

Grand Junction
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Interior Region 7



Highlights - February, 2020

- * 2020 Bonytail and Razorback Sucker Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tagging concluded
- * Hatchery Bonytail feed study concluded
- * Partnerships and Educational Outreach- Lions Club Parade float



February, 2020

Yearly PIT tagging of Bonytail and Razorback Sucker concluded



Crews at Ouray National Fish Hatchery-Grand Valley Unit (Ouray NFH-GVU) concluded their yearly Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tagging of 2019 year class endangered Razorback Sucker and Bonytail. These PIT tags are permanent internal markers that will stay inside the fish throughout its whole life, which may be 40 years or longer.



Grand Junction FWCO biologists hope to re-encounter these endangered animals in upcoming years via submersible PIT tag antennas which are deployed in various reaches of the Colorado, Green and San Juan rivers, or by other active sampling means such as electrofishing, trammel nets, hoop nets, etc.

Every February, Ouray NFH-GVU inserts PIT tags in over 10,000 age-1 Razorback Sucker and over 10,000 age-1 Bonytail as part of its yearly production goals. After being tagged, these fish are held at the Ouray NFH-GVU's 24 Road indoor facility for about 2 months in order to document tag retention rates as well as any delayed mortality due to tagging. The fish will then be transported to Horsethief Canyon Native Fish Facility (an outdoor grow-out pond facility) in late March where the fish will acclimate to living in an outdoor environment and be exposed to more natural conditions before being released into the Colorado, Gunnison and San Juan rivers from June through October.

February, 2020

Hatchery Bonytail feed study concluded



Ouray NFH-GVU completed a dietary feed study in conjunction with three other state and federal hatcheries. The genesis of this study was the observation of abnormal amounts of fat in Bonytail livers (after being fed a diet originally developed for Razorback Sucker) which correlated with decreased survival once Bonytail were released into the wild. The study was aimed at identifying more appropriate dietary lipid and protein levels in feed being given to Bonytail, in order to help maximize post-stocking survival.



February, 2020

Partnerships and Educational Outreach



February 15: Ouray NFH-GVU was proud to participate in the 91st annual Lion's Club Carnival Parade in Grand Junction, Colorado. Mike Gross drove the fish transport truck alongside students involved in the Palisade High School Fish Hatchery Student Leadership Council. Students had fish hatchery nets full of trading cards and temporary tatoos depicting endangered fish of the upper Colorado River, passing out nearly 500 packs to children and young adult parade-goers. The event raised \$118,000 for the Lions Club that will go back to 15 organizations in the Grand Valley community. After this year's efforts, the Lions Club will have raised over \$8 million in total for organizations within Mesa County, Colorado. The Grand Junction FWCO is proud to partner with the Grand Junction Lion's Club, School District 51 and the Palisade High School Fish Hatchery.



Palisade H.S. students left to right: Kaitlyn Erwin, Eliza Smith, Jack Perrin, Nate Walker (teacher) and Kyle Roten prepare to pass out endangered fish trading cards and temporary tattoos to parade-goers.



Grand Junction

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Project Leader - Dale Ryden

Administrative Officer - Vacant 34 months

Grand Junction FWCO Staff:

Fish Biologist - Darek Elverud

Fish Biologist - Travis Francis

Fish Biologist - Ben Schleicher

Biological Science Technician - Vacant 9 months

Ouray National Fish Hatchery - Grand Valley Unit Staff:

Fish Biologist - Brian Scheer

Fish Biologist - Vacant 6 months

Biological Science Technician & Educational Outreach - Mike Gross

Biological Science Technician - Haden VanWinkle



Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

About Us

The Grand Junction Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Grand Junction, Colorado (formerly known as the 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.