

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, February 08, 2017

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, February 08, 2017.

Committee Members and Alternates Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman
Brian Brady
James Hanks
Jeanine Jones
Hank Kuiper
Glen D. Peterson

David R. Pettijohn, Vice-Chairman
John Powell, Jr.
Jack Seiler
Doug Wilson
David Vigil

Committee Members and Alternates Absent

Christopher Hayes
Peter Nelson

Michael Touhey

Others Present

Steve Abbott
Melissa Baum-Haley
Jim Barrett
Karen Donovan
Christian Fielding
Christopher Harris
Bill Hasencamp
Joanna Hoff
Ned Hyduke
Lisa Johansen
Tom Levy
Emanuel Martinez
Kara Mathews

Jan Matusak
Jessica Neuwerth
Autumn Plourd
Angela Rashid
Shanti Rosset
Jack Seiler
Norma Sierra Galindo
Tina Shields
Gary Tavetian
Alina Tishchenko
Meena Westford
Donnell Wilcox
Gerald Zimmerman

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 invited members of the audience to address the Board on items in the agenda or matters related to the Board. Mr. Tom Levy, General Manager of the Colorado River Authority, addressed the Board during the opportunity for public comment. Mr. Levy reported that representatives from the other Basin States had been invited to take part in a tour of the Lower Colorado River scheduled for March 27-30. Mr. Levy noted that the tour would start in Las Vegas, Nevada, and continue down the Colorado River to Yuma, Arizona before heading west across the Imperial and Coachella valleys in California. The tour will include stops at Hoover Dam, Parker Dam, the Palo Verde Valley, Yuma area, Salton Sea and Coachella Valley. Finally, Mr. Levy noted that the Authority hopes to hold a tour in August or September 2017 for Colorado River Board members to visit the Upper Basin, and requested suggestions for possible tour locations and routes.

Welcome from the Coachella Valley Water District

Board member John Powell, Jr. welcomed everyone to the Coachella Valley and shared a brief history of the Coachella Valley Water District and noted the importance of the Colorado River water as a sustainable supply of water for the valley. Mr. Powell stated that about 35,000 acre-feet per year is used for recharge and additional water resulting from implementation of the Quantification Settlement Agreement has helped the District to manage its water supply in a more sustainable manner.

Administration

Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to approve the January 11, 2017 meeting minutes. Mr. Pettijohn moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Wilson, and with unanimous consent, the January 11, 2017 meeting minutes were approved.

Ms. Trujillo provided an update regarding review of Colorado River Board's Rules and Regulations and confirmed that Mr. Chris Harris has initiated a process associated with modification of the Rules and Regulations.

Ms. Trujillo reported that Colorado River Board technical staff had reviewed an application for one acre-foot of domestic water use of Lower Colorado Water Supply Project

water in San Bernardino County. She added that the Board staff recommends approval of this application. Mr. Peterson moved that the resolution recommending that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) subcontract with this water user through the City of Needles be approved, with a second by Mr. Pettijohn. By unanimous consent, the resolution was approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT

Ms. Rashid reported that as of January 30, 2017, the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,085.66 feet with 10.45 million acre-feet of storage, or 40% of capacity. The water level at Lake Powell was at 3,596.19 feet with 11.39 million acre-feet of storage, or 47% of capacity. As of January 29, 2017, the total system storage was at 29.46 million acre-feet, which is 49% of capacity, and is about 69,000 acre-feet lower than the system storage at this time last year. Ms. Rashid reported that precipitation in the Basin was above average for January 2017, with a majority of the Basin receiving between 200% and 300% of average precipitation. Ms. Rashid reported that as of January 29, 2017, Upper Colorado River basin reservoirs other than Lake Powell ranged from 54% of capacity at Fontenelle and 83% of capacity at Flaming Gorge in Wyoming, 96% of capacity at Morrow Point, 71% of capacity at Blue Mesa in Colorado, and 77% of capacity at Navajo in New Mexico.

Ms. Rashid reported that as of January 29, 2017, Brock Reservoir had stored 4,862 acre-feet of excess flows. Ms. Rashid reported that Senator Wash Reservoir was offline from January 3 to January 30 for maintenance and it did not store any excess flows during this time. As of January 29, 2017, excess flows to Mexico were 5,740 acre-feet. As of January 31, 2017, the Minute 242 Bypass Flows to the Cienega de Santa Clara were 7,741 acre-feet. Ms. Rashid noted that the Lower Basin water use accounting will be finalized during Reclamation's Decree Accounting process, which should be concluded in May.

Ms. Rashid reported that Reclamation held a conference call on January 31, 2017 to discuss the current status of reservoir operations and hydrology. As of January 31, 2017, precipitation in the Basin was 137% of average and the snowpack was 160% of median. As of January 17, 2017, the forecasted 2017 WY unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 12.12 million acre-feet, or 112% of normal and the April to July inflow forecast is 9.6 million acre-feet, or 126% of normal. Ms. Rashid reported that Reclamation estimated that nearly 15.0 million acre-feet of inflow would be needed to trigger equalization releases (i.e., more than 9.0 MAF) from Lake Powell to Lake Mead. Ms. Rashid reported that California's drought conditions have greatly improved due to the series of recent winter storms.

Ms. Jones reported that some parts of the state have received precipitation above 200% of average. Ms. Jones reported that this may be California's wettest year since 1983, yet the above average precipitation has not yet contributed to any major flooding events in the Delta and minor flooding was contained to local areas. Ms. Jones reported that the snowpack in the Northern and Southern Sierra was doing well and reservoirs levels have recovered, with exception of New

Melones. Ms. Jones also reported that emergency repairs are underway for the Lake Oroville spillways.

State and Local Reports

Board member Peterson, representing the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that MWD's reservoir storage was 77% of capacity and the Colorado River aqueduct is on two-pump flow. Mr. Peterson explained to the Board how Colorado River and State Project water are distributed within MWD's service area. Mr. Peterson also reported that MWD has stopped filling Diamond Valley Lake to begin storing water in other reservoirs within its system.

Board member Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that the snowpack was 228% of normal to date in the Eastern Sierra. Mr. Pettijohn stated that the Los Angeles Aqueduct may deliver between 750,000 and 800,000 acre-feet of water and compared to the City's demands that are less than 500,000 acre-feet. Mr. Pettijohn explained that the Los Angeles aqueduct system can only store about 300,000 acre-feet of water and LADWP is exploring opportunities to store the additional water they receive with MWD. Mr. Pettijohn noted that one of LADWP's former reservoirs, the St. Francis Dam, failed many decades ago, killing nearly 400 people. Mr. Pettijohn added that for the first time in many years the LADWP Aqueduct System is projected to be able to meet the entire demand of the City of Los Angeles this year.

Board member Wilson, representing the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), reported that San Diego has been building up storage in its reservoirs.

Board member Hanks, representing the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), reported that the IID Board took action to approve the design of a large regulatory storage reservoir within IID's service area, which is needed because of the lack of storage in the system. Mr. Hanks explained that IID will be experiencing a big adjustment to their system once the Salton Sea mitigation flows end and when IID completes the shift from fallowing to on-farm conservation.

Basin States Drought Contingency Planning

Ms. Trujillo reported that discussion among the seven Basin States on the drought contingency planning is ongoing. Within the Lower Basin states, efforts are underway on implementation agreements. Arizona continues to work on specific agreements to generate both system water and additional intentionally created surplus water. The Arizona legislature will have to authorize the Director of the Department of Water Resources to enter into agreements related to drought contingency planning. Ms. Trujillo noted there was an agreement reached in the waning days of the Obama administration between Reclamation and the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona to facilitate the drought contingency planning efforts within Arizona.

Within California, implementation agreements among the contracting agencies including Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, and Palo Verde Irrigation District are also in progress.

Chairman Fisher asked what were the overriding concerns from the Upper Basin with regards to the drought contingency plan. Ms. Trujillo noted that the Upper Basin wanted to understand how they would be impacted by the amount of water released from Lake Powell and potential impacts to power generation at Glen Canyon Dam. The Upper Basin states are also working on a drought contingency plan, consisting of continuing weather modification programs, maximizing operational flexibility in the Upper Basin reservoirs to protect power generation capacity in Lake Powell, and implementing additional conservation efforts similar to the system conservation programs that were undertaken last year.

Status of the implementation of Minute 319 and negotiation of Minute 32x

Ms. Trujillo reported that recent efforts to complete the Minute 32x negotiations did not come to fruition. However, some concepts have been agreed upon by the U.S. and Mexico and recorded in a draft minute. These concepts were similar to existing elements from Minute 319 that allowed for investments in bi-national projects from U.S. funders, and sharing shortages and surplus with Mexico. In addition, there would be an environmental flows program for Mexico's Delta region below Morelos Dam.

Ms. Trujillo noted that the main uncertainty now is with respect to what the new administration positions would be with respect to continuing the negotiations and relationship with Mexico. But a Secretarial Order issued by outgoing Secretary Jewell laid out a plan for moving forward on Colorado River issues with respect to Minute 32x and the two basins' drought contingency planning efforts. Ms. Trujillo also noted that out going Deputy Secretary Connor and the State of California executed an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding on coordination of activities to manage the Salton Sea.

Status of Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, Workgroup, and Advisory Council

Ms. Trujillo reported that she welcomed members of the Salinity Control Forum's Work Group to San Diego, California, who were meeting February 7-9. She reported that the Work Group is in the process of preparing the 2017 Triennial Review, which sets the standards for the Program and plans for salinity control projects for implementation in the Upper Basin. Ms. Trujillo added that one of the efforts underway in connection with the 2017 Triennial Review is documenting the economic impacts of salinity in various service areas. Board staff have been working with the agencies to obtain water use and quality data for developing the economic damages model. Similar efforts are underway in Arizona and Nevada. Finally, it is anticipated that Reclamation will set up a meeting of the cooperating agencies in April to provide an update

on the Paradox Valley Unit EIS process.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Ms. Jessica Neuwerth reported that the Technical Work Group of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program met January 24-26 for its Annual Science Reporting meeting. Ms. Neuwerth reported that, based on preliminary results from the fall 2016 high flow experiment (HFE), 9 of 14 Grand Canyon beaches had increased in size after the flow. Ms. Neuwerth also noted that the endangered population of humpback chub near the Little Colorado River had skipped spawning for the third consecutive year, indicating that the condition of the fish may be poor. In contrast, the number of humpback chub in the Lower Grand Canyon, near the inflow to Lake Mead, has increased significantly in recent years.

Ms. Neuwerth also noted that surveys of the river in 2016 failed to uncover any nonnative green sunfish, which were eradicated from a backwater near the dam in fall 2016 in an effort to keep them from spreading throughout the river system. However, Ms. Neuwerth reported that another potentially harmful nonnative, brown trout, is increasing significantly, particularly in the Lees Ferry area.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group would be meeting February 15-16 in Tempe, Arizona.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Deputy Director Harris reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) held its annual science reporting meeting January 24-26, in Laughlin, Nevada. Mr. Harris noted that the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher is still rare along the Lower Colorado River and hasn't yet moved into habitat created by the LCR MSCP. LCR MSCP staff and researchers are evaluating other sites where the birds are known to nest to determine what, if any, changes should be made to LCR MSCP habitats to make them suitable for the birds. Mr. Harris noted that some LCR MSCP properties, particularly the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve (PVER), have proved to be excellent habitat for the threatened yellow-billed cuckoo. The presence of over 500 yellow-billed cuckoos was recorded at PVER in 2016, including more than 50 breeding pairs.

Mr. Harris also reported that the recently introduced non-native salt cedar beetle made significant southward movement in 2016, spreading from Lake Mohave down to approximately Parker Dam. The LCR MSCP is evaluating opportunities that may be available to revegetate areas of salt cedar affected by the beetle.

Update regarding Colorado River Tribal Water Issues

Mr. Steve Abbott, counsel to the Coachella Valley Water District, provided an overview and update on two cases involving claims to tribal water rights. The first case, Navajo Nation vs. U.S. Department of the Interior, challenged actions that the Secretary of the Interior had taken related to the management of the Colorado River in the Lower Basin. More specifically, the Nation challenged DOI's issuance of guidelines, and associated NEPA analysis, addressing Colorado River surplus and shortage, and also claimed a breach of trust against the U.S. for failing to quantify Colorado River water rights to the Navajo Reservation in the Lower Basin. The second lawsuit is the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians vs. Coachella Valley Water District and Desert Water Agency. In 2013, the Aqua Caliente Band sued CVWD and DWA, claiming a federal reserved water right and seeking to stop these agencies from withdrawing water from the Coachella Valley. A U.S. District Court judge ruling in 2015 is currently under appeal in the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Trujillo reminded Board members that the new federal administration team is in transition, but anticipated that the Secretary of the Interior nominee, Ryan Zinke, may soon be confirmed by the Senate. Additional leadership positions including the Commissioner of Reclamation, the Assistant Secretary of Water and Science, the Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management, have yet to be filled.

Ms. Trujillo also announced that she will be moving to Washington State and thanked her predecessor for guidance she had received. Chairman Bart Fisher thanked Ms. Trujillo for her leadership and work in representing the Colorado River Board and for assembling a qualified team of staff members.

Executive Session

The executive session was called by Chairman Bart Fisher and was held between 11:38 A.M. and 12:07 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

After the executive session, at which no action was taken, the Board Meeting reconvened at 12:08 P.M. With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher adjourned the meeting at 12:09 P.M.