"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not."

— Dr. Seuss, from The Lorax
The ‘PURPOSE’ Of Recovery?

My Biological Bias

Endangered Species Act

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species,...
Everyone Seems to have a different ‘Concept’ of RECOVERY.

*ecosystems* upon which endangered species and threatened species *depend* may be conserved,

The River Ecosystem included the *Entire* floodplain. The channel was one component; isolated oxbows were another. RBS and BT did not *depend* solely on the river channel. They also *depended* on *isolated oxbows*. *We can’t restore the river but we can build and manage oxbow habitats.*
Second part of that:

...to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species,..

One Definition of Conservation is:

“Natural Preservation.”

Shouldn’t conservation include: Survival, Natural Recruitment, Natural Sustainability, and Natural Selection?
Successes and Failures:
MSCP & RIP are Political Marvels!

- Have prevented RBS & BT extinction,
- FWS is preventing **LEGAL TRAIN WRECKS**, 
- MWD & Districts are removing water, 
- WAPA is making power, 
- FWS & USBR got more work & $$ $$ $, 
- States keep their fisheries, 
- Environmental groups secured funding, 
- **NO Environmental GUARANTEES!**
Failure?
Only to a small minority.
For Native Fish it’s a Nightmare!

- Recovery comes 2nd to Social-Economical Needs,
  Ecosystem Recovery “with” Water Development?
- Failure to DOWN LIST,
- Failed the RBS & BT biologically, Populations & Natural recruitment,
- Failed to come to terms with predation, Biologically or Politically
- Lack of effective Conservation measures,
- Lack of accountability!
What is Hindering Recovery - Conservation?

- 3 Evils: Denial + Conformity + $$$$$$
- INEFFECTIVE Federal Leadership (4),
- POOR Resource Stewardship (F&S),
- No Penalty for Failure,
- PREDATION!!!!!!!
- Unrealistic Expectations,
- Politics (Personal, Intra-Interagency,
  Clients don’t complain!
- The Process is the PRODUCT!
  Effort INSURES the Status-Quo!
Graded Examples

- **Upper Basin Recovery** F
  - 23 yrs into a 15 year program,
  - Wild BT & RBS are gone,
  - Mitigation features ineffective,
  - Failed to Implement Conservation,
    - Ignored the ‘oxbow’ component,
  - Chose “ALL” or “NOTHING”.
Graded Examples

- Main Stem Stocking  F--*
- Decades of DENIAL and it continues!,
- Predation is ineffectively addressed in UB and ignored in the LB,
- Domestication* issues are ignored,
- No Stocking Survival Criteria!,
- “Perfecting FAILURE!”
Graded Examples

“Management”
- Desert pupfish success!
- Devil Hole Catastrophe times 2,
- Cibola, 5 years to renovate??
- State opposed NFM at 3 Fingers Lake w/o comparable sportfish benefits,
- Davis Cove changed back to grow-out?
- “Mohave” genetic stock squandered!
Graded Examples

- Imperial Ponds  F+
- Good workshop & innovative design!
- No Construction oversight FWS??
- Construction costs trumped Biological criteria ($$/acre!)
- MSCP Mitigation DOESN’T have to work!!
- Problem addressed by more research and engineering studies! (keep busy!)
Graded Examples

- San Juan RIP & Grand Canyon Project  B & B
- Unified Agency Support!!
- Native Fish Management Reaches!
- NFM at the detriment of sport fish!
  With concerted effort!
- Native Fish response is encouraging,
- Will they sustain effort?
What Can We Do?

- STOP the DENIAL about predation,
- Focus funding to Minckley’s Plan,
- COMMIT TO MANAGEMENT,
- Stop Sacrificial Stocking!
  - Put production back in the wild,
- Secure Mohave Brood Stock!
- More Resource Agency oversight!
- Take OWNERSHIP of these FISH
  - States have plan “B”!
“It’s Easy to Say you care a whole awful lot, But if these fish disappear, it’s Your Agency’s Fault.  Is it not?”

--- Gordon (Lorax) Mueller
Inn Keeper & City Councilman
Bennington, NE