

Minutes of Regular Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, March 9, 2011

A Regular Meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held in the Vineyard Room, of Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 East Convention Center Way, Ontario, California, 91764-4452, Wednesday, March 9, 2011.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr, Chairman
Franz W. De Klotz
Thomas M. Erb
John V. Foley
W.D. "Bill" Knutson
Henry Merle Kuiper
John Pierre Menvielle

Jeanine Jones, Designee
Department of Water Resources

Christopher G. Hayes, Designee
Department of Fish and Game

Board Members Absent

Terese Marie Ghio

James B. McDaniel

Others Present

Steven B. Abbott
James H. Bond
John Penn Carter
Dave Fogerson
Leslie M. Gallagher
Mark L. Johnson
Michael L. King
William J. Hasencamp
Thomas E. Levy
Jan P. Matusak
Carrie Oliphant
Halla Razak
Steven B. Robbins
Jack Seiler
Marv Shaw

Tina L. Shields
Ed W. Smith
Catherine M. Stites
Mark Stuart
Bill D. Wright

Abbas Amirteymoori
J.C. Jay Chen
Christopher S. Harris
Lindia Y. Liu
Gary E. Tavetian
Mark Van Vlack
Gerald R. Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum, and called the meeting to order at 10:03 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.

Mr. Menvielle announced that on March 15th the Imperial Irrigation District will be dedicating the Midway-Bannister Transmission Project (Project). The dedication is to be held at the East Highline Canal on East Simpson Road commencing at 10 a.m. The Project, the first of its kind, will allow the transmission of alternative energy developed from geothermal and solar energy projects outside of the Imperial Valley. Additional transmission projects are expected. Mr. Menvielle announced he had a couple of invitations and offered them to the Board.

Chairman Fisher asked if there was any other items to be brought before the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Fisher moved the meeting to the next agenda item.

ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Fisher asked if there was a motion to approve the February 9th meeting minutes. Mr. Menvielle moved the February 9th minutes be approved and seconded by Mr. Foley. Unanimously carried, the Board approved the February 9th meeting minutes.

New Alternate Board Member Representing Coachella Valley Water District

Chairman Fisher announced that the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) had appointed Mr. Franz W. De Klotz as the new alternate member representing CVWD to the Board. Chairman Fisher reported that Mr. DeKlotz had been sworn in before the meeting and now was officially serving on the Colorado River Board. The Board welcomed Mr. DeKlotz to his new position.

Annual Statement of Economic Interests Form 700

Acting Executive Director Christopher Harris reported that the annual filing of Form 700 is due from each of the Board members by April 1st. The forms need to be submitted to the California Fair Political Practices Commission.

AGENCY MANAGERS' MEETING

Mr. Harris reported that the Agency managers haven't met since November 2010.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS

Colorado River Water Report

Mr. Harris reported that precipitation from October 1st to February 28th was 123 percent of normal, and the snowpack water equivalent was about 121 percent of normal, with little change from last month snowpack equivalent of 123 percent of normal. The April through July runoff is expected to be 9.0 maf or 113 percent of normal. The anticipated 2011 water year runoff is 12.574 maf or about 104 percent of normal. Mr. Harris reported that for the month of February much of the valley regions in both the Upper and Lower Basins were well above normal, some areas over a 150 percent of normal. However, the higher elevation, such as the San Juan's, where typically most of the precipitation occurs falls have been well below normal. This contrast in precipitation patterns seems somewhat typical in a La Niña type water year. There is the possibility that additional precipitation and snowpack may pick up in the higher elevation later in the spring.

Mr. Harris reported that as of March 1st, the storage in Lake Powell was 13.2 million acre-feet (maf), or 54 percent of capacity. The water surface elevation was 3,615.0 feet. The storage in Lake Mead was 11.1 maf, or 43 percent of capacity, and water surface elevation was 1,095.8 feet. Total System storage was about 31.866 maf, or 53 percent of capacity. Last year at this time, there was 32.125 maf in storage, also 54 percent of capacity.

Mr. Harris added that Reclamation's projected consumptive use (CU) for the State of Nevada is 280,000 acre-feet; and for Arizona, the CU is projected to be 2.808 maf; and for California, the CU is projected to be 4.092 maf. The total projected CU in the Lower Basin is expected to be about 7.180 maf.

State and Local Water Reports

Mr. Mark Stuart, of the California Department of Water Resources, reported on the current climate conditions in California. At the Los Angeles Civic Center, January precipitation totals were above the season total for a normal year. If the rest of the year holds as normal, about 20 inches of precipitation would be expected in the Los Angeles area. Statewide the average precipitation is about 125 percent of normal, runoff is about 100 percent of normal and reservoir storage is about 110 percent of normal for this time of year. The precipitation during the months of October and November were greater than normal and December was nearly twice the average. However, January was one of the driest on record with February at about average. The Sacramento River Index Precipitation as of March 1st was 42.3 inches where the average as of March 1st is 34.7 inches and with several months left in the season, additional precipitation is expected. Distribution of snow and precipitation for California in the northern region was about 115 percent of average and was even greater in the central and southern regions.

Mr. Stuart reported that the State Water Project (SWP) has somewhat recovered from the past dry years. The current storage conditions, as of March 1, 2011, north of the Delta was at 2.794 maf or 76 percent of capacity. South of the Delta the SWP storage was 1.679 maf or 92 percent of capacity, where the total SWP storage was 4.474 maf, or 81 percent of capacity. The projected SWP deliveries were 60 percent of Table A entitlements.

Mr. Foley, of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that there was good news. MWD's Diamond Valley Lake has significantly recovered from loss in storage over the last few years and is expected to fill in the next couple of months. As of March 1st, the combined reservoirs storage of Lakes Skinner, Mathews, and Diamond Valley, was about 888,700 acre-feet, or about 86 percent of capacity. Diamond Valley Lake was about 695,900 acre-feet, or about 86 percent of capacity. Lake Mathews was about 153,700 acre-feet, or at 84 percent of capacity. Lake Skinner is about 39,100 acre-feet, or 89 percent of capacity. Mr. Foley reported that the Colorado River Aqueduct was closed for about 19 days for maintenance. The Diamond Valley Lake has been filled with SWP water through the Inland Feeder, at a rate of about 600 cubic feet per second. If this rate is continued, the Diamond Valley Lake is expected to fill in the next couple of months.

Mr. Erb, of the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that the Mammoth Snowcourse in the Eastern Sierra was about 52 inches where the season normal is 43 inches. Mr. Erb added that the water demand in Los Angeles has been maintaining at about twenty percent less than a few years ago.

Colorado River Operations

Metropolitan Water District's Report on the Southern Nevada Water Authority's Interstate Account-Final Accounting Through Calendar Year 2010

Mr. Harris reported pursuant to MWD's Storage and Interstate Release Agreement (SIRA), MWD reported its final verified accounting for the Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA) Interstate Account administered by MWD. The balance beginning in 2010 was 70,000 acre-feet. No additional water supplies were diverted or stored in the account. There were no withdrawals from the account. The ending 2010 balance remains at 70,000 acre-feet.

Bureau of Land Management Looks Anew at Oil-Shale Development Rules and Plans

Mr. Harris reported that on February 15th, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced through a news release that the BLM will be reevaluating its rules and planning processes associated with commercial development of oil shale resources in the western U.S. The Department of the Interior and the BLM intend to ensure that these rules reflect the current state of knowledge and latest technologies. The BLM has also implemented a Research, Demonstration and Development program to promote the development of new oil shale extraction and processing technologies. The BLM anticipates utilizing a public scoping process to evaluate the existing and proposed rules, regulations and planning requirements.

Basin States Discussion

Colorado river Basin Water Study Report

Mr. Harris reported that last month he reported on the status of the Colorado River Basin Water Study Report. The technical reports A-"Scenario Development", B-"Water Supply Assessment", and D-"System Reliability Metrics", have been released as preliminary drafts. Comments have been submitted and are under review by the project team. Preliminary draft technical report C-"Water Demand Assessment" has not yet been released. Mr. Amirteymoori added that there would be conference call next week with the Steering Committee to discuss technical report C.

Colorado River Environmental Activities

Department of the Interior News Release, “Glen Canyon Dam High-Flow Experiments Provide Insights for Future Flow Management of the Colorado River”

Mr. Harris reported that based upon an analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey of three previous High-Flow Experimental (HFE) releases from Glen Canyon Dam, scientists have determined: 1) Spring HFE release benefits trout, and negatively impacts the endangered Humpback chub; 2) The HFE releases are effective at depositing sand on sandbars and beaches, but only if there is sufficient sediment supplies in the mainstream channel below Glen Canyon Dam; 3) The Paria River flooding (primarily in summer months) is the primary source of new sand/sediment inputs into the System; and 4) Future timing and scheduling of HFE release events will consider potential impact to biological resources as well as condition of the mainstream sand/sediment budget.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation (Upper Colorado Regional Office) announced that the comment deadline has been extended for the Draft Environmental Assessments – “Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam, from 2011 through 2020”, and “Non-Native Fish Control Downstream from Glen Canyon Dam”. Comments on both Draft Environmental Assessments are now due in Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Regional Office by March 18th. Mr. Harris reported that the Basin States are currently working on a Seven Basin States joint comment letter for submittal. The comment letter includes: 1) Ensuring that the HFE Protocol is consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines; 2) Ensuring the National Environmental Policy Act assessment rigorously analyzes impacts to Humpback chub; 3) Evaluating potential inclusion of a Rainbow trout “trigger” as an indicator of status of Humpback chub populations; and 4) Addressing whether these Draft Environmental Assessments should be withdrawn and re-issued as a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement.

Mr. Harris asked if there was a motion for the Chairman to sign the Basin States comment letter. Upon the motion of Mr. Menvielle, seconded by Mr. Knutson, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized Chairman Fisher to sign the Basin States comment letter on the two Draft Environmental Assessments.

OTHER BUSINESS

Passing of Mr. Larry Anderson

Mr. Harris reported that long time former Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources, Mr. Larry Anderson, had recently passed away. Many on the Board remembered Mr. Anderson. Some had worked with him on many issues on the Colorado River for over twenty years. Mr. Anderson was remembered as a true gentleman and very knowledgeable in Colorado River issues, he will be missed.

Status Search for Executive Director of Colorado River Board

There was discussion on the status of the search for the next Executive Director of the Colorado River Board. There were few candidates and most of them had little experience with the Colorado River. The deadline was extended till April 25th.

Next Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher announced that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2011, 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. Foley, seconded by Mr. Knutson, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned 10:40 a.m. on March 9, 2011.

/S/

Christopher S. Harris
Acting Executive Director