Adaptive Management Program
Report of the Public Outreach Ad Hoc Group to the
Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group
February 3, 2004

During the January 7 & 8, 2004, Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group (TWG) meeting, the TWG formed an ad hoc group on public outreach, and tasked the group to develop options for planning and implementing a public outreach strategy for the Adaptive Management Program (AMP). Amy Heuslein and Pam Hyde were designated as co-chairs of the ad hoc group, and Mike Yeatts, Mark Steffen, Andre Potochnik, John Shields, and Marklyn Chee volunteered to serve on the ad hoc group.

The Public Outreach Ad Hoc Group (POAHG) met via conference call on January 21, 2004, and discussed the charge from the TWG and how to proceed . Our goal was to determine the target audience(s) for public outreach, the message we needed to convey, possible tools to use, and who should develop the outreach plan and subsequently who should implement it.

We found that we initially needed to clarify two things: (1) whose public outreach was this to be, and (2) what fell within the definition of public outreach. The question arose as to whether this public outreach effort was to provide each stakeholder with the resources to meet their public outreach needs to the constituencies they wanted to cultivate, or rather whether it was to be outreach on behalf of the program itself, limited to messages and strategies that were agreed to by a consensus of the stakeholders and seen as balanced and fair. It was the thought of the POAHG that the latter, rather than the former, was what we were going for.

Then the question arose as to whether certain types of education would fall within this public outreach effort. Athough outreach is a form of education, would providing data to tribes for curriculum development or educational programs for example, be considered public outreach? Would creating products for the AMP for targeted decision makers in Washington DC – within the Department or on Capitol Hill – be considered public outreach? There wasn't clear consensus on answers to these questions, although we did agree that there were lines to be drawn, especially in distinguishing for development of educational curricula from the other "educational" functions of outreach. If the TWG and the Adaptive Management Work Group agree, then it may be necessary to address education, especially in the budget process, as a separate issue that still needs to be addressed.

Ultimately, as we plan a public outreach strategy, we will need to define the goals and objectives for that strategy. Do we intend to further our conservation efforts? Educate others? Are there other goals?

The POAHG agreed that there were probably multiple target audiences for our outreach, from a very broad public to some relatively narrow constituencies. Different messages will probably need to be targeted at different audiences, depending on the issue at hand. In terms of message, we agreed that there were probably two broad categories that our messages would fall into (1) history of the program and basic information up to the present day on what is happening within it, and (2) time sensitive/issue-specific information as developments in the program warrant the release of information to the public as a whole or some segment of it (such as experiments, new data, etc.).

We recognized that there were a large number of tools that we might wish to use to get our message out, but that people with greater expertise at matching the tool to the need could help us decide which tools to use. Brochures and/or pamphlets could be an easy and relatively inexpensive way to get some basic information on the program out to a large number of people. Other possible tools such a PowerPoint presentations, videos, conferences/seminars, public meetings/open houses, newsletters, posters, web site, etc., could be used, too.

Much of the conversation of the POAHG was around the fact that the public outreach issue had been discussed and examined before, notably by an AMWG Public Outreach ad hoc that Rick Gold had asked Barry Wirth to chair a couple of years ago. Not everyone had the materials from that effort, including the proposed public outreach program description that Barry Wirth drafted in February 2001, so our ability to discuss them was limited. Barry Wirth's description of a proposed public outreach program was provided to the POAHG by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and circulated following the conference call.

Additional materials, including Project 18 of the Humpback Chub (HBC) Ad Hoc Group report, which describes a public outreach program, were brought to the attention of the group following the conference call as well. As the conclusions of the POAHG on who should develop the public outreach plan are presented, it is probably important to keep in mind that that section of the HBC Ad Hoc Report envisions an AMWG-level development of a public outreach plan, using agency public affairs experts rather than outside contractors.

That being said, it was the sense of the POAHG that the most effective and speedy way of developing a public outreach plan would be to use the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to contract with a public relations firm to do the plan. This does not mean that a PR firm would do the public outreach, but it was the sense of the POAHG that a PR firm might have the greatest ability to match the needs of the program with the resources that can be brought to a public outreach effort. The POAHG does not have a clear sense of the cost of contracting such work out, but the general feeling was that it could be done for less than the $85,000 available in the current fiscal year (FY04) budget. The contract would have to be administered by Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) or BOR. The POAHG is willing to spend the time developing a Scope of Work for the RFP, should it be charged to do so. However, at this point, the POAHG needs further direction from the TWG, and realizes that the TWG may need to make a report and recommendation to the AMWG before it can do that.