

**1996 WASHINGTON, D.C., BRIEFING**

**RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM  
FOR ENDANGERED FISH SPECIES  
IN THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN**

# Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin

March 18 - March 22, 1996

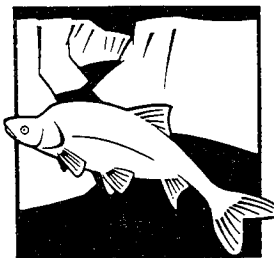
1996 Washington, D.C., briefing packet

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RECOVERY PROGRAM FOR  
THE ENDANGERED FISHES  
OF THE UPPER COLORADO

## Requested FY 1997 Congressional action items

### (Summarized version)

Recovery Program participants would like to make the following requests from Congress (details on each item are provided on following pages):

#### **Fish and Wildlife Service budget**

1. Support Fish and Wildlife Service funding for the Recovery Program.  
(\$624,000 requested in "Recovery" funds)
2. Earmark Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 funds.  
(\$200,000 requested for "Grants to States")
3. Support Fish and Wildlife Service funds for operation and maintenance of the Ouray Endangered Fish Facility.  
(\$250,000 requested in "Fish Hatchery Operation and Maintenance.")

#### **Bureau of Reclamation budget**

4. Support Bureau of Reclamation funds for the Recovery Program.  
(\$7.468 million requested in "Construction Program" funds)



Now endangered, Colorado squawfish once were a prized sport-fish and commonly were used as food, especially during the Depression. Here, Billie Ruple Wintermann shows a Colorado squawfish she caught in Island Park around 1930.

## Requested FY 1997 Congressional action items

### (Detailed version)

#### Fish and Wildlife Service budget

1. **Support Fish and Wildlife Service funding for the Recovery Program.**  
(**\$624,000 requested in "Recovery" funds**)

Recovery Program participants request Congressional support for \$624,000 of Endangered Species Recovery funds for the Service to participate in the Recovery Program in FY 1997.

Projects to be funded are:

- **Fish and Wildlife Service program management:** Funding covers Program Director's office staff salaries and expenses.
- **Interagency standardized monitoring program:** This supports Service participation in monitoring fish populations, a crucial element of the Recovery Program.
- **Yampa River in-stream flow studies:** This would provide funding for a long-term monitoring program to evaluate changes in Yampa River endangered fish populations according to changing hydrology and non-native fish abundance and composition. The program will yield integrated data on river flows, habitat and fish populations, which also can be used to evaluate effects of future water development.
- **Aspinall Unit (Blue Mesa Dam) in-stream flow studies:** An analysis of the effects of flows on endangered fish habitat and food availability will be completed with these funds.

2. **Earmark Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 funds.**  
(**\$200,000 requested for "Grants to States"**)

Recovery Program participants request that \$200,000 of Endangered Species Act Section 6 funds be earmarked for the Recovery Program *before* the Fish and Wildlife Service's allocation formula is applied to the Section 6 funds nationwide. (Congress earmarked these funds for the Recovery Program in FY 1992 through 1995.) Language would need to be included in the Interior appropriations bill specifying the requested earmark.

The allocation formula determines the amount of Section 6 funding to be given for the eight states in Region 6, based in Denver. In FY 1996, the region-wide Section 6 funding total was expected to be reduced to \$583,000; the actual amount to be received is

about \$503,000. In FY 1997, this amount is expected to be reduced even further. Unless the \$200,000 is dedicated before the allocation formula is applied, the Service's ability to fund other high priority recovery efforts for the Region's 73 other endangered species will suffer greatly.

Projects to be funded with the \$200,000 in Grants to States are:

- **Interagency standardized monitoring program:** Funding will cover participation in this effort by the States of Colorado and Utah.
- **Upper Colorado River in-stream flow recommendations:** This provides funding for Colorado to complete interim flow recommendations for the Colorado River between Rifle and the 15-mile reach. The Recovery Program plans to repopulate this 50-mile reach of historic Colorado squawfish and razorback sucker habitat by constructing fish-passage facilities and potentially stocking one or both species.
- **Aspinall Unit (Blue Mesa Reservoir) in-stream flow studies:** This provides funding for the States of Utah and Colorado to analyze flow effects on larval endangered fish in the Gunnison and Colorado rivers.

3. **Support Fish and Wildlife Service funds for operation and maintenance of the Ouray Endangered Fish Facility.**  
(**\$250,000 requested in "Fish Hatchery Operation and Maintenance."**)

Recovery Program participants request Congressional support for \$250,000 for operating Service endangered fish hatchery facilities. This funding is needed to maintain hatchery facilities holding captive endangered Colorado River fish for stocking, research, public education and "refuge" purposes.

### **Bureau of Reclamation budget**

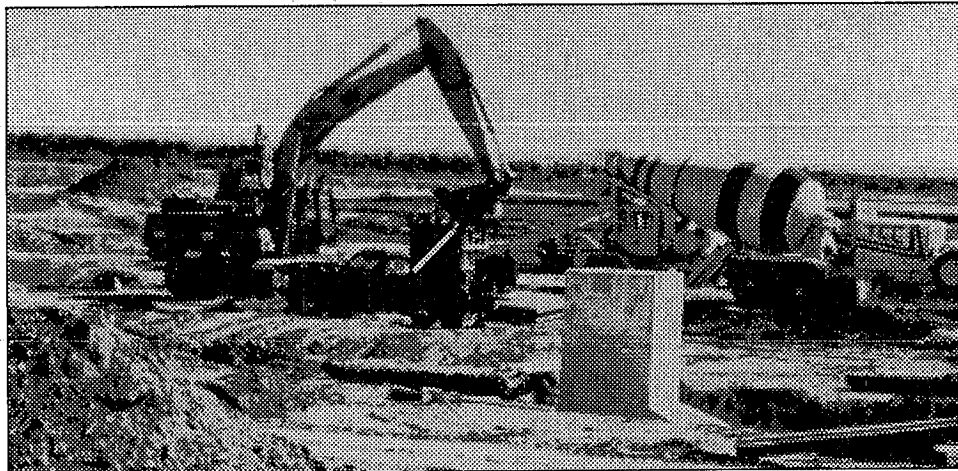
4. **Support Bureau of Reclamation funds for the Recovery Program.**  
(**\$7.468 million requested in "Construction Program" funds**)

Recovery Program participants request Congressional support for the \$7.468 million in Bureau of Reclamation Construction Program funds for the Recovery Program in FY 1997. The funds would pay for water acquisition and capital construction projects to help recover endangered fish, including:

- **Fish passage:** Reclamation funds will go toward rehabilitating water diversion structures and building fish ladders at several locations on the Gunnison and Colorado rivers. These activities will benefit the migratory Colorado squawfish and razorback sucker by giving the fish access to more than 100 miles of historic habi-

tat and by allowing unrestricted movement within their current range.

- **Water acquisition:** Reclamation will take the lead in acquiring water from existing Federal and private water projects to enhance habitat conditions for endangered fish. Water acquisition initiatives include:
  - Evaluating the feasibility of more efficiently operating irrigation projects near Grand Junction, Colo., and dedicating the “saved” water to endangered fish.
  - Using water stored in several smaller Reclamation reservoirs to enhance late summer flows in the Colorado River.
  - Evaluating possibilities for coordinating Federal and private reservoir operations in the Colorado River headwaters to enhance spring peak flows in the Colorado.
  - Reviewing alternatives for protecting flows for endangered fish *and* meeting human needs for water in the Yampa River Basin.
- **Flood plain restoration:** Historically, flood plains throughout the upper Colorado River Basin were inundated annually by spring runoff. But today much of the river is channelized by levees, dikes, rip-rap and the invasion of the exotic plant, tamarisk, or salt cedar. Restoring these flood plains is thought to be especially important for endangered razorback suckers and will benefit a variety of wetland-dependent wildlife. Artificial levees are being removed from several sites in Utah and Colorado. These sites are being evaluated for potential acquisition, restoration and/or management. Funding is needed in FY 1997 to continue land acquisition, levee removal and other flood plain restoration activities at high priority sites.



Construction crews began excavating fish ponds in 1993 at the Ouray Endangered Fish Hatchery near Vernal, Utah. A total of 36 ponds are to be completed by 1997. Young endangered fish spawned from wild adults can be raised in the ponds, away from predator fish in the wild. When large enough, they can be released back into the river.

- **Endangered fish hatchery construction:** Current facilities are inadequate to meet anticipated needs. Additional hatchery and research facilities are required to prevent endangered fish from becoming extinct, maintain unique genetic resources and produce fish for appropriate stocking, reintroduction efforts and research.

Ponds have been excavated in Big Water and Ouray, Utah. At the Big Water, Utah, site, \$600,000 was approved for excavating 10 ponds. Called the Wahweap State Fish Hatchery, this facility will be used to raise upper Colorado River razorbacks and Lake Mohave bonytail. In Ouray, \$450,000 was used to improve the water supply and build four more ponds.

In Craig, Colo., four one-acre ponds will be constructed this summer to hold razorback suckers from the Green River.

A Bureau of Reclamation building near Grand Junction is being converted into a hatchery building to produce razorback suckers from the upper Colorado River. These fish will be used for stocking into the Gunnison River.

FY 1997 funding is needed to continue construction at Ouray, Wahweap, Craig and Grand Junction.

**Long-term funding legislation**  
**For the upper Colorado River and San Juan River**  
**Recovery Programs**

The success of the Recovery Program will depend to a large extent on obtaining sufficient funds to implement recovery activities identified in the Recovery Action Plan. The cost for implementing the Recovery Program is estimated at \$60 to \$112 million through the year 2003. About two-thirds of the funding will be needed to implement a variety of capital projects such as building fish ladders, acquiring water and water rights, acquiring and restoring flood plain habitats used by endangered fish, and constructing additional hatchery facilities.

In October 1994, the Recovery Program's Implementation Committee formed an ad hoc committee to develop a long-term funding strategy for the Recovery Program. The San Juan River Recovery Program was also invited to participate in the discussions because of its critical linkage to the Colorado River Storage Projects. Participants in the discussions have included the States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming; water, power and environmental groups; several Indian tribes; and the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Western Area Power Administration, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. In addition, staff from the House Resources Committee and the Utah and Colorado Congressional delegations have been involved in several of the committee's meetings.

A Bill has been drafted that is currently being reviewed by stakeholders in the Upper Basin. The Bill will provide specific authorization for the Upper Basin and San Juan River recovery programs and provide for a mechanism to fund the programs through the year 2003 and 2007, respectively. Major issues being addressed include potential funding sources and funding mechanisms and cost-sharing by program participants, including Federal and State agencies, power users and water users. It is anticipated that the Bill will be presented to Congress in June 1996.



## Recovery Program overview

The Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin is a 15-year, interagency partnership aimed at recovering endangered Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail and razorback sucker while providing for future water development. The program was launched in 1988, when the Governors of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming; the Secretary of the Interior; and the Administrator of Western Area Power Administration signed a cooperative agreement initiating the program and committing each participant to implementing the program's elements.

Program participants are:

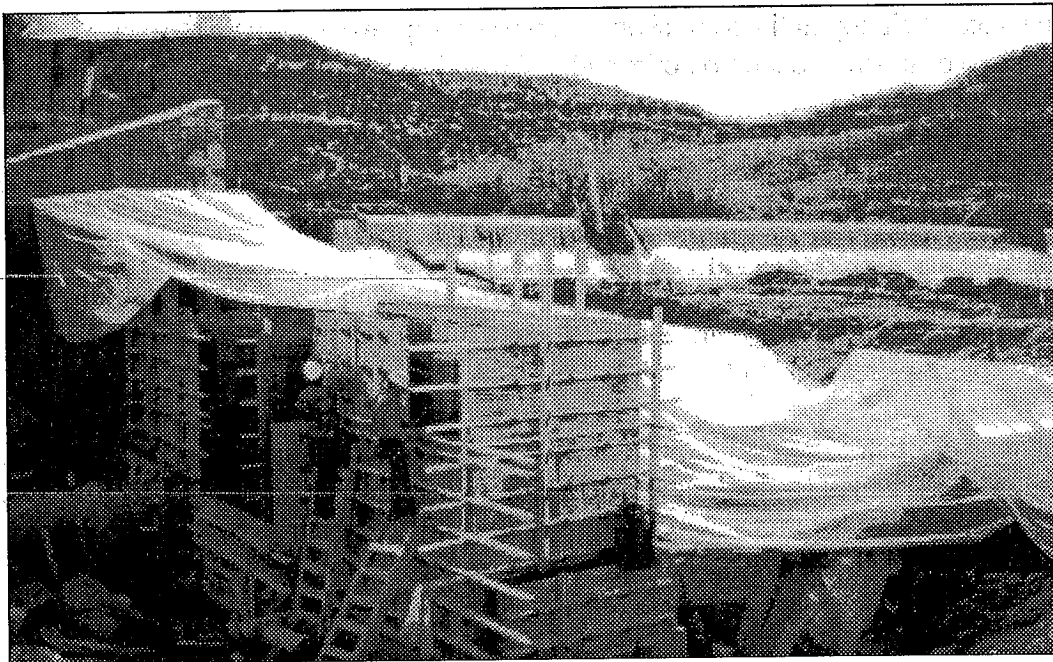
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Western Area Power Administration
- State of Colorado
- State of Utah
- State of Wyoming
- Colorado Water Congress
- Utah Water Users Association
- Wyoming Water Development Association
- National Audubon Society
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Colorado Wildlife Federation
- Wyoming Wildlife Federation
- Colorado River Energy Distributors Association

The program has brought together a diverse group of public and private interests that has made significant strides toward endangered fish recovery. These are explained in more detail later, but here are a few highlights:

- Colorado squawfish populations are showing signs of improvement in the Green River, perhaps in response to changes in operation of Flaming Gorge Dam.
- The Bureau of Reclamation has improved endangered fish habitat by altering the timing of releases from Flaming Gorge and Blue Mesa reservoirs. The amount of water affected by these changes totals 2.5 million acre-feet each year.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stocked about 900 5-inch razorback suckers in the Green River at Dinosaur National Monument and more than 300 4- to 8-inch razorbacks in the Gunnison River upstream of Delta, Colo.
- Construction of a fish ladder on the Gunnison River near Grand Junction, Colo., will be complete this spring. The ladder, built at the Redlands Diversion Dam, will provide access to more than 50 miles of endangered fish habitat.
- The Colorado Water Conservation Board has filed for in-stream flow rights to benefit endangered fish on the Colorado and Yampa rivers.
- Nearly 30 hatchery ponds have been completed in Colorado and Utah to aid in captive rearing of endangered fish.

- More than 200 water projects have proceeded in the upper Colorado River Basin, in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.
- Recovery Program actions have resulted in no water project litigation whatsoever.
- Flooded bottom lands have been restored in four sites: three on the Colorado River near Grand Junction, and one at the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge on the Green River.

In short, the program is succeeding in implementing the Endangered Species Act while also allowing for water resource development and complying with all State water laws. For all of these reasons, this has been called a “model program.” Continued Congressional funding is needed if key recovery actions are to be completed.

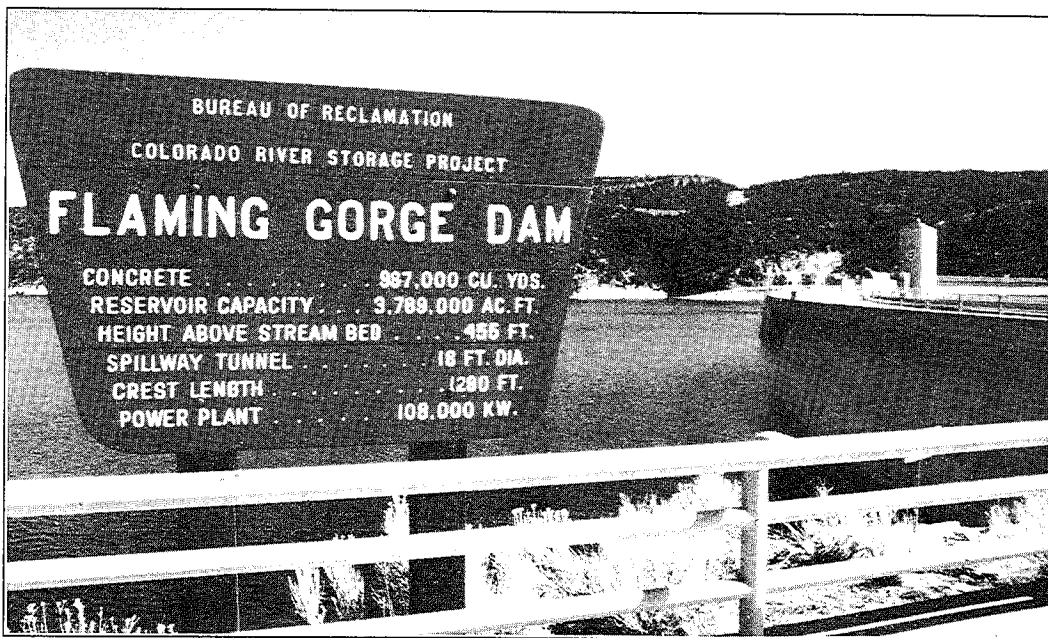


Workers build forms at the entrance to the fish ladder before concrete is poured. The Redlands Diversion Dam can be seen in the background. The dam is located 2.3 miles upstream of the Gunnison's confluence with the Colorado River. It is scheduled to be complete this spring.

## Recovery Program elements

The following are the five elements of the Recovery Program:

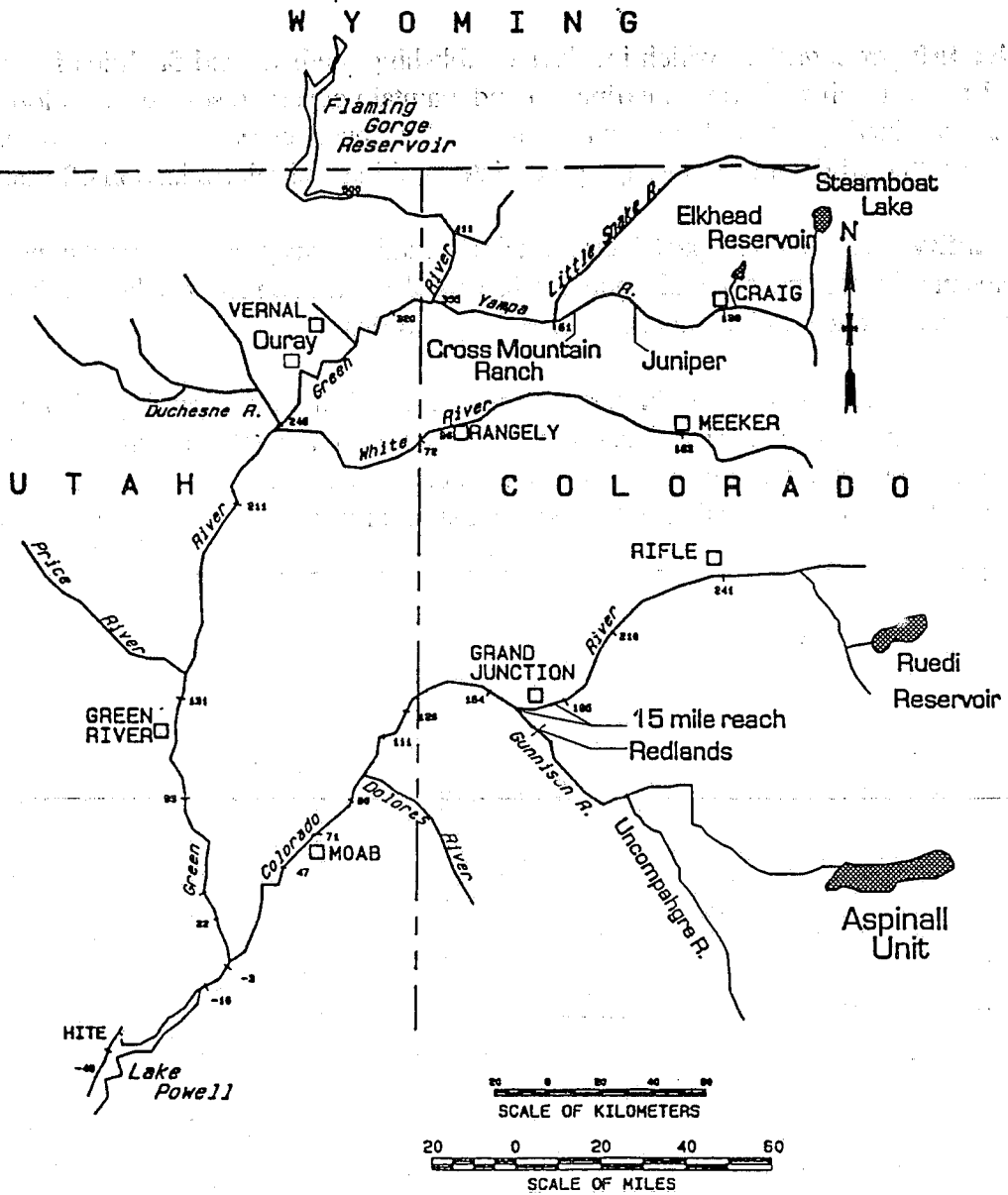
- **Habitat management**, which includes identifying and acquiring in-stream flows and changing operations of Federal dams to benefit endangered fish.
- **Habitat development**, which means restoring flood plain habitats and constructing fish passageways around dams and other barriers.
- **Native fish propagation**, which involves establishing methods and facilities for holding adult broodstock, which will prevent extinction and maintain genetic resources; developing grow-out ponds; conducting research to improve survival of endangered fish raised in captivity and stocked in the wild; and supporting appropriate stocking and reintroduction efforts.
- **Non-native species and sport-fishing**, which entails managing detrimental non-native fish species in critical habitat of endangered fish. This element also involves distributing information to anglers to reduce accidental taking of endangered fish.
- **Research, monitoring and data management**, which is aimed at gaining a better understanding of what the fish need to survive, grow and reproduce in the wild. It includes maintaining data on the numbers, sizes and locations of endangered fish captured during research studies; monitoring endangered fish population trends; and making recommendations on river flows.



Changing the operation of Flaming Gorge and other Federal dams to provide higher river flows in the spring is one way the Recovery Program is working to improve habitat for endangered fish.

## Geographic scope

The Recovery Program covers the upper Colorado River and its tributaries in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.



## Recovery Program accomplishments

Below are just a few of the Recovery Program's accomplishments to date:

- Bureau of Reclamation officials have helped improve endangered fish habitat by altering the timing of releases from Flaming Gorge and Blue Mesa reservoirs. These research-based releases enhance river habitat conditions for the fish by providing higher spring flows and lower, more stable flows the rest of the year. The amount of water affected by these changes totals 2.5 million acre-feet each year.
- For the last six years, the Bureau of Reclamation has made 10,000 to 20,000 acre-feet of water available from northwest Colorado's Ruedi Reservoir for endangered fish.
- The Colorado Water Conservation Board has filed for year-round in-stream flow rights for the 15-mile reach of the Colorado River near Grand Junction, Colo. The State also filed to acquire 300 cfs of unclaimed irrigation return flows in this same stretch of river and has filed for year-round endangered fish flow rights in the Yampa River.
- Nearly 30 hatchery ponds have been constructed to hold and raise endangered fish — six on the Horsethief Canyon State Wildlife Area near Grand Junction, Colo., and 22 on the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge in Utah.
- Researchers installed mechanisms on a 234-acre wetland on the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge that control water levels and prevent entry by large non-native fish. In fall 1995, they discovered 28 4- to 5-month-old razorback suckers in the wetland, proving that these fish can survive beyond the critical stage in the wild.
- Researchers have begun a three-year study to evaluate the effectiveness of removing non-native fish such as northern pike, largemouth bass and green sunfish, from the Gunnison River.
- Biologists have completed studies on non-native fish and potential methods of controlling these fish in Utah's lower Duchesne River.
- Researchers have studied the impacts of "electro-fishing" on razorback sucker production. The scientists found that the percentage of eggs that hatched was significantly lower in "ripe" fish when exposed to the current. Based on these findings, electro-fishing over razorback spawning sites has been discontinued.
- Public involvement efforts have been developed for several program activities: operation of Flaming Gorge Dam, flood plain restoration efforts, Colorado in-stream flow appropriations, coordinated reservoir operations, capital construction projects near Grand Junction, Colo., and the removal of non-native fish from the Gunnison River, among other projects.

- In 1995, Colorado squawfish spawning was documented in the Gunnison River and the 15-mile reach of the Colorado. This was the first documented spawning ever in the upper reaches of the Gunnison and the first in the Colorado since 1982.
- The Utah State Engineer has set a new water rights policy for the Green River to protect releases from Flaming Gorge Reservoir for endangered fish. Flows protected under this policy will be protected from Flaming Gorge Dam downstream to the Duchesne River.
- The Service completed an internal Section 7 consultation that waives payment of the charge for projects that deplete less than 100 acre-feet of water per year. This has simplified the Section 7 consultation process for the majority of water projects in the upper Basin.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service and States of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming are developing procedures for stocking non-native fish in lakes and reservoirs in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The procedures will ensure that such stocking is consistent with endangered fish recovery.
- Biologists completed an inventory of flood plain habitats for 870 miles of the Colorado, Green, Gunnison, Yampa and White rivers last year. This inventory has been used to identify sites that could be restored to provide additional habitat for endangered fish.



Two boys pose beside a large Colorado squawfish caught in the Green River near Jensen, Utah, in the 1930s.

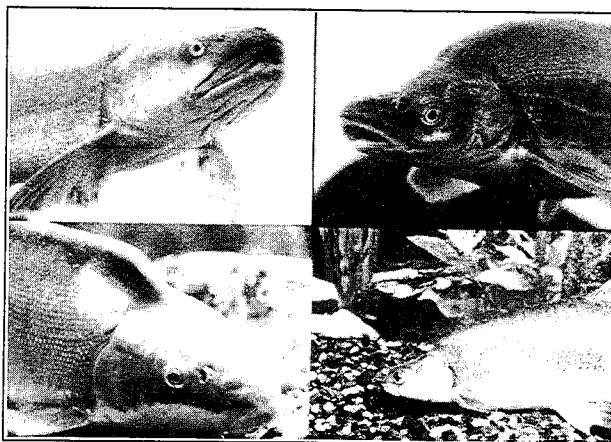
- Limited numbers of the rarest Colorado River fish are being raised in hatcheries as broodstock. In 1995, biologists stocked about 900 5-inch razorback suckers in the Green River at Dinosaur National Monument in Utah and more than 300 4- to 8-inch razorbacks in the Gunnison River upstream of Delta, Colo. In 1994, biologists transplanted 41 razorback suckers from a pond near Debeque, Colo., to their natural habitat in the Colorado and Gunnison rivers. The fact that only about 10 percent of these fish have survived demonstrates some of the challenges facing the Recovery Program.
- The Bureau of Reclamation constructed six two-tenths-acre “refuge” ponds for endangered fish on the Horsethief Canyon State Wildlife Area near Fruita, Colo., in 1992.
- On the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge in northern Utah, a water supply and conditioning reservoir has been constructed and a total of 22 refuge ponds ranging in size from one-tenth acre to two-tenths acre have been constructed to hold endangered fish.
- Construction is nearly complete on a fish ladder at Redlands Diversion Dam on the Gunnison River. Environmental compliance was completed in 1995. The fish ladder will open up 50 miles of historical habitat to the fish. Biologists recently discovered young Colorado squawfish upstream of the dam, a sign that proves suitable endangered fish spawning habitat exists above the ladder.
- Federal and state biologists completed a comprehensive report summarizing the first seven years of the Interagency Standardized Monitoring Program, which tracks endangered fish populations.
- Since 1988, the Service has used Recovery Program accomplishments as a basis for issuing favorable biological opinions on more than 200 water projects in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming with a potential to deplete more than 200,000 acre-feet of water.

## Upcoming events

- The fish ladder at Redlands Diversion Dam is slated to open in April 1996, just in time for the spring spawning season.
- The revised biological opinion on the operation of Flaming Gorge Dam, on the Green River in northeastern Utah, is due in December 1997.
- A biological opinion on the operation of Blue Mesa Dam and the Aspinall unit, on the Gunnison River in southwestern Colorado, is due in March 1997.
- On the Green River near Vernal, Utah, the Recovery Program will work cooperatively with area landowners to restore some riverside wetland areas for young endangered fish (Young fish grow significantly faster in these areas, which have warmer water and plenty of food.) With “willing sellers” of property considered highly valuable for endangered fish, the Recovery Program hopes to pay individuals a fee in exchange for allowing periodic flooding of the property. Levees will be partially removed on five to 10 properties, allowing water to enter at lower flows. Similar actions are planned on the Colorado and Gunnison rivers in 1997.
- Eight new hatchery “refuge” ponds are to be constructed this year — four in Craig, Colo., and four more at the Wahweap facility near Big Water, Utah. At the Ouray Endangered Fish Hatchery in Utah, a total of 36 ponds are to be completed by 1997. Up to eight acres of ponds will be leased in western Colorado’s Grand Valley.
- Plans call for stocking 2,000 bonytails in Utah in 1996. Also, as many as 13,000 razorback suckers of different sizes are to be stocked this year in the Gunnison River in southwestern Colorado.



## Fish population status and recovery goals



Endangered Colorado River fish (clockwise from top left): Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail, razorback sucker.

### **Colorado squawfish**

The largest numbers of Colorado squawfish in the Colorado River Basin are in the Green River. In fact, their numbers in this area actually may be rising. Elsewhere, Colorado squawfish populations are small. They may be declining in the Colorado River and appear stable in the Yampa. Recovery goals for this fish species are to establish naturally self-sustaining populations in the Green River and Colorado River subbasins.

### **Humpback chub**

In the Green and Yampa rivers, humpback chub populations are very small. A population in the Colorado River near the Utah-Colorado state line is relatively large and appears healthy. Recovery goals are to establish five self-sustaining wild populations and protect their habitat. Primary recovery areas in the upper basin include: Black Rocks/Westwater Canyon of the Colorado River near the Colorado/Utah State line; the Yampa and Green rivers in Dinosaur National Monument; Gray and Desolation canyons in the Green River; and Cataract Canyon in the Colorado River.

### **Razorback sucker**

Most razorbacks captured in recent years in the Green, Colorado and Yampa rivers are thought to be more than 20 years old. There is very little known "recruitment" of young fish into the adult population, meaning few young are surviving to adulthood. Razorback populations are considered critical. The first priority for the razorback is to prevent their extinction in the wild.

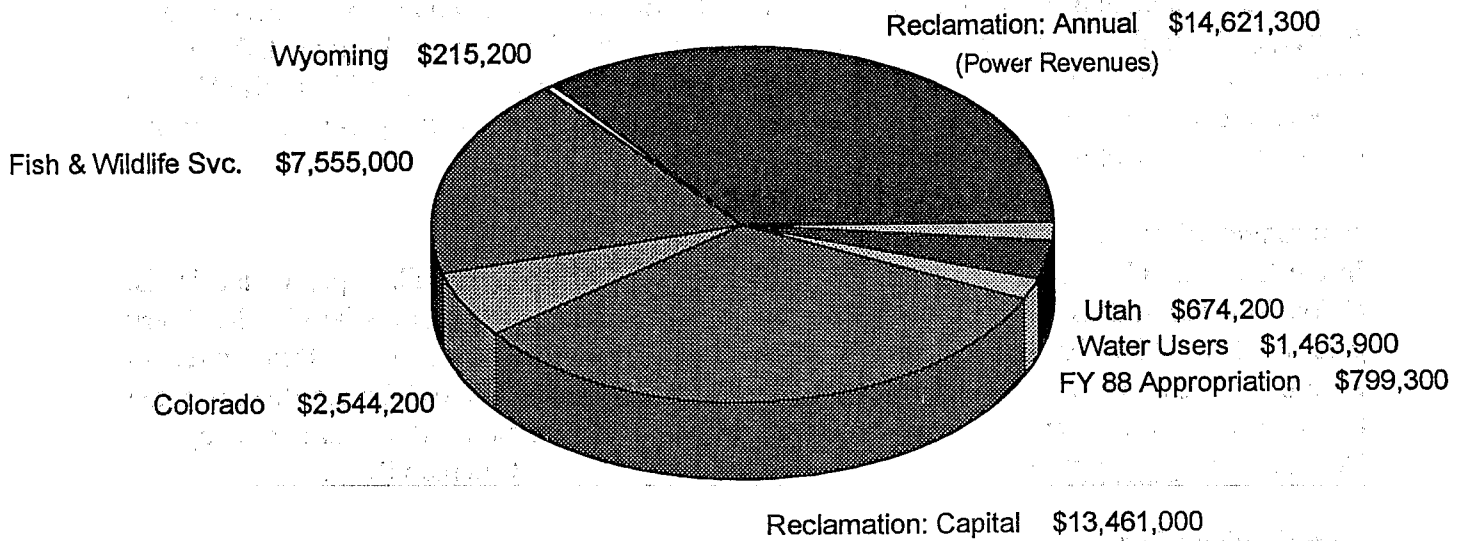
### **Bonytail**

The bonytail is the most endangered of the four listed fish. The last confirmed sighting was in 1981 in the Colorado River near the Colorado-Utah state line. Captive populations of bonytail are being maintained at Dexter National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico and at the Horsethief State Wildlife Area in Colorado. As with the razorback, the primary recovery goal for the bonytail is to prevent extinction in the wild.

# Recovery Program expenditures to date

FY 1989-1996

TOTAL = \$41,333,700



## Letters of support

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 1995

The Honorable Slade Gorton  
Senate Appropriation Subcommittee on  
Interior and Related Agencies  
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Gorton:

We are writing to request your support and assistance in insuring continued funding for the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species of the Upper Colorado River Basin (the "Recovery Program"). This multi-state, multi-agency Recovery Program is being implemented in the Upper Colorado River Basin with the objective of recovering four endangered fish species while water development proceeds in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973. We have four requests:

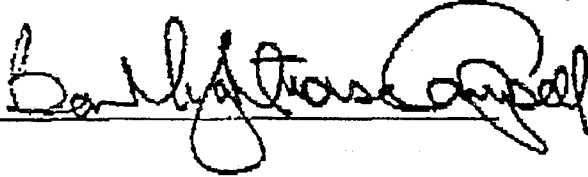
1. That the Subcommittee support the \$623,000 of recovery funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) identified in the President's budget to meet its funding commitment to the Recovery Program.
2. That language be included in the Subcommittee's FY 1996 appropriations legislation to indicate that Section 6 funds should be allocated to the Recovery Program before the FWS formula for allocating funds among its Regions is applied. The ESA Section 6 budget for all 73 listed species in FWS Region 6 will be \$583,000 in FY 1996. Requests from the eight states in FWS Region 6 for ESA Section 6 funds are expected to total about \$2.2 million in FY 1996. Dedicating \$200,000, or over one third of the Region's entire Section 6 budget to four endangered Colorado River fish will adversely and significantly impact state recovery programs for the other listed species in FWS Region 6. Our requested language will insure the Recovery Program will continue to be funded but not at the expense of other high priority recovery efforts in Region 6. In FY 1992, 1993, and 1994, the Subcommittee earmarked \$200,000 pursuant to Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act for the Recovery Program.
3. That the Subcommittee support the \$284,000 of Fisheries Stewardship funds included in the base of the President's FY 1996 budget for the FWS (Fisheries Activity; Hatchery O&M Subactivity) to operate the endangered fish propagation facilities at the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge in Utah.

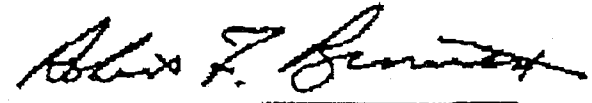
4. That report language be included which states that this hatchery O&M funding should remain dedicated to the Recovery Program until propagation is no longer needed to meet the program's objectives.

To provide for the continued success of this multi-state, multi-agency program, we need the help of the Subcommittee again this year to ensure that FWS is given adequate funds and direction on how to allocate its funds for recovery of the endangered fishes in the Upper Colorado River Basin. We are thankful for your past support and look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Congress of the United States**

Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 1995

The Honorable Peter Domenici  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy and Water Development  
132 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Domenici,

We are writing to request your support for an appropriation in FY 1996 of \$6,373,000 to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for activities associated with the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin ("the Recovery Program"). This amount is included in the Administration's proposed FY 1996 budget for Reclamation under an item labeled "Construction-Endangered Species Recovery Implementation Program-Upper Colorado Region-Various Studies."

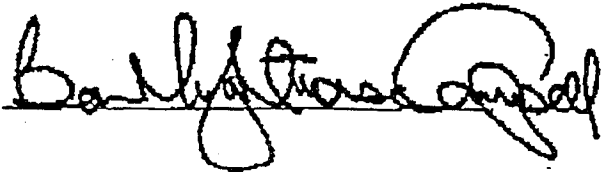
In FY 1994 and FY 1995, the Recovery Program initiated specific studies and action in preparation for the construction activities necessary to recover the endangered fishes. These activities included restoration of fish passage to historical habitat, instream flow protection on the Colorado River (mainstem), Gunnison River, and Yampa River (including the enlargement of the existing Elkhead Reservoir), and the reoperation or modification of existing projects. Activities were also initiated in 1993 and 1994 on several fish habitat restoration projects, including the restoration of flooded bottomlands and wetlands in Utah and Colorado. The FY 1996 funds we are requesting will enable these vital activities to continue and to be successfully implemented in subsequent fiscal years.

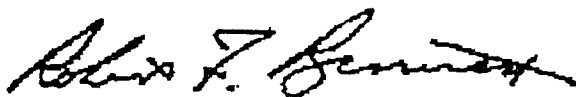
The Recovery Program is a mutually supported program involving Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Area Power Administration, the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, environmental organizations, and water development interests. This Recovery Program, now in its seventh year of operation, has the objective of cooperatively recovering the 4 endangered fishes while water development proceeds in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

In FY 1988, Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 to Reclamation for the purpose of securing water for the endangered fishes. These funds have been used to advance that purpose. Through FY 1994, \$428,000 from the previous appropriation was used, and \$94,100 will be used in FY 1995. In FY 1996, we will continue to use the remaining \$477,900 to acquire water and water rights for the endangered fishes.

We would very much appreciate your support of this important multi-state, multi-agency program, and look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

SCOTT McINNIS  
7Q DISTRICT, COLORADO  
COMMITTEE ON RULES

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0603

March 20, 1995

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DURANGO, CO 81301  
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SUITE 111  
DENVERWOOD SPRINGS, CO 80521  
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FAX: (303) 528-0621

The Honorable Ralph Regula  
Chairman  
House Appropriation Subcommittee on  
Interior and Related Agencies  
B308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Regula:

We are writing to request your support and assistance in insuring continued funding for the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species of the Upper Colorado River Basin (the "Recovery Program"). Although each of us has our own strong opinions about reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act, this Recovery Program is a good faith effort to work cooperatively on recovery of endangered species within the existing law. This multi-state, multi-agency Recovery Program is being implemented in the Upper Colorado River Basin with the objective of recovering four endangered fish species while water development proceeds in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973. We have four requests:

1. That the Subcommittee support the \$623,000 of recovery funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) identified in the President's budget to meet its funding commitment to the Recovery Program.
2. That language be included in the Subcommittee's FY 1996 appropriations legislation to indicate that Section 6 funds should be allocated to the Recovery Program before the FWS formula for allocating funds among its Regions is applied. The ESA Section 6 budget for all 73 listed species in FWS Region 6 will be \$583,000 in FY 1996. Requests from the eight states in FWS Region 6 for ESA Section 6 funds are expected to total about \$2.2 million in FY 1996. Dedicating \$200,000, or over one third of the Region's entire Section 6 budget to four endangered Colorado River fish will adversely and significantly impact state recovery programs for the other listed species in FWS Region 6. Our requested language will insure the Recovery Program will continue to be funded but not at the expense of other high priority recovery efforts in Region 6. In FY 1992, 1993, and 1994, the Subcommittee earmarked \$200,000 pursuant to Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act for the Recovery Program.

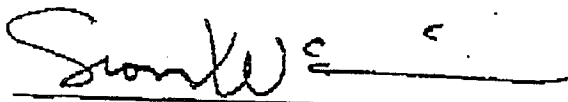


3. That the Subcommittee support the \$284,000 of Fisheries Stewardship funds included in the base of the President's FY 1996 budget for the FWS (Fisheries Activity; Hatchery O&M Subactivity) to operate the endangered fish propagation facilities at the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge in Utah.
4. That report language be included which states that this hatchery O&M funding should remain dedicated to the Recovery Program until propagation is no longer needed to meet the Program's objectives.

To provide for the continued success of this multi-state, multi-agency program, we need the help of the Subcommittee again this year to ensure that FWS is given adequate funds and direction on how to allocate its funds for recovery of the endangered fishes in the Upper Colorado River Basin. We are thankful for your past support and look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

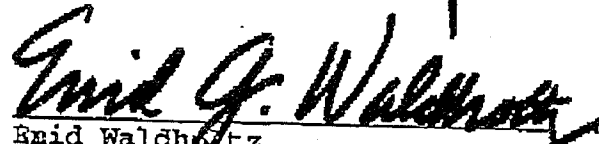
  
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Scott McInnis

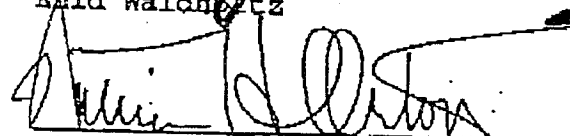
  
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Reid Waldhertz

  
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Bill Orton

SCOTT McINNIS  
30 DISTRICT, COLORADO  
COMMITTEE ON RULES

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0603

March 20, 1995

The Honorable John Myers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
2362 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Myers:

We are writing to request your support for an appropriation in FY 1996 of \$6,337,000 to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for activities associated with the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin ("the Recovery Program"). This amount is included in the Administration's proposed FY 1996 budget for Reclamation under an item labeled "Construction-Endangered Species Recovery Implementation Program-Upper Colorado Region-VariouS Studies."

In FY 1994 and FY 1995, the Recovery Program initiated specific studies and action in preparation for the construction activities necessary to recover the endangered fishes. These activities included restoration of fish passage to historical habitat, instream flow protection on the Colorado River (mainstream), Gunnison River, and Yampa River (including the enlargement of the existing Elkhead Reservoir), and the reoperation or modification of existing projects. Activities were also initiated in 1993 and 1994 on several fish habitat restoration projects, including the restoration of flooded bottomlands and wetlands in Utah and Colorado. The FY 1996 funds we requested will enable these vital activities to continue and to be successfully implemented in subsequent fiscal years.

The Recovery Program is a mutually supported program involving Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Area Power Administration, the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, environmental organizations, and water development interests. This Recovery Program, now in its seventh year of operation, has the objective of cooperatively recovering the four endangered fishes while water development proceeds in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973. In FY 1988, Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 to Reclamation for the purpose of securing water for the endangered fishes. These funds have beer

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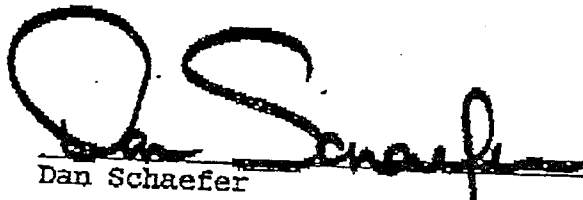
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used to advance that purpose. Through FY 1994, \$428,000 from the previous appropriation was used, and \$94,100 will be used in FY 1995. In FY 1996, we will continue to use the remaining \$477,900 to acquire water and water rights for the endangered fishes.

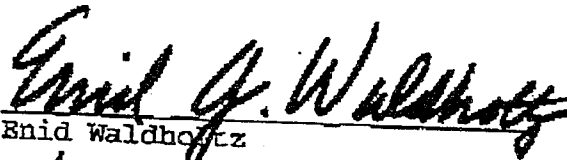
Each of us has our own strong opinions about reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act. However, this Recovery Program is a good faith effort to work cooperatively on recovery of endangered species within the existing law. We would very much appreciate your support of this important multi-state, multi-agency program, and look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you for your consideration.

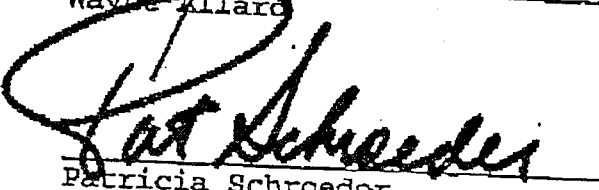
Sincerely,

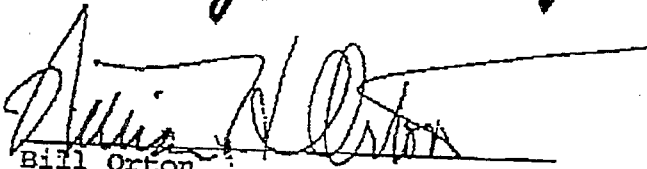
  
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Scott McInnis

  
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