

Large-scale initiatives for endangered species recovery and ecosystem restoration

MRRIC Planning Group Meeting
Omaha, NE
July 19, 2007

The first large-scale initiatives to recover endangered species and restore ecosystems in the United States were established in the early 1980s. The proponents of these pioneering efforts had little to no past experience with large-scale recovery and restoration; every step of their journeys was an experiment with an unknown outcome. By now, dozens of programs are in place and the people who have been participating in them have accumulated a wealth of experience—experience which has the potential to help inform recovery and restoration in the Missouri River Basin.

I've prepared brief case studies of ten different programs: the Chesapeake Bay Program (Chesapeake Bay), the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Everglades), CalFed Bay-Delta Program (San Francisco Bay and Sacramento/San Joaquin Rivers), Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Columbia River), the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound (Puget Sound), the Upper Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program (Colorado River), the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (San Juan River), the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (Colorado River), the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (Colorado River), and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Platte River).

Each case study includes two main sections, “Background” and “Lessons learned,” and two sidebars, “Who’s involved?” and “To learn more.” The “Background” section summarizes the history, purpose, organization, and operations of the program. The “Lessons learned” section includes insights from program participants (or, in a few cases, from researchers who studied but did not participate in the program) regarding the factors contributing to and/or impeding the success of their initiative.

The “Who’s involved?” sidebar highlights one institution within each program that has program management and coordination responsibilities, and therefore might bear some resemblance to MRRIC. If you become particularly interested in any of these institutions, you can find much more information—including their charters—through the websites listed in the “To learn more” sidebar.

Clearly, each of these programs is complex and unique. No single one provides a perfect model for large-scale endangered species recovery and ecosystem restoration initiatives. But all offer valuable and important “lessons learned” that could—if you so choose—help inform recovery and restoration in the Missouri River Basin.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY & SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA

LOCATION: CALIFORNIA

WHO'S ON THE BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

0

STATE AGENCIES:

0

LOCAL GOV.:

20

TRIBES:

2

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

7

BACKGROUND: THE CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta provide drinking water for 23 million people, irrigation for a \$31 billion agricultural industry, and habitat for three federally threatened or endangered species: the Delta smelt, Chinook salmon, and steelhead. By the 1990s, decades of costly and time-consuming litigation had occurred over the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. In 1994, the twenty-five federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over the Bay-Delta region decided to try a new approach and came together to create the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The goal of the Program is to simultaneously improve water supplies in California and the environ-

mental quality of the Bay-Delta region. Between 1994 and 2000, representatives of local and tribal governments as well as other stakeholders partici-



pated in developing the Bay-Delta Program through the Bay-Delta Advisory Committee (BDAC). Since 2000, these stakeholders have participated

in program management and coordination through the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC). BDPAC is responsible for providing advice and

recommendations on program implementation to the Bay-Delta Authority, which is composed of representatives of the federal and state agencies with activities in the Bay-Delta region. BDPAC is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and is composed of between 20 and 30 members at any given time. BDPAC's nine

standing sub-committees provide oversight on specific program areas, including water quality, water use efficiency, and environmental justice.

TO LEARN MORE:

calwater.ca.gov

[calwater.ca.gov/CBDA/
NewCBDA.shtml](http://calwater.ca.gov/CBDA/NewCBDA.shtml)

[calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/
BDPAC.shtml](http://calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/BDPAC.shtml)

LESSONS LEARNED

David Nawi and Alf Brandt summarized several lessons learned in "CALFED Bay-Delta Program: from conflict to collaboration" (2003):

- "The importance of stakeholder participation cannot be overstated. The long history of mistrust and conflict and the natural tendency to revert to those attitudes can be overcome only if the stakeholders remain engaged and talking to each other and the agencies and perceive that their voices are being heard in program implementation and decision-making."
- "Successful watershed ecosystem restoration programs need to progress through all the stages of conflict before they can achieve collaboration. It takes leaders...[and] a certain maturity, which comes from extended conflict."

CHESAPEAKE BAY

LOCATION: MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA

BACKGROUND: THE CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

11

STATE AGENCIES:

13

LOCAL GOV.:

5

TRIBES:

0

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

8

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. Its watershed spans an area of 64,000 mi², including parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. By the 1980s, urban and agricultural development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed had produced marked declines in water quality in the Bay. In order to restore water quality, the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia entered into a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1983. The cooperative agreement created the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP). CBP is governed by an Executive Council which provides leader-

ship, establishes policy direction, and sets goals for restoration. The Executive Council is composed of signatories to the



cooperative agreement. The Executive Council works with an Implementation Committee to implement its policies and coordinate restoration activities.

The Implementation Committee is responsible for developing the annual work plan and budget, providing technical support, and conducting public outreach. Notably, the 48-member Implementation Committee has a tradition of making decisions by consensus. Voting is not used to resolve disputes. In the rare event that agreement cannot be reached, a decision is elevated to the Executive Council. Over the years, the CBP has been able to maintain water quality in the Bay even as population growth and development have increased in the watershed—no small accomplishment. However, in order to achieve improvements in environmental quality, restoration efforts must continue.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.chesapeakebay.net

www.chesapeakebay.net/committee.htm

www.epa.gov/region03/chesapeake/index.htm

www.chesbay.state.va.us

www.cbf.org

www.alliancechesbay.org

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2005, the Government Accountability Office evaluated the Chesapeake Bay Program and drew several conclusions that CBP participants generally agreed with:

- The current lack of integrated approaches to measure overall progress, independent and credible reporting mechanisms, and coordinated implementation strategies is undermining restoration efforts and eroding public confidence and continued support.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program needs a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy to better assess, report, and manage restoration progress. Assurances of the long-term availability of support would help the Chesapeake Bay Program to effectively coordinate restoration efforts and strategically manage its resources.

C O L U M B I A R I V E R

LOCATION: WASHINGTON, OREGON, IDAHO, MONTANA

BACKGROUND: THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH & WILDLIFE PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE NORTHWEST POWER & CONSERVATION COUNCIL??

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

0

STATES:

4

LOCAL GOV.:

0

TRIBES:

0

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

0

TO LEARN MORE:

www.nwcouncil.org

www.salmonrecovery.gov

[www.nwr.noaa.gov/
Salmon-Recovery-
Planning/](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/)

[www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/
index.cfm](http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/index.cfm)

www.lcrep.org

www.icbemp.gov

In the Columbia River basin, the development of water resources over the 20th century for power generation, irrigation, shipping, and recreation led to a dramatic decline in wild salmon populations. Over the years, many local, state, tribal, and federal entities have been involved in restoration efforts. Today, restoration activities in the Columbia River basin occur under four main programs or statutes: the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, the Endangered Species Act, and the Northwest Power Act. The latter is highlighted here. In 1980, Congress passed the Northwest Power Act to give the citizens of Washington, Oregon,

Idaho and Montana a stronger voice in controlling the power generated at, and wildlife affected by, dams on the Columbia River system. The Act cre-



ated the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPC), which is composed of eight members—two representatives

from each of the four states—and is responsible for managing the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. The Program provides guidance and recommendations to the agencies operating the Federal Columbia River Power System (Bonneville Power Administration, Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation) on how to mitigate the impacts of hydropower on fish and wildlife. In order to develop its recommendations, the Council periodically solicits advice from federal and state agencies, tribes, and others, but these stakeholders do not participate directly in decision-making. The Council makes decisions by majority vote.

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2005, the Northeast Midwest Institute (www.nemw.org) compiled “lessons learned” from several large-scale ecosystem restoration projects. Principle findings from the Columbia River basin include:

- Restoration efforts in this basin should not be considered a model. The lack of federal leadership and coordination as well as the lack of a holistic, system-wide approach are major impediments to successful restoration.
- Endangered species recovery in the Columbia River basin could be improved by better coordinating and clarifying responsibilities among the entities involved, establishing uniform goals and objectives, and securing a stable source of funding for restoration activities.

EVERGLADES

LOCATION: FLORIDA

WHO'S INVOLVED IN THE WORKING GROUP?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

14

STATE AGENCIES:

6

LOCAL GOV.:

5

TRIBES:

2

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

0

TO LEARN MORE:

www.sfrestore.org

www.evergladesplan.org

www.evergladesnow.org

www.aoml.noaa.gov/sfp/

www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/everglades/

www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/csop_advisory_team/index.html

sofia.usgs.gov

BACKGROUND: THE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

One of world's richest, most complex, and most challenged ecosystems can be found in South Florida, an area of 18,000 mi² that encompasses the Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, and the Florida Keys. During the 20th century, the population of South Florida grew dramatically and an engineering program was undertaken to improve urban water supplies, enhance flood protection, and provide water for agriculture. Thousands of canals, levees, other water control structures, and pumping stations were constructed, profoundly altering the hydrology of South Florida. Over the years, attempts were made to restore the ecosystem, but progress was slow due to a

lack of coordination and decades of unsuccessful negotiations and adversarial litigation. Finally, in 1993, six federal agencies involved in water management in South Florida estab-



lished a Task Force to coordinate restoration activities. The Army Corps of Engineers developed the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and the Task Force established a Working Group to coordinate implementation of the CERP. In

1996, the Water Resources Development Act expanded the Task Force and Working Group to include representatives of state, local, and tribal governments. Today, the 25 member

Working Group is responsible for formulating and recommending to the Task Force management policies, strategies, plans, programs, and priorities for restoration. The group generally makes decisions by consensus; when consensus is not possible, decisions are made by 2/3 majority vote. Stakeholders are engaged in the activities of the Working Group through multi-stakeholder advisory teams established on a project-by-project basis.

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2000, members of the Working Group described their principal "lessons learned" (Appendix A to "Restoring the Everglades and the South Florida Ecosystem" (2003)):

- Building and maintaining good personal relationships among colleagues is a key to success.
- The Task Force and Working Group need regular, two-way communication and coordination.
- The Task Force requires both top-down and bottom-up leadership initiative.
- Disagreements on issues should be encouraged and dealt with in a constructive and collaborative manner. When appropriate, conflict resolution professionals should be used.

GLEN CANYON DAM

LOCATION: ARIZONA AND UTAH

BACKGROUND: THE GLEN CANYON DAM ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORK GROUP?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

6

STATE AGENCIES:

7

LOCAL GOV.:

0

TRIBES:

6

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

6

In 1963, the Colorado River backed up across the Arizona-Utah border as the Bureau of Reclamation put the finishing touches on Glen Canyon Dam. From the moment it was conceived, the dam was controversial; once it was completed, water and power users, environmental groups, federal and state agencies, and Indian tribes raised concerns about the impact of dam operations on the downstream environment. In 1989, the Secretary of the Interior directed Reclamation to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the operation of the dam. While the EIS was underway, Congress passed the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992, directing the Secretary to estab-

lish and implement long-term monitoring to ensure the dam would be operated "... in such a manner as to protect, mitigate adverse impacts to, and improve the values for which



Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area were established, including...natural and cultural resources and visitor use." In accordance with the Act and the Final EIS, the Glen Canyon

Dam Adaptive Management Program was established in 1997. The program was developed and is now implemented through the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG), a

FACA-chartered committee comprised of representatives of federal, state, and tribal governments as well as other stakeholders representing environmental and recreation interests as well as federal power purchase contractors.

AMWG's primary responsibility is to advise the Secretary on dam operations. The 26-member group strives to seek consensus; when consensus is not possible, decisions are made by 2/3 majority vote.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/amp/index.html

www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/amp/amwg/amwg_index.html

LESSONS LEARNED

Between 2004 and 2007, participants in the Adaptive Management Program prepared the "Report and Recommendations to the Secretary's Designee," with these observations and lessons:

- It is essential to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and functions of the various program components.
- The level of collaboration among participants has decreased since the inception of the program. This trend may be related to the group's operating procedures. The AMWG develops and approves recommendations by a two-thirds majority of members voting. This requires some level of cooperation, but while consensus is initially attempted, consensus building is often frustrated by the fact that the AMWG can simply develop a recommendation to the Secretary with a vote.

LOWER COLORADO RIVER

LOCATION: ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA

BACKGROUND: LOWER COLORADO RIVER MULTI-SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE STEERING COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

6

STATE AGENCIES:

4

LOCAL GOV.:

32

TRIBES:

3

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

10

The Lower Colorado River runs from the Arizona-Utah border through Arizona, Nevada, and California before draining into the Gulf of California. The protection of federally endangered species began to compete with water development on the Lower Colorado River in the late 1960s. Between 1967 and 1995, four species of birds and fish in the Lower Colorado watershed were listed as endangered. In 1997, the Department of the Interior, Arizona, California, and Nevada established a Steering Committee to develop a long-term endangered species compliance and management program for the Lower Colorado River. Over the course of seven

years, the group worked together to develop the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. In 2005, the original Steering Committee was dissolved and replaced by a new Steering Committee,



comprised of representatives of federal, state, local, and tribal governments as well as other stakeholders representing water and power users and environmental interests. Under the authority of Sec. 4 of the Endangered Species Act, the 55-

member Steering Committee cooperates with the Bureau of Reclamation to coordinate implementation of the program and reviews annual work plans, budgets, land and water acquisitions, and reports to Congress and Federal and state regulatory agencies. The committee strives to make decisions by consensus. When every “reasonable and practicable” effort to reach consensus fails, the group votes to determine whether or not a formal dispute exists. If so, informal (i.e. further discussion) and/or formal (i.e. elevation of decision to the Regional Director) dispute resolution mechanisms are triggered.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.lcrmscp.gov

LESSONS LEARNED

In the June 2007 “Final Implementation Report of the Lower Colorado Multi-Species Conservation Program,” lessons learned from the early years of the LCR MSCP were identified:

- Data collection, organization, and management are essential to the early stages of the Adaptive Management Program (AMP). Another aspect of the AMP that is needed early on is a tool box of evaluation techniques that can gauge the effectiveness of conservation measures as they are completed.
- Because the LCR MSCP is a habitat-based program, extensive monitoring of created habitats (both pre- and post-development) is necessary to evaluate implementation and effectiveness of designed habitat creation projects.

PLATTE RIVER

LOCATION: COLORADO, NEBRASKA, WYOMING

BACKGROUND: PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

2

STATE AGENCIES:

3

LOCAL GOV.:

0

TRIBES:

0

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

6

The North Platte River and the South Platte River rise in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, flow through Wyoming and Colorado, respectively, and join in western Nebraska to form the Platte River, which continues eastward to its confluence with the Missouri River. The protection of federally listed species began to compete with water management in the Platte River Basin in the late 1960s. In an effort to find a less adversarial means of resolving disputes, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and the Department of the Interior signed a cooperative agreement in 1997 to address endangered species issues affecting water development. The goals of the agreement were to

maintain, improve, and conserve habitat for the whooping crane, piping plover, interior least tern, and pallid sturgeon while allowing existing and new water uses to proceed. Be-



tween 1997 and 2006, a Governance Committee composed of representatives of federal and state agencies as well as water users and environmental interests worked to develop the

Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. By late 2006, the program was completed and the parties entered into a second cooperative agreement to oversee implementation. The 2006 agreement established a new Governance Committee to manage and coordinate the program. The 11-member committee operates under the authority of Sec. 4 of the Endangered Species Act.

The group makes decisions by consensus; when consensus is not possible, votes are taken. Ten of the eleven members are voting members; 9 of 10 votes must be affirmative to act.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.platteriver.org

LESSONS LEARNED

David Freeman reported some of the lessons learned by participants in the Platte River program in "Organizing for Endangered and Threatened Species Habitat in the Platte River Basin" (2003):

- "Negotiations are...fundamentally about building social and political coalitions of organizations far beyond the halls of Governance Committee deliberations, coalitions of actors who actually manage the water and wildlife habitat along the river."
- "Negotiations were sustained by virtue of the fact that neither the states nor [FWS] could compel the other to do its bidding...each side needs the other as collaborator."

PUGET SOUND

LOCATION: WASHINGTON

BACKGROUND: THE SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND

WHO'S ON THE RECOVERY COUNCIL?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

4

STATE AGENCIES:

3

LOCAL GOV.:

13

TRIBES:

4

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

7

Puget Sound is an estuary in northwestern Washington State where the Pacific Ocean mixes with fresh water draining from more than 10,000 streams and rivers. In the Puget Sound watershed, salmon recovery efforts led by local, state, tribal, and federal agencies as well as other stakeholders have been underway for decades, but have historically operated in isolation from one another, resulting in redundancy, confusion, and the erosion of public support. In response to this situation, a more collaborative approach was launched in 2001: the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound. Through its Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council, the Shared Strategy has created a forum for federal,

state, local, and tribal governments as well as other stakeholders to collaboratively develop a comprehensive and coordinated framework for salmon recovery. The initial

bull trout. Eventually, the Recovery Council also intends to develop plans that will promote thriving stocks of all species—and thereby preempt potential future listings. The 33-member



Recovery Council operates under the authority of Sec. 4 of the Endangered Species Act, uses professional facilitation, makes decisions by

responsibility of the Recovery Council is to develop a broadly supported, practical, and cost-effective recovery plan for the three federally listed salmonids in Puget Sound—the Chinook, Hood Canal summer chum, and

consensus, and receives administrative support from full-time Shared Strategy staff. The Shared Strategy is funded by contributions from state and federal agencies.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org

www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/

LESSONS LEARNED

In the Shared Strategy's May 2007 E-Bulletin, Executive Director Jim Kramer reflected on key factors critical for the successful implementation of the Shared Strategy:

- Many people and organizations must work together in a coordinated way over time.
- Salmon recovery will be a dynamic and evolving process. We must try different tactics and ask what worked well, and what can we do better?
- It is imperative to use funds efficiently, and to get results. Public support and the future of Puget Sound depend on it. We must let people know what is happening in their communities and how their tax dollars are making a difference.

SAN JUAN RIVER

LOCATION: COLORADO, ARIZONA, UTAH, NEW MEXICO

BACKGROUND: SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

4

STATE AGENCIES:

3

LOCAL GOV.:

0

TRIBES:

4

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

2

The San Juan River is a tributary of the Colorado River that drains 38,000 mi² of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico. During the mid-20th century, water was diverted from the San Juan for industrial, municipal, and agricultural purposes. The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program was initiated in 1992 to conserve and recover populations of two endangered fish species in the San Juan River Basin—the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker—while allowing water development to proceed in compliance with federal and state laws, interstate compacts, Supreme Court decrees, and federal trust responsibilities to the Southern Utes, Ute Mountain Utes, Jicarillas, and

the Navajos. Specifically, the program was designed to allow two irrigation projects—the Animas-La Plata Project and the Navajo Indian Irrigation Pro-



ject—to proceed without further impacting the endangered fish. The program is managed by a 13-member Coordination Com-

mittee composed of representatives of federal and state agencies, tribal governments, and stakeholders representing water users and environmental interests. The purpose of the Coordination Committee is to ensure that the goals of the program are achieved in a timely manner. Towards this end, the committee is responsible for establishing program policies, direction, procedures, and organization, as well as approving annual work plans and budgets and managing conflicts. The committee operates under the authority of Sec. 4 of the Endangered Species Act. A representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service serves as chair. Decisions are made by 2/3 majority vote.

TO LEARN MORE:

www.fws.gov/southwest/sjrip/index.html

www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/rm/sjrip/index.html

LESSONS LEARNED

Brent Uilenberg (BOR) has worked with the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River RIP programs since 1992 and 1999, respectively. In a telephone interview, Uilenberg remarked:

“The Upper Colorado program really served as a model for the San Juan program, but frankly, the former is much more effective. The key difference between the two programs is their decision-making mechanisms. The Upper Colorado program uses consensus-based decision-making, which forces diligent framing of issues and thorough exploration of parties’ positions. The San Juan program uses a 2/3 majority vote, which politicizes decision-making and creates an undercurrent of lobbying and an “us versus them” mentality. It is really a leap of faith to commit to consensus-based decision-making, but from my experience, it’s the only way to go.”

UPPER COLORADO RIVER

LOCATION: COLORADO, WYOMING, UTAH

BACKGROUND: UPPER COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

WHO'S ON THE GOVERNING COMMITTEE?

FEDERAL AGENCIES:

4

STATE AGENCIES:

3

LOCAL GOV.:

0

TRIBES:

0

OTHER

STAKEHOLDERS:

6

The Upper Colorado River, upstream of the Glen Canyon Dam, was engineered over the late 19th and 20th centuries to support agricultural irrigation, power generation, and urban development. After the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, four fish—the Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, razorback sucker, and bonytail—were listed as endangered. The Bureau of Reclamation began consulting with the Fish and Wildlife Service as to the impacts of water projects on these species. By 1988, the Secretary of the Interior, administrator of the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), and the governors of Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah signed a cooperative agreement estab-

lishing the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program. The objective of the Program is to simultaneously recover the



endangered fish and allow water development to proceed. The Program is managed and coordinated by a Governing Committee composed of repre-

sentatives of federal and state agencies as well as various stakeholder interests, such as water users and environmental advocacy groups. The Govern-

ing Committee was established pursuant to Sec. 4 of the Endangered Species Act, and is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The committee is chaired by a representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Decisions are made by consensus among the representa-

tives of the federal and state agencies; water users and environmental groups participate in pre-decisional discussion, but not decision-making.

TO LEARN MORE:

[www.fws.gov/
coloradoriverrecovery/](http://www.fws.gov/coloradoriverrecovery/)

[www.r6.fws.gov/crrip/
index.htm](http://www.r6.fws.gov/crrip/index.htm)

LESSONS LEARNED

As a representative of water development interests, Tom Pitts (Water Consult Engineering and Planning Consultants) has been involved with the development and implementation of the Upper Colorado program since 1983, as well as with similar programs on the San Juan (since 1989), the Platte (1985-1995), and the Middle Rio Grande (since 1999). In a telephone interview, Pitts remarked:

“The Upper Colorado program is the best model I’ve ever seen of people working together. [...] Decision-making by unanimous consensus can work; it’s worked since the beginning of the program on every major decision, from work plans to budgets. It works because everyone has a high stake in the success of the program; the program *has* to work; there is no good alternative to it. [...] In the San Juan, the supermajority vote has convoluted the process, and created hard feelings.”