



# Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Summary Dated: July 24, 2013

## Information and Education Committee Webinar Summary July 15, 2013

**Participants:** Justyn Hock (USBR), Mike Porras (CPW), Martha Moore (CRWCD), Dan Johnson (NPS, Dinosaur National Monument), Brent Stettler (UDWR), Kara Lamb (USBR), John Shields (WY), Joann Perea-Richmann (FWS, San Juan Program), Sharon Whitmore (FWS, San Juan Program), Leslie James (CREDA), Dan Luecke (WRA), Program Director's office: Melanie Fischer and Angela Kantola.

Assignments are indicated in the document in **bold**, preceded by a ">".

### **CONVENE 9:30 a.m.**

1. Introductions – Martha Moore introduced the call. Angela Kantola introduced Melanie Fischer, who joined the Program Director's office staff this past March. I&E Committee members know Melanie as the graphic artist who designed the Upper Basin Program's website, the San Juan Program's logo, tradeshow booth, banner stands and Program Highlights briefing book. She has worked with us as a graphic designer since 2005. In addition to her administrative role in the Program Director's office, Melanie will provide graphic design and layout for *Program Highlights*, the Swimming Upstream newsletter, take over most of the administration of the Upper Basin Program's website and lead our efforts on social media.
2. Review of draft FY 2014-2015 work plan. Draft scopes of work are found at <http://www.coloradoriverrecovery.org/documents-publications/work-plan-documents/project-scopes-of-work.html#VI>. Angela Kantola posted information about the draft work plan, along with a budget spreadsheet on the fws-coloriver listserver on June 21. Scopes of work to be reviewed by the I&E Committee are:

[12 General Information & Education](#) – Angela said her office did not prepare scopes of work for interpretive signs/exhibits or nonnative fish public involvement this year due to budget restrictions. However, since we will work on those things as needed with available funds, Angela asked the Committee if they would like her to **>append those to scope of work for project 12. The Committee endorsed this (and Angela also will correct dates in the SOW)**. John Shields asked about the number of endangered fish magnets; Melanie said these are very popular and we will need to re-order them, if possible. The Program has a good quantity of rulers and stickers on hand. Angela said that in Debbie Felker's recent post-retirement adventures, she discovered an interpretive trail at Rifle Gap State Park with old signs (very weathered/damaged) about the endangered fish. These are the signs that we just replaced in Grand Junction. We need to work with CPW to replace them someday and

perhaps similar signs at some other parks in western Colorado. Colorado installed interpretive signs about our fish in several western parks during the Greg Walcher/John Marshall era. Mike Porras said CPW is working on many new signs as a result of the recent merge of Wildlife and Parks. >**Mike will raise the issue of the endangered fish signs with CPW and check with regional managers regarding signage needs.**

[12cCoordinated Reservoir Operations](#) – No comments.

3. Committee member updates

- a. Kara Lamb said this year's hydrology didn't allow coordinated reservoir operations. The [annual Ruedi Reservoir operations meeting](#) will be held this Wednesday at the Basalt Town Hall from 7-8:30 p.m. Jana Mohrman will discuss flows she anticipates requesting this year for the endangered fish. Kara will have an update on recent Ruedi contracting activity on the next call. USBR anticipates nearly filling Ruedi this year.
- b. John Shields reported on the Green River Basin Advisory Group meeting May 21 in Rock Springs. The turn-out was not large, but John's colleague presented John's Powerpoint that included a Recovery Program update and also provided copies of briefing book. John also indicated that most of the briefing books were not taken and that he has copies available if people are interested.
- c. Dan Luecke noted that PBS NewsHour last week covered the Friant project on the San Joaquin River (result of lawsuit settlement). (See [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/environment/july-dec13/california\\_07-12.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/environment/july-dec13/california_07-12.html) and <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2013/07/restoring-the-san-joaquin-river-and-recalling-its-history.html>, but note that on 7/24/13 the standard PBS NewsHour website was down and the latter site was not accessible). Dan said it wasn't a particularly favorable portrayal, and much disagreement remains, despite the fact that they now have a restoration program). Dan said it didn't seem as though much has been done or that the parties are getting along, but perhaps this is due to growing pains and early stages. Parties in UCREFRP fortunately are unlikely to behave that way, but it's worth it for us to see how the restoration program was portrayed. Dan mentioned the river tours hosted by the [Colorado Foundation for Water Education Foundation](#). Kara said USBR sometimes presents at these. On the recent tour, Martha Moore presented at Roller Dam as did Dale Ryden, of the Service's Grand Junction CRFP office. The Recovery Program also provided 60 information packets. (See article at <http://www.postindependent.com/news/grandjunction/6984007-113/colorado-river-tour-users>). Dan said he's heard folks from other river basins speak positively about the CROS and HUP call groups and noted that other basins might benefit from learning about this cooperative approach. A Denver Post article highlighted this work a few years ago and Martha said the Summit Daily ran an article this year.
- d. Sharon Whitmore said the [San Juan Program won an America Great Outdoors award](#) (McKinstry nominated it for the recent habitat restoration work). The Program has displayed the award outside the Chapter House on the Navajo Reservation. The San

Juan's recent outreach activities have been somewhat limited with sequestration.

- e. Justyn Hock said the OMID canal improvement project draft EA released last week. Justyn did a [press release](#) and a couple of TV stations covered it. Construction is expected to begin this fall. The project is anticipated to result in savings of ~17Kaf/year.
- f. Mike Porras said [CPW's stocking tiger muskies in Harvey Gap](#) reservoir made a media splash. These are an alternative fish they hope will be attractive to anglers. The fish were raised by students at Limon High School. These fish were stocked at ~20", larger than a previous, failed stocking. The screen recently installed at Rifle Gap seems to be working well.
- g. Martha Moore asked if there was a recent article or resolution from the Western Governor's Association. John Shields said WGA updated their [resolution about endangered species](#) and the Recovery Programs may have been mentioned in the discussion about the resolution at the WGA annual meeting as the resolution encouraged what our Recovery Programs already do. Martha asked if the Recovery Program will be involved with the [Colorado State Water Plan](#) which CWCB has been directed to submit in draft to the Governor's office by the end of 2014. John noted that Becky Mitchell, Colorado's former Management Committee representative heads CWCB's Water Supply Planning Section, and assumes she would direct some involvement of this effort with the Recovery Program. **>Angela will check with Jana Mohrman on this.**
- h. Brent Stettler reported that Lake Powell has now been determined to have quagga mussels. A concentration apparently was found at the Antelope Point boat launch and appears to be scattering from there toward Wahweap. See also <http://www.nps.gov/glca/parknews/successful-quagga-mussel-blitz.htm>. The Hite boat launch is out of the water due to reservoir levels.
- i. Dan Johnson said that the Park Service has been conducting tamarisk removal projects in Green and Colorado river corridors.
- j. Angela Kantola and Melanie Fischer
  - Meeting with States' fish chiefs on nonnative fishes – Angela Kantola discussed the meeting held in Grand Junction May 21-22 with the Fish Chiefs (and staff members). John Shields said he thought the meeting went very well. As background, Angela said that last fall the Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Team recommended that the Service defer downlisting pikeminnow due to current population status and the link to nonnative fish. In the May meeting, the group discussed the draft nonnative strategy and Tom Chart recommended critical action items. On June 25, the Fish and Wildlife Service met to discuss sufficient progress, but has delayed making its 2013 determination until the Program can respond to the proposed critical nonnative fish actions. Tom Chart is working with the States to get agreement on critical action items (e.g., focusing on the worst species at a basinwide level, specific actions in the upper Yampa, etc.) that would be put into the RIPRAP and implemented over the

next 1-3 years and provide the Service assurance of how the Program will address the nonnative fish threat in a more aggressive way. As this develops, the Program will need to do more outreach and broad education regarding the impacts of nonnative fishes on endangered fish. Martha asked about fines for illegal introductions; Mike said Colorado's fines go up to \$5K, but folks also can lose their license for life and be responsible for reclamation.

- Social Media – Angela said the Program Director's office recommends the Recovery Programs make the jump into social media with facebook, Twitter, and Flickr accounts (combined accounts for both recovery programs). The Fish and Wildlife Service has now plowed a fair bit of ground in social media. As examples, Angela referred the Committee to sites such as:  
<https://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie>  
<https://www.facebook.com/PlantsAndPollinatorsOfTheAridWest>  
<https://www.facebook.com/FerretCenter>  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jackson-National-Fish-Hatchery/192613280864159>  
<https://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>  
<https://twitter.com/USFWSBearRiver>  
<https://secure.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnpairie/>

Melanie said the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region has the second highest regional facebook following at just under 6,000 and the third-highest Twitter following at over 11,000. The Region also has more Flickr images than any other, with over 4,700. Thanks to the Elk Refuge, the Region had the Service's most viral social media post (mountain lion story) at the end of March, with over 3 million views in just one week. The Region reached 2.8 million people across its network in April of this year, alone.

Social media will help us communicate our messages about the recovery programs to new and broader audiences and allow us to get more photos, videos, and clickable URLs in front of those audiences. Melanie Fischer has experience with social media and is willing to take the lead on this, and the San Juan Program supports this approach. Program partners will be able to post information on these sites and access the photo library on Flickr. The Committee discussed methods of moderating social media sites and acknowledged that the protocols the Service has already established will make our entry into social media much simpler. Melanie will use software (e.g., SproutSocial or HootSuite) to monitor activity on our sites. Dan Luecke suggested the possibility of creating a Twitter account for a humpback chub or bonytail, for example and related a very compelling piece he read recently on tracking a radio-monitored crane on migration (appeared in The Crane Trust newsletter, *Braided River* between 2002 and 2004). In addition to photos, Melanie said we'll also begin encouraging field folks to take videos. **>Melanie will send the Committee an e-mail requesting endangered fish photos and content; Brent said he'd forward that request for content to Utah's field biologists.** Angela noted that many of the programs' young field biologists already use social media and this likely will be a natural for them. **Brent recommended including sideboards/parameters/technical guidelines for posts and >Melanie said she would do that.** Angela Kantola

encouraged Program partners to contribute to the social media sites. Melanie said she anticipates this work being more time-consuming at the beginning and as we launch the sites, she'll focus on increasing followers and providing regular and relevant posts and photos. Angela assured the Committee that the Program Director's office will be careful to consider and represent all Program partner views in our postings, and welcomed Program participants input and comments as we establish our social media presence. Committee members supported the Programs' leap into social media.  
>**The Program Director's office will provide links as they are launched.**

- Newsletter - Angela said the next big I&E product is the newsletter, and we will try to go ahead and do one this year. A content planning meeting is usually held in August with the deadline for articles in early to mid-September. The newsletter usually has ~15 stories: a cover story of 1000 – 1500 words (applicable to both programs), shorter stories of ~500 words, and little news & updates pieces of ~100 words.

Content suggestions to date include:

- A feature story about a person (like “Honky Tonk Harry in the last newsletter). A tribute to Debbie Felker was suggested. We might also want to do a “where are they now” feature on Bob Muth, Gerry Roehm, George Smith, Pat Martinez, etc.
- A lead article on Colorado pikeminnow from Bill Miller
- An article about OMID, which also could reference GVWM and how these projects contribute water to the 15 Mile-Reach. Dan Luecke previously suggested an important part of this story is that the improvements the program has made in operation of the system also are of enormous value to irrigators in these dry years. This is a rare example of how investment in environmental restoration provides benefits to existing uses. John suggested including a chart of water added from GVWM.
- Other articles drawing on recent articles in *Irrigation Leader* (Kris Polly and Bob Johnson could be helpful here). Eric Kuhn was recently interviewed by Kris for an article in *Irrigation Leader* on the Recovery Program.
- A story about finding young razorbacks in the San Juan and upper basin.
- Passive PIT antennas (if haven't done already).
- Electrofishing equipment standardization and Pat Martinez' retirement
- Nonnative fish strategy

I&E Committee members can help by serving as a first line of editorial review for articles from folks in their agencies

Angela and Tom Chart will be working with Sharon and Dave to provide subject matter direction and perhaps farm some topics out to I&E Committee members. Justyn Hock has offered to help edit the newsletter, and the Program Director's office *may* have a half-time public relations person (shared with Region 6 External Affairs) on board in time to help, as well. John Shields emphasized staying results-oriented with both newsletter articles and social media postings.

- Going digital – We've long talked about moving more toward digital media and

eventually reducing the number of our printed media (e.g. newsletter), which would enable us to enrich the content significantly. Melanie said software is available that makes this very easy. Just using interactive pdf files, we could create a great product that folks can view on their iPads, phones, etc. Angela asked if the Committee would support the Program Director's office sending a postcard (and/or making phone calls) to our mailing list) to get email addresses of folks who are willing to received enhanced digital instead of printed versions of the newsletter. Martha agreed digital is the direction we should head and Brent said it would save a significant amount of money. The Committee endorsed moving toward digital editions. Martha and Angela noted we'll always want to have a printed version for folks who prefer that.

4. The Committee will schedule another call when needed via a Doodle poll.

***ADJOURN 11:30 a.m.***