Upper Colorado River
Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Summary Dated: March 1, 2012

Information and Education Committee Webinar
March 1, 2012 – 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Summary

Participants: Kara Lamb, Justyn Hock, John Shields, Leith Edgar, Pat Martinez, Joann Perea-Richmann, Randy Hampton, Sharon Whitmore, Martha Moore, Debbie Felker, Tom Chart, and Angela Kantola.

1. **Review of work planning materials** – The Committee had no revisions to the current drafts. John Shields noted the passage of the bill yesterday related to the San Joaquin and article that appeared in the Sacramento Bee, with the issue being portrayed as fish vs. people. John thinks our Program is going to have to take on some of the rhetoric being spoken about these issues on the Hill. We need to make the distinction that in our Program, it's fish ***and*** people. We should be thinking about how we'll go about that. Randy agreed the Committee does need to consider this (as well as the continuing controversy in the Klamath, the recent publications about the June Sucker, etc. (discussions of fish vs. people, the value of fish, etc.) Randy suggests that we highlight the Program's successes. John said he's torn between trying to get out there and tell our story (e.g., via an op ed piece) or just respond to questions in one-on-one meetings, etc. We don't want to appear to be pointing out weaknesses of other programs. John suggested we at least prepare a short (2-page) white paper with talking points on this so we are prepared. Pat Martinez noted that these stories get amplified at the national level when there's a big conflict with water use. John agreed; back in 1983 we had the potential for such conflict, but we've avoided that with this Program. Pat cautioned that in trying to portray the positives of this Program, we need to be careful not to amplify the conflicts that do exist with sportfishing. We fully intend to have viable sportfisheries, but that doesn't mean northern pike in every available water, for example. Tom Chart agreed that these national debates shine a positive light on our Program, but we want to be careful not to fuel the fires in other recovery efforts that are contentious in other parts of the country. John Shields suggested we focus on the fact that we're responsibly trying to *solve* the problems. Randy agreed, and said we can also talk about how we have everyone at the table – resources are best managed by having everyone responsible for and who use the resources working together. Leith agreed it's good to exercise caution; in "taking on" politicians, they have everything to gain, and we as conservationists, have everything to lose – we don't want to get into a back-and-forth with politicians. >Debbie will draft talking points, with help from Randy, John, and Pat. This will be strictly a *draft* document to get folks ready for conversations anticipated on the Hill. Randy suggested we can review some of these national stories and consider how we would respond to similar criticisms, so this group will share current articles with each other.

2. **Discuss draft outreach section for Upper Colorado River Basin nonnative and invasive aquatic species prevention and control strategy** – Randy sent the draft to the Committee last week. Pat Martinez said he thought the comments improved the original. Pat asked about a bullet point in the marketing strategies section that the Program would work on eliminating "mixed messages" in policies and promotion by Program partners; Randy said he'd made a note to add that. Angela suggested adding some context for what we've done in the past (it may help to make these bullet items). Angela asked about the "proper fish locations" (this will be deleted). Angela recommended deleting attitude survey references, since we have a pretty good idea of public attitudes and if we had funds available, we probably would not choose to conduct another survey. Randy said the attitude survey is one of the only pieces of social science we've attempted. Randy doesn't disagree there would be better uses of the funds if we had them; however, we might want to fall back on the fact that we at least conducted the one survey. Angela suggested revising the wording to say we did the survey, here were the results, and if we had need, it could be repeated. Randy said he thinks he can reword the section along these lines. Leith – if we could get someone to do this pro bono, it would be value added, though. Kara reminded us that the Committee's decision not to survey again also has to do with the federal government's restrictions on how these surveys are conducted. Shields said just getting OMB clearances for a survey for the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Work Group is taking years and $35K. Therefore, if we were using Federal funds, this would be a very complicated process. John Shields asked if we might discuss the socio-economic impact assessment a little more broadly than the survey (e.g., the Loomis paper that discusses costs we've avoided through having this Program, references to costs of managing invasive species [for which Pat Martinez probably has references]). Pat said he also has references about impacts to family-friendly sportfisheries when large, predatory nonnative fish are introduced and the resulting impacts to sportfish economics. Randy said he's open to adding this. Tom Chart suggested putting these issues (e.g., impacts to recreation, economics, attitudinal surveys, etc.) in the broad context of social science. Angela asked about including the concept of native fish conservation areas; this is covered elsewhere in the document, but the question is should it be part of our messaging. Randy said we could add that concept back in where we had talked about "proper fish locations." John Shields asked why the messaging basics section is so far down in the section. Randy said it's structured to show where we've been and where we're moving. >Randy will draft changes and get those back to the group. John Shields recalled an old idea of a "wanted poster" of the nonnative fish of concern, saying he thinks it's very helpful to put a "face" with these "bad actor" nonnative species. Tom Chart said this is great, but needs to be in the context of our primary messages of what the Program does for water users, etc.

3. **D.C. Briefing Trip update** – John Shields said the non-Federal participants of the two recovery programs are finishing arrangements for their upcoming visit to the Hill and to other offices in D.C. (March 14-20). The visit will include the 9th annual congressional staff appreciation luncheon on Friday, with Kyra Finkler of Reclamation addressing Reclamation's key role in both programs in terms of capital projects and benefits to Reclamation and its constituents from these Programs. (John mentioned that we might get another article in *Irrigation Leader* magazine as a result of this presentation.) As currently scheduled, the trip participants will be able to meet with the Utah delegation all together, so that will be very helpful. John Shields is working to schedule a meeting with Rep. Tom McClintock and subcommittee staff, since we still don't have a bill before the House to extend authorization for use of power revenues for all purposes in the recovery programs.

John said they're also working to get letters signed by all four State governors supporting the $8.4M in Reclamation's budget and the funds in the base budgets for FWS in recovery and Ouray hatchery operations.

4. **I&E update –** Debbie provided the following update:

The *Highlights 2011-2012* briefing document is at the printer and will be delivered to our office next week. Everyone should have received an electronic version. It will be posted to our website next week.

Thank you to Randy Hampton who helped staff our exhibit at the Colorado Water Congress Annual Meeting in January. Randy also arranged for bonytail to be brought for the exhibit from Colorado's J.W. Mumma Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility in Alamosa. The fish that were displayed are now at home in an aquarium at the Recovery Program office. During her presentation at the conference, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science Anne Castle praised both our program and the San Juan Program for our successes.

Zane Olsen with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources will bring bonytail from Wahweap Fish Hatchery for our exhibit at the Utah Water Users Workshop in St. George, March 13-14. Fish and Wildlife Service Hydrologist Jana Mohrman, Joann Perea-Richmann from the San Juan Program and I will staff the exhibit with Zane.

Recognizing 75th anniversaries. On behalf of the Recovery Program, Tom Chart will acknowledge the 75th anniversary of three Colorado water organizations at their respective board meetings – Northern Water on April 13, the Colorado River Water Conservation District on April 17, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board at a date still to be determined.

I'm still working on interpretive sign replacements for Grand Junction area. I will also be contacting researchers with CO and UT to see if they need new or replacement signs to post along the rivers where anglers might catch endangered fish.

Endangered Species Day is May 18. I will contact the Denver Aquarium again to ask if we can come down that day with our educational materials.

As we've discussed, we have a lot of work to do related to nonnative fish issues. I will be working with some of our committee and Pat Martinez to update our q&as, fact sheets and other materials for this year's field season.

With the help of researchers working within Dinosaur National Monument, National Park Service staff continues to include Recovery Program educational materials in packets they give out with boat permits.

Thanks to efforts of our researchers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Colorado State University biologists met in February with Dinosaur National Monument staff to advise them of upcoming research projects within the monument. These efforts are building a stronger positive relationship between our program and the monument.

We continue to rely on all of our program partners and staff to identify opportunities to meet the program's outreach goals and appreciate everyone's efforts in this regard.

5. **Roundtable updates** –

   Leith said he'd like to work with those interested on a subcommittee for social media, as he thinks we're currently missing opportunities to get some of our good content on that platform. Let him know if you'd like to participate; the group might have a monthly conference call.

   Justyn said the Horsethief ponds will be completed in June. She will work with Debbie on a press release (Randy asked to keep Mike Porras in the loop on that since the site is jointly managed with CPW). The final Aspinall EIS was released and a Record of Decision is expected in the next couple of months.

   John said Wyoming's Green River Advisory Group will meet June 11. He will bring the *Highlights* briefing book to hand out and give an update on the recovery programs.

   Kara said the final EA on 10,825 is anticipated later this spring. Reclamation also is gearing up for annual public presentations up in the Roaring Fork Valley. Kara said they're almost done with the video for the anniversaries of their transbasin diversion projects. This might be a good opportunity to have a Program booth at a public event to be held at Pueblo Reservoir on August 18.

   Martha said she and Debbie and others took part in the recent webinar on endangered species messaging; Martha thought it was a very good presentation. One helpful message is "extinction is forever," we were reminded to try not to use the word "species," and the presenters provided a helpful "good words/bad words" list. John said he thought the materials were excellent and he shared them with D.C. trip participants not already on the I&E list.

   Joann said a water user outreach program scheduled for April was canceled. She will be at the Utah water users meeting in St. George.

   Randy said the CPW Commission has added burbot and rusty crayfish to Colorado's prohibited species list. Randy showed the Committee CPW's draft fishing brochure, which has pictures of the endangered fish, and addresses aquatic invasive species and illegal stocking. CPW will do a press release when the brochure goes out that will highlight these additions. Tom Chart thanked Colorado for those changes to the brochure.

6. **Discussion of committee member commitment and participation** – Randy led a discussion with Committee members after Program staff (except Debbie) left the webinar to encourage members' to be open about any restraints they may have related to their committee involvement.

7. **Schedule next meeting** – Debbie suggested hosting a meeting in Grand Junction to make it easier for some folks to travel, and including a morning site visit. Randy suggested it might

be good to schedule the Committees' annual face-to-face meeting in July instead of Feb/March. The next meeting will be Thursday, July 19, 2012, in Grand Junction.