

Trip Report
March 13 through March 19, 2002
2002 Washington, D. C. Briefing
Meetings

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish
Recovery Implementation Program
And
San Juan River Basin Recovery
Implementation Program

Prepared by John Shields, Chairman, Upper Colorado Program Management Committee
Reviewed and Approved by the Management Committee on April 29, 2002

CAVEAT: This trip report has been prepared based on notes, recollections and observations made during the course of the briefing group's briefings. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author and do not constitute either a Program position or the views or opinions of any of the program participants, including the Department of the Interior agencies.

SYNOPSIS AND PURPOSE: During the period March 13th through March 19th, representatives of the non-federal participants in the Upper Colorado Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Programs¹ met with Members of Congress and their staffs to brief them on the status of the two endangered fish recovery programs and to seek their support for Program funding included in the President's proposed fiscal year 2003 budget. The group met with the Congressional delegations of the States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, and Congressional committee staff for the authorizing and appropriations committees having jurisdiction over the Bureau of Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife Service, Administration officials (including the Office of Management and Budget) and several other entities. The meetings addressed three matters:

1. Status of the Recovery Program and its accomplishments, including the anticipated upcoming publication in the *Federal Register* of the notice of availability of the recovery goals for the four species of endangered fish (including the need, basis, development and proposed content of those goals).
2. Fiscal Year 2003 funding needs and inclusion of Recovery Program funding line-items in the budgets for the USFWS and the Bureau of Reclamation included in the in the President's Fiscal Year 2003 recommended budget to meet those needs.
3. Our progress in implementing the provisions of Public Law 106-392, authorizing cost sharing for the remaining capital construction projects for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program and providing a stabilized source of annual "base" funding, and to report on the status of the States' cost-sharing to be contributed pursuant to this newly enacted law.

At each meeting, our group recognized the importance of past funding support from the Congress as being a key element of the progress that these two programs are making and explained the continuing need for funding and the uses and benefits being obtained with Program funding. Joint-delegation letters addressed to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies (expressing funding support for specific funding amounts included within line-items in the President's FY 2003 recommended Bureau of Reclamation and

¹ Program participants represented at most of the briefing meetings were the three involved States of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, water users and environmental groups. New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission representatives participated in the meetings with the New Mexico Congressional Delegation staff members. Representatives of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation participated in the briefings for the purpose of answering technical questions concerning the fishes' life history, habitat needs, Program accomplishments and anticipated activities (including the finalization of the draft recovery goals).

USFWS budgets for these two recovery programs) were circulated on Capitol Hill last week. Copies of the funding support letters submitted to the appropriations subcommittees by Governors Owens, Leavitt and Geringer and the New Mexico State Engineer were provided to legislative staff at each meeting. In addition, letters of support have been submitted by a number of water user interests and municipalities and the water users' Program representative provided either copies of those letters or noted their submittal at each of the briefing meetings.

As measured by having nearly all of the signatures of the House Members of Congress and a plurality of the Senators' signatures (two of the Senators do not, as a matter of policy, sign funding support letters on account of their membership on the Appropriations Committee) from the four involved states on the joint delegation letters, we have again amply demonstrated the support of our Congressional delegations for fiscal year 2003 funding for these two recovery programs. Eleven of thirteen House members signed the letters of support for Program funding (Rep. Skeen, as an Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman, doesn't sign funding support letters; Rep. Hefley was unwilling, again this year, to sign on). In the Senate, four of the eight Senators signed letters which our Committee had drafted expressing funding support. We received a number of compliments for our efforts – including the Program's successes, the quality of the briefing materials and the presentations made, the approaches we are using and our repeated visits to these offices each year. In particular, the author wants to note that the briefing with Rep. McInnis, Rep. Diana DeGette's Legislative Assistant, Senator Bob Bennett's Legislative Assistant and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation garnered particularly pleasing praise.

A copy of our briefing booklet used for these visits can be downloaded from the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program's Internet home page (www.r6.fws.gov/coloradoriver/). The letters of support submitted by Governors Geringer, Leavitt and Owens, New Mexico State Engineer Tom Turney and the water users will be posted on that website as well, along with the executed joint delegation funding support letters signed by the members of the Congressional delegations of the States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

The objectives of the trip were met. A list of those who participated in the meetings/briefings is provided below. Not all participants were in Washington, D.C. during the entire period of the trip nor did all participate in each meeting, nonetheless the roster provides a listing of all who participated in one or more meetings.

TRIP PARTICIPANTS:

The group representing the two recovery programs consisted of:

- John Shields – Wyoming
- Robert Morgan, Executive Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources
- Robert King – Utah
- Tom Blickensderfer – Colorado
- Tom Pitts – Upper Colorado River Basin and San Juan River Basin Water Users
- Jenny McCurdy - Denver Water
- Tom Iseman – TNC
- Ted Illston – TNC (attended the meeting with the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee Majority Staff Member)
- Norman Gaume and Rhea Graham – New Mexico (attended meetings with the NM Congressional Delegation staff members)
- Christine Karas – USBR
- Bob McCue - USFWS
- Robert Muth – USFWS – Upper Colorado Recovery Program Director
- Shirley Mondy – USFWS – San Juan River Basin Program Coordinator
- Matt Kales - USFWS
- Kiel Weaver (Vice President, Morgan McGuire, LLC – who represents CREDA in re: legislative matters – attended 3/14 ESA accommodation versus resource development

luncheon roundtable held in Board Room 108 of the Annex Building of the Capitol Hill Suites Hotel located at 200 C Street, S.E.

SYNOPSIS OF MEETINGS AND CONTACTS:

The following provides a chronological listing of each meeting held and of the contacts that were either informally made or conducted via telephone during our time in Washington, D.C. The following notes specific requests, points of discussion or other information worthy of note for future reference, including necessary follow-up that should and will occur.

Wednesday, March 13:

- 8:00 a.m. Trip participants held a pre-briefings meeting in Board Room 108 of the Annex Building of the Capitol Hill Suites Hotel. Discussion of last minute itinerary revisions and the plans for the upcoming Luncheon Briefing and Roundtable Discussion occurred.
- 10:00 a.m. Met with House Resources Committee Staff Member Darin Bird in 1324 Longworth House Office Building. We discussed with Mr. Bird the fact that we have preliminarily debated about seeking an extension of the authorization period for capital construction (only in the time, not in the amount of funding) from 2005 to 2007. Darin suggested that we should set that down in writing and provide it to him prior to the April 8th scheduled recess. We committed to providing the draft wording for the public law change and draft committee report language. During subsequent meetings, this was discussed with others who also requested the language by about the same date, and the request was broadened to include talking points for those who might support and champion the language change, a listing of the factors that have led to the need for the extension in time, a description of how far along towards completion of the capital construction program we are and a “due diligence” description of our efforts to date.
- 11:00 a.m. Met with Environment Legislative Assistant Susie Gorden for Representative Diana DeGette (CO) in 1530 Longworth House Office Building. Gorden indicated strong support for our efforts and paid our efforts many nice compliments.
- 11:40 a.m. Met with Legislative Director Larry Hojo for Representative Joel Hefley (CO) in 2230 Rayburn House Office Building. Shields pushed to get a “little more” from Mr. Hojo this time, but, alas, we got the same response as we have in past years.
- 1:30 p.m. Met with Majority Professional Staff Member Bob Schmidt and Dennis Kern in 2362 Rayburn House Office Building of the House Energy & Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee in Room 2362 Rayburn House Office Building. We have met with Mr. Schmidt for a number of years and he well understands our Programs and remembers us from year to year.
- 2:00 p.m. Met with Legislative Director/Environment Legislative Assistant Josh Tzucker for Representative Jim Matheson (UT) in 410 Cannon House Office Building. Tzucker was very complimentary about our Program efforts.
- 2:15 p.m. Met with Environment Legislative Assistant Dennis Ellis for Representative Barbara Cubin (WY) in 1114 Longworth House Office Building. At the conclusion of the meeting, we had the opportunity to say hello and thanks and engage in a minute of small talk with Representative Cubin as she was on her way out of her office to a Leadership meeting.

4:30 p.m. Met with Staff Member Doug Yoder, Staff Member Matt Derringer and Legislative Fellow Kris Mills of the Water and Power Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee in 1522 Longworth House Office Building. This was a solid and in-depth meeting. We discussed in depth the advantages of seeking the authorization extension from 2005 to 2008 with Mr. Yoder. He strongly recommended we proceed with seeking the extension during the current session of Congress, and provided ideas as to the information that we should include in our submittal to the Resources Committee. He requested that we provide this information to him and to Josh Johnson, Staff Director of the Water and Power Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee.

Thursday, March 14

9:00 a.m. Met with Environment Legislative Assistant Cory Gardner for Senator Wayne Allard (CO) in 525 Dirksen Office Building. Cory indicated a desire to review the proposed language for extending the authorization period for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program from 2005 to 2008. We committed to send on the information packet re extension of the authorization periods to Mr. Gardner.

9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Met with Representative Scott McInnis (CO), Environment Legislative Assistant Melissa Simpson and Forestry Subcommittee Staff Member Josh Penry in 320 Cannon House Office Building.

10:00 a.m. Met with Environment Legislative Assistant Shelly Vaughn Randel, State Office Director Anne Katherine Ziehe for Senator Pete Domenici (NM) and Tammy Perrin, Minority Staff Member for the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee in 328 Hart Senate Office Building. We committed to send on the proposed language and information packet for extending the authorization period for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program from 2005 to 2008 to these staff members.

11:30 a.m. Met with Majority Staff Member Mike Connor of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM). Mr. Conner advised that while he had extended an invitation to Patty Beneke, Colleen Deegan and Jim Beirne to attend this meeting, they were detained with Senate consideration of the energy bill. Copies of the briefing materials were left with him to provide to those other committee members. Mr. Conner was supportive of proceeding with our effort to extend the authorization period and we committed to send on the proposed language and information packet for extending the authorization period for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program from 2005 to 2008 to these staff members

12 – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon Briefing and Roundtable held in Board Room 108 of the Annex Building at the Capitol Hill Suites, 200 C Street, S.E. This has been set up with the assistance of Kiel Weaver of Morgan Meguire, LLC. Senator Wayne Allard and Representative Scott McInnis transmitted “Dear Colleague” letters.

Those who attended the luncheon roundtable and enjoyed lunch paid for by Tom Pitts, Water Users Representative, were the following:

John Shields, Wyoming

Robert King, Utah

Kiel Weaver, Morgan Meguire, LLC

Tom Pitts, Water Users Representative

Susie Gorden, Representative Diana DeGette

Norm Gaume, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Christine Karas, USBR

Shirley Mondy, USFWS in Albuquerque
Tom Iseman, The Nature Conservancy
Jenny McCurdy, Denver Water
Rhea Graham, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Gloriana Ydrach, Rep. C. Hilda L. Solis
Cory Gardner, Senator Wayne Allard
Tom Blickensderfer, State of Colorado
Matt Kales, USFWS, Region 6
Dave Heffernan, USFWS, Refuges, Region 6
Bob McCue, USFWS, Region 6
Bob Muth, USFWS, Recovery Program Director

During the luncheon roundtable discussion of how we have, within the Upper Colorado Recovery Implementation Program, dealt with the apparent dichotomy between aquatic endangered species recovery while resource development has continued, the following points relative to reasons for our success were made:

1. We understand the challenges associated with competing interests and have been able to listen to all sides and to figure out how to give everyone what they need and all have recognized that they can't have everything that they want to have – this cooperative and compromising attitude is vitally important.
2. Sound science builds trust.
3. Respect others' values while not necessarily sharing them.
4. The right answer is the one we reach together and THE issue is how do we move forward.
5. We have incorporated the truism that we must “land when we have to land” and that delay only damages our process.
6. We have avoided litigation.
7. We have taken a critter-friendly approach that assures that the money is put into measures on the ground.
8. We understand the concept that we all must remember to “don't take it personally.”
9. Our program reflects a comprehensive and robust approach that draws upon the synergy that our joint collaboration produces.
10. The federal and non-federal money has been there and we are committed to making sure that we obtain the needed financial resources in the future to complete the job.
11. The program has been blessed with reasonably good leadership and there has been a willingness, particularly on the part of the USFWS to take risks in order to achieve benefits and get things done.
12. The peer review in this Program is as good as any we have seen.
13. We have recognized and dealt with the fact that if you fail to plan you are planning to fail.
14. We have recognized that it is easy to tear things down and darn hard to build them up.
15. We have recognized that information sharing is critical.

- 3:00 p.m. Met with Environment Legislative Assistant Wendy Fink for Congressman Bob Schaffer (CO) in 212 Cannon House Office Building. Wendy asked some good questions about our Program's activities and indicated that Rep. Schaffer would sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters.
- 3:30 p.m. Met with Legislative Assistant Mac Zimmerman for Congressman Tom Tancredo (CO) in 418 Cannon House Office Building. This was a good meeting in that we once again heard compliments for what we are doing and have accomplished with the two recovery programs.
- 4:00 p.m. Met with Legislative Director/Environment Legislative Assistant Stan Sloss for Representative Mark Udall (CO) in 115 Cannon House Office Building. While this was

a relatively short meeting, Sloss again stated, as he has in past years, that Rep. Udall supports and likes what our Recovery Program is doing and accomplishing. He indicated he knew of no reason why Rep. Udall would not sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters.

- 4:30 p.m. Met with Legislative Counsel Thad Bingel for Representative Chris Cannon (UT) in 118 Cannon House Office Building. While Thad was “new” to the subject he did a good job of comprehending the Program’s purposes and asked several insightful questions.
- 5:00 p.m. Met with Legislative Director Tony Martinez for Rep. Tom Udall (NM) in 502 Cannon House Office Building and with John Nolasco, Environment Legislative Assistant for Representative Heather Wilson (NM). Norm Gaume took the lead in broaching the meeting subjects and the purpose of our meeting.

Friday, March 15:

- 9:30 a.m. Met with Roger Cockrell, Majority Prof. Staff Member of the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee in 129 Dirksen Senate Office Building.
- 10:00 a.m. Met with Energy Legislative Assistant Fitz Hugh Elder for Senator Bennett (UT) in 431 Dirksen Senate Office Building. JJ Brown of Senator Hatch’s staff (UT) was able to join us for a few initial minutes of the meeting. JJ had read through the briefing material that Shields had previously faxed to Brown. JJ indicated that Senator Hatch would again, this year, sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters. Mr. Elder stated he was pleased to initiate the circulation of the joint delegation funding support letters for our group and was very complimentary of our Recovery Program’s ongoing successful efforts and our joint resolve and approach to solving problems and accommodating species recovery and resource development. It is always a pleasure to meet with Fitzhugh.
- 10:30 a.m. Met with Energy Legislative Assistant Craig Ferguson for Ben Nighthorse-Campbell (CO) in 380 Russell Senate Office Building. We did not get much feedback from Craig.
- 11:00 a.m. Met with Brooke Livingston, Professional Staff Member and Bruce Evans, Minority Staff Member in 131 Dirksen Senate Office Building. This meeting went well and Brooke was able to clarify for our group what the situation had been with regard to fiscal year 2002 funding for the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s base funding contributions and the funding provided for the Ouray NFH operation and maintenance.
- 3:30 p.m. Met with Carolyn Duffin, Deputy Director, Western Governors Association and with Gary Taylor, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Suite 388 of the Hall of States at 400 North Capitol Street N.W.

Monday, March 18:

- 8:30 a.m. Met with Matt Sicchio, Coordinator, of the Hydropower Reform Coalition and Andrew Fahlund and Elizabeth Maclin, Director of Field Operations, of American Rivers at American Rivers Offices located at 1025 Vermont Avenue, Suite 720.
- 10:00 a.m. Met with Majority Staff Member Loretta Beaumont of the House Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee in B-308 Rayburn House Office Building. Minority Staff Member Mike Stephens had a personal commitment and could not attend. During a phone conversation with Shields in advance of the meeting, he noted he had met with us last year and will call if he has questions about the Program briefing materials

that were provided to him in advance of the meeting by Shields – he feels “we are in good shape.”

11:00 a.m. Met with Minority Staff Member David Kilian of the House Energy & Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee in 1016 Longworth House Office Building. Shields committed to send a more detailed description of the genesis of the Recovery Program to Kilian for his information.

1:00 p.m. Met with Majority Staff Member Jo-Ellen Darcy of the Fisheries, Wildlife and Water Subcommittee of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building. Darcy committed to deliver our briefing materials to Minority Staff Member Sharla Moffett Beall who was unable to attend the meeting.

1:30 p.m. Met with Senator Mike Enzi (WY), Environment Legislative Assistant Dallas Scholes; and with Celia Wallace, Environment Legislative Assistant, for Senator Craig Thomas (WY) in 290 Russell Senate Office Building. Senator Enzi stated that we are doing a good job with the Program. In reference to the fact that Rep. Cubin is signing onto the joint delegation letters while he and Senator Thomas have declined to do so, he stated it is okay and appropriate for the Wyoming Congressional Delegation to be split on this matter as a way to indicate Wyoming’s frustration and dissatisfaction with the current Endangered Species Act. He again noted that he has not opposed the Program in the past and we believe we heard him indicate that he does not intend to do so in the future. He expressed the view that the Federal Government should be paying for the Recovery Program in total, as the ESA is a federal statute.

3:00 p.m. Met with Eric Hansen, Program Examiner, Water and Power Branch, Natural Resource Programs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW. Evans invited the USFWS Program Examiner to attend this meeting. This was a good meeting and we committed to provide the authorization extension language materials to these two gentlemen when they are sent to the Hill on or prior to April 8th.

Shields called Steve Lanich, Minority Staff Director for the Water and Power Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee (226-2311, 186 Ford House Office Building) and made sure that he had received a copy of the briefing booklet from Doug Yoder. Shields made Lanich aware of the discussions about proceeding with seeking the extension of the authorization date from 2005 to 2008 and committed to provide that wording/information package to Lanich.

5:00 p.m. Tom Pitts met with Jim Hughes, Legislative Director for Rep. Joe Skeen (NM), delivered the briefing booklet and generally sought support for the Programs’ funding included in the President’s budget.

Shields checked with Melissa Simpson to ascertain from whom she had received commitments to sign the joint delegation funding support letters. Shields dropped by and reminded Stan Sloss of Rep. Mark Udall’s office at 115 Cannon House Office Building that the request was made by McInnis’ office that they hear back from each of the other House offices by close of business on March 19th. Tom Blickensderfer dropped by copies of Governor Owens’ funding support letters on this date.

Shields held an impromptu meeting with Cody Stewart of Rep. Chris Cannon’s office in 118 Cannon House Office Building and provided an abbreviated version of the briefing. Our group had previously met with Thad Bingel of Rep. Cannon’s staff.

Shields held an impromptu meeting with John Nolasco of Rep. Heather Wilson's office in 318 Cannon House Office Building to again reiterate the importance of the San Juan Recovery Program to continuing New Mexico water use and development and again requested that he seek the necessary approvals and call Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis' office to indicate her willingness to sign onto the funding support letters.

Shields left a voice mail for Tony Martinez of Rep. Tom Udall's office requesting that Mr. Martinez advise Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis' office to indicate Rep. Udall's willingness to sign onto the funding support letters.

Shields left a voice mail for Josh Tzucker of Rep. Matheson's office and Darin Bird of the House Resources Committee (Rep. Hansen is the Chair) advising of the upcoming deadline to get signature blocks on the joint delegation letters and again requesting that they contact Melissa Simpson in Rep. McInnis' office by close of business on Tuesday, March 19th.

Tuesday, March 19:

9:00 a.m. Met with John Berry (Executive Director), Constance Singleton (Financial Officer) and Cheree Peterson (Public Relations Officer) of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in the NFWF's offices at 1120 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 900. Don Glaser, Regional Director, Intermountain West, NFWF, attended this meeting as well. Mr. Berry, who formerly served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy and Analysis, paid great praise to our Program and our collective efforts. We committed to send on the proposed language and information packet for extending the authorization period for the Upper Colorado Recovery Program from 2005 to 2008 to the NFWF.

Shields called and spoke briefly with Legislative Director Tony Martinez of Rep. Tom Udall's office to again request that Mr. Martinez contact Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis' office in order for Rep. Udall's signature block to be placed on the joint delegation funding support letters. Martinez did not at first recall our meeting on the prior Thursday afternoon, but then did.

11:00 a.m. Met with Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service Directorate and Bureau of Reclamation officials (Room 1352, Main Interior Building, 1849 C Street, N.W.). Those in attendance at the meeting were the following:
John Shields, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
Bob Muth, Program Director, Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program
Tom Blickensderfer, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Bob McCue, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver
Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator, San Juan RIP, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque
Jennifer McCurdy, Denver Water
Tom Pitts, Upper Basin and San Juan Water Users
Cathy Short, Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington
Tom Iseman, The Nature Conservancy
Robert H. Pos, Division of National Fish Hatchery Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington
John Castellano, FWHMA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington
Tom Busiahn, FWMA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington
June Deweese, Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington
Beth Stevens, Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington

Judy Troast, Office of Policy, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Washington
Sharon Kliwinski, Water Resources Division, National Park Service, Washington
Bob Morgan, Utah Department of Natural Resources
Gary Johnston, Biological Resource Management Division, National Park Service,
Washington
Robert Wolf, Director, Program and Budget, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Washington

Cathy Short requested that relative to the additional \$100,000 beyond last year's allocation of \$344,000 for Ouray NFH operation and maintenance that we have requested in our letters of support that we request "new money" as opposed to additional funding from the "hatchery base." We reported to her that our letter language requesting the Subcommittee to include report language directing the USFWS to expend in accordance with our request was not specific as to the source of the additional \$100,000 of funding. The group engaged in dialogue about getting additional funding into the President's budget for hatcheries. Short recommended a two-pronged approach that seeks to support hatchery funding to both the Administration and to the Appropriations Subcommittees. She stated that we are certainly seeing some tension within the national hatcheries program as a result of the ongoing debate about whether there should be a federal fish hatchery system and if so, how should it be funded.

5:00 p.m. Shields checked in with Melissa Simpson as to the "head count" on who had called her to advise that they would sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters. Since yesterday at the same time, Josh Tzucker had called to advise that Rep. Matheson would sign the two letters. This brought the count to 5 at that time. Melissa advised that we could advise the other offices that the letters would be printed shortly after noon on Wednesday, March 20th, so the revised deadline to get back to her if there were other Members who wished to sign on would be noon on Wednesday.

Shields left a voice mail message for Cody Stewart asking that he call Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis' office prior to noon on Wednesday, March 20th advising that Congressman Cannon is willing to sign the joint delegation letters.

Tom Blickensderfer dropped copies of Governor Owens' funding support letters with Stan Sloss. Shields left a voice mail later in the afternoon requesting that Mr. Sloss advise McInnis' office of Rep. Udall's determination to sign onto the joint letters.

Shields called Tony Martinez of Rep. Tom Udall's office and reiterated our desire to have Martinez call or leave a voice mail with Melissa Simpson prior to noon on March 20th. Martinez again referred to the closing date for Member statements as being in early April. He said he would call Simpson as soon as our conversation ended.

Shields called John Nolasco of Rep. Heather Wilson's office and reiterated our desire to have Nolasco call or leave a voice mail with Melissa Simpson prior to noon on March 20th. Nolasco said he would call Simpson and advise that if the walk around of the letters did not occur until Thursday then he probably could get the approvals in time. Shields suggested that if it became necessary for Rep. Wilson to send "solo" letters to the appropriations subcommittees that we would surely appreciate a copy of each supporting funding for the Program.

Shields visited with Olin Sims and Veronica Canfield, President and Vice President, respectively, of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, and Ed Burton, State Conservationist for Wyoming, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Casper, in the hallway of the Longworth House Office Building. They advised that the Western Coalition of Conservation Districts had met with Asst. Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and

Parks Judge Manson and USFWS Director Steve Williams at 11:00 a.m. that day (which was the **same** time as our briefing with Interior and explains why our meeting attendance was not greater). The Western Coalition had presented to Interior and the USFWS a “Working Paper on Suggested Changes to the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and All Revisions” of one page in length and a second one-page position paper on endangered species. They shared copies of both with me and I provided them with information concerning our briefings and efforts.

6:15 p.m. Shields met briefly with Tim Stewart and Darin Bird in the Resources Committee’s offices (1324 Longworth House Office Building) to again request that either Tim or Darin call Melissa Simpson in Rep. McInnis office indicating the Congressman’s willingness to again sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters. Stewart asked who had agreed to sign the letters and after a very brief conversation, Bird called and left a voice mail for Melissa Simpson indicating that Rep. Hansen will sign the two funding support letters.

Wednesday, March 20:

9:45 a.m. Shields called the San Juan Water Commission, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and Water Consult requesting that they call John Nolasco of Rep. Heather Wilson’s staff and Tony Martinez of Rep. Tom Udall’s staff to request they “check in” with Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis’ office to indicate their willingness to sign the joint delegation funding support letters prior to noon on that day, March 20th. He urged them to reiterate the importance of this federal funding to various New Mexico interests and suggested telephone messages to these staffers might be successful in getting the signatures of Rep. Udall and Rep. Wilson on the joint delegation funding support letters.

12:30 p.m. Shields called Craig Ferguson with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell’s office and left a voice mail requesting that if he had not already done so that Ferguson check with the office staff as to whether Senator Campbell is willing to sign onto the joint delegation funding support letters addressed to the Senate Appropriations E/WD and I/RA Subcommittees and, if the Senator is willing, to contact Fitz Elder in Senator Bennett’s office who is circulating the joint delegation funding support letters on the Senate side.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

We again found it is vitally important to annually visit Congressional Committee staff and our Congressional delegation members and/or their staffs in order to keep the Programs’ needs and ongoing progress in mind. Staff turnover occurs from year to year (in the Senate, a change in leadership since last year as well) and face-to-face meetings continue to have no substitute. The participation of each of the non-federal participants in these briefings is quite important. The participation of New Mexico state officials during this trip was very helpful and will be sought next year. We encourage CREDA to join in next year’s meetings. Having a weekend during the middle of the trip works best for several reasons, including the opportunity to go at it again “fresh” on Monday morning, to allow for rescheduling of meetings (which occurs at least once each year), and to allow for unexpected contingencies (such as was experienced in 2000 when the Capitol complex was “shut down” when we had Friday meetings scheduled due to the NATO conference which was unknown to us when we set our briefing trip dates).

Sending the briefing materials via e-mail (briefing book as an Acrobat file and backgrounder as a Word file) in advance of meetings is useful and should be continued as it shortens the time required to explain our Programs’ objectives and operation. This makes for better meetings with more informed staff members and helps our group stay on the established trip itinerary schedule. Additional emphasis on getting top-level Administration officials to the “Interior” meeting is warranted; one suggestion is to again

provide a written meeting “backgrounder” to each invitee in advance. In order to accomplish this, we will need to obtain the e-mail addresses of each of the invitees earlier in advance of the meeting date.

Trying to schedule all of the meetings with the New Mexico Delegation members on a single day was not unworkable, but it does present some scheduling difficulties. We should try to complete the House side of Capitol Hill visits and Senate side visits, rather than mixing them in order to accommodate one particular briefing group member or members. We should seek the New Mexico Governor’s signature on the funding support letters that we submit during our meetings.

We may wish to arrange for the use of the Board Room in the Capitol Hill Suites again next year if we decide to conduct a luncheon briefing. This location, although a long block off of Capitol Hill, worked very well for us and provided us with certain flexibility relative to food arrangements and scheduling simplicity that we could not obtain with a Congressional building location. It also keeps us from having to ask one additional favor of very busy Congressional staff members in trying to find a suitable room (which was problematic this year due to a large amount of people “traffic” on the Hill), reserving the room, etc. Since we using the room for our “pre-briefings” meeting, we might consider holding the luncheon briefing on that first day and reserving the use of the Board Room from 7:30 until 1:30 p.m.

We continue to see great usefulness in the Dear Colleague letters as a way to “get the word out” to each office on the Hill; however, we learned this year that the House ethics rules for these letters require that we do an invitation first, THEN a “Dear Colleague” letter can be sent out as a reminder. This was learned AFTER Melissa Simpson of Rep. McInnis’ office had made 435 copies of Rep. McInnis’ letter and was told by the House Mail Office staff that these letters violated the rules and could not be sent (nonetheless, we were able to distribute copies of the McInnis letter at each of our meetings on Wednesday and Thursday morning). We may wish to investigate other alternatives, including e-mail distribution of our luncheon briefing invitation, with key Program information included, in lieu of continuing with the “Dear Colleague” letters approach used for the third year this time. We should also “get on this” sooner next year so that we have time built in to send a follow-up reminder about the luncheon briefing, if we determine to again sponsor such an event on the Hill.

The joint delegation letter circulation process continues to be a chore and we are appreciative of the efforts of those staff members who take on this task for us each year. It is suggested that we prepare a cover page that is attached to the draft letters that explicitly states our request (e.g., we wish to circulate this letter among the four States’ Congressional delegations by “x” date, provides the name and contact information of the staff member who is initiating the circulation, clearly sets forth that the staff member in that office is being asked to get approval to sign the letter and provides in clear terms a deadline for getting that approval and contacting the circulating Member’s staff member to advise of the willingness to sign on). This will help facilitate the job, but it is also clear that follow-up calls and contacts will remain an important aspect of getting the letter circulation process completed. We should also consider providing a self-addressed stamped envelope when we provide the letters on computer disk so those circulating the letters will have an additional reminder and reinforcement of our request for a copy of each letter.

APPENDIX MATERIALS:

Dear Colleague Letters signed by Representative Scott McInnis and Senator Wayne Allard extending invitations to attend the Thursday March 14th Luncheon Briefing and Roundtable Discussion:

_03/08/2002 16:45 FAX

SCOTT McINNIS
3D DISTRICT, COLORADO

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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002

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