



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

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NEWS RELEASE

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Releases for Endangered Fish Begin

LAKESWOOD, Colo. – Coordinated releases from a series of Upper Colorado River Basin reservoirs began yesterday afternoon and are anticipated to carry on through early next week as part of the Coordinated Reservoirs Operations Program. The program benefits the endangered fish of the Upper Colorado River Basin.

The Coordinated Reservoir Operations program was established in 1995 as part of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. Its purpose is to enhance spring peak flows in a section of the Colorado River upstream of Grand Junction, Colo., determined critical to the survival of four endangered fish species: the humpback chub, razorback sucker, bonytail and the Colorado pikeminnow. In years with sufficient snowpack, surplus inflows to the reservoirs can be passed on downstream to benefit these fish without impacting reservoir yield.

Coordinated Reservoir Operations were last conducted in 2010. In 2011 and 2014, wet conditions caused streamflows in certain areas of the basin to approach or exceed levels associated with minor flooding, so peak augmentation was not performed. In 2012 and 2013, reservoirs did not have surplus inflow to contribute due to extremely dry conditions.

Managers of the reservoirs completed a conference call yesterday, agreeing to voluntarily run the program this year. Warm and dry conditions in early spring made it seem unlikely there would be a coordinated reservoir release to enhance a pronounced peak flow. Above average precipitation throughout May increased the forecasted streamflows and reservoir inflows, and reservoir operators determined coordinated peak augmentation is now possible. Planned reservoir operations are described below. Release and flow amounts are approximate.

Granby Reservoir, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation and Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, is currently releasing 1000 cfs and will increase releases to 1800 cfs over the next few days.

Colorado River Energy Distributors Association - Colorado Water Congress - National Park Service - State of Colorado

State of Utah - State of Wyoming - The Nature Conservancy - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Utah Water Users Association - Western Area Power Administration - Western Resource Advocates - Wyoming Water Association

Due to high inflows in previous weeks, Green Mountain Reservoir, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, has already increased its releases to maximum powerplant capacity of 1500 cfs and will not increase releases further as part of 2015 Coordinated Reservoir Operations. Releases from Green Mountain include inflows bypassed by Dillon Reservoir, operated by Denver Water.

Denver Water also operates Williams Fork Reservoir, which is currently releasing 270 cfs. Releases may increase later in the week if inflows increase, but may not exceed 500 cfs.

Wolford Mountain Reservoir, operated by the Colorado River Water Conservation District, is currently passing inflows of 450 cfs. Outflows will be increased to 650 cfs.

Ruedi Reservoir, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, which is releasing 200 cfs, will increase releases to 650 cfs over the next few days.

Increased outflows from the participating reservoirs may continue through early next week. The Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC) has incorporated these planned reservoir operations into their streamflow forecasts. Based on weather forecasts and planned reservoir operations, flows at Cameo are anticipated to be approximately 15,000 – 16,000 cfs for June 4 – June 10.

More detailed information about forecasted streamflows in the Colorado River basin are available from the CBRFC website at www.cbrfc.noaa.gov. A map-based interface allows viewing of hydrographs detailing recent, current and anticipated flows.

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The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program is a cooperative partnership of local, state and federal agencies, water developers, power customers and environmental groups established in 1988 to recover the endangered fishes while water development proceeds in accordance with federal and state laws and interstate compacts.

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