

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, June 9, 2021

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held virtually on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, using the Zoom Webinar meeting platform.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

David DeJesus (MWD Alternate)	Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)	Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
John B. Hamby (IID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)	Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
Henry Kuiper (Public Member)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)
Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)	

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
James Hanks (IID Alternate)	

Others Present:

Steven Abbott	Enrique Martinez
Brian Alvarez	Kara Mathews
Justina Arce	Cary Meister
Jim Barrett	Dylan Mohamed
Robert Cheng	Jessica Neuwerth
Tommy Drennan	Jessica Rangel
JR Echard	Shana Rapoport
Tim Goble	Angela Rashid
Emily Halvorsen	Ivory Reyburn
Christopher Harris	Kelly Rodgers
Joanna Hoff	Shanti Rosset
Michael Hughes	Tom Ryan
Ned Hyde	Roberta Saligumba
Lisa Johansen	Keith Scoular
Eric Katz	Tina Shields
Larry Lai	Cherie Watte
Laura Lamdin	Meena Westford
Tom Levy	Johnsie Wilkinson
Victor Lujan	Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson 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 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 May 12, 2021, meeting minutes. Mr. Kuiper moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Madaffer. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget of \$2.413M. Mr. Madaffer moved that the budget be approved, seconded by Mr. Peterson. By roll-call vote, the budget was unanimously approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Ms. Rashid reported that as of June 7th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,561.35 feet with 8.43 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 35% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,072.12 feet with 9.37 MAF of storage, or 36% of capacity. The total system storage was 24.99 MAF, or 42% of capacity, which is 6.16 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Ms. Rashid reported that as of June 2nd, the unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year-2021 (WY-2021) is 3.37 MAF, or 31% of normal and the WY-2021 forecasted April to July inflow to Lake Powell is 1.8 MAF, or 25% of normal. For WY-2021, the observed May inflow to Lake Powell was 0.54 MAF, or 23% of normal. The June inflow forecast to Lake Powell is 0.75 MAF, or 28% of normal. To date, the WY-2021 precipitation in the Upper Colorado River Basin is 73% of normal and the current Basin snowpack is 50%.

Ms. Rashid reported that precipitation conditions in April were dry throughout the Basin. Precipitation conditions in May were drier, with a few exceptions in the Colorado mainstem, Upper Green and San Juan Basins.

Ms. Rashid reported that through May 27th, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 50,186 AF and 32,174 AF, respectively. She also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 16,859 AF, compared to 48,325 AF last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 50,769 AF.

Ms. Rashid reported on the results of the May 24-Month Study. She stated that the most probable operating tier for Lake Powell is the Mid-Elevation Release Tier for Calendar-Year 2021. The most probable release from Lake Powell for Water Year-2021 is 8.23 MAF and the most probable release in WY-2022 is 7.48 MAF. She stated that in WY-2022, Lake Mead will be operated in a shortage condition.

Ms. Rashid reported that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) hosted its first consultation for the 2022 Colorado River Annual Operating Plan (AOP) on June 3rd. She reported that the projected operational tier for Lake Powell will be the Mid-Elevation Release Tier with a most probable release of 7.48 MAF. She also added that Lake Mead is projected to be operating in a Shortage Condition, and the projected delivery to Mexico will be 1.45 MAF.

State and Local Report

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that the State's precipitation conditions continue to be dry due to a lack of rain. She stated that at the end of May, the statewide reservoir system was 67% of average, and the capacity of some of the large reservoirs in Northern California, which are very important to the State Water Project and Federal Central Valley Project, is or is at slightly less than 50% of the historical average. She added that capacity of the Oroville reservoir will be record low for the season.

Ms. Jones reported that in 2020, the statewide runoff ranked fifth driest of record and the precipitation was the thirteenth driest. She added that sustained dry conditions reduces runoff efficiency and less runoff makes it to the reservoirs. She stated that this year's runoff will most likely be ranked second or third driest on record. She reported that the runoff season is over and only 5% of the snowpack is remaining in the Northern Sierra, and the Central and Southern Sierras have already lost their snow cover.

Board member Fisher inquired about the status of Lake Oroville's outlet valve system. Ms. Jones stated that outlet valve system will probably be used in the later summer and that the system has not been operated in a while. She added that one of the concerns of running the system is with

the loss of hydropower generation capacity in the latter part of the summer when there are power shortages and issues with the grid.

Mr. Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), added that MWD has not been pumping water over the Tehachapi Mountains which has reduced the pressure on the State's electrical grid. He stated that MWD's reservoirs are 83% of capacity. He stated that MWD changed its method of delivering water to the Mills plant and is delivering water from Diamond Valley Lake which allows MWD to take as much as it can off the State Water Project system, as well as the Colorado River system.

Mr. Peterson reported that MWD's sales are forecasted to be normal to slightly above normal because of dry conditions in Southern California. He stated that MWD's deliveries are 90% of average and MWD is expected to deliver 15,000 AF to the Coachella and Desert Water Agency. He also mentioned that MWD appointed new general manager, Adel Hagekhalil from the Department of Sanitation of Los Angeles.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that the April 1st snowpack was 46% of normal. He reported precipitation conditions in the Eastern Sierra had tracked closely with the driest year of record, 2014/2015, until February when a storm slightly improved the precipitation conditions.

Mr. Pettijohn provided more information about MWD's new general manager, noting that Mr. Hagekhalil was a leader in the One Water Plan of Los Angeles and is an advocate of local resource development. He stated the Mr. Hagekhalil will be a breath of fresh air and bring a new perspective to MWD.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Status of Minute 323

Hydrology Work Group

Mr. Harris reported that the Minute 323 Hydrology Work Group has been working for several months to prepare a draft of the annual status report required by the Minute. The report will describe the current and projected Basin-wide hydrologic and precipitation conditions. Mr. Harris noted that the report will be particularly important this year, given that current conditions indicate the Lower Basin will be operating in a shortage condition in the coming year. This means that shortage reductions to Mexico will also be called for under the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan. Mr. Harris reported that the AOP for 2022 projects a delivery of 1.45 MAF to

Mexico. Mr. Harris noted that the draft report will be delivered to Mexico in June, with the goal of finalizing the report in late June or early July.

Environmental Work Group

Board Staff Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Minute 323 Environmental Work Group had met several times in recent months to finalize plans for an environmental water delivery to the Colorado River Delta in summer 2021. Water deliveries to Reach 4 of the Delta began on May 1st and are set to continue through October. Ms. Neuwerth reported that 35,000 AF of Mexican federal water deliveries would be made during this period. The water will be delivered through local canals and habitat area infrastructure to maximize the water available for habitat.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Workgroup (AMWG) met via webinar on May 19. The AMWG briefly discussed the FY22 budget which includes minor alterations to the previously adapted triennial budget. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the AMWG heard a report on the Spring Disturbance Flow held in March. No evidence was found of fish stranding due to the low flow. Additional information regarding the impacts of the flow is forthcoming.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still considering down listing humpback chub from endangered to threatened. No timeline is available for when this determination is expected. Ms. Neuwerth reported that discussions will be taking place regarding whether or not to consider stocking razorback sucker, an endangered fish, in Lake Mead. There is a self-sustaining razorback sucker population in Lake Mead that is declining.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the Technical Work Group will be meeting June 16-17.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Steering Committee for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) met via webinar on May 12-13 to review annual reporting on program accomplishments in the previous fiscal year (FY20), the status of efforts underway in the current fiscal year, and what is planned for the coming fiscal year.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that despite the pandemic, the program established over 100 acres of habitat in FY20. Total habitat established by the program is approximately 6,500 acres, 80% of the restoration required for the program. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the program has also stocked approximately 350,000 native fish since its inception in 2005. More than 300 yellow-

billed cuckoos were detected in FY20. Southwestern willow flycatchers are being detected in LCR MSCP habitat but do not appear to be nesting.

Ms. Neuwerth also reported that the program recently detected an 11-year old summer tanager, the oldest known summer tanager, at Beal Lake Conservation Area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Harris reported on a recent paper released by the Utah State University's Center for Colorado River Studies, entitled "Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers". Mr. Harris invited members of the Board, agency managers, etc., to contact him for a PDF copy of the report.

Washington, D.C. Updates

Mr. Harris reported on administrative nominations. Mr. Harris stated that The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted to advance the nominations of Ms. Radhika Fox to lead EPA's Office of Water, and Ms. Shannon Estenoz as DOI's Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Mr. Harris noted that The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee advanced the nomination of Ms. Tanya Trujillo as DOI's Assistant Secretary for Water and Science.

Mr. Harris reported that the Biden Administration began releasing details on its FY-2022 budget. Mr. Harris stated that the EPA requested \$11.2 billion, a 21% increase over the current level. Mr. Harris noted that Reclamation requested \$1,532,949,000 in federal discretionary appropriations, and \$1,379,050,000 for Water and Related Resources account.

Mr. Harris reported that \$21.4 million will be allocated towards Colorado River Activities in the Biden Administration's FY-2022 budget. Mr. Harris also stated that the FY-2022 budget will include \$2 million for Salton Sea Research Projects, \$24.57 million for Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program funding, and \$42.2 million for the Lower Colorado River Operations Program.

Mr. Harris reported on the Status of the FUTURE Drought Act. Mr. Harris stated that California Congressman Jared Huffman (D-CA), introduced H.R. 3404, the FUTURE Drought Act on May 20th. Mr. Harris noted that the FUTURE Drought Act will include \$750 million for multi-benefit water storage projects, \$260 million for desalination projects, and \$500 million for Title XVI.

Mr. Harris reported on the Proposed Legislation to Expand Reclamation's Authority to

support large-scale water recycling. Mr. Harris stated that SNWA recently provided testimony in support of the legislation to House Natural Resources Committee during a drought hearing. Mr. Harris also reported on White House Infrastructure Discussions. Mr. Harris noted that the White House offered a \$1.7 trillion proposal, and the Senate GOP counteroffered a proposal closer to \$1 trillion.

Next Scheduled Board Meeting

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be held on July 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 11:16 a.m.