

Information & Education Committee Conference Call September 23, 2008

Participants: Tom Czapla, Kara Lamb, Angela Kantola, Debbie Felker, Matt Kales, Randy Hampton, Leslie James, Betsy Blakeslee, Martha Moore, John Shields, Justyn Hock, Scott Durst, Mark Hadley, and Tom Chart.

CONVENE: 1:00 p.m.

1. Introductions – Scott Durst was introduced as a new biologist for the San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program. He participated on the call in place of Sharon Whitmore.
2. Discussion of proposed postage stamps – As an avid stamp collector, Tom Czapla wanted to see the endangered Colorado River fishes receive recognition on postage stamps so he submitted a proposal to have stamps produced in 2008 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Recovery Program and the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Tom prepared mock-up artwork that shows each fish on an individual stamp with a map of the Upper Colorado River Basin on all four. The proposal was submitted to Colorado Senator Wayne Allard, but his office apparently never received it. Tom thinks that perhaps the Program would have better success than he did as a private citizen. John Shields suggested trying to get one or more congressional sponsors after we get our legislation done. Czapla said that would make sense, since the U.S. Postal Service likes a 3-year lead time and suggests we push for 2013. Another option is a semi-postal stamp, which costs a penny more than regular (there are ones for breast cancer and 9/11) and proceeds go to those causes. John said we might also consider partnering with others who might be interested (e.g., the Platte River Recovery Program, other endangered species programs, etc.)
3. Nonnative fish management update – Tom Chart referred to the list of recommendations that have been generated by biologists and other participants at past nonnative fish management workshops. The nonnative fish subcommittee has been working to prioritize those recommendations and hopes to have that done shortly. Some of the recommendations have a significant I&E component and will need this committee's input. All of the recommendations likely will be captured in an overall nonnative fish management strategy, and the Recovery Program would like the I&E Committee to help finalize and prioritize the I&E-related recommendations. The Nonnative Fish Subcommittee may get Biology Committee buy-in at the end of October which is when Chart thinks the I&E input would be needed. Randy Hampton and Mark Hadley agreed to work with Kara Lamb on a subcommittee to provide this input. Matt Kales will talk with Barb Perkins from his office to see if one of them can also participate to represent the Fish and Wildlife Service. Other committee members are welcome to participate.

4. Discussion of new I & E product – Debbie said the idea for this came from a Colorado Water Congress meeting two years ago in Denver. Debbie and Kara noted that conference attendees weren't picking up Recovery Program items and asked them why. They said they already had everything from previous years. The recommended new item is an approximately ~9" stuffed fish (humpback chub) like a beanie baby, and would have a hang tag with educational information about the fish and the Program's logo, web address and phone number. The idea would be to introduce one species per year. The primary use would be to distribute at exhibits for water users, to classrooms, and select other audiences. The committee agreed it wouldn't be appropriate to take to Washington, D.C., during the briefing trip. Kara said the idea would be to rejuvenate the collectability aspect we had with the magnets and to help continue to build awareness and a positive impression of the fish and the Program among the general public. Leslie James agreed that this would be a popular item at the water user meetings. Betsy Blakeslee agreed it would be great for classrooms to have these. To start, we would just order ~1,200 (\$3,000), and then see if we want to order more in the future. Libraries, bookstores, classrooms, all our various stakeholders, etc. The Committee discussed size, and suggested that we might want to make the humpback smaller and reserve the 9" size for the Colorado pikeminnow. The Committee supported doing a first run of the humpback chub. No one envisioned producing as many of these as we do magnets, for example. The first water conference where we had these available would probably be the Utah Water Users meeting in St. George, Utah, in March. Matt asked where the plush fish are made. They are made in China. Leslie said folks may ask that, but the group acknowledged that affordable specialty marketing items are almost inevitably made in China and elsewhere at this point. Debbie will find out about having them made in the United States and the Program Director's office will get back to the Committee with a more full proposal (total #'s to be made of all four fish, planned distribution, etc.).
5. Colorado River Water Users Association Meeting (Dec. 15-17) – Quent Bradwisch who has done a lot of outreach for us has accepted a new position in a hatchery near Salt Lake City. Debbie complimented Quent for his exceptional outreach efforts on behalf of the Recovery Program and said she will miss him. At this time, Debbie and Sharon Whitmore from the San Juan River Basin Recovery Program are the only ones scheduled to staff the exhibit in Las Vegas. Debbie doesn't know if someone from the Wahweap Fish Hatchery will be available. Matt is willing to help if he doesn't have to be in Washington, D.C., on the transition team. Justyn will check with Brent Uilenberg to see if she can help.
6. Update on interpretive signs at Elkhead Reservoir – Martha Moore said the Recovery Program provided \$10,000 to help fund this project. The design is still in the works and is dependent on State Park approval. The park manager would like to fund a larger sign with a roof for shade and is looking for funds from his budget to support this. At this time, the project is out of the River District's hands and they are waiting to move forward, pending direction from the park manager.

7. Update on northern pike program at Wolford Mountain Reservoir – The Colorado River Water Conservation District has paid for 28 fish under this bounty program to date. The program will continue until the reservoir freezes over this year. A decision to offer the program next year is yet to be made. Martha will send posters to Betsy to promote the program in area fishing shops, etc.
8. Town of Palisade proposed whitewater park as the issue relates to the Recovery Program as it relates to Price-Stubb – Justyn said that while the issue at the Price-Stubb fish passage has been resolved, the Town of Palisade and boaters remain dissatisfied. The Committee was briefed on the status of the Town’s application for a permit to construct proposed building a whitewater park elsewhere on the Colorado River. Matt reported that the Service cannot support the permit at this time because the information provided by the Town to date is inadequate. He said the Service’s Grand Junction Ecological Services office has briefed Congressional staff and is handling news media inquiries. Kara asked what we might do to re-build a positive image with the community. She was interested in internet-based efforts such as blogging, pod casts and message boards. Justyn suggested laying low for a few months because she said that when the Recovery Program is discussed, people immediately turn to the whitewater park controversy. Angela suggested publicizing Grand Valley water management activities might be appropriate in the next month or so.
9. Researchers meeting – January 13-15 in Grand Junction – The Program Director’s staff discussed the feasibility of having some presentations on outreach. The Committee thought this would be a good idea. John said we might also poll the researchers at this time re: their perception of our outreach efforts. Debbie will follow-up with Kara to talk about more about this idea. They will report back to the Committee.
10. Roundtable discussion by committee on issues each member may have that affect the Recovery Program -- Matt Kales: The Service’s new regional director asked External Affairs to develop a brochure to highlight activities in the Mountain-Prairie Region. The Recovery Program will be included in this publication. There is a fairly recent new initiative in the Service to address Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC). Bob Muth is a member of the SHC regional implementation team and is educating others about how the Recovery Program has successfully used this approach... John Shields: thanked Justyn, Debbie, and others for the July 1 dedication ceremony. He said the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel’s* editorial about cooperative conservation that ran the Sunday after the event was excellent. John asked if we might want to make a foil sticker or graphic for the 2008-2009 briefing book that notes receipt of the Department of the Interior’s Cooperative Conservation Award. John said a team is still working to have a capital construction authorization extension passed in this Congress. Provisions for annual funding will be introduced in a separate bill at a later time. The 2009 briefing trip will take place March 4-10. At least seven of the 14 house members for the four states will be new, and there will be turnover in the Senate, as well. Betsy Blakeslee: has been serving on the Routt County Environmental Sustainability focus group. She read a draft desired outcome statement regarding Yampa River Flows that she drafted to present to this group. She will email the draft to Debbie for review by Tom Chart and others on the

Program Director's staff. Martha also asked to see it. Kara Lamb: reported that she will be traveling to Basalt near Ruedi Reservoir next month for her annual presentation for the Roaring Fork Conservancy's Reservoir education program. She will talk about the Recovery Program as it relates to Ruedi Reservoir and Reclamation operations.

11. Schedule next meeting – Debbie will work with Kara and other Committee members to schedule a meeting early next year (perhaps the middle two weeks in February) at the Downtown Denver Aquarium.

ADJOURN: 2:50 p.m.