

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held virtually on Wednesday, September 15, 2021, using the Zoom Webinar meeting platform.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

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

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

James Hanks (IID Alternate)	Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)	

Others Present:

Steven Abbott	Aaron Mead
Brian Alvarez	Cary Meister
Justina Arce	Dylan Mohamed
Jim Barrett	Jessica Neuwerth
Robert Cheng	Jessica Rangel
Dennis Davis	Shana Rapoport
Dan Denham	Angela Rashid
JR Echard	Kelly Rodgers
Guillermo Gonzalez	Tom Ryan
Melissa Haley	Roberta Saligumba
Christopher Harris	Keith Scoular
Alex Heide	Gary Tavetian
Joanna Hoff	Rob Thomson
Michael Hughes	Sabrina Tsui
Ned Hydeuke	Sara Tucker
Rich Juricich	Cherie Watte
Larry Lai	Virginia Wei
Laura Lamdin	Jerry Zimmerman
Enrique Martinez	

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 July 14, 2021, meeting minutes. Mr. Peterson moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Kuiper. By roll-call vote, the minutes were approved. Mr. Vigil abstained.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Mr. Juricich reported that as of September 13th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,548.25 feet with 7.46 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 31% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,067.72 feet with 9.02 MAF of storage, or 35% of capacity. The total system storage was 23.38 MAF, or 39% of capacity, which is 5.97 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Juricich reported that as of September 1st, the unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year-2021 (WY-2021) is 3.56 MAF, or 33% of normal and the WY-2021 forecasted April to July inflow to Lake Powell is 1.85 MAF, or 26% of normal. For WY-2021, the observed August inflow to Lake Powell was 0.29 MAF, or 59% of normal. The September inflow forecast to Lake Powell is 0.20 MAF, or 49% of normal. Mr. Juricich reported that overall precipitation conditions in the Upper Colorado River Basin were 82% of normal.

Mr. Juricich reported that the Basin experienced strong monsoonal activity during July and August which increased the unregulated inflow into Lake Powell by 200,000 AF. He also noted that Lake Mead benefitted from the increased monsoonal activity, stating that the July and August

intervening flows to Lake Mead were 146% and 109% of the 5-year average, respectively. He added that Arizona measured its second wettest July on record.

Mr. Juricich reported that La Nina conditions are anticipated for the 2021-2022 winter season, stating that La Nina conditions correlate with below-normal winter precipitation in the southwestern U.S.

Mr. Juricich reported on the August 24-Month Study projections for reservoir elevations for Lakes Powell and Mead, stating elevations for Lakes Powell and Mead for January 2022, sets the operational tiers for both reservoirs for the following year. He stated that Lake Powell's elevation on January 1, 2022, is projected to be 3,530.40 feet and will operate in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier for Water Year 2022 (WY-22). The Glen Canyon Dam will release 7.48 MAF for WY-22 without the potential for a mid-year adjustment in April 2022. Lake Mead's January 1, 2022, elevation is projected to be 1,065.85 feet and will operate in a Level 1 Shortage Condition for the first time. In addition, in Calendar Year 2022 (CY-22), the required shortage reduction and water savings contributions from Arizona, Nevada and Mexico will total 0.613 MAF. Mr. Juricich stated that the projected operations for Lakes Powell and Mead will be incorporated into the 2022 Colorado River Annual Operating Plan.

Mr. Juricich reported that the minimum probable elevation for Lake Mead was projected to be below the elevation of 1,030 feet in July 2023. This elevation triggers a consultation between the Secretary of the Interior and the Lower Division States to identify what potential, additional actions might be taken to protect Lake Mead from falling below the elevation of 1,020 feet. Mr. Juricich noted that formal discussions have not started, but the Lower Basin States are starting to discuss options and strategies for the next year. He explained that a work group has been established to develop options ranging from additional water conservation actions to examining environmental compliance issues and constraints. He stated that the work group plans to report back to the Lower Basin principals at the end of September.

Mr. Juricich reported that through September 12th, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 88,950 AF and 53,710 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 51,198 AF, compared to 88,950 AF last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 84,408 AF.

Mr. Juricich reported that Reclamation provided a preview of the Colorado River Simulation System (CRSS) results for the August 2021 5-Year projections, also known as the "5-Year Table", which highlights the key operation of Lakes Powell and Mead through 2026. Mr. Juricich explained that Reclamation provided a "preview" of the projections because it made significant changes to the CRSS assumptions. He stated that in the past, Reclamation developed the projections using two different input hydrology data sets – the Full Natural Flow for the period of 1906 – 2019 and the Stress Test, for the period 1988 – 2019. For the new 5-year projections,

Reclamation decided to discontinue use of the Full Natural Flow hydrology and use the Stress Test hydrology, which is more representative of drier conditions the Basin has experienced over the last few decades. The Stress Test hydrology has a long-term average of 13.3 MAF, while the Full Natural Flow has a long-term average of 14.8 MAF.

Mr. Juricich reported that Reclamation would no longer include the operations of the Upper Basin Drought Response Agreement (DROA) in its 5-Year projections in 2022 through 2026 because it will be difficult to determine the volume of emergency flows upstream of Lake Powell. Mr. Juricich reported that the updated 5-Year projections are expected to be released at the end of September.

State and Local Report

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that California has experienced an extraordinarily dry water year and it will be the second driest water year since 1977. She noted that quite a few of the larger urban areas in the State received less than 50% of average annual precipitation this year. Ms. Jones also stated that the southeastern corner of California benefitted from the summer monsoonal activity.

Ms. Jones reported on statewide reservoir conditions, noting that the largest Central Valley Project and State Water Project reservoirs storage levels are at record lows. She added that the storage in San Luis reservoir was reduced to make dam safety repairs and its elevation has never recovered and will reach its second record low point.

Ms. Jones reported on the Basin Characterization Model (BCM). She added that DWR provided USGS with funding to further develop the BCM to cover the Colorado River Basin. She explained that the BCM was used to analyze the climatic moisture deficit. Ms. Jones shared images and data of the accumulated moisture deficit in California from 2012 to 2019, noting that 2020 was the hottest on record at the time, and the state endured many wildfires. Ms. Jones stated that the BCM can be used as a diagnostic tool to assess the potential areas of high wildfire risk and it can also be used to back calculate how runoff efficiency changes as conditions stay hotter and drier. She added that for the Colorado River Basin, the dry conditions in the Upper and Lower Basin are similar to conditions in California, therefore it is expected that a lot of precipitation will be needed in the Basin before it can recover from the drought.

Mr. Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that total reservoir storage is 78% of capacity. He noted that MWD is anticipating serious issues with the western branch of MWD's service area that are dependent on State Water Project (SWP) water due to California drought issues. He also added that the Colorado aqueduct is on a 7-pump flow, noting that it would normally operate at an 8-pump flow, but MWD is taking less due to conservation efforts.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), concurred with Mr. Peterson's assessment of the issues anticipated with the low SWP allocation for portions of MWD's service area. He added that if the SWP doesn't produce a minimum of 20% of the current entitlements, several sections of MWD's service area will have a difficult year meeting demands.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Draft California Guiding Principles for the Post 2026 Period

Mr. Harris provided an update on the draft California guiding principles for the Post 2026 process. Board staff received comment letters from the Quechan and Colorado River Indian Tribes associated with the Board's draft guiding principles. The letters were generally supportive of principles promoting water supply management and flexibility options, and supportive of Lower Colorado River ecological restoration processes. Mr. Harris described how staff were working on response letters to each Tribal Council that acknowledges Tribal interest in a more formal process for engaging with the Board.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Implementation

Mr. Juricich provided an update on the implementation of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program including a preview of the upcoming Salinity Forum Work Group meeting scheduled for September 20-21 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Topics covered included updates on the Paradox Valley Unit salinity control project, preparation of the 2023 Triennial Review of Salinity Control Standards, and updates for federal agency programs, studies, and funding. A graphic was presented that shows recent flow and salt load in the Dolores River in Paradox Valley. Mr. Juricich described that the low flows in the River during the summer resulted in an upwelling of highly saline brine water into the River. Monsoon rains washed this saline water downstream contributing to the salt load in the Colorado River.

Status of Minute No. 323 Implementation

Board Staff Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Environmental Work Group for Minute 323 met via webinar on August 25th. Ms. Neuwerth noted that under Minute 323, 210,000 acre-feet of water is allocated for environmental purposes, to be provided in equal part by the U.S. Federal government, Mexican Federal government, and NGOs. The environmental work group designed and implemented delivery of 35,000 acre-feet of U.S. Federal water to the Colorado River Delta in summer 2021. The water is being delivered through local canals and infrastructure to Reach 4

of the Delta, which has a large number of habitat restoration sites. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the work group will be evaluating the effects of this water delivery over the coming months and planning for water deliveries in 2022. In response to a question, Ms. Neuwerth noted that the habitats in the Delta are supplied with water on an ongoing basis through NGO water deliveries under the Minute.

Mr. Harris reported that Ms. Maria-Elena Giner was recently appointed as Commissioner for the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission. Mr. Harris noted that Ms. Giner has significant experience in water issues along the U.S. Mexico border. Mr. Harris also reported that the Commissioner for the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission had recently stepped down to join CONAQUA and that a new Commissioner had not yet been nominated.

Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Workgroup (AMWG) held a two-day meeting in August. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the meeting included a panel during which federal agencies discussed current challenges. The AMWG also received a report on the status of fish in the Grand Canyon. Unusually low numbers of juvenile humpback chub have been found in the Little Colorado River in recent years, triggering a provision of the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP). More robust modeling information on humpback chub will be provided at the program's Annual Reporting Meeting in January.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the group is considering potential impacts to resources if a fall high flow experiment (HFE) were to be conducted.

Finally, Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Technical Work Group will be meeting October 13th and 14th.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington, D.C. Updates

Mr. Harris reported on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Mr. Harris indicated that the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its FY-2022 Energy and Water bill. Mr. Harris also reported that Congress will need to pass a continuing resolution (CR) that would fund agencies at current levels until at least late-November.

Mr. Harris reported on the White House infrastructure negotiations. Mr. Harris stated that Congress is still grappling with passing both a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill and a

proposed \$3.5 trillion partisan budget reconciliation bill. Mr. Harris also noted that House progressives will not support the bipartisan funding infrastructure until they are assured that the Senate will back the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation effort.

Mr. Harris reported on the Waters of the United States Rule. Mr. Harris stated that the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have stopped using the prior administration's controversial definition of which streams and wetlands are protected under the Clean Water Act; and, in the interim, the EPA will rely on regulations and guidance used prior to 2015 to determine which waterways are now protected.

Next Scheduled Board Meeting

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be held on October 13, 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 11:02 a.m.