

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, April 12, 2017

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2017, at the headquarters office of the Palo Verde Irrigation District in Blythe, California.

Committee Members and Alternates Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman	Glen D. Peterson
Brian Brady	David R. Pettijohn, Vice-Chairman
James Hanks	Doug Wilson
Jeanine Jones	David Vigil
Hank Kuiper	
Peter Nelson	

Committee Members and Alternates Absent

Christopher Hayes	John Powell, Jr.
Michael Touhey	Jack Seiler

Others Present

Steve Abbott	Jan Matusak
Bert Bell	Jessica Neuwerth
Brian Brady	Vic Nguyen
Grant Chaffin	Shanti Rosset
Dan Denham	Ed Smith
Robert Cheng	Tina Shields
Christopher Harris	Alina Tishchenko
Bill Hasencamp	Joseph Vanderhorst
Ned Hyduke	Kimberly Velasquez
Kara Mathews	

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 11:45 A.M.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Chairman Fisher invited members of the audience 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.

Welcome from the Palo Verde Irrigation District

The Palo Verde Irrigation District's General Manager, Mr. Ned Hyduke, welcomed everyone to the Palo Verde Valley.

Administration

Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to approve the March 15, 2017, meeting minutes. Mr. Kuiper moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Peterson, and with unanimous consent, the March 15, 2017, meeting minutes were approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

The Board's Principal Engineer, Mr. Vic Nguyen, reported that as of April 3, 2017, the water level at Lake Mead was 1,088.30 feet with 10.71 million acre-feet of storage, or 41% of capacity. The water level at Lake Powell was 3,596.35 feet with 11.41 million acre-feet of storage, or 47% of capacity. As of April 3, 2017, the total system storage was 29.93 million acre-feet, which is 50% of capacity. Mr. Nguyen reported that as of April 3, 2017, the forecasted unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for Water-Year 2017 was 13.98 million acre-feet, or 129% of normal. As of April 3, 2017, the forecasted April to July inflow was 9.90 million acre-feet, or 138% of normal. Mr. Nguyen reported that the Basin snowpack was 122% of normal.

Mr. Nguyen reported that the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC) held a webinar on April 6, 2017 to review the water supply conditions and forecast. The CBRFC indicated that March was warm and dry with uneven precipitation across the basin. Dry weather combined with warm temperatures resulted in significant runoff in low-and mid-elevation areas and little precipitation in the Lower Basin. Mr. Nguyen reported that early runoff and dry conditions have decreased the snowpack as well as the April-July runoff estimates. April is projected to have warm and dry periods alternating with cold and wet periods. Mr. Nguyen also

presented monthly precipitation maps for the Basin, noting that the three prior (December 2016 to February 2017) were one of the wettest periods in the historical record. He also reported that much of the Upper Basin snowpack was above average, especially in the Upper Green River subbasin. Mr. Nguyen also reported that storage in the Upper Basin reservoirs, except for Lake Powell, ranged from 57% of capacity at Fontenelle in Wyoming, 85% of capacity at Flaming Gorge in Wyoming and Utah, 92% of capacity at Morrow Point and 70% of capacity at Blue Mesa in Colorado, and 87% of capacity at Navajo in New Mexico.

Mr. Nguyen reported that as of April 6, 2017, storage in Brock and Senator Wash reservoir system was 36,643 acre-feet and 17,823 acre-feet, respectively. He also reported that excess deliveries to Mexico were 5,980 acre-feet, as of April 9, 2017. So far, in 2017, the total Bypass flows of saline drainage to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico were 26,653 acre-feet.

State and Local Reports

Mr. Nguyen also reported that Governor Brown lifted the drought restrictions for most of California. Ms. Jones, representing the CA Department of Water (CDWR), stated that she missed last month's Board meeting to attend meetings in Washington, D.C. to request funding for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) weather forecasting program. Ms. Jones explained that NOAA's work is instrumental to assessing atmospheric rivers (ARs). Ms. Jones stated that the West Coast experienced almost 50 atmospheric rivers this year, which is five times the average. Ms. Jones explained that the ARs contributed to a record or near record wet year, depending on the location within California. She noted that precipitation for Eight Station index ranked the second wettest on record. Ms. Jones also stated that there has been significant storage in state reservoirs. Ms. Jones also indicated that the Governor released an Executive Order associated with the flood damages to the Oroville Dam spillways. DWR is also closely monitoring the potential for flooding on the San Joaquin River system because of its very limited channel capacity. Ms. Jones noted that they expect significant snowmelt runoff as temperatures increase.

Chairman Fisher noted that he witnessed significant flooding damage along the Kings River and questioned whether the damage was related to snowmelt runoff. Ms. Jones responded that a large AR storm in early February most likely contributed to the flooding problems along the San Joaquin River system, and noted that two levee incidents have already occurred in that area. Ms. Jones reported that the State Water Project allocation is currently at 60% and any change to the allocation will be dependent on the water level at Lake Oroville, which is expected to be kept at relatively low levels to facilitate repairs to the spillways.

Board member Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that as of April 1, 2017, the combined storage of Lake Skinner, Lake Mathews and Diamond Valley Lake are at 85% of capacity. He stated that Diamond Valley Lake

is currently 80% full and will be full by the end of the year. Mr. Peterson noted that some agencies within MWD's service area are not using any Colorado River water and that their demands are being fully met with State Water Project water. Mr. Peterson also provided an update on the status of construction of intertie infrastructure near the Whitewater River outlet for MWD deliveries of Colorado River water into the Coachella Valley Water District recharge basins.

Board member Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that as of April 11, the Eastern Sierra precipitation was 151% of normal. He reported that LADWP is working to effectively manage the significant surplus of water that it has received to date. Toward that end, Mr. Pettijohn indicated that LADWP and MWD have signed an agreement to conduct an unbalanced exchange with other water agencies and exchange water at locations where some of the systems are connected. Mr. Pettijohn explained that for every two acre-feet of water they deliver, LADWP would receive will receive one acre-foot. If the water is not returned before the end of 2019, the water will become part of MWD's supply. Mr. Pettijohn reported that its surplus of water may also impact dust control measures constructed on the Owens Lake, on which LADWP has spent about \$1B in investments. Mr. Pettijohn added that LADWP is also having an issue managing surplus water that may inundate a nine-mile stretch of endangered species habitat for the tui chub below the Long Valley Dam if it spills. Mr. Pettijohn added that Mono Lake's elevation should rebound sometime this year, but LADWP will not be exporting from that system this year.

Board member Nelson, representing the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), reported that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) developed a report examining the subsidence of USGS monuments across the Coachella Valley. The report shows that there was uplift in the Coachella Valley due to conservation measures that resulted in a reduction in groundwater production. Mr. Nelson also stated that they have been connecting golf courses to directly use Colorado River water instead of tapping into the aquifer. Mr. Nelson also reported on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians vs. Coachella Valley Water District and Desert Water Agency. CVWD has elected to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to determine if the Agua Caliente Band has a federally established right to a portion of the area's groundwater.

Mr. Hanks, representing the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), reported that IID has an underrun of 102,000 acre-feet, which is enough to meet the following call to the end of June.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Basin States Drought Contingency Planning

Executive Director Harris reported that the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) technical modeling workgroup met in Las Vegas on April 5th. The group continues to analyze the modeled

impacts of the Lower Basin and Upper Basin DCPs, individually and in combination. Mr. Harris noted that there is still some uncertainty what impact the Upper Basin DCP will have on the elevation of Lake Powell and the frequency of releases greater than 8.23 million acre-feet to Lake Mead. Chairman Fisher commented that Lower Basin parties have spent time explaining the Lower Basin DCP to the Upper Basin states and getting all parties comfortable with the plan, and now a similar process must be done with the Upper Basin DCP. Mr. Harris added that understanding the impacts of the Upper Basin DCP will require focusing on the anticipated operational changes at Flaming Gorge Reservoir, which has the most influence in regulating inflows to Lake Powell.

Minutes 319 and 32x

Mr. Harris reported that a draft of the new binational minute, Minute 32x, was completed in late-December 2016 and has not undergone any changes since then. The current positions of the U.S. and Mexican federal administrations are unclear, but U.S. agencies are moving forward with drafting the domestic agreements that would be needed to implement the minute. Mr. Harris noted that there seems to be general agreement among U.S. parties that a new minute should be in place before the expiration of Minute 319 on December 31, 2017. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has drafted a schedule for the preparation and approval of the domestic agreements that are required to implement Minute 32x, which could be brought before the various boards, commissions, and agencies in the Lower Basin states perhaps as soon as July or August 2017.

Mr. Harris noted that there are still outstanding issues, which may hinder the approval of these agreements, such as ongoing uncertainty about the Salton Sea Management Program and the California WaterFix. Chairman Fisher added that it is also uncertain if parties are willing to decouple the finalization of Minute 32x from the completion of the Lower Basin DCP, which may take longer to complete. Chairman Fisher noted that there are internal issues in Arizona between the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, as well as the status of Arizona's proposed "DCP Plus" program.

Mr. Harris reported that the Lower Basin U.S. Technical Team met on March 27th in Las Vegas to review the current draft of Minute 32x and would meet again via webinar on April 13 to discuss next steps. Finally, he noted that the U.S. Technical Team has scheduled a domestic agreements drafting workshop for May 2-3 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

Mr. Harris reported that Board staff is preparing letters in support of the Forum and Advisory Council's late Fall 2016 goals and objectives for the Program going forward. The letters are in support of nearly \$16 million for NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program

(EQIP), about \$10 million for Reclamation's Basinwide Program, and \$1.5 million for BLM's Soil, Water, and Air Program. Board staff understand that both MWD and CAP will also be submitting testimonial letters in support of these appropriations requests.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation has resumed injection on April 6th at the Paradox Valley Unit after an earthquake of with Magnitude 2.9 occurred on March 12. Reclamation believes the earthquake was injection-induced. Reclamation resumed injection at 88 gallons per minute, reduced from 100 gallons per minute before the earthquake, and shortened the rest period from eighteen hours to six hours per week. Mr. Harris reported that the new operational rate could result in a reduction in annual salt disposal by about 5,000 tons. Reclamation estimated the new disposal rate would be between 90,000 to 95,000 tons per year.

The Work Group will meet in Salt Lake City on April 19-20. The purpose of the meeting is to prepare a final draft of the 2017 Triennial Review, which the Forum would then adopt at its June meeting, distribute for public comment and review, and finalize at its fall meeting. A Forum and Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for June 8-9 at the Jackson Lake Lodge in Wyoming, with the Work Group meeting being held the day before.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Board Staff Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) held a Work Group meeting March 29 in Las Vegas. The group discussed the addition to the program of coverage for the northern Mexican gartersnake, which was recently listed as federally threatened. Ms. Neuwerth reported that an amendment to the LCR MSCP Habitat Conservation Plan had been drafted.

Ms. Neuwerth noted that in satisfaction of the program's CESA permit, the program is working to create conservation areas within the state of California. The Mohave Valley Conservation Area near Needles, California is currently under construction and will provide about 50 acres of backwater habitat. Ms. Neuwerth also described the proposed Dennis Underwood Conservation Area, located at the southernmost end of PVID. Approximately 600 acres of habitat would be created on the site.

Ms. Neuwerth also reported that approximately 33,000 razorback sucker being reared by the program at the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery recently died in an outbreak of the parasite "ich" at the hatchery facility. Ms. Neuwerth noted that staff have been working to rebuild hatchery populations after the event and to prevent future outbreaks of the parasite.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LCR MSCP Steering Committee would meet April 26, and the Work Group would meet May 10-11 to discuss next year's budget and work plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Harris reported that there have been two Deputy Assistant Secretaries, one for the Fish and Wildlife Service and Parks and the second one is for Lands and Minerals Management. Mr. Harris reminded that the “Alternatives to Permanent Fallowing” report by Bradley Udall and Gregory Peterson have been added to the executive director’s report. Mr. Harris provided a summary on the Lower Colorado CRA (Colorado River Authority) Tour that was held from March 27 to March 30.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher adjourned the meeting at 12:44 P.M.