The second meeting of the commission took place in Lamar on June 19, 1992. Thirteen of the fourteen commission members were present or represented. The sign-up list is attached.

The May 27 meeting summary was approved with one change. The commission's fourth goal was changed to read:

Maintain water for viable agriculture and avoid injury to vested water interests; protect and enhance the quality of life for people in the Lower Arkansas Valley.

General Issues

There was no public comment; however, commission members took the opportunity to discuss several issues.

- Bob Northrup raised a concern that the creation of endangered species' habitat would be difficult to sell locally and would constrict future land management and use decisions. Ron Desilet responded that the species are physically present and that any future projects would have to avoid harm to them. If any federal dollars become part of a Great Plains project, protection of T&E species will be required. The funding subcommittee will look into this relationship.

- Steve Witte asserted that the ultimate success of this effort would depend on its satisfying the needs and meeting the desires of water owners. Bob Northrup noted that ditch companies were generally in the dark about this commission's activities.

The commission agreed to take active steps to assure that water owners are informed and have opportunities to become involved. The water subcommittee will have primary responsibility for this during the summer. In addition, each ditch company will be added to the commission mailing list. At some point, the commission will need to make more formal contact with each company.

After some discussion, the commission decided not to expand its membership through the addition of an Amity Canal representative.

- Bob Bauserman raised the issue of the best use of water in the Great Plains reservoirs and suggested the need for a feasibility analysis. Burl Scherler noted that the six
June 19, 1992 Meeting
Page 2

Counties had agreed to the Great Plains site when the Governor visited and that efficiency should not be the sole measure of feasibility. Ron Desilet explained that the hydrology evaluation would address key feasibility issues. This led to a broader discussion of the future of water in the valley. Some felt that water will be sold anyhow and that the valley ought to capture public as well as financial benefits from these sales. Water is valuable for multiple purposes and yields multiple benefits to communities.

Subcommittee Reports

Ron Desilet reported on the Water and Habitat Subcommittee. He handed out three items: (1) a summary of DOW's options for securing water for John Martin; (2) a one page outline of the recommended engineering hydrology evaluation; and (3) a 2+ page scope of work for the same evaluation.

With respect to John Martin, the division expects to determine its preferred option in mid-July. The Wildlife Commission will then be asked to approve the proposal. The Wildlife Commission would be assured of the concurrence of prospective water sellers. The division will require the sellers to resolve any legal issues associated with the transaction before completing the deal.

Steve Witte emphasized that the Lower Arkansas River Commission should be aware and supportive of the DOW proposal to obtain water for John Martin. Desilet agreed to inform commission members on a "privileged communication" basis.

The hydrology evaluation will likely take a year to complete. It will look at water levels necessary for recreation and fishery purposes. Kent Wiley and Ron Desilet agreed that a viable fishery is essential to the success of a state park at the Great Plains reservoirs.

Commission members suggested several changes and additions to the scope of work. DOW will put the contractor selection and hiring process on a fast track. Grady McNeill, DOW, will keep commission members informed of progress on the hydrology evaluation.

Mark Lowrey and Jan Goedert reported on the Funding Subcommittee. Data collection forms have been developed and contacts initiated. Although the draft work plan did not make this explicit, the subcommittee will work to understand and develop materials related to budget requests from all levels of government.
The final tasks of the Funding Subcommittee will be to prepare model applications and budget requests. They will be the equivalent of business plans for the provision of water, and the creation and operation of a state park.

Kent Wiley reported on the State Park Subcommittee. The DPOR has prepared a draft development plan for a state park at John Martin. Kent Wiley will send a copy of the plan to all commission members. A similar plan will be prepared for the Great Plains complex by mid-July. The plan will address levels of development, minimum water needs, and costs for four options at the reservoirs.

Steve Miller, the Water Conservation Board's project manager for the Fort Lyon study, outlined the role of the Water Transfer Study Subcommittee. He will send a draft plan of study to subcommittee and commission members at the beginning of July. The Water Conservation Board is scheduled to approve the plan of study at its July 10 meeting. There would still be opportunities for this subcommittee to suggest refinements to the study plan. The time frame for completing the study will be about one year.

The full commission next discussed the draft Lower Arkansas River Commission Work Plan. A number of changes were made to accommodate new information about schedules and to be more explicit on several tasks. Steve Norris will incorporate the changes, seek a quick review from Ron Desilet and Jan Goedert, and then submit the Work Plan to the Governor, General Assembly, Wildlife Commission, Parks Board and Water Conservation Board on July 1, 1992. The Lower Arkansas River Commission will be asked to formally approve the plan at its next meeting.

Other Business

The tight time frame for producing an implementation plan generated concern and discussion. Steve Norris will look into the November 15, 1992 deadline to see if a draft plan would satisfy the mandate of the General Assembly.

Subcommittees will continue to meet and complete the tasks they have identified in their work plans. The next meeting of the full commission will be on August 12 in Eads. A tour of the Great Plains complex will be part of the agenda. Details to follow.

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[This summary was prepared by Steve Norris. Please contact him if there are important omissions or misstatements.]