

Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group
Agenda Item Information
January 21, 2010

Agenda Item

Nonnative Fish Control in Grand Canyon—Historical Perspectives and Recommendations for Monitoring, Control, and Research

Action Requested

- ✓ Recommendation to AMWG, draft motion for consideration:

TWG has reviewed the following plan: “Nonnative Fish Control in Grand Canyon—Historical Perspectives and Recommendations for Monitoring, Control, and Research” and dated November 17, 2009. This plan was requested by AMWG and described as a conservation measure in the 2008 Biological Opinion for Glen Canyon Dam Operations. TWG has reviewed the plan and finds that it is scientifically and technically credible and recommends that AMWG review the plan. TWG recognizes there are tribal concerns with the implementation of this plan and understands that there is ongoing tribal consultation between the Department of Interior and the interested tribes, and from those consultations changes may need to be incorporated into this plan.

Presenters

Kara Hilwig, Fishery Biologist, Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center
Shane Capron, Technical Work Group Chair (Western Area Power Administration)

Previous Action Taken

- ✓ By AMWG: At its October 2004 meeting, AMWG passed the following motion by consensus: Authorize funds for workshops, and direct GCMRC to further develop warm water species plan with TWG. The workshops include the GCMRC workshop as described in the prospectus for warm water species research, and participation in the Upper Basin Recovery Implementation Plan workshop on non-native fish control.

Background Information

Control of nonnative fishes is recognized as an important element in restoration of the native aquatic ecology of the Colorado River ecosystem in Grand Canyon. It is included as a conservation measure of the 2008 Biological Opinion for Glen Canyon Dam Operations (2008 High Flow Test with Five Years of Two-month Steady Flows Experiment):

“*Nonnative Fish Control* – As first presented in the biological opinion on the Shortage Guidelines, Reclamation will, in coordination with other DOI AMP participants and **through the AMP**, continue efforts to assist NPS and the AMP in control of both cold- and warm-water nonnative fish species in both the mainstem of Marble and Grand canyons and in their tributaries, **including determining and implementing levels of nonnative fish control as necessary**. Because Reclamation predicts that dam releases will be cool to cold during the period of the proposed action,

control of nonnative trout may be particularly important. Control of these species will utilize mechanical removal, similar to recent efforts by the AMP, and may utilize other methods, to help to reduce this threat. **GCMRC is preparing a nonnative fish control plan through the AMP process** that addresses both cold and warm-water species that will further guide implementation of this conservation measure.” (*emphasis added*)

GCMRC has written the nonnative fish control plan referenced above entitled, “Nonnative Fish Control in Grand Canyon—Historical Perspectives and Recommendations for Monitoring, Control, and Research” and dated November 17, 2009. TWG began discussion of the plan during a conference call on January 5, 2010, and will continue deliberations at our January 21 meeting.

The January conference call highlighted a number of issues to be resolved:

- Inclusion of text in the document describing the conflict between tribal values and the intentional destruction of fish in Grand Canyon – Kara Hilwig agreed to work with tribal representatives on the inclusions of text in the plan before the January 13 tribal consultation meeting.
- Tribal consultation – tribal consultation will continue at a January 13 meeting, the results of this meeting will be provided to TWG at our January 21 meeting.
- Various technical issues were brought up and those folks will provide additional comments to Kara for potential inclusion in the plan depending on the scope of those comments. Steve Mietz (NPS) wanted to work with Kara on issues related to tributaries in the plan.
- A number of comments were made which are outside the scope of the current document and deal more with policy than the technical purview of the TWG, these issues could be highlighted and brought to AMWG’s attention during the recommendation:
 - ▲ Who’s responsibility is it to pay for nonnative control efforts?
 - ▲ Is nonnative removal cost effective?
 - ▲ Do nonnative control activities become “management actions?”
 - ▲ How will coordination be completed among cooperative agencies?