



# Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Summary Dated: July 13, 2011

## Information and Education Committee Conference Call July 13, 2011 – 10 a.m. to Noon

### Summary

**Participants:** John Shields, Kara Lamb, Diane Katzenberger, Joann Perea-Richmann, Randy Hampton, Martha Moore, Mark Hadley, Justyn Hock, Leslie James, Tom Chart, Debbie Felker, Melissa Trammell, and Angela Kantola.

#### 1. Review of draft FY 2012-2013 work plan

**12 General Public Involvement:** Randy noted that the budget item on page 7 that addresses the unit cost for staffing the Ute Water Festival should read “2 people @ \$40/hr x 45/hrs = \$3,600.” >Debbie will make this correction. Randy asked about the newsletter and if we’re getting good mileage from the 8,500 copies we print. Committee members said they think so. Debbie said she suggested in last year’s annual report that the program should consider producing an online color version in the future (though we will want to continue to have printed copies for conferences and visitor centers). John Shields agreed that we will want to continue to have printed copies for handouts and said he uses them during the annual Congressional briefing trip. Debbie said she’s reduced the number we print to minimize leftovers and 8,500 seems to be a good number now. John asked about including a postcard to ask if folks want to continue receiving the newsletter; Debbie said we don’t have a way to pay return postage. The Committee recommended printing an announcement in the next newsletter that asks readers to provide an email address if they would prefer to receive the newsletter online. By building an email list, the program can reduce printing and postage costs.

Diane said the Fish and Wildlife Service produced its [Mountain-Prairie Region Year-in-Review](#) as an electronic video this year and got very positive responses. The major savings in an electronic vs. printed newsletter is in postage, so as we consider a change, we will want to focus mostly on reducing individual mailings. Diane reminded the group that it is very time consuming to manage social media sites. She said the Service is very willing to use its social media platform (website, facebook, twitter) to promote Recovery Program news and activities (e.g., the razorback sucker larvae story was promoted via Twitter, facebook and the website). She also suggested that perhaps other program partners could help through their agencies as well.

**12C Coordinated Reservoir Operations:** No comments.

**12H Interpretive Signs and Exhibits:** Debbie has carry-over funds to work on these projects. She has included a history of Recovery Program exhibits in this scope of work. >Randy will find out if there's still a sign at Rifle Gap State Park. John Shields asked if the Recovery Program still has a small exhibit at the Flaming Gorge Visitor Center; >Debbie will check with Ed Vidmar.

**12I Ruedi Reservoir:** Kara said the Ruedi operations public meeting in Basalt is this evening. Reclamation is beginning to cut back on releases now and it sounds like the Service won't call for much in the way of late summer/fall releases for the fish, which will go over well with the public. Service Hydrologist Jana Mohrman will speak at the meeting on behalf of the Recovery Program.

**12L Nonnative Fish Management Public Involvement:** Randy said that nonnative fish removal has been a focus of much of our Program communication in the past. This year, messages started to shift toward talking more about Recovery Program benefits (e.g., continued water use, endangered and native fish benefits, landowner benefits). This was noted in the tone of the press releases issued this spring about nonnative fish management in Colorado and Utah. Hopefully this will help change public perceptions. Melissa Trammell said she and the Biology Committee agreed this is a very good shift. John Shields agreed, noting that when something is characterized as the greatest good for the greatest number, then it will be better received. Randy believes combining this with an emphasis on science and the adaptive nature of the Recovery Program is our best communication approach. Randy also said CDOW made personal visits to staff at Elkhead State Park and to local bass fishing groups that might be affected by the decision to stop translocation into Elkhead Reservoir of smallmouth bass removed from the Yampa River this year.

John Shields asked if the San Juan Program should be mentioned in this scope or if it is specific to the Upper Basin Program. Debbie said this one is specific to the Upper Basin and she asked Joann and others if they thought the San Juan Program should be mentioned. Joann said the San Juan Program has its own scope of work for communication. John suggested we may need to consider any implications related to messaging that may arise due to the draft environmental assessment for nonnative fish control downstream from Glen Canyon Dam. He questioned how we can keep the differences between various programs clear in people's minds. Leslie noted that a recent Notice of Intent published in the *Federal Register* indicates that a recovery implementation program below Glen Canyon Dam may be considered during scoping of a Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS.

## 2. Roundtable updates –

- a. Justyn Hock said she, Debbie and Kara participated in the Colorado Foundation for Water Education annual river basin bus tour a few weeks ago. More than 100 community leaders, state legislators, teachers and others went to the Grand Valley Project Diversion Dam where they got a firsthand look at the fish passage and screen and razorback suckers. People told her they really appreciated this part of their tour, including Mesa County Commissioner Steve Acquafresca who said it was the highlight for him. The local NBC television station filmed at the passage and produced a good ~45 second spot. Debbie thanked Justyn for representing the Program on the planning committee for the tour and for all of her on-the-ground coordination. Kara met the tour in the headwaters area and talked about the Colorado Big-Thompson Project. She alluded to the Recovery Program and Debbie's upcoming talk. Justyn said she's working with another local NBC reporter Cecile Juliet. Cecile contacted Brent about the growout ponds they'll be constructing at Horsethief. Since the ponds aren't being constructed yet, Justyn and Brent took her to see the hatchery and provided information about the program. Cecile was interested in costs and a potential Colorado pikeminnow sportfishery and has asked to come back out to the hatchery to do some more filming. Justyn will continue to help the Recovery Program with this media story.
- b. Leslie James said that at CREDA's recent summer meeting, she received an excellent new bi-fold publication that Reclamation produced entitled, "Hydropower: Powering a Clean Future." >Kara will follow-up to get a link to an online version to share with the Committee.
- c. Diane thanked Debbie Felker for providing two stories for the Service's recent 50 stories for 50 states blog series on climate change. Stories in the series explore the many ways that accelerating climate change is impacting or may impact fish and wildlife across America. The stories addressed ways the Upper Basin and San Juan Programs are working with partners to manage water during times of drought. Stories are available on the Service's website: <http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange/>.
- d. Kara said she continues to address a lot of high water issues this spring. At tonight's Ruedi meeting in Basalt, Reclamation will make it clear that the high flows are due to hydrology, not fish releases. The 10,825 draft environmental assessment is still in progress. Reclamation had hoped to have all cooperating agency comments back by now, but is still waiting to receive comments from one important water group. The public meeting scheduled for the end of July will be rescheduled for mid-August.

- e. John Shields encouraged folks to read the articles about the Upper Basin and San Juan River programs in the national trade magazine, *Irrigation Leader* (which Tom Pitts sent out). This magazine has a distribution of ~6,000 and goes to every Congressional. (Note from Debbie: color copies of the articles will be made available at future water user conferences.) John gave a brief update on legislative issues. One outstanding question is the period of authorization. John said he understands a small group of people from Mexico, representing the International Boundary of Water Commissioners, will tour the upper basin the first week of August and perhaps spend the night in Grand Junction. Larry Walkoviak is heading up this effort, so Justyn or Kara may want to find out if we can provide some information for their packets about the recovery programs. >Justyn will contact Barry Wirth.
- f. Randy Hampton said that when he visited the Biology Committee on July 11, Tom Pitts mentioned the need for continued coordination with the San Juan Program. He also mentioned that legislatively it would be beneficial if some of our messaging focused on recovery goals and progress toward those, so we may want to discuss this during the next conference call. Randy noted the merger of Parks and Wildlife divisions in Colorado. The tentative name is Colorado Parks and Wildlife and a transition team is working out details. The new director, Rick Cables, starts on Monday, July 18. His office will be at the downtown location at 1313 Sherman. Randy said that in the grand scheme of things, the merger won't change how Colorado works with the Recovery Program.
- g. Debbie Felker
- Interpretive Signs and Exhibits: Debbie is working with the park managers at James M. Robb – Colorado River State Park and Elkhead State Park to replace vandalized and worn interpretive signs about the endangered fish. Recovery Program funds that were previously targeted toward a project that didn't happen at the Denver Zoo were redirected to produce the signs. Park staff will install them.

Tom Chart recently saw an interpretive sign near Stewart Lake in Utah that refers to the Colorado squawfish. We will work with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in Vernal to either remove or replace the sign with current information.

Debbie is working with CDOW staff to obtain bonytail from J.W. Mumma Native Aquatic Restoration Facility for aquarium exhibits

- The news release issued last week about finding razorback sucker larvae for the first time in the White River was picked up by the *Salt Lake Tribune*. We are working with a reporter from Brigham Young University on a story about this topic and anticipate our news clipping service will alert us to additional coverage.

We anticipate a positive story in *The Deseret News* in the near future about the challenges facing the Colorado River and how our program is moving forward successfully to meet our dual goals with no lawsuits having been filed. The reporter and photographer toured the hatchery and Redlands fish passage in Grand Junction recently and Tom Chart and Debbie have been interviewed.

The San Joaquin Program contacted our program to get ideas from us that they may be able to use in their program. Representatives will attend our upcoming Management Committee meeting and perhaps meet with some of our Program leaders.

- Rack Card: Debbie explained that due to other priorities she has not rewritten the content for the rack card that the Committee reviewed last fall. She hopes to get that done and a second version out for Committee review by September.
  - It's already time to start thinking about content for this year's newsletter. Committee ideas are welcome and should be given to Debbie by August 12, 2011.
3. **Schedule next meeting/conference call** – The next call is scheduled for October 12, 2011, from 10 a.m. to noon. Agenda items will include integrating recovery goals into messaging (perhaps update from Tom or Angela), GIS pit tag data which may or may not be on a public website. (The call may include a webinar so we can have a demo and facilitate a discussion about how this might be useful for the public.)