

Request for Proposals
Native Fish Synthesis and Identification of Management Possibilities to Protect 3 Species

Request for Proposals – Synthesis of Native Fish status and needs on the Dolores River between McPhee Reservoir and the confluence with the San Miguel River for the project: **“A Way Forward: The Dolores River Below McPhee Reservoir” or “A Way Forward”**.

To: Aquatic Biologists, with knowledge and experience with three Native Fish: Roundtail Chub, Flannel Mouth Sucker, and Bluehead Sucker

From: The Legislative Subcommittee working in conjunction with the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group (San Juan Citizens Alliance as Fiscal Agent)

Deadline: 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 25, 2010

Contact: Please send proposals to Marsha Porter-Norton, porternorton@bresnan.net, Facilitator for the Legislative Subcommittee. Phone: 970-247-8306

Questions: Questions can be submitted to the Legislative Subcommittee via email to Marsha Porter-Norton at the above email address.

I – History, background and description of the “A Way Forward” Project

This effort is organized by the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group’s – Legislative Subcommittee (hereinafter referred to as “the Subcommittee”). The Lower Dolores Plan Working Group was formed through the Dolores River Dialogue (DRD) in 12/08 and met their charge in finding an alternative to the WSR suitability status on the river. In 3/10, the Working Group reached consensus to pursue federal legislation as that alternative. This legislation, if passed, would establish a National Conservation Area and permanently remove WSR suitability from below McPhee Reservoir to either Bedrock or the confluence with the San Miguel River. The Working Group further appointed an eleven-member Legislative Subcommittee, including two members who are Ex-Officio (see list below), to develop the parameters and principles of the legislation. The Subcommittee, after meeting numerous times, agreed to much of the legislation’s content and so did the larger Working Group at its 7/10 meeting. However, several unresolved issues remain around flows and Native Fish. The Subcommittee believes that a greater priority needs to be put on the Native Fish. Past efforts to gain consensus among key stakeholders about the exact status of the Native Fish, as well as options for management, has generally met with a lack of consensus and considerable disagreement. Thus, the Legislative Subcommittee decided that a more flexible, transparent and participatory approach should be taken and it is called: **A Way Forward: The Dolores River Below McPhee Reservoir** (hereinafter referred to as “A Way Forward”).

“A Way Forward” is an inquiry into the status of Native Fish on the Lower Dolores River combined with a multi-stakeholder consensus-building process that is intended to result in “do-able” alternatives while honoring water rights and Dolores Project allocations. This project brings about a unique “marriage” of linked but often diverse interests. Water managers and users have a high interest in avoiding a listing of Native Fish by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A USFWS listing could *involuntarily* divert Dolores Project storage water downstream, and thus would dramatically hurt the economies and agriculture bases in Dolores and Montezuma Counties. Next, many groups and individuals in the conservation and environmental communities are interested in improving the status of the fisheries below McPhee and specifically the Native Fish. The Roundtail Chub -- one of three Native Fish on the Lower Dolores -- was singled out by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as an “Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV)” and is one reason for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) suitability status on the Lower Dolores River. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) is charged with managing the fisheries below the dam including a cold water and warm water fishery. Thus, water managers, conservationists, federal and state agencies, and local governments -- as well as the public at large -- have a **common interest** in resolving management issues about the Native Fish.

The ultimate goal and deliverables of “A Way Forward” are: an objective scientific report, using available sources on what is known about the status of Native Fish below McPhee Dam, opportunities to improve their status, an evaluation of how opportunities for improvement can be undertaken within the available water supply, and institutional requirements for any changes in management needed to pursue do-able opportunities.

The Legislative Subcommittee is seeking external and professional scientific guidance, through hiring three science contractors, on the status and needs of Native Fish, and how a range of management opportunities can be discussed with a focus on identifying “do-able” alternatives. The contractors will work with the Subcommittee and a Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel that is designed to work with, provide direction to and support the scientific work by the selected scientists. The members of the Legislative Subcommittee and the Oversight Panel are listed below.

Please refer to Attachment B for a map of the Area of Focus.

II - Scope of Work - Individual science contractors will complete their work in three phases including:

- Phase I: Science contractors will review the list of scientific data, studies, etc. established by the *Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel* and will individually respond to key questions posed by the panel about the Native Fish. While contractors are not being asked to do primary field research, they are free to draw on their own experiences, resources and contacts that are pertinent to the questions posed.
- Phase II: Working with the *Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel* as well as the Legislative Subcommittee, the science contractors will then suggest “do-able” alternatives based on available hydrologic information and other water rights and Project constraints.

- Phase III: Produce a report, including recommendations, after consultation with the Legislative Subcommittee and the *Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel*, that synthesize best management opportunities for improving the status of the Native Fish while honoring existing water rights and Project constraints.

III - 3-species relationships to flow: preferred knowledge and experience

- Knowledge of spatial and temporal patterns of species habitat use
- Experience with the 3-species in a variety of settings, e.g., multiple rivers, and various institutional settings
- Experience with research on the relationship between fish and flow and/or experience developing science-based flow recommendations
- Experience with sensitive, threatened or endangered fish recovery
- Understanding of southwest aquatic ecosystems with information shared about any work done on the Lower Dolores River specifically
- Demonstrated understanding of river ecosystem management in a water management context, where choices must be made about competing demands for finite water supplies; specific experience or understanding of the Dolores Project should be explained
- Experience with fluvial geomorphologic relationships with long-term instream habitat dynamics
- A number of years of experience with native warmwater fish species
- Advanced degree – Ph.D. preferred or equivalent expertise
- Proven experience working collaboratively with teams of people who represent diverse interests
- A listing of any published material and relevant accomplishments
- Three references including name, affiliation, title, phone and email address

IV. Contractors will be provided with the following:

- A position paper published by CDOW concerning Native Fish in the Dolores River
- A technical memo on the Flannelmouth Sucker, produced by a DRD consultant
- A report on the Big Gypsum research site which includes a literature search on the Round Tail Chub
- Additional data and information about Native Fish in the Dolores as recommended by the Project Oversight Panel or as requested by contractors

- An example of the annual fish pool budget used to allocate approximately 32,000AF per year of releases out of McPhee Reservoir to support the fishery, along with background on how the fish pool is shorted during drought periods and enhanced in spill years
- A table that summarizes April through July runoff and acre feet of managed spills from 1987 to the present
- Access to hydrologic and reservoir operational criteria needed to complete Phase 2 of the Scope of Work (II above)
- Other such information as recommended by the A Way Forward Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel or as requested by contractors
- Note: contractors are expected and encouraged to bring any available and relevant information to the project

V. Contractors will provide the following:

- During Phase 1 (II above), each contractor will provide an independent written report on opportunities to improve the status of Native Fish on the Dolores River from McPhee Dam to the confluence with the San Miguel River, based on questions posed and information provided to and accessed by contractors.
- Phase 1 will culminate with a meeting in Cortez, Colorado at which time contractors present their independent analysis of opportunities to the Oversight Panel and Legislative Subcommittee, and receive input with regard to hydrologic and institutional constraints.
- During Phase 2, contractors will interact with one another, in the manner of their choosing, to work through areas of agreement and variations in their independent Phase 1 reports. Contractors will also be able to access needed information concerning hydrologic and institutional parameters.
- During Phase 3, one of the contractors will be selected to prepare a joint report on opportunities to improve the status of the Native Fish which reflects the level of consensus among all contractors.
- When the Phase 3 joint report is completed, contractors will make a second report to the Oversight Panel and Legislative Subcommittee in Cortez, Colorado on near, medium and longer term opportunities to improve the status of the Native fish. This report will conclude the formal work requirements of contractors.

VI. Contractor budget

- There will be three science contractors hired. One will serve in a coordination role and his/her total contract will not exceed \$22,500. The other two contracts will not exceed \$17,500.
- There will be up to three conference calls and/or in-person meetings among the three scientists hired with the Legislative Subcommittee and the Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel. These meetings will be held in Cortez, Colorado. Travel is paid including mileage, lodging and per diem. This amount will be negotiated separately.

VII. Proposal format and other information

- Proposals should be framed in terms of qualifications, approach, and services that can be provided within the above amounts. Proposals should also address any previous experience working in the area of focus as well as with multi-interest stakeholder groups. Published information and relevant accomplishments should be presented.
- The format of the proposals should be written in 12 point font, and should not exceed 20 pages in length including attachments. The narrative, any exhibits or attachments need to be placed in one .PDF file that can be easily shared electronically. Note: any published information, such as papers or journal articles, can be provided outside of the 20 page proposal limit.
- Applicants wishing to play a coordination role among the three contractors should indicate a desire and detail any previous experience in this area.
- The deadline is: 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 25th.
- Payments will be made on the basis of contractor invoices for services rendered, products delivered and expenses incurred.
- Any applicant wishing to review the “A Way Forward” work plan and any additional information about the project should email the facilitator, Marsha Porter-Norton (porternorton@bresnan.net).
- Extensive information about the Lower Dolores River, including science report, maps, public input documents, etc. can be found at: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/>. The “Lower Dolores Plan Working Group” and “Science Subcommittee” sections of the Web site are especially relevant.

VIII. Timeframe

- The goal is for the work of contractors to be completed in 6 months, beginning in November of 2010. The schedule may be adjusted by agreement of the parties.

IX – Members of the Legislative Subcommittee:

- ✓ Cole Crocker-Bedford (private landowner in the Lower Dolores Area)
- ✓ Amber Kelley (San Juan Citizens Alliance)
- ✓ Rick Gersch (Town of Dove Creek and oil/gas/minerals)
- ✓ Al Heaton (private landowner)
- ✓ Gerald Koppenhafer (Montezuma County Commissioner)
- ✓ Peter Mueller (The Nature Conservancy)
- ✓ Mike Preston (Dolores Water Conservancy District, manager)
- ✓ Jim Siscoe (Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company, manager)
- ✓ Jeff Widen (The Wilderness Society)
- ✓ Ernie Williams (Dolores County Commissioner)
- ✓ *Steve Beverlin of the Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM) and John Whitney with Congressman Salazar’s Office serve in an ex-officio capacity.

X – Members of the Scientific and Water User Oversight Panel

Panel Coordinators	Mike Preston, DWCD; Peter Mueller, TNC
Colorado Division of Wildlife	
Bureau of Reclamation	
US Fish and Wildlife Service, or USGS (Interior’s source of science)	
Dolores River Dialogue Hydrology Committee	Ken Curtis, DWCD Engineer; Shauna Jensen, BLM Hydrologist
Upper Colorado Recovery Program, or NGO Aquatic Biologist	John Sanderson, TNC
Division of Water Resources	Rege Leach, Division 7 Engineer
<p>All members of the Legislative Subcommittee need to evaluate scope of work and hire science contractors: Gerald Koppenhafer, Ernie Williams, Rick Gersch, Amber Kelley, Jeff Widen, Cole Crocker-Bedford, Jim Siscoe, Al Heaton, Steve Beverlin, and John Whitney</p>	

MAP of Area of Focus

