

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, April 10, 2019

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, April 10, 2019. Due to a recording malfunction, this month's minutes are an approximation of what occurred during the meeting and may not reflect all discussion points.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

David DeJesus (MWD Alternate)	Nicole Neeman-Brady (Public Member)
Evelyn Cortez-Davis (LADWP Alternate)	Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)	Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
James Hanks (IID)	Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate)
Hank Kuiper (Public Member)	Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)	Norma Sierra Galindo (IID Alternate)
David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)	Doug Wilson (SDCWA)
John Powell, Jr. (CVWD Alternate)	

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Lindia Liu
Brian Alvarez	Jessica Neuwerth
Melissa Baum-Haley	Mojgan Poursadighi
Robert Cheng	Ivory Reyburn
Elsa Contreras	Shanti Rosset
Christopher Harris	Tom Ryan
Bill Hasencamp	Tina Shields
Ned Hyde	Alina Tishchenko
Rich Juricich	Jerry Zimmerman
Eric Katz	

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

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

Chairman Nelson invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Nelson moved to the next item on the agenda.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Harris introduced Mr. Rich Juricich, the new Principal Engineer for the Colorado River Board of California.

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the March 13, 2019, meeting minutes. Mr. Fisher moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Peterson. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

### **Colorado River Basin Report**

Mr. Harris reported that as of April 8<sup>th</sup>, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,568.77 feet with 9.00 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 37% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,089.85 feet with 10.84 MAF of storage, or 42% of capacity. As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the total system storage was 26.79 MAF, or 45% of capacity, which is about 4.0 MAF less than the system storage at this same time last year.

Mr. Harris reported that the forecasted Water Year-2019 inflow into Lake Powell 2019 is 12.1 MAF, or 112% of normal. The forecasted April-July 2019 runoff into Lake Powell is projected to be 9.2 MAF, or 128% of normal. The March 2019 observed Lake Powell inflow was 0.62 MAF (94% of normal), and the April Lake Powell inflow forecast is 1.30 MAF (123% of normal). To date, the WY-2019 precipitation is 119% of normal and the current basin snowpack is 130% of normal.

Mr. Harris reported that precipitation conditions in February were above average. In March, two large storms brought significant precipitation to the Upper Basin while dry conditions persisted in the Lower Basin, particularly in western Arizona and southern Nevada.

Mr. Harris reported that as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Upper Colorado River basin reservoirs, excluding Lake Powell, ranged from 27% of capacity at Fontenelle Reservoir in Wyoming; 85% of capacity at Flaming Gorge Reservoir in Wyoming and Utah; 91% of capacity at Morrow Point and 30% of capacity at Blue Mesa Reservoirs in Colorado; and 57% of capacity at Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico.

Mr. Harris reported that as of March 28<sup>th</sup>, Brock and Senator Wash Reservoirs captured 30,332 AF and 29,052 AF, respectively. He also reported that excess deliveries to Mexico through March 31<sup>st</sup> were 3,298 AF. As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the total bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico is 21,988 AF.

### **State and Local Report**

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), discussed California's current precipitation conditions. As of April 4<sup>th</sup>, the statewide snowpack is 162% of normal and the April 1<sup>st</sup> average snowpack is 161%.

Mr. Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), stated that as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the combined reservoir storage was 91% of capacity.

Ms. Cortez-Davis, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the current snowpack condition for the Easter Sierra was 164% of normal.

## **STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS**

### **Status of the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan**

Mr. Harris reported that the Basin States representatives met in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 19<sup>th</sup> to sign a letter accompanying the submittal of the proposed federal legislation and draft interstate Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) agreements to the U.S. Congress. With this commitment from the states, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman rescinded a February 6<sup>th</sup> Federal Register notice requesting input from the Basin States on Secretarial action to prevent continued reservoir decline.

Mr. Harris reported that on March 27-28, oversight hearings regarding the DCPs were held by the Senate Water and Power Subcommittee and House Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Subcommittee heard from Commissioner Burman and from Tom Buschatzke (Arizona), John Entsminger (Nevada), and Pat Tyrrell (Wyoming). On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the House Subcommittee then received testimony from Commissioner Burman and

from representatives of each of the Seven Basin States, including the Board's Chairman Nelson on behalf of California. Mr. Harris reported that the testimony focused on the need to implement the DCPs in order to more effectively manage the water resources of the Colorado River System and reduce the decline of storage in both Lakes Powell and Mead.

Mr. Harris reported that the proposed federal legislation submitted by the Basin States on March 19<sup>th</sup> was subsequently modified by House and Senate members and committee staff, before being introduced in both the House and Senate. Mr. Harris noted that the legislation authorizing the DCP was passed by both chambers of Congress on April 8<sup>th</sup> and signed into law by the president on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Harris reported that the Minute No. 323 Minute Oversight Group met in Mexico City on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and discussed the impending finalization of the Lower Basin DCP and the intent to have Mexico's Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan fully effective by the time of the release of the August 2019 24-Month Study Report. Mr. Harris noted that a small binational working group has been charged with developing the process and schedule leading to the activation and implementation of the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan prior to the release of the August 2019 24-Month Study Report.

#### **Status of the Salinity Control Program**

Mr. Harris reported that the Salinity Control Workgroup is scheduled to meet on April 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> in Salt Lake City, Utah. He also reported that the Salinity Control Forum has scheduled its 100<sup>th</sup> meeting for June 5-6 in Denver, Colorado. The first Forum meeting was held there in November 1973.

#### **Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program**

Board Staff Ms. Neuwerth reported that an Annual Reporting and Technical Work Group meeting for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program was held on March 12-14 in Phoenix, Arizona. Ms. Neuwerth noted that populations of the endangered humpback chub appear to be stable or slightly increasing, although juvenile fish counts have been low for several years. Rainbow trout populations have increased significantly in the past year, but the Arizona Game and Fish Department is planning to stock as many as 6,000 sterile fish near Lee's Ferry in summer 2019 to further bolster angling. Ms. Neuwerth reported that catch rates of nonnative brown trout have stabilized but are still considered to be high.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that researchers focused on the effects of high flow experiments (HFEs) on various natural resources. The regular implementation of fall HFEs has coincided with an increase in the number of brown trout but no causal link has been confirmed. Ms. Neuwerth noted that this potential link has increased interest in conducting spring flood releases at Glen Canyon Dam, although these types of flows are currently restricted by sediment

availability and the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS directing dam operations through 2036.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LTEMP planning team had met several times via teleconference to discuss potential experimental actions for 2019. The group moved forward with a recommendation to conduct “bug flows” at Glen Canyon Dam in summer 2019. These low, steady weekend flows were also held from May through August 2018 and appear to have successfully increased aquatic insect diversity and distribution in the Glen and Marble Canyon reaches of the Colorado River. Ms. Neuwerth reported that a final determination on whether to conduct the flows would be made by DOI in late April.

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

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) and Metropolitan Water District would be holding a dedication ceremony at the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area on April 16<sup>th</sup> in Blythe, California. The new conservation area is located at the southern end of the Palo Verde Valley and will provide about 600 acres of new habitat pursuant to the restoration goals of the LCR MSCP.

Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LCR MSCP Steering Committee would meet April 24<sup>th</sup> in Las Vegas and the Work Group would meet May 8-9 in San Diego to review the proposed work plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Harris reported that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power presentation regarding the Boulder Canyon Pumped Storage Project would be moved to the May 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Harris reported that Mr. David Bernhardt, the current Acting Secretary of the Interior, was moved out of committee and a full vote for confirmation is expected soon. The House and Senate held DCP oversight hearings; and that hearings were also held on broader western water issues and concerns.

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be May 15<sup>th</sup> and would be held in Ontario, California.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 10:33 a.m.