

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, May 13, 2015

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, May 13, 2015.

Board Members and Alternates Present

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

Board Members and Alternates Absent

Stephen Benson	Michael Touhey
John Powell Jr.	Chris Hayes

Others Present

Steve Abbott	Autumn Plourd
Samantha Adams	Larry Purcell
Tim Blair	Angela Rashid
Augie Caires	Halla Razak
John Carter	Eric Ruckdaschel
Robert Cheng	Peter Silva
Dan Denham	Nan Sterman
Brad Fikas	Joanna Smith
Christopher Harris	Philip Southard
Bill Hasencamp	Tanya Trujillo
Michael Hughes	Mark Van Vlack
Ned Hyde	Cher Watte
Lisa Johansen	Suzanna Webb
Eric Katz	Meena Westford
Neena Kuzmich	
Eric Larson	
Tom Levy	
Keith Lewinger	
Lindia Liu	
Kara Mathews	
Jan Matusak	
Jessica Neuwerth	
Thang (Vic) Nguyen	

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:07 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. Chairman Fisher introduced Mr. John Carter. Mr. Carter introduced Cheri Watte, a native from the Imperial Valley. Mr. Carter explained Ms. Watte's professional career. Mr. Carter also explained that he and Ms. Watte are members of a new organization that is focused on helping protect the Imperial Valley and California's water rights.

Chairman Fisher introduced Nan Sterman and explained that Ms. Sterman recently produced a video that was played on KPBS in San Diego. Ms. Sterman thanked Mr. Fisher and explained that she is a co-producer and host of the show called A Growing Passion which airs on public television in San Diego. Ms. Sterman gave a short presentation on gardening and showed slides from the video.

## **PRESENTATIONS BY THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY REGARDING AN OVERVIEW OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY, CARLSBAD DESALINATION PROJECT UPDATE AND EAST COUNTY ADVANCED PURIFICATION**

Dan Denham presented an overview of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDWCA) and discussed the efforts and activities taken by over the past ten years to increase water supply reliability such as implementing agreements like the Quantification Settlement Agreement.

Neena Kuzmich, San Diego County engineer with the Carlsbad Desalination Project, reported to the Board about the status of the construction of the desalination facility, which began construction a year-and-a-half ago. The developer, Poseidon Resources entered into a 30-year Water Purchase agreement with SDWCA. Once complete, the desalination plant will be the largest desalination plant west of the Sierras and provide approximately 50 million gallons per day of high quality drinking water to Carlsbad and the surrounding community. The presentation also included a fly-over virtual tour of the facility.

Vice-Chair Wilson gave a presentation about Padre Dam's Advanced Water Purification project located in the East County region of San Diego. The project proposes to purify treated wastewater that will supply 20% to 30% of the area's local water needs. The project includes a one-year demonstration project that will process treated

wastewater that will meet the level of distilled water. The results of the demonstration project will be reviewed by a panel of experts, including the Health Department. Mr. Wilson added that the project also includes tours for the public to help promote public acceptance of the project.

### **PRESENTATION FROM THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO REGARDING THE WATER PURIFICATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

Director of the City of San Diego Public Utilities, Halla Razak, gave a presentation on the water challenges the City of San Diego is facing with the drought. Ms. Razak spoke about the water conservation efforts, groundwater development challenges with limited availability of aquifers, and their recycled water system. The multi-year Pure Water Program is meant to use current technologies to produce a sustainable and high-quality water supply. The draft Environmental Document for this program will be published at the end of the year, and the product water will be distributed to customers in 2021.

### **PRESENTATION BY ERIC LARSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

Mr. Eric Larson, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau, gave an overview of how the drought has impacted the farming industry in San Diego County. He gave several examples on how the farmers have developed new water use strategies in order to continue to be a major agricultural production area in the nation.

### **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT**

#### **Presentation regarding the 2014 AZ v. CA Decree Accounting Report**

Angela Rashid, Colorado River Board staff, reported on the draft the 2014 Colorado River Accounting and Water Use Report (Accounting Report) released in April. Ms. Rashid explained that the Accounting Report is a requirement of Article V of the 1964 AZ v. California Supreme Court Decree. Ms. Rashid briefly explained the process of compiling the data for the Accounting Report which begins with the modeling and development of the Annual Operating Plan in August, includes the water order approval process as well as real time monitoring and forecasting of all diversions, uses and return flows. At the end of the calendar year, Reclamation compiles the Accounting Report that includes detailed records of releases from regulatory structures, diversions, returns, consumptive uses by the Lower Basin States, water ordered but not delivered, deliveries to the Gila National Forest and deliveries to Mexico. Other important information found in the Accounting Report includes overrun accounting, interstate banking, conservation, transfers, and exchanges, ICS and accounting for the Lower Colorado Supply Project. The final Accounting Report will be published by May 15, 2015.

## Colorado River Basin Water Report

Ms. Trujillo reported that Lake Mead had recently reached its lowest level since its filling, noting that its elevation may achieve new lows daily as we approach summer. Lake Mead is 38% of capacity, while Lake Powell is 44% of capacity as of May 3. On May 4, 2015, precipitation in the Basin is 73% of average since the beginning of the Water Year in October. Snowpack in the Basin is 45% of average, with forecasted April through July runoff expected to be 42% of average. Forecasted unregulated inflows into Lake Powell for Water Year 2015 are 59% of average. Ms. Trujillo reported that lower levels of precipitation and high temperatures have resulted in less runoff than expected.

Ms. Trujillo also reported on the Basin States Technical Committee meeting held on April 28, 2015. The meeting is held twice a year and brings together technical staff from the seven Basin States to hear reports from Reclamation and other federal agencies and to share information about the status of programs within the Basin. During the meeting, Reclamation reported that there is a 33% probability of shortage in 2016 and a 25% probability of shortage in 2017. Reclamation stated that side inflows will be a critical factor to determining the elevations in Lake Mead as they approach the August 24-month study modeling and operating tier determinations. Ms. Trujillo added that Reclamation recently released its Midterm Operation Model (MTOM), which is an additional tool that can be used to evaluate the reservoir system. Additional topics discussed during the meeting included updates on the hydrologic conditions and Basin forecast from NOAA, the California drought, Minute 319 and other on-going programs in the Basin.

## State Water Report

Board member Jones reported that precipitation in the Northern Sierras is 75% of average. Noting unfortunately, that most of the precipitation did not stay frozen, resulting in early snow melt and low reservoir levels. San Joaquin reservoir levels were also low due to poor snowpack accumulation. Ms. Jones noted that most of the larger statewide reservoirs, which are important for managing the Delta and supplying water for the State project, are well below average.

## Local Water Report

MWD's total reservoir storage as of May 1, 2015 is at 47% of capacity. Board member Peterson stated applications for MWD's Residential Turf Program have greatly increased, noting that 527 applications were submitted last April, while 10,000 applications were submitted in April 2015. Mr. Peterson stated that MWD has over \$500 million of turf removal applications and is considering modifying the program to help mitigate the program's increasing expense.

## **UPDATE REGARDING THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT**

Ms. Trujillo reported that 47% of the State is in the exceptional drought category. The May 1 snowpack level was 2% of average which is lower than the prior month's snowpack of 5% of average. On May 5, the State Board implemented regulations for implementation of the Governor's April 1 Executive Order, requiring water reduction tiers for urban providers between 8% and 36% based on current per capita gallons per day usage. The overall target will be 55 gallons per person per day for indoor water uses.

Board member Jones reported that the State's Senate National Resources Committee held an oversight hearing on the Administration's actions on the drought. Ms. Jones also noted that DWR held a press conference to discuss the installation of the temporary salinity emergency barrier in the Delta on West False River. The barrier cost close to \$40 million and will stay in place until November. The barrier will control salinity in the Delta to help meet delivery capability within the Delta service area and environmental regulatory requirements.

## **STAFF REPORTS REGARDING THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS**

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

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Board continues to work with the other two Lower Basin States on efforts to implement the Memorandum of Understanding that was developed last fall. In addition, there is a system conservation pilot program which has been implemented and Reclamation is expected to announce the award of contracts in the Lower Basin soon. Since Reclamation does not have the same authority in the Upper Basin, the Upper Colorado River Commission will be facilitating the contracting process for the pilot program in the Upper Basin.

Reclamation continues to develop programs relating to efforts to reduce the excess bypass flows going to Mexico, focusing on improving efficiency primarily in the Yuma area. Ms. Trujillo reported that Board staff will continue to monitor and participate in the workgroup process, which is co-led by Reclamation and Arizona, and to provide updates to the Board member agencies on that effort.

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

Ms. Trujillo reported that Reclamation released the Phase I report of the Basin Water Supply and Demand Study (Basin Study) on May 12, 2015. The report focused on municipal and industrial conservation, agricultural conservation, and water transfers and environmental and recreational flows. For the municipal and industrial conservation portion, the report highlighted approximately 25 opportunities for improved sustainability in the Basin, such as examples of how to increase outdoor water use efficiency. With respect to agricultural conservation, the report documented potentials for improving productivity and water management, such as switching from flood irrigation to drip

irrigation in appropriate areas. Since this was a Basin-wide effort, there were examples from both the Upper and Lower Basins highlighted in the report. In the environmental flows portion, Reclamation is looking for funding opportunities for expanded partnering between traditional water uses and environmental flows. Phase II of the Basin Study process is expected to look into pilot projects that may be undertaken under the three sectors in both Basins. The report can be found on Reclamation's website where there is an opportunity for public comments.

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

A meeting with the Mexican delegation is scheduled for May 14 to review the implementation status of Minute 319 and start the discussion of a longer-term agreement. Minute 319 has a 5-year term and we are halfway through that term. The goal is to try to examine the potential for expanding some of the agreement's benefits on a long-term basis. Ms. Trujillo reported that there was positive feedback from the Mexican delegation at the Colorado River Water Users meeting in December of last year and she anticipated similar positive messages from them at the May 14, 2015 meeting. Ms. Trujillo will report back to the Board on the meeting.

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

As one of the members on the Salinity Control Forum's Executive Committee, Ms. Trujillo described her trip to Washington D.C. with the Salinity Forum's Executive Director Don Barnett. The trip consisted of four full days of meetings with congressional and administration staff on the importance and success of the Salinity Control Program in the Basin. Ms. Trujillo reported receiving positive feedback from these meetings. There were no specific requests for legislative amendments to the Program but there are always opportunities to expand salinity control in the Upper Basin. Ms. Trujillo reported that the meetings were an opportunity to describe the importance of the Paradox Valley Unit project and its operations.

The Forum is meeting for four days in May in Salt Lake City, Utah. One of the highlights of the meetings will be a tour of a salt mine facility in the Salt Lake area that is directly adjacent to a migratory bird refuge area. This would be an opportunity to examine the viability of a brine evaporation pond facility located very close to a migratory bird facility. Ms. Trujillo anticipated some interesting discussions during the tour with representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies. The Board continues to participate as one of the cooperating agencies on the Paradox Valley Unit Alternative Study/EIS process. The EIS process continues to be on track and is anticipated to be completed next fall. Part of the process involves expert review boards to provide input to the EIS team. The EIS team has received reports on the maximum allowable surface pressure for the current well, which will help determine siting for a replacement well. Another report was also received on evaporation ponds as an alternative to an injection well as a means of disposal of the salt produced. Ms. Trujillo

reported that the technical issues associated with these two reports are currently being examined.

Vice Chairman Wilson commented that he is pleased that the Salinity Control Forum is pushing for an earlier EIS completion and maintaining a viable emergency plan, but he remains concerned about the potential economic damages that may occur if the disposal well fails. Mr. Wilson urged the Board representatives on the Forum to continue to push hard on this issue. Ms. Trujillo responded that the same message was conveyed during her Washington D.C. trip to ensure the EIS gets completed and to get funding for the implementation of the alternative. Ms. Trujillo planned to take these messages to the Forum meeting next week.

#### Review status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group and Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS

Ms. Trujillo reported that the EIS is still progressing in the Glen Canyon Dam Program. A draft report is expected to be released to the cooperating agencies this month or the next. A public draft report is expected this summer. The Adaptive Management Work Group met at the end of April to address budget issues and the general operations of the program. The next Work Group meeting is scheduled for the end of May in the form of a webinar.

#### Review Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Trujillo reported that a Steering Committee meeting was held on April 22, 2015. The highlight of that meeting was the approval of the lease for the acquisition of the Planet Ranch property in Arizona. The acquisition will proceed through the environmental review process. The Work Group met in May in Phoenix to review budget issues. The budget for next year is anticipated to be \$39 million for the program. Chris Harris reported that there was a sighting of a Northern Mexican garter snake in the Havasu National Wildlife refuge area by some of the MSCP bird survey groups. It was the first sighting in over a hundred years of that species in the area. Although the species is threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act, it has no special status under California law. Consultation with Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the three states' game and fish agencies would be needed to determine the most appropriate action for this species. Mr. Harris noted that adding this species to the list should not be a major modification nor require any additional mitigation since the MSCP is already doing mitigation for marsh habitats, which is the preferred habitat for this species. Mr. Harris does not anticipate any issue with this species going forward.

### **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. Nelson, seconded Mr. Kuiper, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 12:11 P.M.