

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Project Summary: The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Recovery Program) is a unique partnership of local, state and federal agencies; water and power interests; and environmental groups working to recover the endangered fish of the Upper Colorado River Basin (Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub and bonytail), while water development proceeds in accordance with federal and state laws and interstate compacts. This major undertaking involves restoring and managing stream flows and habitat, boosting wild populations with hatchery-raised endangered fish, and reducing negative interactions with certain non-native fish species. The goal of recovery is to achieve natural, self-sustaining populations of the endangered fish so that they no longer require protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Recovery Program provides Endangered Species Act compliance for continued operation of state, federal and private water and power projects in accordance with project purposes. With its demonstrated successes, the Recovery Program has become a national model for its collaborative conservation efforts to protect endangered species.

Strategic Value: The Recovery Program is a unique partnership whereby divergent stakeholder groups work together to pursue the common goals of endangered species recovery and water development.

Benefits: The Recovery Program has consistently demonstrated significant progress toward endangered fish recovery and continues to provide Endangered Species Act compliance to more than 1,800 water projects (federal and non-federal) depleting more than 3.7 million acre-feet per year. While species recovery and water development are the primary benefits of the Recovery Program, recovery activities such as instream flow protection and habitat restoration will also likely result in healthier riverine and riparian environments in national parks, wildlife refuges and on other public lands enjoyed by outdoor recreationists and nature enthusiasts.



Map of Upper Colorado River Basin, including the San Juan River



Green River in Dinosaur National Monument, Colo.



Biologist with endangered Colorado pikeminnow