangered fish presentations, Ouray NFH-GVU also provided live endangered



Photo by School District 51

Shelley Elementary teacher Sabrina Francis puckers up to kiss the large Razorback Sucker while touring 24 Rd. Hatchery in Grand Junction, Colorado

fish for 4 community events and festivals reaching roughly 18,050 visitors, as well as providing live endangered fish for 2 permanent fish tank exhibits which were seen by an estimated 20,050 visitors. Finally, Ouray NFH-GVU participated in 2 parades passing out I & E information to over 950 children and young adults reaching an estimated 7,000 parade goers. The total estimated participants reached from our outreach efforts from Feb 1, 2019 - Feb 28, 2019 (13 months) was roughly 49,207 people.

Ouray NFH, Grand Valley Educational Outreach Totals Feb 2019 - Feb 2020		
Tours	<i>Professional or Community Group, Tour or Presentation</i>	111
	<i>School, Tour or Presentation</i>	3421
	<i>Community Events/Festivals, Information and Education Booth</i>	18050
	<i>Permanent Endangered Fish Exhibit</i>	20500
	<i>Parades</i>	7000
	<i>Ceremony, News Events</i>	125
	Total Participants Reached	49207

March, 2020

Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Grand Valley Unit

March Activities: Water Line Repair



Ouray NFH-GVU staff dug up and repaired a broken water control valve between two rows of grow-out ponds during March 2020.

The new control valve, now in place. Let the back-filling begin. This repair allowed us to fill ponds, so we could transfer endangered fish from our hatchery building to the grow-out ponds for the upcoming grow-out season.



March, 2020

Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Grand Valley Unit

March Activities: SCADA System Repairs



In March 2020, Ouray NFH-GVU staff worked with DMC, Inc. (a digital engineering firm) out of Denver to debug and repair the Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that electronically controls the flow of water from the infiltration gallery pumps, located along banks of the Colorado River, to the grow-out ponds.



The SCADA system (partly located in the metal box on top of the concrete cylinder shown on left) controls water flows from the underground infiltration gallery (along the banks of the Colorado River, seen in the background on left) to the adjacent grow-out ponds (see below).



March, 2020

Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Grand Valley Unit

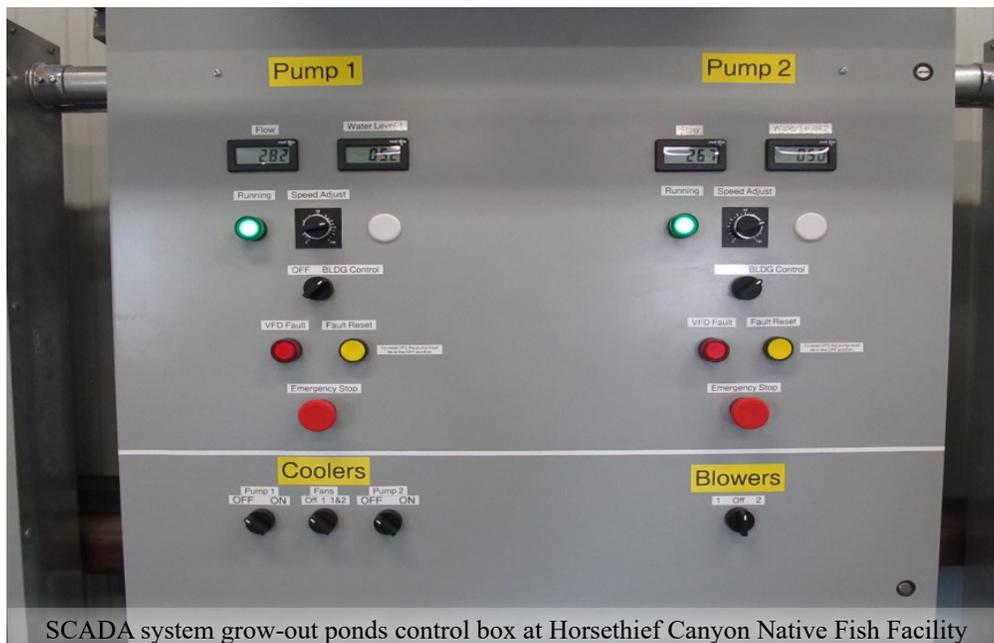
March Activities: SCADA System Repairs



SCADA control system on bank of Colorado River near Horsethief Canyon Native Fish Facility



The two halves of the SCADA system allow the pumps and control system located along the banks of the Colorado River (above) to communicate with the control box near the grow-out ponds (see picture below). Photos by Brian Scheer USFWS



SCADA system grow-out ponds control box at Horsethief Canyon Native Fish Facility

March, 2020

*Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office:
March Activities: Lake Powell SUR retrieval trip*



From 9-12 March 2020 Grand Junction FWCO staff retrieved and downloaded numerous Sonotronics brand Submersible Ultrasonic Receiver (SUR) units that have been deployed throughout Lake Powell, in Utah (see newsletter cover photo). These SUR units passively monitor movements of Razorback Sucker using acoustic tags that have been surgically-implanted into endangered Razorback Sucker. The Grand Junction FWCO has been doing research on this population of Razorback Sucker in Lake Powell since 2011. This population of Razorback Sucker bridges the gap between the Razorback Sucker populations currently being managed by the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program.

Photo by Sonotronics Inc.



A clean SUR, before being deployed into mussel-infested waters at Lake Powell, Utah

Photo by Travis Francis USFWS



A not-so-clean SUR, after being deployed into mussel-infested waters at Lake Powell, Utah



SUR's are anchored securely along the lakes edge

Photo by Travis Francis USFWS

March, 2020

*Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office:
2020 San Juan River survey for age-1 Razorback Sucker
postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19*



B iologists from Grand Junction FWCO were forced to postpone indefinitely the planned 2020 San Juan River sampling trip for age-1 Razorback Sucker due to the COVID-19 situation. They were set to kick off the 2020 field season March 26 with an electrofishing and seining crew being deployed on the San Juan River to conduct a survey of age-1 Razorback Sucker between Shiprock, New Mexico and Clay Hills, Utah. The goal of the survey was to compare recruitment of young-of-year (YOY) Razorback Sucker, up to age-1, between high and low flow years. Low flows in 2018 resulted in the largest number of wild age-1 Razorback Sucker ever documented on the San Juan River. With last year's flows being one of the largest in recent history, this 2020 sampling trip was set to inform biologists of what a high flow year will do for recruitment of YOY Razorback Sucker up to age-1. We'll have to wait until next year.....Knock on wood.



Untagged Razorback Sucker captured in the San Juan river during a research sampling trip targeting age-1 Razorback Sucker, March 2019 at river mile 119 near 4 corners bridge. Photos by Tyler Walton USFWS

March, 2020

Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office:
Draft reports completed



**Population Structure, Abundance and Recruitment of
Colorado Pikeminnow of the Upper
Colorado River, 1991–2015**

Draft Report

March 25, 2020

Prepared by

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Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program
Project No. 127



**San Juan River Demographic Monitoring
2019**

Draft Report

March 30, 2020

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San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program
Project No. 19a

March, 2020

*Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office:
Coordination activities with partners*



3/10/2020:

Coordination meeting with Middle Colorado Watershed Council to identify priority projects to benefit endangered fish species in the Colorado River between Glenwood Springs and DeBeque, CO

3/20/2020:

Biology Committee meeting of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (includes 13 state, federal, water user and environmental partner agencies/entities)

3/25/2020:

Conference call with the Historic Users Pool (HUP) group to coordinate spring river flows in the 15 Mile Reach of the Colorado River to avoid an “April Hole,” a condition caused by local irrigation canals filling prior to snow-melt runoff commencing, thus causing river flows to dip below the recommended 810 CFS needed in the “15 Mile Reach” for Colorado River endangered fish species. The 15 Mile Reach of the Colorado River is located between Palisade, CO and the confluence of the Gunnison River (15 miles downstream), which is a critical section of the Colorado River for adult endangered fish. These coordination calls include representatives with an interest in water delivery from the Colorado River to both Colorado’s front-range and the western slope. This includes reservoir operators, the HUP irrigators (among the oldest water rights holders on the Colorado River) and federal and state government agencies, and are held weekly throughout the irrigation season (March through November).



Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Staff

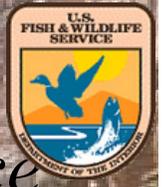
Project Leader - Dale Ryden
Administrative Officer - Vacant 35 months

Grand Junction FWCO Staff:

Fish Biologist - Darek Elverud
Fish Biologist - Travis Francis
Fish Biologist - Ben Schleicher
Biological Science Technician - Andrew Disch
Biological Science Technician - Nathan Vargas
Biological Science Technician - Vacant 10 months

Ouray National Fish Hatchery - Grand Valley Unit Staff:

Fish Biologist - Brian Scheer
Fish Biologist - Vacant 7 months
Biological Science Technician & Educational Outreach - Mike Gross
Biological Science Technician - Haden VanWinkle



Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office About Us

The Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Grand Junction, Colorado (Formerly known as Colorado River Fishery Project, aka CRFP) consists of both a field office (FWCO) and an endangered fish hatchery, known as the Ouray National Fish Hatchery-Grand Valley Unit.

The CRFP field office was established in 1979 to perform research and management actions aimed at helping recover four endangered fish species of the upper Colorado River basin: Razorback Sucker, Colorado Pikeminnow, Humpback Chub, and Bonytail.

Ouray NFH-GVU was established in 1992 as CRFP's endangered fish propagation center and currently produces over 20,000 endangered Bonytail and Razorback Sucker annually.

The Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office works in the Colorado, Gunnison, San Juan and Yampa rivers in Colorado, Utah and New Mexico, as well as in Lake Powell in Utah.

*Ouray National Fish Hatchery
Grand Valley Unit*

Current fish on station:

Razorback Sucker 11,800 (150mm-250mm)

Bonytail 10,300 (100mm-200mm)