

**Western Regional Panel
Executive Committee Minutes**
Thursday, December 11, 2003

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

Members Present: Tina Proctor, Jim Athearn, John Chapman, Susan Ellis, Al Van Vooren, Wendy Ralley (for Dwight Williamson)

Members Absent: Blaine Parker, Ted Grosholz, Scott Smith, Mark Sytsma, Nate Decoretz

1. 100th Meridian meeting in Boise, Idaho

Jim reported on the meeting December 2-3 in Boise, Idaho to create a Columbia River Team of the 100th Meridian Initiative. The Columbia River Working Group which had been meeting quarterly to exchange ANS information is the nucleus of the new team. New partners include Idaho Power and The Nature Conservancy. Stephen Phillips and Bill Zook will work with the team to duplicate and extend the program that is presently in place along the Missouri River to provide outreach and education to boat travelers during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Tom Donahoe unveiled the two new humorous Public Service Announcement or Traveler Information System (TIS) radio ads that he produced using character actors playing the roles of "Clark and Lewis." Richard Kind from "Spin City" and Patrick Warburton from "Almost Perfect" are the two voices and are familiar to people in the Northwest because they have also done "Clark and Lewis" ads for Horizon Airlines. The 100th Meridian Initiative can use these ads for the next three years. The group discussed working with marinas along the Columbia River, signs, monitoring, TIS placement and Lewis and Clark Signature Events. Minutes will be out in the next few weeks.

Al mentioned that the Idaho Invasive Species Task Force met yesterday and Fred Partridge from Idaho Fish and Game played the ads for the group. Al was surprised how many people in the room had no knowledge of zebra mussels and the possible threat. They definitely picked up on the message of the ad.

2. El Dorado Reservoir Team Meeting, November 19

Tina reported on a meeting in Kansas to develop another 100th Meridian Team, called the El Dorado team after the reservoir where a new population of zebra mussels are flourishing. Partners include Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, USFWS, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Corps of Engineers, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and OSU. The focus of the meeting was to create outreach projects to warn people about zebra mussel presence and how to avoid spreading them. Bob Pitman, FWS and David Britton, U. of Texas at Arlington, suggested that a team of people do boater surveys around the reservoir using the hand-held PDA's that allow researchers to enter data that can then be transferred directly into the 100th Meridian database. Bob has six of the PDA's that David programed with the boater survey that has been used over the past six years.

It is estimated the zebra mussels have been in El Dorado for one to two years. They were first identified near a jet-ski launch area by a person who had seen pictures and information in Kansas boater registration guidelines. This discovery is spurring Kansas to work on a rapid response plan and an ANS management plan.

[Note: the draw down of the reservoir is beginning on December 12 and will continue for 10 days, according to Tom Mosher.]

3. Mississippi River Basin Panel Meeting - January 8-9

Tina asked if anyone would like to represent the WRP at the MRB Panel meeting in New Orleans in January. She said Mike Stone plans to attend and is willing to be our representative. Everyone agreed that would be fine. Jim suggested the Mike be reminded to submit a report of the meeting to the EC when he returns.

4. New Zealand mud snails in California

Susan reported on the infestation of New Zealand mud snails (nzms) in Putah Creek which is 20-30 miles from Sacramento. They were found in a 1/3 mile reach by a consultant hired by the Bureau of Reclamation to look for water hyacinth. The consultant and David Bergendorf, a FWS staffer are continuing to survey the creek. The Fish and Game Commission will close the area to fishing for 120 days starting December 16 if they can get an emergency action from the Governor's office. The county has closed the access to the Creek. Susan says this is a hot spot for fly fishing.

Susan is developing a rapid response strategy based on the WRP model plan along with the plan they used to combat Caluerpa. They would like to have people from outside of California on some of the teams. Anglers groups are concerned and may be able to donate funds for outreach.

Any possible nzms found will be given to the California bio-assessment lab and then sent to David Richards for further identification. Susan mentioned there is some discussion of drying the stream since the water level is controlled by a dam and then doing steam cleaning.

5. Letter to Western Governors' Association

Scott suggested that the WRP write a letter to the WGA about the seriousness of the zebra mussels in El Dorado Reservoir, that action needs to be taken immediately. The letter would then give a list of actions to prevent the spread of zebra mussels in the West. We would ask the WGA to use their leadership to get states to enact these programs. Tina will write a draft and send it to the EC. Jim suggested that she coordinate with Tom Mosher in Kansas to make sure he agrees with what we say. Al suggested that the WRP offer our assistance about how we can help the states.

6. Request for Proposals from Members and Time Line

Tina will send a request for proposals for the projects that were approved by the members at the annual meeting. The deadline to submit will be January 15. Therefore the next conference call will be changed to January 22 and final approval will be on the following regular conference call on February 12. Al suggested that we make the requirements of the proposals very clear and that they must include a budget.

7. Risk Assessments

Susan discussed the issue of risk assessments in California in relation to the genetically engineered "glo-fish" which has been prohibited by the California Wildlife Commission although it was not because of ecological reasons. She is concerned about having to do risk assessments species by species. Wendy mentioned that Canada developed a risk assessment formula that she can distribute to people. She said it can be used to justify prohibiting importation of species. The link is: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/aquaculture/national_code_e.htm

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