

Information & Education Committee Meeting
February 15, 2005
Denver, Colorado

Convene:

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Program Director's Update - Assistant Program Director, Angela Kantola, gave an update on current Program activities.
3. Nonnative Fish Outreach - Debbie Felker said most of the press was very positive this year. Debbie has been conducting phone interviews with all of the biologists who conducted nonnative fish management actions to find out what went well last year and what's needed in 2005 in terms of outreach. In the Yampa River, Fish and Wildlife Service biologists report that opposition seems to have declined (just a small, but vocal minority). It may be helpful to inform river outfitters of the nonnative fish management work that's being done so the outfitters know what's going on when they encounter biologists and their electrofishing rigs on the river. FWS biologists support a suggestion made by a Colorado Division of Wildlife biologist at last December's Nonnative Fish Management Workshop to designate certain river reaches in Colorado as native fish management areas. Matt Kales suggested perhaps providing a laminated 8.5" x 11" fact sheet for outfitters. In Utah, much of the work in the lower Green River is done in remote areas with little public access. Regional Advisory Council meetings continue to be a useful venue for education in Utah. Perhaps informational materials could be provided with boat permits issued by BLM and at BLM launch sites. In the upper Green River, Kevin Christopherson has noted we need to be sure we stress the big picture of endangered fish recovery (of which nonnative fish management is just one part) when responding to questions and providing information about nonnative fish management efforts. Kara Lamb suggested including overall key messages about the Recovery Program with the nonnative fish information. Debbie still needs to talk with biologists from the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado State University before finalizing a written summary and drafting the communication plan for this year. Randy Hampton said he'll continue to work on getting photos of the endangered fish back in the Colorado fishing regulations (perhaps in 2006). The Committee discussed whether the nonnative fish management information is being related in an appropriate, simple manner to reporters and the public. Debbie said we do our best to be sure that the biologists have the key messages and stay on point when they're talking to the public, reporters, etc., however, she asked each Committee member to help carry through with this. She is working with Greg Gerlich with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to include nonnative fish management information in this fall's training for new district wildlife managers. Recovery Program staff will also develop a powerpoint presentation about nonnative fish management efforts for use by Recovery Program partner organizations. >Debbie will e-mail the key messages, the interview summary and the draft communication plan for this year to the Committee for review. Recovery Program staff will develop and distribute a powerpoint presentation on nonnative fish management actions by the end of April 2005.

4. Interactive Map Project - Peter Roessmann reported that the Southwest Data Center map products were not user-friendly, so the River District has started over and Kevin Reynolds with Bureau of Reclamation in Salt Lake City is working on the project. Peter said we may need more funds than planned for developing the graphics, but less than projected for implementing the interactive map. The base layer for the map is done and it's probably appropriate at this point to hire web designers experienced with interactive maps. Angela Kantola suggested the River District host the map and the Program websites will link to that. >The Program Director's Office will provide data to the River District (hatchery locations, fish distribution, links to appropriate websites [e.g., hatchery websites], images, etc.) by the end of March. John Shields said he would like to add icons showing locations of fish passage, fish screens, etc., to the map we use in the briefing materials. >Peter will send the graphics developed so far to the Committee.
5. Training Opportunities - Mark Hadley distributed information about training available from the International Association for Public Participation. Mark said this training builds on the Bleiker training in that you learn *how* to do public involvement (and is well-suited to natural resource management work). >Debbie Felker will find out if group training for the Committee (and colleagues) might be available from IAP2 in Denver.
6. Washington, D.C., Briefing Trip - John Shields gave an update on the recent trip several of the non-Federal Recovery Program participants made to D.C. to request an increased authorization (by \$15M) and extension of time for capital construction. In effect, this would add three additional years of the same level of Federal appropriations to the Program's capital budget. Additional non-Federal cost-share is made up of \$7.1M in lost power revenues and \$3.9M in water from Elkhead. John said that overall they received positive response to this proposal. The plan is to ask Representative Cubin (WY) and Senator Allard (CO) to sponsor the bill. The regularly-scheduled D.C. trip in advance of the appropriations process will be March 8-15. One feature of that trip will include request for support of restoration of the Service's \$691,000 of Recovery funds in the FY 2006 budget. Matt Kales noted that the week of March 7-10 the Service's Fisheries and Ecological Services staff will be on the hill to promote "Celebrating Habitat" (highlighting aquatic habitat conservation). From Region 6, Mike Stempel and Mary Henry's deputy, Julie Lyke, will participate.
7. Elkhead Reservoir Expansion - Peter Roessmann reported that the District got the 404 permit for the expansion yesterday. The District has been doing lots of work with the public to explain the project. There appears to be very little local opposition (most of which is related to closing the reservoir during construction). During construction, the District will continue periodic updates to local residents (200-300 contacts on the mailing list). Their Elkhead web page is getting good visitation and Peter thinks there's more opportunity to use that page for education about the endangered fish and the Recovery Program. Peter said he, Dan Birch and Ray Tenney plan to meet with local newspaper editors and reporters. Randy Hampton suggested that Dan Prenzlou and Susan Werner may also be good contacts for the papers with regard to sportfishing issues. >Debbie will get Peter a list of the locations where nonnative fish removed from the Yampa are being

- relocated. >Peter will send updated brochures to Debbie and Randy, and also contact Betsy Blakeslee at the Carpenter Ranch. Randy will get the brochures to CDOW field personnel so that they'll have something to provide to anglers and others who ask what's going on at Elkhead. John Shields recommended providing brochures to the Yampa River Basin Partnership and noted that tours of the construction project will offer additional educational opportunities. Peter said the District will likely install some signage explaining the expansion. The reservoir expansion will take 2 years to complete.
8. Review of Draft RIPRAP Assessment - The Committee had no comments or changes.
 9. Review of Draft RIPRAP Revisions - The Committee discussed whether the public awareness survey status should continue to read "update if needed," and agreed to leave it as is. >Debbie will provide a copy of the original survey to the Committee.
 10. Review of Draft FY 06/07 Program Guidance - John Shields commented that as we get further into the Aspinall EIS, the public may receive mixed messages (recalling the scoping meetings at the beginning of the Flaming Gorge EIS process). It may be important to work with editorial boards who cover the area further upstream on the Gunnison River.

12J Peter Roessmann suggested that he doesn't anticipate a need for \$5,000 in FY 06 and 07 to maintain the interactive basinwide map.

12I For Ruedi Reservoir, there is no 1-800 information line.

12C Funds are for public involvement *and* reservoir operation coordination (also correct funds in the budget tables). E-mail notification also is used to inform the public about coordinated reservoir operations.

11. I&E Update

Debbie asked >Committee members to consider having folks from their agencies write guest articles for the fall newsletter (e.g., CDOW on isotope study to determine origin of smallmouth bass in the Colorado River and UDWR larval drift entrainment study).

Debbie asked for Committee input on how to structure the public information efforts for the Flaming Gorge Environmental Impact Statement & Record of Decision. Matt pointed out that there may be considerable interest from the fly-fishing community who fish for trout below the dam. >Debbie will contact Barry Wirth with the Bureau of Reclamation in Salt Lake City to ask how the Committee and/or Program partners can best assist and work with Reclamation on this. John Shields recommended that the connection to the Recovery Program and its adaptive management approach be made clear.

Debbie outlined the water meetings where the Program display is exhibited every year (Colorado Water Congress in January in Denver, Utah Water Users Association in St. George in March; previously the Colorado Water Workshop in Gunnison in July (now just have materials at Reclamation's booth), Wyoming Water Users Association in

October in Casper, and the Colorado River Water Users Association in Las Vegas in December). Debbie said those who have staffed the exhibit in Las Vegas have suggested that we only attend that event every other year due to the cost and the fact that they see the same people each year and that our message hasn't changed significantly each year. Matt recommended that we need Tom Pitts' input on this, but suggested that it might be appropriate to attend in Vegas every other year, and exhibit at alternate venues in the off-years. Matt suggested we might exhibit at the River Network's River Rally, which is in Keystone May 20-24 this year. John and Peter noted that the Water Education Foundation puts on some teacher education workshops we might want to have a part in. Debbie added that Justyn Hock and the Fish and Wildlife Service both provide exhibits at the Water Festival in Grand Junction in May. The Recovery Program will also be represented at the Utah River Festival in Vernal in June.

The new museum in Vernal is interested in having an aquarium.>Debbie will followup to learn the status of this project.

The custom-designed Colorado pikeminnow benches (3 for Grand Junction [Audubon site and riverfront trail] and 3 for Vernal [Dinosaur NM and other locations TBD]) are ready for delivery.

Debbie recalled that we previously considered a Program-wide video, but it wasn't pursued after the footage was shot and script drafted. Debbie asked the Committee if they thought the video should be completed (would require additional footage and updated script), or if a Powerpoint presentation would make more sense. Matt suggested that NCTC might be willing to make a video, but Debbie said they bid on the original project and were very expensive. Matt suggested a Powerpoint with video clips that could be updated periodically and put on a DVD. John Shields suggested it could also be converted to e-books format. >Debbie will work with Program staff to develop a Recovery Program Powerpoint presentation for the Committee to review.

12. Next meeting - Matt recommended holding every other meeting somewhere in the Colorado River Basin. Other Committee members supported this idea. The next meeting date will be determined at a later time.

Attendees

1. **Mark Hadley**, I&E Committee Chairman, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
2. **Angela Kantola**, Assistant Director, Recovery Program
3. **Debbie Felker**, I&E Coordinator, Recovery Program
4. **Matt Kales**, Fish & Wildlife Service External Affairs
5. **Justyn Hock**, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction
6. **John Shields**, Management Committee Chairman, representing State of Wyoming
7. **Kara Lamb**, Bureau of Reclamation, Loveland
8. **Randy Hampton**, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Grand Junction
9. **Peter Roessmann**, Colorado River Water Conservation District