

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, October 14, 2015

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2015.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Brian Brady	David Vigil, Alternate Designee
Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Glen Peterson	Doug Wilson
James Hanks	Jeanine Jones, Designee
Michael Touhey	Department of Water Resources
Jack Seiler	

Board Members and Alternates Absent

Stephen Benson	David Pettijohn
Henry Kuiper	Chris Hayes, Designee
Peter Nelson	Department of Fish and Wildlife
John Powell Jr.	

Others Present

Steve Abbott	Jan Matusak
Brian Brady	Doug Mcpherson
Robert Cheng	Jessica Neuwerth
Allison Ellingson	Vic Nguyen
Karen Donovan	Autumn Plourd
Jack Hartman	Angela Rashid
Bill Hasencamp	Tom Ryan
Michael Hughes	Suzanna Sexton
Eric Katz	Mark Stuart
Lisa Johansen	Tanya Trujillo
Tom Levy	Mark VanVlack
Lindia Liu	Jerry Zimmerman
Kara Mathews	

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:01 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 August 12, 2015 and September 9, 2015 meeting minutes. Mr. Wilson moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Ms. Jones, and by unanimous support, the August 12, 2015 and September 9, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

Consideration of Application for an Allocation of Water from the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project

Ms. Trujillo reported that the CRB technical staff reviewed an application from an individual residing in San Bernardino County. The applicant owns a single-family dwelling and is seeking to utilize up to one acre-foot of water per year. The CRB technical staff recommended that the Board adopt a resolution in support of the application.

MOTION: Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Peterson moved that the resolution be approved, seconded by Ms. Jones. By unanimous support, the resolution was approved.

Colorado River Basin Water Reports and State and Local Water Reports

Ms. Trujillo reported that October 1, 2015, marked the beginning of the 2016 Water Year. She reported that after a series of lower predictions for Water Year 2015, the final inflow into Lake Powell was 94% of average. Ms. Trujillo also noted the release from Lake Powell for Water Year 2015 of 9.0 million acre-feet. Ms. Trujillo stated that Reclamation has forecasted a zero percent probability for a shortage in the Lower Basin in 2016 and an 18% probability in 2017.

Ms. Trujillo reported that as of October 5, 2015, the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,606 feet with 12.3 million acre-feet, or 51% of capacity, while the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,078 feet with 9.98 million acre-feet, or 38% of capacity. Total

system storage was at 51% of capacity. Several Upper Basin reservoirs remain close to full capacity.

Brock Reservoir has stored a cumulative total of 116,000 acre-feet. Senator Wash has stored a cumulative total of 93,000 acre-feet of water. Ms. Trujillo noted that the reservoirs are helpful tools for maintaining Lower Basin water supplies and decreasing the amount of water released from Lake Mead. Through October 2015, excess flows to Mexico have been approximately 13,800 acre-feet. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Bypass flows, which is water required to be released to address Minute 242 salinity concerns, have been approximately 106,000 acre-feet. Ms. Trujillo stated that the final numbers will be finalized in connection with the Decree Accounting Report process at the end of the year.

Ms. Trujillo reported that precipitation in August and September was below average for most places in the Basin. Although most places in the Basin have experienced improved drought conditions, in California, 46% of the state continues to be in the exceptional drought category. The State Water Resources Control Board has issued reports indicating that on a statewide basis, Californians have been able to meet the Governor's April 1st Executive Order water conservation mandates. On a statewide basis, water reductions have been at 27% on average as of the month of August. Approximately, 600,000 acre-feet of water has been conserved during the June to August timeframe. Ms. Trujillo also noted that Water Year 2015 was the warmest year on record. One impact associated with drought and high temperatures is the increase in forest fires. To date, California firefighters responded to over 7,000 fires that burned over 800,000 acres of land. Ms. Jones reported that the Department of Water Resources is in the process of removing a temporary rock barrier that was installed in May to protect water quality in the Delta. The fisheries agencies had required that the barrier be removed by November 15, 2015. Ms. Jones also noted that due to the impending El Nino predictions, DWR has also been focusing on flood preparedness in some counties.

Mr. Stuart reported that Los Angeles Civic Center precipitation to date is 11.24 inches or 72% of average, noting that the area received a 2.4 inches of rainfall in September. As of October 5, 2015, the Northern Sierra Precipitation Eight Station Index was at 80% of average. The San Joaquin Precipitation Index was 47% of average. The Southern Sierras Precipitation Index was 47% of average. Regarding the State Water Project, Mr. Stuart reported that total reservoir storage is 1.9 million acre-feet, or 34% of capacity. The State Water Project's largest reservoir, Lake Oroville is almost at a historic low at 1.0 million acre-feet, or 30% of capacity.

Mr. Peterson reported that MWD's conservation in the region has reduced water deliveries by 27%, noting that his region has conserved 36%. Vice Chairman Wilson reported that in the San Diego region, conservation has been about 27% through the last four months, exceeding the Governor's mandatory conservation target for the State. Mr. Hanks reported that IID is predicting a 136,000 acre-feet underrun. In addition, IID is on target in working with growers for the on-farm conservation efforts. Chairman Fisher stated that as of August 1, 2015, 29% of the acres within PVID service area are fallowed

as part of the following agreement with MWD. Mr. Seiler, from PVID, provided an update regarding the on-going maintenance and gate replacement at the Palo Verde Diversion Dam. Chairman Fisher added that PVID took possession of the dam a few years ago but realized there were significant maintenance obligations that had to be addressed.

Review Status of the Basin States Drought Contingency Programs

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Central Arizona Project (CAP) is currently seeking approval of its new Intentionally Created Surplus proposal. CAP has received feedback regarding the proposal from IID and has been working with IID staff and Reclamation to try to address IID's concerns. CAP will present a revised plan that will highlight the verification steps they intend to follow to verify the amount of conservation that will take place in their program. Ms. Trujillo stated that CAP's proposal is designed to generate 95,000 acre-feet in 2015 and 2016. Ms. Trujillo noted that the Board Packet included a letter from Reclamation authorizing a Water Conservation Program in Arizona that is designed to leave approximately 14,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead in 2016 from the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. Ms. Trujillo stated that this is an example of water users in Arizona receiving compensation to contribute water for the benefit of Lake Mead, which will be accounted for in the Decree Accounting Report.

Ms. Trujillo reported that Reclamation is continuing to implement the Pilot System Conservation Program for Lower Basin Projects. Contracts for two projects, in Coachella and City of Needles, are in the process of being finalized. Both programs will be documented and facilitated through Reclamation's Decree Accounting process. The Upper Colorado River Commission is coordinating a similar review and proposal process for Upper Basin contracts. Reclamation received congressional authorization to participate in the Upper Basin System Conservation Pilot Program. In 2018, Reclamation is required to submit a report to Congress documenting the results of the pilot program and to provide recommendations as to whether the program should be continued. Ms. Trujillo stated that the Lower Basin applications for the program will fully utilize the existing amount of funding contributed to the program and the next round of potential funding is underway. The existing funding agreement may be modified to include additional funding from the program's existing funders or additional sources.

Ms. Trujillo stated that the Bypass Flows Workgroup continues its efforts to evaluate options to increase efficiencies in the Yuma area. The next meeting of the Workgroup is scheduled for October 26, 2015. Ms. Trujillo stated that the Workgroup will continue to refine and evaluate the suite of proposals aimed at maximizing conservation of water for use in the US. The Workgroup has targeted 100,000 acre-feet per year of additional water that could be saved and used for the benefit of the Lower Basin system. Some of the potential proposals that could be implemented range from operation of the Yuma De-salting Plant to pumping additional water from the Minute 242 well field. Ms. Trujillo stated that a major component to the success of this project is receipt of additional federal funding.

Review status of the implementation of Minute 319

Ms. Trujillo reported that, as the five-year pilot program Minute 319 continues to be implemented through 2017, small group bi-national meetings occurred in September in Tijuana and last week in New Mexico with a focus on creating a framework for the potential successor Minute, which is targeted to be completed within the next couple of years. The first task is to develop workgroups that can provide assistance and guidance with respect to positions relating to additional bi-national projects that could be funded and/or to have more flexibility with respect to the salinity requirement at the border. The Mexican delegation is interested in continuing to develop environmental programs for the Delta and the Cienega area in Mexico. A tour planned for November 5 will highlight some of the results of last year's pulse flow event and review how some of the restoration areas have progressed since the adoption of Minute 319. A follow-up meeting of the bi-national negotiating group is scheduled for November in Mexicali.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the International Boundary Water Commission has completed Minute 320 with Mexico. It provides a framework for dealing with the border water issues in the Tijuana River area. The Minute was executed on October 5 in Tijuana and is available on IBWC's website.

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

Board staff Lindia Liu reported that the Paradox Cooperating Agencies met on September 21 in Reclamation's office in Grand Junction, Colorado. At the meeting, Reclamation reported that the Paradox well surface injection pressure has been steady for the past two years and no major seismic events in the past twelve months. Ms. Liu reported that Reclamation is initiating studies recommended by the Evaporation Pond Consulting Review Board, including a hydrogen sulfide management study, a pond optimization study, which would determine whether there is a need to do a pilot pond, salt disposal options, and an ecological risk assessment for the birds. Reclamation also did a cost estimate for assessing topographies for evaporation ponds on how topography impacts earth work and thus the cost. The take away message was that topography is not a restricting factor in determining where to put the ponds in the valley. Reclamation is still reviewing that estimate to see what else is not included.

Ms. Liu reported that Reclamation is evaluating issues associated with surface infrastructure, drilling, and ranking of potential sites for the second well alternative. The sites are expected to be ranked by fall 2016. Reclamation is also currently reviewing a proposal received for the Request For Proposal they put out for the commercial use of the brine.

Ms. Liu reported that Reclamation walked through a process flowchart, with a contingency plan laid out in case the well fails. If the well fails and the EIS Record of Decision has not been completed, Reclamation will consult with the Salinity Control Forum, and it may be appropriate to start construction on a second well. The flowchart

helps visualize the EIS process. Reclamation will present an updated schedule at the Forum meeting at the end of October based on this flowchart.

The Work Group met on September 22-24 in Colorado Springs. Ms. Liu reported that Reclamation continues their efforts on updating the damages model, and is working to get data from Arizona and Nevada, as well as from areas outside of MWD service area. The Work Group chairman walked through the triennial review and identified sections that will be updated. Ms. Liu presented a map of the salinity project areas. She reported that the salinity coordinators for the Lower Gunnison and the Uinta Basin project areas updated the Work Group on some of the challenges they have had in working with the landowners. The Forum and Advisory Council are scheduled to meet on October 28 and 29 in Tucson, Arizona.

Mr. Wilson commented that he was happy to hear about the contingency plan in case of an emergency but was concerned that the well is running at a lower capacity. Ms. Trujillo responded that we continue to push for the completion of the EIS to bring the project back to its optimal design and increase salt reductions associated with the operation. Ms. Trujillo added that the disposal rate has dropped around ten percent. Ms. Liu added that the well was disposing about 110,000 tons per year and now about 100,000 tons per year. Ms. Trujillo further added that the upside of the reduced operations is the lack of earthquakes but the downside is less productivity out of that project.

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

Staff member Jessica Neuwerth reported that scientists and members of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) had been evaluating the feasibility of carrying out a high flow experiment (HFE) in November of 2015. Although the sediment necessary to implement the HFE was available, biological concerns had led to a recommendation that an HFE not be implemented. Ms. Neuwerth reported that green sunfish, a non-native predatory fish, had been found downstream of Glen Canyon Dam, and the HFE was disallowed over worries that an HFE would encourage the sunfish to spread before they could be eradicated.

Ms. Neuwerth stated that Board staff had submitted cooperating agency comments on the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS on September 30. A public draft is expected in mid-December, with a 60-day comment period. A Record of Decision and Biological Opinion for the EIS are expected by late spring or early summer of 2016. Finally, Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Technical Work Group would be meeting on October 20 and 21 in Phoenix, AZ.

Ms. Trujillo noted that the recent HFE process was an example of how interests and resource concerns are balanced in the GCDAMP and of how complex decisions are being made in the upcoming LTEMP EIS.

In response to a question from Board Member Peterson, Ms. Neuwerth explained that the green sunfish probably came through Glen Canyon Dam from the established population in Lake Powell. Ms. Neuwerth also noted that efforts were underway to contain and remove the fish, including sealing off the backwater from the main channel and planning the application of rotenone to the area. Vice Chairman Wilson inquired how the fish were being removed. Ms. Neuwerth and Board Member Vigil described the potential processes used to capture the fish, including netting and electrofishing. Mr. Vigil explained that electrofishing used a DC current to immobilize fish so they could be netted more easily. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the removal or killing of fish in the Grand Canyon was a sensitive issue for some Native American tribes and that coordination with tribes over the removal of green sunfish was ongoing.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Work Group had met on September 30 in Las Vegas, NV. Among the topics of discussion was the new Fish Augmentation Plan, which will guide native fish stocking from 2015 to 2020. The group also discussed the threatened northern Mexican gartersnake, which Ms. Neuwerth noted is known to inhabit the Bill Williams River near the Planet Ranch property the group is attempting to acquire, and which was also recently found at the LCR MSCP's Beal Lake Conservation Area. The work group discussed the snake and is currently evaluating how the snake could be added to the LCR MSCP permit as a covered species.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that a hearing before the Arizona Supreme Court was held on October 13. The hearing addressed the sever and transfer of water rights at the Planet Ranch property that the LCR MSCP has been attempting to acquire as a habitat restoration area. In addition to Planet Ranch, the group is also moving forward with restoration at several other sites. LCR MSCP staff are currently creating habitat designs for Parker Dam Camp, Mojave Valley, Palo Verde Ecological Reserve South, and Three Fingers Lake.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LCR MSCP steering committee would meet on October 28 in Las Vegas, NV.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Trujillo reported that Governor Brown signed legislation that authorized actions for Salton Sea restoration that outlined targets of restoring 12,000 acres of shoreline habitat over the next five years and up to 25,000 additional acres of shoreline by 2020. The Little Hoover Commission also prepared a report similar to the legislation signed by Governor Brown on Salton Sea restoration. The report included a recommendation that the State should transfer the mitigation water that's currently being sent to the Salton Sea to MWD in exchange for funding that could be used for additional restoration projects. The Little Hoover Commission recommended the expedition of

permits and to allow for construction as soon as possible for projects that have already received permits and funding.

Ms. Trujillo also reported that there was a hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in Washington, DC on pending drought legislation bills, including the Senate bill from Senators Feinstein and Boxer relating to California drought issues and the previously passed House bill that has been sent over to the Senate for consideration. The committee did not take any action on those bills, and did not announce the date when the committee would be officially marking up or authorizing the bills to move forward. Ms. Trujillo explained that the mark-up hearing would be an opportunity for amendments or potential consolidation of the two bills.

Ms. Trujillo reported that during the hearing, Senator Flake, from Arizona, a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee asked Mike Connor, who was testifying for the Administration on behalf of all of the bills, about the availability of unused apportionment from one State's allocation to be used or transferred to another State for use. Mike Connor responded that based on the agreement of the states and, in particular, since the 2007 Interim Guidelines had been adopted, the Secretary has not allocated any unused apportionment from one State to another State. Ms. Trujillo reported that Mike Connor cautioned that no such determination would be made without involvement and consultation with the States.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Colorado River Basin Forecast Center will be holding a stakeholder forum/webinar on October 20-21, 2015.

Ms. Trujillo reported that David Palumbo, an Assistant Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region, has been selected to be the new Deputy Commissioner for operations at the Bureau of Reclamation in Washington D.C.

Ms. Trujillo reported that Anne Castle, former Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, has a new position with the University of Colorado, School of Law.

Chairman Fisher reported that a prospective list of Board meeting dates for 2016 was circulated during the Board meeting for review. If agencies are interested in hosting meetings next year should let Ms. Trujillo know.

Chairman Fisher reported that the November 2015 Board meeting will be held at Imperial Irrigation District at the William Condit Auditorium at their office on Broadway in El Centro, California.

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 Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. Peterson, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.