

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, March 10, 2021

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held virtually on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, using the Zoom Webinar meeting platform.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

David DeJesus (MWD Alternate)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)
James Hanks (IID)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)

Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)
Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)
Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Norma Sierra Galindo (IID Alternate)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
Henry Kuiper (Public Member)

David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
John Powell, Jr. (CVWD Alternate)

Others Present:

Steven Abbott
Brian Alvarez
Jim Barrett
Bert Bell
JR Echard
Castulo Estrada
Melissa Baum-Haley
Emily Halvorsen
JB Hamby
Christopher Harris
Bill Hasencamp
Joanna Smith-Hoff
Michael Hughes
Ned Hyduke
Sarai Jimenez
Lisa Johansen
Rich Juricich
Larry Lai
Tom Levy
Lindia Liu

Victor Lujan
Henry Martinez
Kara Mathews
Aaron Mead
Dylan Mohamed
Jessica Neuwerth
Jessica Rangel
Shana Rapoport
Angela Rashid
Ivory Reyburn
Kelly Rodgers
Shanti Rosset
Tom Ryan
Tina Shields
Andrew Slagan
Gary Tavetian
Cherie Watte
Jay Weiner
Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:02 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

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the February 10, 2021, meeting minutes. Mr. Madaffer moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Fisher. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the proposed Board Resolution Posthumously Honoring Mr. Kevin Kelley, former General Manager of the Imperial Irrigation District. Mr. Fisher moved that the Board Resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Peterson. By roll-call vote, the Board Resolution was unanimously approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Mr. Juricich reported that as of March 1st, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,571.46 feet with 9.23 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 38% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,087.26 with 10.62 MAF of storage, or 41% of capacity. The total system storage was 26.96 MAF, or 45% of capacity, which is 4.05 MAF less than system storage at this time last year. Mr. Juricich added that the storage levels for both Lake Powell and Lake Mead is in the 10th percentile relative to the average from 1981 and 2019.

Mr. Juricich reported that as of February 16th, the unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year-2021 is 5.42 MAF, or 50% of normal and the WY-2021 forecasted April to July inflow to Lake Powell is 3.60 MAF, or 50% of normal. For WY-2021, the observed January inflow to Lake Powell was 0.20 MAF, or 55% of normal. The February inflow forecast to Lake Powell is

0.22 MAF, or 56% of normal. To date, the WY-2021 precipitation in the Upper Colorado River Basin is 74% of normal and the current Basin snowpack is 83%.

Mr. Juricich reported that in January the Upper Basin experienced dry precipitation conditions while the Lower Basin benefited from a series of storms. In February, the reverse occurred, with improved precipitation conditions in the Upper Basin (150% to 200% of average) due to storm activity and very dry (0% to 30% of average) precipitation conditions in the Lower Basin.

Mr. Juricich reported that the Basin that as of February 25th, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 17,682 AF and 12,736 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico through January 31st, were 7,104 AF. As of March 1st, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 16,424 AF.

Mr. Juricich reported on the historical consumptive use of the Lower Division States and Mexico. He reported that as a whole, the Lower Division States have been using less than their 7.5 MAF apportionment. Mr. Juricich also reported on the February 24-Month Study. He stated that for WY-2021 the most probable operating tier for Lake Powell is the Mid-Elevation Release Tier with a release of 8.23 MAF and in WY-2022 and WY-2023 the most probable release from Lake Powell is forecasted to be 7.48 MAF. He reported that the 24-Month Study projects that Lake Mead's elevation will fall below the first tier of shortage in WY-2021, which would trigger a shortage condition in 2022. He stated that Reclamation's January 5-Year Probability table projects a high probability of shortage conditions over the next several years.

Chairman Nelson inquired about the impact of adjusting the period of record for the Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) values from its current period of record of 1981 to 2010 to 1991 to 2020. Mr. Juricich stated that the new period of record will reflect the drier conditions the Basin has experienced over the last few decades.

State and Local Report

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that Northern Sierra precipitation index is 49% of average, noting that similar precipitation conditions existed this time last year. She added that last Water Year ended up being the third driest Water Year on record in terms of statewide precipitation. Ms. Jones reported that in the San Joaquin Basin precipitation conditions are 49% of average, which is slightly greater than last year's conditions due to storm activity during late January and early February that brought atmospheric river conditions to the Central Sierra watershed. She reported that in the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Lake Basin, precipitation conditions were 37% of average which is slightly below last year's precipitation conditions.

Ms. Jones reported that current precipitation conditions are tracking closely with conditions from 2013 and 2014, which were extremely dry years. However, she noted that the current snowpack conditions are better than they were in 2013 and 2014, and once runoff season begins natural flow conditions may improve.

Mr. Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that MWD's total system storage is 77% of capacity. He noted that the Colorado River aqueduct was shut down in February for repairs and has since resumed a seven-pump flow. Mr. Peterson reported that water deliveries for January 2021 were 86% of average and MWD plans to deliver 92,000 AF to the Desert/Coachella facility.

Mr. Kwan, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that as of March 9th, the Eastern Sierra snowpack is 41% of normal of the April 1st target and 46% normal to date. He noted that a slight warming trend in mid-February to late March caused premature snow melting. Mr. Kwan reported that LADWP is anticipating an inch of SWE from upcoming storm activity.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Status of the Salinity Control Program

Mr. Juricich provided an update on the recent Salinity Control Forum Work Group meeting held at the end of February. During the meeting, the different federal agencies supporting the Salinity Control Program each provided updates on on-going research and funding status. Mr. Juricich reported that the Work Group received a good update and briefing on the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) project from the Bureau of Reclamation Upper Colorado Basin Region regional director Mr. Wayne Pullan. Due to some recent increases in seismic activities, Reclamation is proposing to do an engineering risk assessment to understand the risk to property damage and the people living in the area. Unfortunately, while the two-year study is underway, the existing brine injection well will not be in operation. Mr. Juricich reported that Mr. Pullan recognizes the importance of the PVU project and Reclamation will explore options after the completion of the risk assessment. Potential options could be new projects outside of the Paradox Valley, including ramping up the Basinwide Program.

Mr. Juricich presented a few slides of seismographs showing seismic rates from when the well was first in operation in the late nineties to the present. The seismographs showed the time Reclamation worked with the injection rates to control seismic activities prior to the March 2019 earthquake, which resulted in the shutdown of the injection well. During last summer, Reclamation restarted the well as a six-month pilot test, but ended the test after one month. Due to unexpected spikes in seismic activities in November and December last year, Reclamation made the decision

to do the risk assessment. Mr. Juricich explained how the various graphs showed the seismic activities magnitudes and locations. One graph showed a drop in salt load that corresponds to the thirty-nine-day injection test last summer and then an uptick in the salt load when the injections ceased even though the river flow remained constant during the same period. USGS has been doing studies looking at the causes of this increase in salt load while river flow rate is constant. USGS suspects that the increase may be associated with the daily freeze, thaw, and melt cycles of the river. USGS also observed a seasonal trend, where increase occurs in the spring and early-winter period in other years.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Board Staff Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) met via webinar on February 10-11. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the AMWG heard an update from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which oversees power generation at Colorado River Storage Project facilities, on the status of power generation and power revenues at Glen Canyon Dam. WAPA anticipates low hydropower revenues in the near term due to a combination of factors, including low reservoir levels, low projected dam releases, and the high cost of replacement power. This will result in less funding for the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund, which has historically provided funding to a number of programs, including the Salinity Control Program and the GCDAMP. Ms. Neuwerth noted that Congress directed the GCDAMP to be funded with power revenues from the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund in FY-2020, although future program funding may not rely as heavily on this fund.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that Department of the Interior (DOI) solicitors provided a brief update to the AMWG on ongoing litigation related to the 2016 Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS, which guides releases from Glen Canyon Dam. In October 2019, several NGOs filed suit against DOI and then-Secretary David Bernhardt over the LTEMP, alleging that the plan failed to adequately consider the effects of climate change. Ms. Neuwerth reported that six of the Basin States moved to intervene in the case in April 2020. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the scope of the administrative record for the case has been nearly established and that DOI expects initial briefings on the case in the near future. In response to a question from Mr. Peterson, Ms. Neuwerth noted that New Mexico had not moved to intervene in the LTEMP case but had instead filed an amicus brief in support of DOI's position.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that a spring disturbance flow would be taking place at Glen Canyon Dam starting on March 15th, beginning with five days of low steady flows to allow for repair to the concrete apron below the dam. Once the repair is complete, dam releases would ramp up to the maximum powerplant capacity release of about 20,000 cfs for 84 hours before ramping back down. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the spring disturbance flow is intended to test the ecosystem response of spring high flows.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the Technical Work Group for the GCDAMP would be meeting April 13-14 via webinar.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Financial Work Group met via webinar on February 18th to discuss the FY-2020 budget. Ms. Neuwerth noted that FY-2020 expenses came in below the budgeted amount of \$27.1 million, due in part to the effects of the pandemic, which required changes in construction and monitoring efforts. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the FY-2021 budget is \$26.5 million, and the FY-2022 budget is \$31.2 million. Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LCR MSCP Steering Committee would be meeting on April 28th via webinar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Governor Newsom's State-of-the-State Address

Mr. Harris reported that Governor Newsom addressed the State of California on March 9, 2021. Mr. Harris noted that the Governor's address was livestreamed over various social media platforms.

Law of Colorado River Conference

Mr. Harris reported that Mr. Hasencamp and Mr. Pearce will be co-hosting the 23rd Annual Law of Colorado River Conference. Mr. Harris noted that the Law of Colorado River Conference would be held on March 11-12, 2021 and would be held virtually as well.

Washington, D.C. Updates

Mr. Harris reported that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted to advance New Mexico's Representative Deb Haaland's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior to the Senate for consideration. Mr. Harris also reported that the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted to advance Michael Regan's nomination as the next U.S. EPA administrator to the Senate for consideration as well.

Mr. Harris reported that President Biden's FY-2022 budget request would be submitted to Congress in early-April.

Mr. Harris reported that Congress is expected to move forward with infrastructure legislation following the passage of the COVID relief bill.

Mr. Harris reported on key water-related legislation. Mr. Harris noted that various bills were presented to Congress, including the New River Cleanup and Restoration; Emergency Assistance for Rural Water Systems; Water and Wastewater Infrastructure on Indian Reservations; Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation likely proceeding for reauthorization; and Water Act for Infrastructure Improvements.

Next Scheduled Board Meeting

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be held on April 14, 2021 and would also be held virtually using the Zoom Webinar meeting platform.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.