

Minutes of Regular Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, March 11, 2009

A Regular Meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held in the Orchard Room, of Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 East Convention Center Way, Ontario, California, 91764-4452, Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

Board Members and Alternate Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr, Chairman

John V. Foley

Terese Maria Ghio

W.D. "Bill" Knutson

Henry Merle Kuiper

Thomas M. Erb

John W. McFadden

John Pierre Menvielle

Jeanine Jones, Designee

Department of Water Resources

Christopher G. Hayes, Designee

Department of Fish and Game

Board Member Absent

James B. McDaniel

Others Present

Steven B. Abbott

Mark D. Beuhler

Celia A. Brewer

James H. Bond

John Penn Carter

Charles Van Dyke

Dave Fogerson

Michael L. King

Russell Kitahara

William J. Hasencamp

Thomas E. Levy

Jan P. Matusak

Dan Parks

Halla Razak

Steven B. Robbins

John L. Scott

Jack Seiler

Tina L. Shields

Ed W. Smith

Mark Stuart

William H. Swan

Peter E. von Haam

Joseph A. Vanderhorst

Bill D. Wright

Abbas Amir-Teymoori

J.C. Jay Chen

Christopher S. Harris

Gary E. Tavetian

Mark Van Vlack

Gerald R. Zimmerman

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Chairman Fisher asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Fisher moved to the next agenda item.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### Approval of Minutes

Chairman Fisher asked if there was a motion to approve the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Mr. Knutson moved the February 11<sup>th</sup> minutes be approved. Seconded by Mr. Menvielle, unanimously carried, the Board approved the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

## **AGENCY MANAGERS' MEETING**

Mr. Zimmerman reported that the Agency managers are scheduled to meet after the March 11<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the operations of the Proposed Yuma Desalting Plant Pilot Project. In addition, the Agency managers were to discuss the Basin states Discussion Document regarding the International Boundary and Water Commission's Process.

## **PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

### Colorado River Water Report

Mr. Amirteymouri reported that as of March 8<sup>th</sup> the storage in Lake Powell was 12.898 million acre-feet (maf), or 53 percent of capacity. The water surface elevation was 3,611.7 feet. The storage in Lake Mead was 12.476 maf, or 48 percent of capacity, and water surface elevation was 1,110.8 feet. Total System storage was about 32.607 maf, or 55 percent of capacity. Last year at this time, there was 30.973 maf in storage, or 52 percent of capacity. There was an increase of over 1.5 maf acre-feet in total system storage over last year.

Mr. Amirteymouri reported that precipitation from October 1<sup>st</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup> was 99 percent of normal, and the snowpack was about 102 percent of normal. The April through July runoff is expected to be 7.8 maf or 98 percent of normal. The anticipated 2009 water year runoff is 11.225 maf or about 93 percent of normal. The snow condition, as of March 10<sup>th</sup>, is normal for this time of year. Last month there were small areas in the Upper Basin that were above normal snowpack but those areas dropped by about 10 percent to fall within the normal range for this time of year.

Mr. Amirteymouri added that Reclamation's projected consumptive use (CU) for the State of Nevada is 304,000 acre-feet; and for Arizona, the CU is projected to be slightly below its basic entitlement of 2.8 maf (2.773 maf); and for California, the CU is projected to be 4.427 maf. The total projected CU in the Lower Basin is expected to be about 7.504 maf.

## State and Local Water Reports

Ms. Mark Stuart, of the California Department of Water Resources, reported on the current climate conditions in California. At the Los Angeles Civic Center January was dryer than normal, and February was about 10 percent wetter than normal, but still about three inches below average for the season. The Central Coast Region is less than 70 percent of normal, whereas, the South Coast is between 83 and 113 percent of normal. The Imperial and Blythe areas are about 80 percent of normal.

Mr. Stuart reported that the Sacramento River Index was 85 percent of average. Though February was wetter than average, January was about 30 percent of average. The Northern Sierra Precipitation 8-Station Index as of March 9<sup>th</sup> was about 80 percent of normal. However, runoff was only 45 percent of normal.

Mr. Stuart reported that the reservoir storage of the State Water Project (SWP) north of the Delta was 1.468 maf or 40 percent of capacity, south of the Delta the SWP reservoir storage was 1.089 maf or 60 percent of capacity, overall the SWP reservoir storage was 2.558 maf or 46 percent of capacity. SWP projected deliveries are currently at 15 percent of Table A Entitlements. The SWP deliveries for the rest of the year are expected to be decided within the next few weeks.

Mr. Stuart reported that on February 27<sup>th</sup> Governor Schwarzenegger declared California to be in a drought. Since that time both the Shasta and Oroville Reservoirs have increased in storage, but both are still well below normal. Lake Shasta was about 65 percent of capacity, and Lake Oroville was about 39 percent of capacity.

Mr. Foley, of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, MWD's combined reservoirs storage of Lakes Skinner, Mathews, and Diamond Valley, was about 562,000 acre-feet, or about 54 percent of capacity. Diamond Valley Lake was about 408,000 acre-feet, or about 50 percent of capacity. Lake Mathews was about 116,000 acre-feet, or at 64 percent of capacity. Lake Skinner is about 39,000 acre-feet, or 89 percent of capacity.

Mr. Erb, of the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that precipitation in the Eastern Sierra was about 81 percent of normal. On the March snow report the overall Eastern Sierra was 72 percent of normal for this time of year and 63 percent of normal for April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Los Angeles City Council is set to debate restrictions on outdoor water use. Perhaps as soon as next week the LADWP Board will make a decision on water rationing.

## Colorado River Operations

*Federal Register Notice Regarding Reclamation's Information collection Request to continue Lower Colorado River Well Inventory to the Office of Management and Budget*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that Reclamation published a notice in the *Federal Register* regarding Reclamation's request to the Office of Management and Budget for the continued collection of well inventory data along the Lower Colorado River. This information collecting request is made pursuant to the 1995 Paperwork Reduction Act. Reclamation is soliciting comments from interested stakeholders regarding the continuation of this program. This information is necessary in order to make a full and comprehensive accounting for diversions and water uses in accordance with the Consolidated Decree in *Arizona v. California*. Comments are due by March 27<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Zimmerman

requested a motion to approve the Board send a letter to Reclamation in support of continuing the well inventory activity. Upon the motion of Mr. Kuiper, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation that the Executive Director send a letter to Reclamation in support of continuing the Lower Basin well inventory data collection effort.

#### *Lower Colorado Water Supply Project Monitoring Study*

Mr. Zimmerman reported the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project (LCWSP) is the sole water supply for many of the project's beneficiaries. The exchange contract among Needles, Imperial Irrigation District (IID), and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) allows IID and CVWD to reject receipt of the exchange water if the salinity exceeds 879 ppm, plus or minus 30 ppm. Because of this possibility, there is a need to conduct an assessment of the future quality of the groundwater being pumped by the LCWSP well field. The project's beneficiaries also need sufficient lead time to implement corrective actions or to find another water supply source if the groundwater quality of the groundwater aquifer steadily degrades. The recognition of lead time was made part of the agreement among Reclamation, MWD, and the City of Needles, in which MWD has the ability to purchase water that is made available from the excess capacity of the well field. The money that is received from MWD is placed into a Trust Fund for the benefit of the LCWSP beneficiaries and can be used to conduct studies of the groundwater aquifer and if necessary, to implement corrective actions at the existing well field or to find an alternative water supply. Among several proposals to refine the goals and objectives of this initial study, the proposal of the USGS was selected. The USGS proposal will be a 3-year study that begins in 2009 with an estimated cost of \$1.1 million. The objectives of the study will be to: 1) Describe the current knowledge of the groundwater system adjacent to the well field; 2) Determine the data and information needs; 3) Establish a hydrologic monitoring network; and 4) Develop an initial characterization of the groundwater system.

Mr. Zimmerman reported that approval of both Reclamation and MWD is required to expend money from the Trust Fund. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, a letter was received from Reclamation approving the study to be conducted by the USGS. It is anticipated that MWD's approval letter, accepting the USGS study proposal, will be received soon. A copy of Reclamation's March 5<sup>th</sup> letter was included in the handout materials.

#### *Imperial Irrigation District's Proposal to Rename the Drop-2 Reservoir to honor the late Mr. Warren H. Brock*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that at the last Board meeting, the Board endorsed IID's request that Reclamation rename the Drop-2 Reservoir facility to honor the late Mr. Warren H. Brock. The Board staff prepared a letter to Reclamation in support of the Board's action and IID's request. Copies of letters from the Board and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District supporting the name-change were included in the Board folder.

#### *Metropolitan Water District's Letter to Reclamation and the three Lower Basin states regarding the Southern Nevada Water Authority Interstate Account*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that the Board folder included a copy of MWD's February 24<sup>th</sup> letter to Reclamation regarding the Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA) Interstate Account. The letter stated that, as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, MWD will make a final verified accounting for the prior year including: 1) the beginning 2008 balance of 25,000 acre-feet; 2) The amount of water diverted and

stored in 2008, 45,000 acre-feet; 3) The debits withdrawn from the account by SNWA for the purpose of creating Intentionally Created Unused Apportionment was zero acre-feet; 4) The net balance during 2008 was 45,000 acre-feet; 5) The cumulative amount credited to SNWA's account was 70,000 acre-feet.

### Basin States Discussion

#### *Basin States Discussion Document Concerning Bi-national Water Management*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that the Basin States' Discussion Document concerning Bi-national Water Management was transmitted to the IBWC's Commissioner, Mr. Bill Ruth, on December 17, 2008. Commissioner Ruth shared the Discussion Document with Mexico's counterparts in January. Mexico requested a consultation meeting with federal representatives. The consultation meeting was held February 13<sup>th</sup>. Mexico welcomed the receipt of the Discussion Document, and cited the need for greater detail, and wanted further discussion to be held regarding the binational process. Some in the Basin states believe the binational process is inefficient and ineffective and the binational process does not fully recognize the Basin states' role and would like to implement a modified process. All of the Basin states want the dialogue to continue and will start to prepare a response to Mexico's issues.

Mr. Zimmerman reported that representatives of the Basin states are: 1) Preparing a presentation that more fully describes the states role and the concepts contained in the Discussion Document; 2) Identifying how implementation of the programs in the Discussion Document can work and benefit both Nations; 3) Meeting to flesh out the policy and legal issues that must be addressed; 4) As legal and policy issues are identified, the Basin states will attempt to reach a unified position; 5) Begin to develop negotiation protocols; and 6) Preparing for a meeting with Mexican counterparts in May, 2009.

#### *Seven Basin States Governors' Representatives' Letter of Interest in Basin Studies Program to Reclamation*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that at the February Board meeting, the Board considered a letter of interest from the Basin states and others to participate with Reclamation in a study. The study would be part of Reclamation's Water for America Initiative. The Water for America Initiative is a 17 Western states initiative and there will be proposals from any number of the 17 Western states as well as local water districts and others. The letter of interest proposed a study that would refine options and develop strategies for augmentation opportunities to meet future demands within the Colorado River Basin. The identified projects and programs would have the potential for meeting the current and projected water supplies throughout the Colorado River Basin.

Mr. Zimmerman reported that the Basin states would provide significant resources to assist in the development and completion of the proposed study including cost-sharing up to 50 percent. In addition, the Basin states would share data, information, and pertinent models. The letter of interest was due to Reclamation by March 4<sup>th</sup>. The Executive Director signed the letter of interest, which was sent to Regional Directors Ms. Lorri Gray and Mr. Larry Walkoviak requesting Reclamation's participation and cooperation in developing the proposed study. If selected, a detailed study proposal would be prepared in cooperation with Reclamation. A copy of the signed letter to Reclamation was included in the Board folder.

## Colorado River Environmental Activities

### *Seven Colorado River Basin States Representatives' Letter to the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program regarding decision-making process associated with Glen Canyon Dam Operations*

Mr. Zimmerman reported that in response to comments circulated in the media suggesting that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program is broken, the Basin states members of Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Work Group sent a letter for the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) in support of Reclamation and the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (AMP). The letter reaffirmed the Basin states representatives support for the current direction of the AMP and the need to continue scientific research, monitoring, and the stakeholder process provided by the AMP. A copy of the letter sent to Reclamation Regional Director Mr. Larry Walkoviak was included in the Board folder.

### *Status of the Glen Canyon Trust vs. United States Lawsuit*

Mr. Gary Tavetian, of the Attorney Generals' Office, reported that the Glen Canyon Trust Lawsuit is still in the process of being briefed. The defendants and plaintiffs have filed cross-motions for Summary Judgment. Next week the plaintiffs are expected to file a sur-reply, a response to the defendants reply after a motion has been briefed.

## **WATER QUALITY**

### *Salinity Stimulus Package*

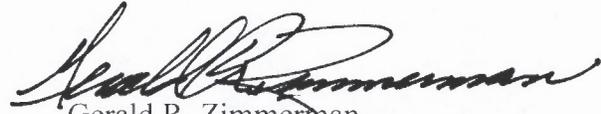
Mr. Amirteymouri reported that Reclamation recently announced a potential funding opportunity for implementation of salinity control measures. The funding would come through the public grants portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Grant applications could target salinity control activities and measures such as: 1) Reducing salinity contributions from saline springs; 2) leaking wells; 3) Irrigation sources; 4) Municipal and industrial sources; 5) Erosion of public and private lands; and 6) other sources of salt-loading in the Upper Colorado River Basin. All proposed salinity control projects would be required to replace incidental wildlife habitat losses concurrent with implementation of the salinity control measure. Reclamation expects that the full Funding Opportunity Announcement package will be published at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by March 20<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the advanced notice of the Funding Opportunity Announcement was included in the Board handout materials.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### Next Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher announced that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 East Convention Center Way, Ontario, California.

There being no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Kuiper, seconded by Mr. Menvielle, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned 10:57 a.m. on March 11, 2009.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald R. Zimmerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G".

Gerald R. Zimmerman  
Executive Director