



Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Information and Education Committee Conference Call October 13, 2010 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Summary

Participants: Martha Moore, Peter Roessmann, John Shields, Kara Lamb, Diane Katzenberger for Matt Kales, Joann Perea-Richmann, Sharon Whitmore, Randy Hampton, Justyn Hock, Leslie James, Tom Chart, Debbie Felker, Pat Martinez, and Angela Kantola

1. **Program Director's update** – Tom Chart said he's been reviewing draft newsletter stories for Debbie and that it's shaping up to be another excellent newsletter with good articles about both the Upper Colorado and San Juan programs. Tom introduced Pat Martinez, the Recovery Program's new Nonnative Fish Coordinator, and mentioned Pat's current project to develop an Upper Basin-wide nonnative fish management strategy. That strategy will place new emphasis on prevention, so we can anticipate a need for new messaging to go along with that.
2. **Legislative update; annual briefing trip** – John Shields said there's been no change in status to the annual funding bill. The original Ruedi legislation introduced by Representative John Salazar will not be moving forward. Instead, a 40-year contract is being developed between Reclamation and West Slope water users that may suffice. The 2011 briefing trip is scheduled for March 15-22. Martha Moore said that Chris Treese met with Acting Deputy Commissioner Bob Quint this morning and Chris said it went really well. Chris is meeting with Congressional representatives and will include the Ruedi legislation in those briefings.
3. **Proposed conference call with Members of Congress** – John Shields outlined background on this. Beginning with last year's briefing trip, Representative McClintock raised questions about the recovery programs. A supplemental information document was produced to address those questions. The Management Committee subsequently had a conference call to brainstorm ways to improve Congressional communication during which Mat Maucieri (Reclamation's Congressional liaison) suggested considering holding short (~20-30 min.) conference calls for interested Congressional staffers (quarterly or three times per year). The Implementation Committee agreed at its September 22 meeting to try a call – perhaps the first week of December.

Debbie Felker said she and Tom Chart met with Matt Kales (the Service's congressional liaison) to discuss this further. They decided that, in light of upcoming elections in November, it might be better to hold the first call in February -- a month in advance of the non-federal partners annual Congressional visit. Topics to address might include: completion of the 5-year species' status review; decisions being made on recovery goals/plans; and recent program accomplishments such as detection of endangered fish via the newly installed PIT-tag antenna at Price-Stubb fish passage and capture of a large Colorado pikeminnow from the San Juan River.

Debbie cautioned that Federal employees must be careful during the call to only provide technical information. Non-federal partners would discuss any upcoming legislation, the March briefing trip, etc.

Leslie James reminded the group to exercise caution in discussing the recovery goals/plans in light of ongoing GCT v. U.S. litigation. Tom Chart noted that this may be a topic that Congressional staffers raise questions about and we need to be prepared to answer those questions. Kara suggested limiting the call to 10-15 minutes. The group discussed how effective these calls might be, noting that since the programs are implementing a solution that avoids train wrecks, our issues may not be "hot" enough to grab their attention. E-mail updates could be more effective, for example.

Diane Katzenberger recommended trying the conference calls to see how they work. She said the Service has experience with them and that the Service's legislative staff in D.C. would likely help set up the call and invite participation. She suggests the purpose of the first call would be to familiarize Congressionals with our programs in advance of the March briefing trip and explain who we are, what we're doing, and why it's important to their constituents. Randy Hampton agreed, noting that since folks at the Implementation Committee level think the call might be helpful, we probably should try it. The Information and Education Committee won't actually be too heavily involved. John Shields said we want to be sure that the calls aren't viewed as a waste of staffers' time.

Angela Kantola supported Diane's suggestion, and recommended asking Tom Pitts to chair the call (since water users are constituents for all Congressional members). Angela agreed the calls should be short (15 min) and that what we want people to know about the call should fit on one screen of the e-mail advertising it. Tom Chart suggested that we briefly describe what the recovery programs are about and let them know about the upcoming March briefing trip. Kara stressed covering the "who, what, why, where, when" basics about the recovery programs.

Leslie and John emphasized that we'll need to make it clear what we want from them (e.g., participate in briefings, support legislation, etc.). Randy cautioned that inviting folks with such a wide spectrum of opinions about the recovery programs and the Endangered Species Act to participate on the same call could result in folks who are strongly opposed influencing those who are lukewarm. The I&E Committee's role in assisting with this first call will be to help make sure we're on point, determine the first message, and how to communicate it succinctly.

4. **Rack Card for Upper Colorado and San Juan Programs** – Debbie welcomed Ellen Szczesny from the Recovery Program’s staff to the call to help present this topic. Debbie provided background about the rack card. Since people respond so positively to seeing the endangered fish live, Debbie proposed the concept of a rack card for tourist centers to direct the public to locations where they can see the fish in aquaria. The card also would provide a link to a website that would give people quick information on where they can see the fish. Debbie said she still needs to get permission from facilities where aquariums are located and to determine distribution. The Committee reviewed a mock-up of the proposed card. Mark Hadley recommended (via e-mailed comments) to take the partner names off of the back of the card and perhaps use fish photos instead. Mark also suggested working on the text on the front of the card to do a better job of grabbing peoples’ attention.

Martha agreed that listing the partners is extraneous and suggested giving facts about the fish and their importance, etc. John agreed, noting that the list of partners can be seen at the sites where people go to see the fish (as well as the website) and that some of those sites (and directions) should be listed on the card. The Committee liked the concept and approach. Pat Martinez agreed with Martha and suggested we could stress how we’re trying to preserve the native fish communities. Pat noted we could stress new scientific facts (e.g., the hump in razorback sucker and humpback chub as an evolutionary advantage to avoid Colorado pikeminnow propagation).

Ellen said we’re also contemplating having a webcam of aquarium fish on the website. Sharon Whitmore thought that would be really helpful for folks who would have to travel a long way to see the fish. Debbie will continue to work on this project and provide an update and another draft design/text for the Committee’s review/comment.

5. **Roundtable updates** – Debbie said she and Jana will staff a Recovery Program exhibit at the Wyoming Water Association in Laramie October 26-28. The recovery programs will have their usual exhibit at the Colorado River Water Users Association meeting December 15-17 in Las Vegas. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources approved out-of-state travel for Zane Olsen to bring fish from Wahweap Fish Hatchery to display in an aquarium at the exhibit.

Tildon Jones will give a presentation about the endangered fish and distribute program materials at the second annual Moab River Rendezvous November 11-14. Tom Chart and Angela staffed an exhibit at the Grand Junction Downtown Market Festival on September 2 and received very positive responses. The festival is held every Thursday throughout the summer. Tom and Angela recommend exhibiting there again once or twice next year.

Debbie thanked Joann and Sharon with the San Juan program, Justyn Hock, and others for help with writing newsletter articles. The newsletter should be available by the end of November. The Recovery Program participated in three out of four Community Agriculture Alliance water forums this year (July regional tour of Yampa River Basin; September forum in Craig that addressed state and regional water issues; and in November, the forum will address local issues in the Yampa River Basin). Debbie said the Upper Basin Recovery Program website (ColoradoRiverRecovery.org) redesign is completed and recognized Ellen’s great work on this project. Debbie is waiting to receive a formal request from Colorado State

Parks to replace weathered interpretive signs in western Colorado. She recommended the Recovery Program use the \$5K not needed in FY 11 for a Denver Zoo project to do this, as long as the Recovery Program approves the text/graphics on the signs (the Committee agreed).

Randy said CDOW is working to replace Tom Nesler, who has retired. Randy has taken a position as CDOW's statewide spokesperson based in Denver. He will continue to serve on the I&E Committee for the time being.

Leslie said they've been working on a 1-page, 4-color briefing document about hydropower and Glen Canyon Dam which she'll share with the Committee when it's finished. She also said she will share a report about dams across the country that is produced by Homeland Security, "Open Source Digest."

Kara said issues downstream of Ruedi Reservoir were fewer than last year. The primary people who are upset now are associated with the private Yacht Club located on the reservoir. They are upset that reservoir levels dropped quickly at the end of the summer season. Kara said about 80,000 acre-feet of water was delivered from Ruedi and Green Mountain reservoirs this year, which is a new record for Reclamation.

Peter Roessmann said Western Resource Advocate's "Fossil Foolishness" report has been well-received and keeps the concern about impacts of water demands on the Recovery Program on folks' radar screen.

John complimented Tom Pitts for his recent article about the Recovery Program that appeared in the first issue of Irrigation Magazine which has a distribution of 3,600. Debbie had color copies made of this article to include with Recovery Program exhibit handouts.

6. Schedule next conference call – February 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in Denver near DIA.
7. Call adjourned at 3 p.m.