

United States Department of the Interior

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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In reply refer to:
AESO/SE
22410-2011-F-0100
22410-2011-F-0112

October 10, 2012

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Upper Colorado Regional Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Salt Lake City, UT (UC-731)

From: Field Supervisor

Subject: Change in Proposed Action for Non-Native Fish Control Downstream From Glen Canyon Dam and Notification of Biological Monitoring Components for November, 2012, High Flow Experiment

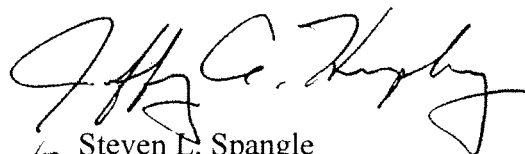
This memorandum responds to your October 3, 2012, memorandum concerning the subject Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) programs. These actions were included in the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) final biological opinion (FBO) dated December 23, 2011, for the Non-Native Fish Control (NNFC) and High Flow Experiments (HFE) environmental assessments.

As stated in your memorandum, the documentation of whirling disease at the Lees Ferry rainbow trout fishery in 2012 by Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) has significant consequences for the 2012 test removal trips for rainbow trout removal in the Paria-Badger Rapid (PBR) reach of the Colorado River at and below Lees Ferry. These two trips were intended to evaluate the effectiveness of mechanical removal of rainbow trout in the PBR reach to effectively reduce rainbow trout emigration downstream prior to initiation of larger-scale removal efforts (up to 10 trips could be scheduled in any one year from 2011-2020) in the reach. With the documentation of whirling disease, it is not possible to implement live removal of rainbow trout from the PBR reach with subsequent transport of the fish to stocking sites elsewhere in Arizona. The 2012 test removals would have provided information on implementation of such removal and transport. As you describe in your memorandum, other information that would be gained from continuing with the removals in 2012 is already available from other ongoing research and monitoring in Grand Canyon. Thus, not conducting the 2012 PBR trips does not significantly affect our knowledge of rainbow trout in Grand Canyon, and does not affect our findings in our December 23, 2011, FBO. This change does not require reinitiation of formal consultation as defined in 50 CFR §402.16.

The FWS has considerable interest in the potential effects to native and non-native fish and the aquatic food base from the implementation of a fall HFE. We understand that the conditions to

support a fall HFE have been met, and the Secretary of the Interior has determined that an HFE will occur in November, 2012. The effects of a spring HFE to these resources was documented after the 2008 HFE and significant issues related to rainbow trout population increases were identified. We have reviewed the list of monitoring actions that are ongoing in Grand Canyon that will provide information to assess the effects of the fall HFE on these biological resources and believe it to be sufficient to inform us of significant issues resulting from a fall HFE. We do have one concern; official publication of results from the monitoring after the 2008 spring HFE did not occur until 2010 and 2011. We understand that preparing these reports for official distribution by U.S. Geological Survey/Grand Canyon Monitoring and Resource Center (USGS/GCMRC) is a complex process. However, it is important that the findings from this monitoring be available to us prior to any subsequent fall HFE events taking place. We understand you are working with USGS/GCMRC on this concern.

Thank you for your continuing coordination on implementation of the NNFC and HFC programs and their effects to biological resources. If there are other questions, or we may assist in any way, please contact Ms. Lesley Fitzpatrick of my staff at (602) 242-0210 (x236) or me (x244).



for Steven L. Spangle

cc: Regional Director, Southwest Region, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM
 (ES; FARC)
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