

Addressing Concerns about the MRP

by

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April 2, 2006, TWG Meeting

AMWG Recommendation

“AMWG approves the MRP as a working document to help guide preparation of the FY 08-09 work plan and budget; and recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the GCMRC be charged with (1) addressing the concerns listed in the TWG minority report in a final FY 07-11 document and (2) bringing that document to the AMWG for further consideration in the summer of 2007.” AMWG Meeting, December 5, 2007

The TWG minority report (attached) was authored by NPS, Colorado and WAPA. It's unclear which of the 6 members of the TWG who did not support approval of the MRP actually support the minority report.

NPS Issues Related to the MRP

The NPS (Joe Alston., Ken McMullen, Norm Henderson) met with GCMRC (John, Helen, Ted) on 1/11/2007 in Flagstaff regarding NPS concerns over the draft MRP that had been specified in the minority report presented to the AMWG on 12/6/06. The discussion boiled down to a concern that the draft MRP (11/14) lacked a comprehensive list of critical science questions (found in Appendix A) which the MRP used to develop the five-year program proposal. To address this NPS concern, GCMRC/NPS agreed to the following:

GCMRC would develop a crosswalk table showing how the AMWG approved RINs (sequenced) in the AMP Strategic Plan related to the Science Questions specified in the draft MRP. Through a review of this table, areas of vulnerability/gaps would be identified by GCMRC that would be revisited through adding science questions in the MRP. The revised list of science questions developed through this process would be reviewed/ approved by the NPS. Once agreed to by NPS, GCMRC will bring revised list to rest of minority (WAPA, USFWS, BOR, GLCA, GRCA, GCT) for review. The crosswalk table and additional science questions would be included in the revised draft MRP and brought to the AMWG for approval at its summer meeting.

WAPA and State of Colorado Issues Related to the MRP

John Hamill (GCMRC) met with Rod Kuharich (CO), Randy Seaholm (CO), Mary Barger, (WAPA), and Clayton Palmer on December 6, 2007, Las Vegas NV, to discuss issues raised in the TWG minority report on the MRP. A summary of that meeting follows:

1. **Humpback Chub (HBC) monitoring:**

- The current HBC monitoring program is a cooperative effort among GCMRC, Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service have primary responsibility for conducting the field work for the HBC monitoring effort. GCMRC has primary responsibility for developing protocols, data management and analysis, and modeling.
- FWS will be revising the HBC Recovery Plan in FY 07. GCMRC has been working with FWS to ensure that the monitoring protocols for humpback chub in the Grand Canyon are consistent with the requirements of the HBC Recovery Plan. Language could be included in the MRP that clarifies that the HBC monitoring being conducted under the auspices of the AMP will be designed to meet the standards or requirements specified in the HBC Recovery Plan

2. **Sediment**

- WAPA and Colorado would like BHBF's and related sediment work to focus on the entire Colorado River from Glen Canyon Dam to Lake Mead and not just on the Marble Canyon reach.
- WAPA and Colorado would like the MRP to reflect that other options for sediment conservation will be addressed (e.g. load following flows, Habitat maintenance flows, alternative flow regimes).
- Colorado expressed concern that use of sand bars by recreational users significantly threatens the persistence of sand bars
- WAPA/Colorado will draft proposed revisions to the MRP to reflect the points above.

3. **Food Base**

- Hamill indicated that the MRP currently specifies that effects of alternative flows regimes on food base would be addressed through the Long Term Experimental Program which is still a work in progress. There is currently a place holder in the MRP to address the effects of alternative flow regimes on food base.
- Clayton supports implementation of Argonne's proposal for doing some mini experiments to evaluate the effects of fluctuating flows on drift and food base in FY 08. Hamill indicated that this proposal should be brought to the TWG for consideration in the preparation of the FY 08 work plan.

Next Steps

1. GCMRC will revise the MRP based on consideration of comments/ recommendations from the primary authors of the Minority Report (Colorado, NPS and WAPA) (Jun 15)
2. GCMRC will send out proposed revisions for review by all TWG members (Jul 15)
3. GCMRC will send out proposed revisions for review and approval by the AMWG (August 2007)