

**INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**Conference Call Summary**  
**June 19, 2003**

Participants: Chris Treese, Mark Hadley, Debbie Felker, Justyn Hock, Peter Roessmann, Sharon Rose, Angela Kantola, Leslie James, Kara Lamb, and John Shields.

> Action items.

1. Program Director's Update - Angela Kantola gave an update on recent Program activities.

After three years of discussion and revision, the Biology Committee approved the report *Flow Recommendations to Benefit Endangered Fishes in the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers* and the Service is now finalizing that report. Gerry Roehm joined the call later, reporting that the Aspinnall reoperations EIS process will likely take ~4 years. The biological opinion will be based on that process, so it is several years down the road. The Black Canyon settlement neither supports nor conflicts with the Service's flow recommendations.

Public meetings on the Yampa River Management Plan are tentatively scheduled for August 11, 12, and 13 in Baggs, Craig, and Steamboat Springs.

Argonne has completed the strategic plan to prioritize and direct future habitat research and monitoring activities to meet the recovery goals of the fishes. The plan is being revised based on peer review comments and will be discussed by the Biology Committee at its July meeting.

Rich Valdez is working with local action teams to develop subbasin floodplain management plans that will identify how each site fits into the overall recovery effort.

Negotiations are still underway to acquire an easement on Thunder Ranch wetlands, located 6 miles downstream from the Green River razorback spawning bar.

Additional nonnative fish control efforts finally got underway this year. Some (e.g., Yampa and White rivers) were delayed due to permitting difficulties, but biologists have been or are removing: channel catfish, northern pike, and smallmouth bass from the Yampa, Green and Duchesne rivers; and channel catfish from the Colorado river. The work follows a treatment/control research approach to evaluate effectiveness in depleting the target nonnative fishes.

UDWR crews have detected predation on stocked age 1 razorback sucker in the Green River by scanning all large predator fish (northern pike, Colorado pikeminnow and walleye) for a PIT tag and also looking in mouths and taking stomach samples of nonnative predators that are removed. PIT tags of stocked razorback suckers have been detected in the stomachs of three northern pike, two Colorado pikeminnow, and one walleye.

In the Yampa River ~1/2-mile upstream from Dinosaur National Monument, John Hawkins' crew captured a 30-inch northern pike on June 4 with the tail of a ~20" Colorado pikeminnow protruding from its mouth. The first 1/3 of the pikeminnow was digested and the rest was relatively fresh.

The razorback sucker hatch at Ouray NFH was reduced this year; but we still should meet the requirements of the stocking plans.

Approximately 8,000 age 1-razorback sucker were stocked at the Split Mountain boat ramp over a two-week period during April 2003 by the Ouray National Fish Hatchery. UDWR - Vernal sampling crews have observed these fish primarily in nursery habitats beginning near the stocking location (RM 319) and continuing down river to the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge (RM 254). Relatively few wild razorbacks (n = 24 captures) and those that have originated from earlier floodplain stocking (n = 14 captures) have also been collected. A total of 249 age 1 razorback have been collected during fyke netting efforts associated with nonnative fish management in the middle Green River near Jensen. During the first pass of electrofishing effort to obtain abundance estimates of Colorado pikeminnow, 254 age 1 razorback sucker were captured.

Tom Czaplak of the Program Director's Office has been working actively with various entities of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group to help focus recovery actions for humpback chub in the Grand Canyon. Leslie James asked if Tom has access to Dr. Carl Walters' May 29 Powerpoint presentation, which was significant in that he said in essence, they've miscounted the humpback chubs and he believes there are 3200-4200 chubs. Leslie would like Walters' powerpoint. >Justyn will talk to Barry Wirth with the Bureau of Reclamation in Salt Lake City about issuing a press release about this and will let Debbie know so she can coordinate with Region 2 FWS people.

Dan Luecke is back on the Implementation Committee (through the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies).

In Sioux City, Iowa, in July, the Department of Interior is sponsoring a week-long course on collaboration in resource management for federal and state agencies and tribal governments in the Missouri River Basin. The training team has asked Angela to present the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program as a case study on the second morning of that course.

2. I&E Update - Debbie Felker provided the following information:
  - a. Nonnative Fish Management - A summary of Colorado public meetings was sent to all. In addition to the public attendance, the Recovery Program gained some respect and appreciation from our counterparts at several other agencies, such as Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, for the quality of the presentations Angela and Pat Nelson gave, as well as their willingness to take the heat from the public. Prior to these meetings, we'd heard repeatedly that the state agencies were tired of taking the blame for recovery efforts that weren't popular with anglers. We continue to seek news

media coverage of our nonnative fish management efforts. Todd Hartman from the *Rocky Mountain News* went out on the Yampa River yesterday with Frank Pfeifer from FWS. His story is expected to run in the next few weeks. Dave Buchanan from *The Daily Sentinel* in Grand Junction plans to go out on the river with FWS folks from Grand Junction in July when they do their catfish work. Josh Nichols from the *Craig Daily Press* just went to work for the new daily paper in Grand Junction, *The Free Press* (Debbie will follow-up with him to try to get a story in that paper, too.) We will send a news release as soon as possible this fall announcing the results of this year's work and anticipated plans for next year. Debbie thanked Mark Hadley for his efforts to get news media coverage of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' work. We've had some good news stories as a result of these efforts. Debbie also received support from Todd Malmsbury from CDOW who made follow-up calls to reporters he knows.

Mark Hadley said UDWR got the word out about their planned nonnative fish removal efforts a couple of weeks before their Regional Advisory Council meetings. Kevin Christopherson immediately got about two dozen calls from concerned anglers, so he was able to talk to them individually. About a dozen came to the public meetings, but after his presentation he didn't get any comments, which made him think the individual contacts had been helpful. They continue to work to get the word out. Debbie added that she's working with the Yampa River State Park to change a sign in its interpretive display at the visitor center that says channel catfish are native to the Yampa River.

- b. Interpretive Signs - Debbie is in the process of hiring a vendor from Durango -- Interpretive Design -- to make our interpretive signs for the Colorado Riverfront Trail. Hopefully the signs will be fabricated and installed by the end of December. Debbie hasn't yet received a draft MOU from the City of Grand Junction parks department for maintenance. Chris Treese will call a contact with the City of Grand Junction to follow-up. This is an agreement whereby the Recovery Program will set up a fund with \$5,000 in it for use by the parks department to clean/replace signs that are vandalized. No actual money will be exchanged because the City of Grand Junction has committed \$5,000 to pay for fabrication of the signs.

The Ouray National Fish Hatchery Kiosk is completed and in place. >Debbie will post photos on the listserver.

Audubon Property -- the Recovery Program has purchased some land along the Colorado River in Grand Junction. In July, a dike will be breached to create a restored floodplain to serve as spawning habitat. From mid-March to mid-May each year, part of the Audubon's hiking trail will be unusable when the river is flooded. Debbie is trying to make contact with the Audubon folks to see if they will partner with us to put up two interpretive signs that explain that the trail is temporarily closed during this time to enable the endangered fish to spawn.

CO State Parks -- >Debbie will contact John Marshall to find out the status of endangered fish signs being made and installed in CO state parks.

- c. Exhibits - We set up one of our freestanding exhibits in the visitor center at Glen Canyon Dam just before Memorial Day weekend. It will remain there through Labor Day during which time the visitor center will greet an estimated 600,000 to 900,000 visitors. We provided 5,000 bookmarks to be given out. We don't know how long they will last, but the visitor center folks will let us know when they run out. Quent Bradwisch from the Wahweap Fish Hatchery briefed tour guides about the fish and our program so they could include our exhibit in their tour of the visitor center and dam. Leslie said she heard they will be revising the permanent interpretive exhibits at the visitor center; >Debbie will contact Barry Wirth about that. The Program's other exhibit is still in place at the Museum of Western Colorado in Grand Junction. We decided not to have our exhibit this year at the CO Water Workshop in Gunnison. Bob Muth and Dan Luecke have been invited as keynote speakers at the CO River Water Users Association meeting in Las Vegas (Dec. 11 & 12) so we will have our exhibit there again this year. John Shields suggested someone from the San Juan Program should also participate; >Chris will pass this suggestion on to his contact with the CO River Water Users Association. The Colorado State Fair will once again include an exhibit of endangered fish set up by the CO Division of Wildlife. Fish will be provided by the Mumma Native Aquatic Species Facility in Alamosa. John said the WY Water Users Assoc. is a joint meeting with the Upper Missouri on October 22-23, and our exhibit would be one of a dozen or more exhibits. In light of the Missouri River Basin's interest in a collaborative recovery program, we may want to have an exhibit there.
- d. Aquariums - The fish at the Carpenter Ranch aquarium were released by local students during which we received some excellent news media coverage. Betsy Blakeslee is presently awaiting replacement fish. David Whitman has purchased the aquarium for the Dinosaur Quarry Visitor Center and is working on getting it set up, including developing interpretive signs. Montrose Pavilion fish are healthy. The pavilion still needs to install an interpretive sign we provided to them.
- e. Newsletter - Draft content list has been developed to include a cover story on nonnative fish management. Other major stories: Article written by 5th-graders in Grand Junction who raised razorback sucker in their classroom this past school year and tagged and released them into the river in May. Article on humpback chub population estimates with sidebar description of this species. Research story to determine if drifting razorback sucker larvae can be entrained into restored floodplain nursery habitats. Photo of bulldozer breaching dike at Audubon property. Researcher of the Year (Doug Osmundson) and special award presented to George Smith for his work coordinating water releases during the drought. Follow-up Elders Pond photo/caption of fishing in the pond this summer. Possibly update on new hatchery facility at Wahweap. Photo of exhibit at visitor center at Glen Canyon Dam. If space permits, story about Page High School student who worked for Wahweap Hatchery during the summers and will soon graduate from college w/degree in Biology. This story was held from last issue. John Shields suggested we might note that 12 of our 14 Congressional delegation supported funding (perhaps in the Program Director's update).

- f. Video: Unfortunately, this has been on the back burner due to the other projects we've discussed. Debbie hopes to finalize the script and give it to Angela and Bob for review within the next few weeks. Then it will come before the committee for feedback.
  - g. Other - no one has gone to the Bleiker public involvement training this year, but we are supporting Mark Hadley's participation in training by the International Association for Public Participation's course on holding public meetings. Mark will report back regarding whether or not he recommends this as a course for other Committee members to consider attending in the future. Upcoming dates for the Bleiker course are: Golden, CO June 24-26, Monterey, CA September 2-4, and Seattle Sep 30 - Oct. 2. Debbie also has been researching items (e.g., pens, posters, lapel pins, etc.) for the Committee to consider now that the magnet series is complete. >Debbie will check with Ellen on the amount of traffic on our website.
3. Interactive Map - Chris Treese reported that the Colorado Water User Association Board approved transfer of work done by a professor at the University of Pasadena to the SW Data Center which has already been working on some Colorado Plateau GIS. Water users won't put these up for public review until next January. Chris said he still needs any info. (GIS-based or descriptive on critical habitat and Program activities); >Angela Kantola will get this info. to Chris. Also needs links, etc., on Reclamation sites (>Kara will e-mail links to Chris).
  4. Ruedi Public Meeting & Green Mountain Reservoir Update - Kara reported the Ruedi public meeting at the end of May went very well. Concern has shifted from the impact of the Recovery Program more to the impact of the way the reservoir is operated to the economy of Basalt. Reclamation finished the EA for the Ruedi 2012 agreement. It is available on its website: [www.usbr.gov/gp/nepa/nepa.html](http://www.usbr.gov/gp/nepa/nepa.html). Reclamation has been storing water in Green Mountain Reservoir, so there should be enough water this year.
  5. FY 2004/2005 Planning -Angela Kantola outlined the process for developing the 2004-2005 work plan. Technical committee comments are due to in July so that they can be considered by the Management Committee in advance of its July 31-August 1 meeting. The I&E Committee should provide comments to Debbie by July 15, so she can prepare the report to the Management Committee. The Implementation Committee will meet September 4 to approve. The SOW's and summary budget table will hopefully be mailed by c.o.b. this Friday. The Program Director's Office has recommended that the due date for annual project reports be moved up from mid-December to mid-November. Debbie noted that PIP 12H Interpretive Exhibits is now a placeholder showing \$20,000 for each fiscal year – this is reduced from \$30,000 per year in FY 2002-2003. The reason for the reduction is twofold: we have not spent the \$30,000 that was budgeted in past years and the Recovery Program is looking for ways to trim costs. Debbie outlined the exhibits she's proposed in this scope of work. Peter suggested the Bill Heddles Community and Recreation Center in Delta as a good site to begin raising awareness in the Gunnison River Basin.

6. Other - Kara said there won't be coordinated reservoir operations this year because there isn't enough water. Even though this year's runoff brought significant improvement over last year's, reservoirs were drawn upon heavily during the past several years of drought. Consequently, participants decided providing flows to the Recovery Program this year would be too risky to reservoir storage. BOR will issue a press release. Chris recommended that the Program be prepared to respond to questions on the recent 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit decision. Chris said he needs to withdraw from the committee chairmanship (and probably eventually the committee with Peter Roessman coming on). Chris suggested Mark Hadley take over and the Committee agreed. John Shields suggested that in light of the interest in this Program the 1989 blue book should be available on the internet. >The Program Director's Office will get the 1989 blue book on the website (Angela Kantola agreed).

7. Next Meeting - October 2, 2003, 10-3 near DIA.