International Federation of Fly Fishers

November 13, 2014

Memorandum

To: Secretary's Designee, DOI, Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

From: John Jordan, AMWG Representative, Recreation Fishing Interests, IFFF/TU

Jerry Meyers, TWG Representative, Recreation Fishing Interests, IFFF/TU

John Hamill, TWG Alternate, Recreation Fishing Interests, IFFF/TRCP

Subject: Deterioration of the Lees Ferry Trout Fishery

We are writing to bring to your attention reports from fishing guides and fishermen of the rapid deterioration of the condition and health of rainbow trout in the Lees Ferry reach of the Colorado River. The deterioration appears to relate to increased water temperatures from the dam approaching 58 degrees F. and low midge and black fly production, the primary food supply for rainbow trout in the Lees Ferry reach. We are further concerned that for the month of November 2014, pre and post the High Flow Experiment (HFE) releases will be reduced significantly with fluctuations ranging from approximately 9,000 cfs during the daytime hours and 6,500 cfs at night. Typically, 8000 cfs has been the minimum flow from Glen Canyon Dam (GCD). Low flows from the dam in combination with warm water temperatures and low food supplies are likely to further stress rainbow trout and may lead to a serious decline in the quality of the fishery that could take many years to reverse. Such a decline would have a serious impact to recreational fishing and to local lodge, restaurant, and guiding businesses, whose viability depends on a high quality and reliable trout fishery.

We want to encourage the Department of the Interior to consider actions to alleviate the factors that are adversely impacting the rainbow trout fishery. Short term actions would involve increasing pre and post HFE releases from GCD in November 2014 to maintain a minimum flow of 8000 cfs. Long term actions include:

- Expediting the evaluation of a Temperature Control Device that has the capability to release cold and water from the dam. We believe that increasing water temperature not only poses a serious threat to the trout in Lee Ferry but will also impact the native fishes (including the endangered humpback chub) by creating conditions that allow for the invasion of cool and warm water fishes into the Colorado River below GCD.
- Taking experimental actions that will increase the production and diversity of aquatic invertebrates in the Colorado River below GCD, especially mayflies, stoneflies, and caddis flies. We believe that action to enhance the foodbase will benefit both trout, native fishes and the riparian bird community.
- Fully consider the condition of the Lee Ferry trout fishery when determining the timing and duration of HFEs, developing the pre- and post-HFE flow regimes, establishing minimum flows, and testing of trout management flows.

- Only testing trout management flows when the rainbow trout fishery is healthy and a large cohort of young rainbow trout is present.
- Requesting GCMRC in coordination with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to convene a workshop of tailwater fishery experts to review current data and develop management recommendations for enhancing the quality and reliability of Lee ferry trout fishery consistent with the goals for native fish downstream.
- Develop an implementation plan and necessary compliance to allow for stocking of trout in the event of a collapse of the fishery.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns and recommended actions in more detail.

cc Superintendent, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Chairman, Arizona Game and Fish Commission
IFFF
TU
Terry Gunn, Lee Ferry Anglers
TWG
AMWG
Chief, GCMRC, USGS