

**Flaming Gorge Technical Working Group**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Wednesday, March 9, 2016**

In attendance: Heather Patno, Jerry Wilhite, Tom Chart, Kevin McAbee, George Weekley, Tildon Jones, Matt Breen, Peter Crookston, Bob Schelly, Steve Hulet, Dave Speas, Julie Howard, Leslie Bennett

- Introductions were made, initial kickoff for water year 2016, no additions to agenda
- Hydrology Summary was reviewed
  - During an El Nino year hydrology actually decreases in the Upper Green River
  - High elevation snow is lacking in both Upper Green River and Yampa River
  - Table 1, Page 8 The year 2015 was very dry but had a Miracle May for precipitation; can't count on that for 2016
  - Table 2 – represents 10 years most probable
  - Figure 11 – average weekly flow shorter period of record because of Deerlodge
  - Record of Decision – keep in mind it is still very early in the season
  - Flaming Gorge releases decreased from 2,200 cfs to 800 cfs from mid-February to March. The Yampa River at Deerlodge gage is currently iced over, while Green River at Jensen Utah flows decreased from 2,760 cfs to 2,190 cfs. This indicates that Yampa River flows have been increasing over the last few weeks.
- Tom Chart updated the group on the Draft Recovery Program flow request
  - Recovery Program will be exploring the necessary NEPA and experimental documentation needed to implement elevated base and spike lows in 2017
  - Small mouth bass – minor request That is difficult to do in a dry year but when needed most. The spike flow needs to be done under experimentation
  - Need study plan for spike flow and elevated base flows, will include commitment to implement study plans in final draft of the FGTWG request letter to be sent out next week
  - LTSP study plan required 3 years below 18,600 cfs and 3 years above 18,600 cfs.
  - LTSP in place since 2012 has only hit above 18,600 cfs once even though flows in 2011 did reach above 18,600 cfs the study plan wasn't officially in place
  - This group to discuss (3) components moving forward: LTSP, elevated base flows and SMB spike flows
  - Reclamation to look into what will be needed to implement experimentation
  - Jerry provided feedback to initial conversation only
- Stewart Lake – Need an official letter with amount requested from the State of Utah. That process is separate from the FGTWG process, but will assist in informing operations moving into the future.

- Green River Public Meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 was discussed
  - Facilitate public participation
  - Emery and Grand County Sheriff offices will be attendance
  - Will need to address issues discussed prior in 2011 meeting to include:
    - Landowners concerns regarding spring flood
    - Tushar Wash Diversion Construction
    - New information on experimentation flows
    - Include maps to highlight how the rivers effect the town of Green River
    - Increase awareness of Flaming Gorge Dam operations and the Yampa River, what is responsible for increase water flows during spring and base flow seasons
    - Re-emphasize the 2011 increase in water flows were for dam safety and had nothing to do with endangered fish
    - Share information regarding Yampa River as it relates to water flow
    - Compare 2011 to this year as a reference point
    - Property flooding is a big issue
    - Share with landowners the benefits the diversion project gives them
    - Tom Chart will present on the Draft Recovery Program emphasizing the background, compliance requirements, science behind flows and the benefit to the water users.
  
- Flaming Gorge Workgroup Meeting will be held in Vernal on April 19, 2016 at 11:00 am
  - Tom Chart will be unable to attend, George Weekley and Paul Abate from the Ecological Services FWS will present
  
- Heather discussed the GROGRA public comments that were received.
  - Slower down ramp rates are being requested