

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

November 13, 2000 – 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Comfort Suites at DIA

Denver, Colorado

Participants: Chris Treese, Jone Wright, Kara Lamb, Geoff Tischbein, John Shields, Mark Hadley, Bob Muth, Kathy Holley, Gerry Roehm, Pat Nelson, Debbie Felker

1. Program Director's Update – Acting Director Bob Muth gave an update on several significant Program issues:

A. Program director search: The application deadline was extended to Nov. 14. The Program hopes to announce a new director by the end of December.

B. Long-term funding legislation: President Clinton signed this bill on Oct. 30, extending funding for the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Basin Recovery Programs.

C. Draft recovery goals: A special Management Committee meeting is scheduled for Nov. 20 to address comments. The Program hopes to finalize the draft goals and publish to the Federal Register in early to mid-December. An outreach plan has been developed.

D. New Voting Partners: The Implementation Committee approved two new voting partners -- Colorado River Energy Distributors Association and the National Park Service.

E. Yampa Management Plan and PBO: Gerry Roehm will discuss later in the meeting.

F. Green River flow recommendations: The recommendations are finalized and have been given to the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau is preparing a draft environmental impact statement regarding operation of Flaming Gorge Dam. A public meeting will be held in Rock Springs, Wyoming, on Nov. 16.

G. Aspinall/Gunnison PBO: Planning meetings have been held. Tom Pitts has taken the lead on these meetings. The next one will be held Jan. 31 in Montrose. Geoff Tischbein may attend.

H. Upper Basin Researcher's Meeting: Scheduled for Jan. 17 and 18 in Grand Junction. Tom Nesler from CDOW is organizing the meeting.

I. Thank you: Bob thanked the I&E Committee for its hard work this past year. He said the Management Committee appreciates efforts made.

2. I&E Update: Debbie Felker provided an update of key I&E activities (see attachment A).

### 3. Committee Reports:

A. Mark Hadley – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources set up a special aquarium to showcase razorback suckers and bonytail at the Utah State Fair. More than 200,000 people attended. Recovery Program bookmarks were a big hit. Mark will ask UDWR biologist to write an article for UDWR's quarterly magazine about how sportfishing has improved below Flaming Gorge Dam.

B. Geoff Tischbein -- Anita Martinez distributed the Program newsletter to 500 landowners who comprise CDOW's Listening Log. She also requested 100 copies of the Grand Valley video to distribute to landowners with whom she is in contact during her work with pond reclamation. Geoff secured a news media spot on ponds on Bill's Backyard. He is working with Debbie to update and/or replace interpretive signs at Kenney Reservoir and in Grand Junction.

C. Kara Lamb -- The Bureau held two public meetings in May in Basalt to address releases from Ruedi Reservoir. To improve communication with anglers in the area, Kara established an e-mail list to notify anglers when flow levels change by a certain percentage. She will add the I&E Committee members to this list. The Bureau is developing an interpretive sign for Ruedi Reservoir and Kara would like to include some mention of the endangered fish – either as part of the permanent sign, or as a brochure/fact sheet that could be picked up.

D. Jennifer DeLeon was unable to attend, but Debbie distributed copies of the recently approved Ouray National Wildlife Refuge Management Plan that addresses recovery of endangered Colorado River fish. Jennifer has been working with Kathy Holley on the interpretive sign/exhibit project.

E. Jone Wright -- Update of Grand Valley projects:

1. Contract for installing checks (small dams) in the Government Highline Canal was awarded. They should be in place by spring 2001.
2. Still waiting for signed memorandum of understanding for Grand Valley water users
3. The design is proceeding for the GVIC fish screen. The contract for building and installation should be awarded by July 2001
4. The final Environmental Assessment on the fish passage at Price Stubbs Diversion Dam is still on hold.
5. The draft study on the alternative methods for a fish passage at the Grand Valley Project Diversion Dam should be completed by December 2000.
6. The study of possible alternatives for a fish passage at the Harland Diversion Dam should be completed in December 2000.

F. Chris Treese -- Rod Kuharich will become the new director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board on December 3. Dan McAuliffe will continue as assistant director. The Roaring Fork Conservancy District is doing a study on fish habitat (not endangered fish.) There are two basic purposes to the study: to determine the economic value of the trout fishery in the Roaring Fork Valley and the biological and economic impact of

fluctuating flows on the Frying Pan River. The survey will be administered next spring or summer and data should be ready next fall.

The River District is looking for additional monies for the Colorado Native Species Trust Fund to fully fund that account. The River District filed an official complaint to the Bureau of Reclamation in Loveland and the State Engineer's Office stating that the Big Thompson Project is being run inappropriately and inefficiently. The District hopes to resolve the complaint without going to court. (Note: In response to Chris' comment, Kara read a statement from her office explaining the Bureau's concerns over the complaint and its willingness to work with the District to resolve the issues. She said the Bureau's Area Manager has been in contact with Eric Kuhn from the River District and will also meet with the State Engineer's Office.)

Chris challenged the Committee to think about better ways to help people understand the benefit(s) they receive because this program exists.

G. John Shields – John made a presentation about the status of the Program to about 70 people at a statewide Wyoming Water Association seminar in early November. He will also present at a public meeting in Rock Springs, Wyoming, on Nov. 16. He plans to explain the background and history of the Program and the relationship of Green River flow recommendations to the operations of Flaming Gorge Dam. This meeting came at the request of the Bureau of Reclamation and Sen. Craig Thomas.

3. Interpretive Exhibit Update – Kathy Holley presented a written report detailing contacts she has made regarding this project (see attached). She recommends partnering with clubs or other organizations with the most active memberships (i.e., Legacy, Riverfront and Audubon in Grand Valley). The Committee asked Kathy to proceed with seeking opportunities to partner and to move ahead on those projects while interest is high. The Committee also asked her to consider creating exhibits that can be duplicated (i.e., used in both Grand Valley and Vernal) to minimize costs. The concept of interactive exhibits was discussed. Kathy will try to get more information from Denver Water about its exhibit at Colorado's Ocean Journey. Kathy asked the Committee to help her determine five key messages to use on interpretive signs in Grand Valley. Debbie will work with her to share the messages that are being used on the updated Program display.
4. Yampa River Update – Gerry Roehm presented details of a facilitated public meeting that took place in Craig last August (see attached handout) He also explained that there is a difference of opinion regarding how large increments of water depletion will be addressed in the Yampa Management Plan. He hopes that issue can be resolved by the end of November or early December. Once the draft Management Plan is finalized, it will be made available for public comment and review. This is tentatively planned for January 2001.

5. Other I & E Issues:

A. Gunnison River PBO – The suggestion was made to get all public information officers from agencies involved with the process together so that everyone knows what's going on and works together. The purpose is to try to avoid sending mixed/confusing messages to the public. It was further suggested that presentations be made at a group's standing meeting, rather than schedule a new meeting for this sole purpose. Chris, Gerry and Jone can probably develop that list.

B. Open houses versus public meetings. Discussion centered around these types of communication with the public. Some felt open houses are less formal. Others thought they were intimidating and didn't allow attendees to hear others' views. Consensus seemed to be that perhaps the best solution is to host an open house before the public meeting.

C. Recovery Goals Outreach Plan – Debbie distributed a draft outreach plan. She will contact State partners to get quotes to add to news releases and develop a list of agency people that can be contacted for news interviews. Notification of legislators is also included in the plan.

D. Plumbing Map – Pat Nelson led a discussion and showed examples of Upper Colorado River Basin maps. The Committee provided him with input on changes that would be helpful in developing a simple map for use at public meetings and perhaps on the Program's website. Pat will bring a corrected map to the next Committee meeting for review.

6. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held January 19, 2001, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction, Colorado.