

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, June 10, 2015

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, June 10, 2015.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Brian Brady	Jack Seiler
Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman	Michael Touhey
James Hanks	David Vigil
Peter Nelson	Doug Wilson
Glen Peterson	Jeanine Jones
David Pettijohn	

Board Members and Alternates Absent

Stephen Benson	Chris Hayes
John Powell Jr.	
Henry Kuiper	

Others Present

Steve Abbott	Jan Matusak
Tim Blair	Jessica Neuwerth
Robert Cheng	Autumn Plourd
Dan Denham	Angela Rashid
Karen Donovan	Tom Ryan
Bill Hasencamp	Tina Shields
Tom Havens	Philip Southard
Michael Hughes	Mark Stuart
Ned Hyduke	Tanya Trujillo
Lisa Johansen	Mark Van Vlack
Lori Jones	Suzanna Webb
Tom Levy	Jerry Zimmerman
Kara Mathews	

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:06 A.M.

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

Chairman Fisher asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished 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**

### **Consideration and Approval of the Minutes**

Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to approve the May 13 minutes. Mr. Wilson moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Ms. Jones. Chairman Fisher asked if there were any additions or corrections. Hearing none and by unanimous support, the May 13 meeting minutes were approved.

### **Approval of Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Colorado River Board Budget and Standard Agreement for Reimbursement of Expenses**

Ms. Trujillo presented to the Board a resolution to approve the Colorado River Board budget and to request approval for Ms. Trujillo, the Executive Director, to execute the standard agreement for reimbursement with the Six Agency Committee for funding of the Board. Ms. Trujillo explained the details of the budget and indicated the total amount of the budget is \$1,892,000.00, as approved by the Governor's May revised budget for the Board.

Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Peterson moved that the resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. Mr. Fisher asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none and by unanimous support, the resolution was approved.

Ms. Trujillo announced that no item would be presented to the Board relating to the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project during the June meeting.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

Ms. Trujillo reported that there was significant precipitation in the Colorado River Basin in May, but drought conditions still persist and drought planning is ongoing. As of June 1, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,597 feet with 11.49 million acre-feet of storage, or 47% of capacity, while the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,077 feet with 9.72 million acre-feet of storage, or 37% of capacity. The total system storage was 29.06

MAF, or 49 percent of capacity. Ms. Trujillo noted that precipitation since October 1 is about 89 percent of average. The significant precipitation received in May brought the monthly snowpack to 144% of average, but the forecasted April through July 2015 runoff is still about 3.75 million acre-feet, or 52 percent of average.

Ms. Trujillo reviewed the precipitation maps for May 2015 that indicated that nearly the entire Basin was above 150% of average except for the Little Gila River Basin in New Mexico which was in the 50% range. Ms. Trujillo noted that on a map utilizing a scale that exceeds 150% of average, such as the map produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of precipitation in the Southwest, parts of the Upper Basin had up to 400 percent of average precipitation for the month of May. The Upper Basin reservoirs have benefited from the increased precipitation and some of them have filled and spilled.

Chairman Fisher asked if there was an estimate of accumulation in acre-feet of runoff to Lake Powell. The June forecast projected an increase in storage by as much as 2 million acre-feet as a result of late season precipitation compared to the May forecast.

Board Member Peterson asked about plans for flexibility in operations of the Flaming Gorge. Ms. Trujillo explained evaluating flexibility in system operations is one component of the Upper Basin drought contingency planning process. Ms. Trujillo reported that she will attend a meeting with the Upper Colorado River Commission next week and will receive an update on the status of their efforts.

The U.S. drought monitor map indicates some easing of drought conditions in the Colorado, Utah, and Arizona areas. Nevada and California are still experiencing extreme drought, with 47% of California in the Exceptional Drought category.

#### State and Local Water Reports

Mr. Mark Stuart reported that Los Angeles Civic Center cumulative precipitation is considerably below average for the Water Year at 8.5 inches. The precipitation to date in the Los Angeles area is 8.46 inches, or 56% of average, while it is 2.57 inches in Blythe, or 109% of average. As of June 1, we are at: 74% of average for the Northern Sierra; 45% of average for the Central Sierra; and 43% of average for the Southern Sierra. Reservoir inflows are expected to be considerably less than normal.

For the State Water Project storage, Lake Oroville is at 1.57 million acre-feet, or 44% of capacity, and San Luis is at about 786,000 acre-feet, or 74% of capacity. The total storage in the State Water Project was 2.9 million acre-feet, or 52 % of capacity.

Mr. Peterson briefly noted that the MWD's combined reservoir storage is at 48% of capacity.

## UPDATE REGARDING THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) continues to implement the Governor's April 1 Executive Order requiring mandatory water conservation. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Association of California Water Agencies developed a series of webinars to provide assistance regarding implementing the required reductions. As of June 2, the SWRCB reported that water conservation for April 2015 vs. April 2013 shows a 13.5 percent level of conservation. The SWRCB released revised reduction tiers on June 5 and it is up to the individual communities and water service providers to comply with those orders.

Ms. Trujillo reported that U.C. Davis researchers released a report on the economic impacts on agricultural production due to the drought in 2015 showing an estimated direct agricultural impact of about \$1.8 billion, with statewide economic costs of about \$2.7 billion and reporting that 563,800 acres would not be irrigated in 2015. Ms. Trujillo added that Governor Brown was in Southern California this week attending the MWD Board meeting and appearing on a public T.V. broadcast associated with water conservation.

Ms. Jones reported that she recently attended a workshop in San Diego on improving precipitation forecasting, which is one of the actions required by the drought emergency proclamations. Seasonal precipitation forecasting is scientifically difficult. The goal of the workshop was to identify actions that could be included in NOAA's programs and prioritize funding for improving forecasting in the federal budget. The next steps include setting up a series of workshops on this subject, with one of them planned for the Colorado River Water Users Association in December 2015.

Ms. Jones mentioned that NOAA recently came out with its assessment for the California drought in 2014, which highlighted seasonal forecasting. The current drought may provide an opportunity to take action on this subject. Seasonal forecasting is also linked to long-term climate change adaptation with respect to improving short-term reservoir operations. Ms. Jones noted that NOAA's drought assessment report is available on its website.

Ms. Jones reported that DWR held workshops to focus on subjects like improving statistical modeling. Ms. Jones reported that DWR is currently funding research on a number of research projects such as atmospheric rivers and short-term forecasting. Ms. Jones noted that more than \$1 million is being spent courtesy of drought emergency funding.

Ms. Jones added that the emergency salinity barrier has been installed in the Delta in **West False River** to better manage salinity without requiring release of flows from upstream reservoirs. The emergency salinity barrier is scheduled to be removed in November 2015.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

### **Review status of the Basin States Drought Contingency Programs**

Ms. Trujillo reported that Central Arizona Project (CAP) is in the process of finalizing approvals from parties to the forbearance agreement for their Extraordinary ICS creation plan, and has requested approval of the plan as quickly as possible. CAP's proposal is to generate up to 95,000 acre-feet of conserved water in 2015 and a similar quantity in 2016. Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and the Colorado River Commission of Nevada approved the proposal in May. Ms. Trujillo reported that Reclamation awarded a Pilot System Conservation contract to SNWA to create 15,000 acre-feet of water through fallowing in the Virgin River Basins over the next 2 years. Ms. Trujillo also noted that the Upper Colorado River Commission is meeting with funders to implement a similar program in the Upper Basin.

Chairman Fisher noted that delaying approvals of CAP's ICS plan may complicate Reclamation's ability to prepare accurate modeling results. Bill Hasencamp reported that Metropolitan Water District expects to provide approval to the proposal in August. Chairman Fisher added that Palo Verde Irrigation District would also provide approval of the plan by August and reiterated the importance of approving the plan in a timely matter to ensure accurate modeling results.

### **Review status of the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study**

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Phase 1 report was published via the internet on May 12, 2015 and is open for public comment. The report identifies 25 opportunities for additional conservation in both the municipal and agricultural sectors. Ms. Trujillo explained that the next steps of the Phase II process have not been determined yet, but will likely involve implementation of pilot projects.

### **Review status of the implementation of Minute 319**

Ms. Trujillo gave an update on the May 14 meeting with the Mexican delegation in San Diego. The Mexican delegation included representatives from both the federal and state levels, the IBWC's counterparts at CILA, as well as some of the local Mexican water users. Regarding the implementation status of Minute 319, a more detailed proposal on one of the canal lining projects is to be expected within the next several weeks. We are halfway through the 5-year term of Minute 319 so there is a need to keep an eye on completion of the obligations in that agreement. There is interest from the Mexican delegation to continue and expand upon Minute 319 and develop a longer-term agreement, and a negotiation process to brainstorm the components of the next Minute has started. Ms. Trujillo will be attending a small team meeting scheduled for June 22 in Juarez. The meeting will most likely focus on technical details of how to structure the negotiation process. Ms. Trujillo passed along appreciation from the Mexican delegation and from our sister states for the reception that was funded by the Colorado River Authority. Ms. Trujillo added that it was an excellent opportunity to meet informally

with our counterparts. Chairman Fisher concurred and thanked Board staff Suzanna Webb for planning the dinner.

### Review status of the Salinity Control Forum, Workgroup, and Advisory Council Revised Agenda

Ms. Trujillo gave an update on last month's Salinity Control Forum, Advisory Council, and Work Group meetings in Salt Lake City, Utah. One of the highlights of the meetings was a visit to a 25,000-acre salt mine evaporation pond facility run by Compass Minerals. Ms. Trujillo reported that it was a great opportunity to see the interaction between wildlife in the natural setting and evaporation ponds. The 80,000-acre refuge is adjacent to the 25,000-acre salt mining production, which has a viable operation and is one of the world's leading producers of the salt-based components. The Migratory Bird Refuge is one of the crown jewels of the National Park Service's Refuge system that provides an incredible amount of migratory bird habitat in the area. The operators do not have concern about the evaporation ponds attracting the birds or any potential detrimental impacts on birds. It was a beneficial experience for those working on the Paradox well project issue to be able to see a system where two kinds of habitats are coexisting well.

Ms. Trujillo also reported that Reclamation has reduced operations at the Paradox well and has eliminated the seismic activities they were previously concerned about, but at the expense of having reduced the amount of salt being contained at that facility. Reclamation plans to maintain the operation into the future while continuing the draft EIS process, evaluating the evaporation ponds alternative and a replacement well alternative. Chairman of the Salinity Control Forum, David Robbins, who is from Colorado, proposes to participate with Reclamation in their outreach meetings in the Paradox Valley area to review the pros and cons of a surface disposal facility as opposed to a new injection well. There is seismic potential associated with a new well versus potentially unsightliness associated with the disposal ponds. This next step is working through with the public and local entities about the various options. In the meantime, Reclamation continues working on the contingency plan, which would be used if there was an emergency shutdown of the well that ceases disposal prior to the completion of the EIS. One of the key focuses of the meeting was to encourage Reclamation to continue to complete the EIS process within the budget and timeframe predicted while working on an emergency backup plan.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Forum continues to work on solutions for the potential shortfall of the cost-sharing for the Salinity Control Program (Program), which is in part a result of constraints in the existing legislation to allow flexibility for additional contributions into the cost-sharing components in order to meet cost-share requirements and to continue operating the projects of the Program. The Lower Basin funding is comprised of portions of the power revenues for the Lower Basin power contractors from California and Nevada to pay towards the Program. By statute, the revenues from Arizona contractors go toward repayment of the Central Arizona Project and other processes dealing with Arizona settlement issues. One of the goals is to try to modify the situation so that Arizona can be contributing towards the salinity program cost-share. Another goal is to try to adjust the Upper Basin/Lower Basin parameters so

that the Upper Basin can meet more of their share of the cost-share requirements. The Program is very heavily tilted towards federal contributions, with state contribution at 30 percent and federal contribution at 70 percent. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Forum is currently working on both short-term and long-term solutions for the cost-share issue. One of the short-term solutions the Forum recommended to Reclamation was for Reclamation to withhold some of the funding used to repay some of the Treasury obligations and spend that on projects instead of repaying interest to the federal government. Reclamation implemented the recommendation last year and will again this year to keep the projects moving forward.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the salinity standards for Colorado River Basin in California were adopted by our State Water Resources Control Board in May through the adoption of the 2014 Triennial Review. The process for the new Triennial Review will kick off this summer and fall. At this meeting, the 2016 Forum budget was approved and state assessments were the same as prior years with about \$40,000 coming from California towards the Program. This contribution is separate from the contributions made directly from the power contractors through the Lower Basin fund.

The next meetings of the Work Group are scheduled for July in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Forum meetings will be in late October in Tucson, Arizona.

#### Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group and Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) met via webinar in late May, with the primary business being the approval of a new charter which authorizes the program to continue through 2017. The AMWG was provided updates on the humpback chub and razorback sucker, which appear to be doing well and are expanding their populations. In contrast, the trout fishery at Lee's Ferry is in decline.

Ms. Trujillo noted that the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS process is still underway and that the Colorado River Board had requested cooperating agency status in order to review the EIS as soon as it is released. After review by the cooperating agencies, the draft EIS will be released to the public.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the next AMWG meeting would be held on August 26-27 in Tempe, Arizona.

#### Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) was in the process of finalizing its annual Final Implementation Report, which is expected in July. Ms. Trujillo noted that the next Steering Committee meeting would be held on June 24 to approve the Program's 2016 budget and work plan. Additionally, on June 22, the California MSCP partners planned to meet informally to discuss upcoming issues.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS/ NOTICES**

Ms. Trujillo announced that a handout of the press release from the Department of the Interior's Water SMART funding announcements was included in the packet. Also of note was that the Secretary was in the Los Angeles area with Commissioner Lopez on May 20<sup>th</sup> and announced \$50 million in drought funding that was awarded.

Ms. Trujillo also announced that Reclamation has announced an additional funding opportunity for drought relief programs. A webinar for that purpose was scheduled for June 11, 2015 at 1:00pm and the application for that type of funding is due June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Trujillo lastly announced that the Senate Energy National Resources Committee held an oversight hearing on the status of the drought conditions in the Western U.S. on June the 2<sup>nd</sup>. A live webcast is available to view. Ms. Trujillo is working on a draft of testimony to be submitted to the Committee as an opportunity for the Committee to hear perspectives on the western drought from water users. The California witness at the hearing was a representative of the Family Farm Alliance. He presented testimony of the drought impacts associated with his family farming operations in the Central Valley. The State of Arizona was represented by Tom Buschatzke, and his remarks are in the record.

Ms. Trujillo mentioned that she does not anticipate having lengthy reports for the July meeting. Chairman Fisher agreed that July looked like a good month to cancel.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Pettijohn, seconded Mr. Wilson, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 11:13 AM.