

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, June 15, 2022

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, June 15, 2022, at the Sheraton Ontario Airport Hotel, 429 North Vineyard Avenue, Ontario, California 91764.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)
John B. Hamby (IID)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)
Glen D. Peterson (MWD)

David R. Pettijohn, Vice Chairman (LADWP)
Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)
James Hanks (IID Alternate)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)

Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)
Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)
Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)

Others Present:

Steve Abbott
Dee Bradshaw
Robert Cheng
Dennis Davis
Dan Denham
Tommy Drennam
Chris Harris
Bill Hasencamp
Larry Lai
Laura Lamdin
Tom Levy
Dwight Lomayesva

Aaron Mead
Jessica Neuwerth
Robert Page
David Rheinheimer
Kelly Rodgers
Tom Ryan
Alexi Schnell
Tina Shields
Gary Tavetian
Petya Vasileva
Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Pettijohn 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

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

ADMINISTRATION

Vice Chairman Pettijohn asked for a motion to approve the April 13, 2022, Board meeting minutes. Mr. Fisher moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Hamby. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 budget. Mr. Peterson moved that the budget be approved, seconded by Ms. Jones. By roll-call vote, the budget was unanimously approved.

Consideration of Application for Water Subcontract from the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project (Action)

Mr. Harris summarized a proposed Board Resolution 2022-2 that recommends a subcontract for the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project (Project) water in San Bernadino County, California be offered to the applicant and directs the executive director to forward the application to Reclamation. Mr. Chad Hill is requesting a new contract for 1.0 acre-feet of future use. If the Board recommends approval, a new subcontract would be developed by Reclamation for the owner at a future point in time.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn asked for a motion to approve the resolution on the application for the Lower Colorado River Water Supply Project. Mr. Fisher moved that the resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Hamby. By roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Mr. Harris reported that as of June 13th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,536.20 feet with 6.64 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 27% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,045.57 feet with 7.37 MAF of storage, or 28% of capacity. The total system storage was 20.71 MAF, or 34% of capacity, which is 4.31 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Harris reported that as of June 3rd, for Water Year-2022 (WY-2022), the observed May inflow to Lake Powell was 1.38 MAF, or 67% of normal. The June inflow forecast to Lake Powell is 1.20 MAF, or 49% of normal. The forecasted unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for WY-2022 is 5.61 MAF, or 58% of normal and the WY-2022 forecasted April to July inflow to Lake Powell is 3.5 MAF, or 55% of normal. Mr. Harris reported that overall precipitation conditions in the Upper Colorado River Basin were 93% of normal and the current Basin snowpack is 95% of normal. Mr. Harris reported that the snow accumulation season for the Basin has concluded, and the existing snowpack is melting.

Mr. Harris reported that through the end of May, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 45,169 AF and 38,662 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 1,403 AF, compared to 16,963 AF this time last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 65,044 AF, through June 7th.

2023 Colorado Annual Operating Plan, First Consultation

Mr. Harris reported that the first consultation for the 2023 AOP was held on June 1st via webinar and was hosted by the Upper Colorado Basin region. He added that the draft AOP is available on the Upper Colorado Basin region and Reclamation websites. He stated that based on the current water supply projections from the May 24-Month study, a 7.581 MAF release is projected from Glen Canyon Dam. He stated that Lake Mead will be operating in a shortage condition, noting that the shortage condition will be Tier 1 given the operational neutrality benefit of the release reduction from Glen Canyon Dam. The projected delivery to Mexico is based upon the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan and shortage reductions of Minute 319. He added that Mexico is considering creating additional conservation and storage in the Mexican water reserves.

Mr. Harris reported that the second consultation meeting will be held in July and the third meeting will be held in August or early September. He added that the results of the August 24-

Month Study report are needed to finalize the AOP. Board member Peterson requested more information about the status of the Mexican water reserve. Mr. Harris stated that the information would be presented at the next CRB meeting.

State and Local Report

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that the State's precipitation season has concluded. She stated that the statewide reservoir storage is about 70% of average. She stated that the winter precipitation conditions were very dry, adding that there is a about a 60% chance of a third La Nina season, which is rare.

Ms. Jones reported that the State Water Project and Federal Central Valley Project (CVP) are operating under a temporary emergency change order to allow DWR to hold more water back in upstream reservoirs, noting that the existing temporary emergency change will limit CVP and SWP exports collectively to 1,500 cfs in the Delta, with 600 cfs attributed to the SWP. She added that the order will conclude in the fall and DWR will analyze the hydrology and modeling results to determine if additional actions will be needed.

Ms. Jones reported that for the first time ever the CVP is imposing health and safety restrictions on its M&I customers, noting that the agricultural contractors received a zero percent allocation and the settlement contractors in the Sacramento Valley received an 18% allocation.

Board member Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) reported that as of June 1st, MWD's total system storage is 70% of capacity and Colorado River Aqueduct is on an 8-pump flow through September. The diversion target is 1.17 MAF and as of June 13th, 340,000 AF has been diverted. He stated that water deliveries are expected to decline in June due to restrictions set in MWD's Emergency Water Shortage Declaration. He stated that the storage target for the Desert Water Agency is 15,000 AF.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Lower Colorado River Basin States Near-Term Drought Response Actions

Mr. Harris reported on the drought response actions that have been taken in Water Year-2022. He stated that the Upper Basin Drought Response Operations plan was approved in May, which results in 500,000 AF being shifted from Flaming Gorge reservoir down to Lake Powell over the period from May 2022 to the end of April 2023. He stated that concurrently with that action,

Reclamation worked with the Lower Basin States to reach an agreement to reduce the annual release for 2022 from Glen Canyon Dam from 7.48 MAF to 7 MAF. He stated that this results in another 480,000 AF of storage in Lake Powell. The combined actions create almost 1 MAF of water in Lake Powell.

Mr. Harris explained that the Reclamation's rationale for implementing these actions is to protect Glen Canyon Dam's ability to release water effectively if the water level drops below 3,490 feet and to protect its power generation ability. He added that releasing water through the dam's river outlet work may cause harm to the infrastructure, adding the Reclamation has deferred maintenance on the outlet works for decades. He stated that Reclamation is currently working on upgrading the outlet works by the end of 2024.

Mr. Harris stated that in FY-2022, 613,000 AF of water will be conserved through the actions developed under the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the current Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) from the Lower Basin States, and the Minute 323 and Binational Water Scarcity Contingency plan. He stated that there has been about 150,000 AF of water generated from 500-Plus plan activities in WY-2022. He added that the cumulative water created between 2021 and 2022 is close to 250,000 AF.

Mr. Harris stated that Reclamation is profoundly concerned about protecting critical elevations in Lakes Powell and Mead. He stated that Reclamation preformed a series of preliminary modeling that examined protecting Lake Powell at elevation 3,500 feet and Lake Mead at 1,000 feet and Lake Powell at elevation 3,525 feet and Lake Mead at 1,020 feet, as well as the necessary protection volumes. He added that Reclamation has begun discussion among the Basin States, Mexico, NGOs and Reclamation plans to reach out to the Tribes.

Mr. Harris discussed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing. He stated that Ms. Camille Touton, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, stated that the Department of Interior and Reclamation plan to identify a target protection volume by mid-August and it will be implemented by 2023. Ms. Touton stated that if a consensus-based plan is not available, Interior will be ready to take action. Mr. Harris reported that the federal team and the Basin States have been meeting over the past two to three weeks. He added that he has briefed the governor's drought taskforce and CNRA and DWR leadership on the current status of the Basin drought response actions.

Board member Fisher remarked that the federal response to this crisis is to implement curtailment if necessary to preserve the elevations in Lakes Powell and Mead. He stated at an elevation of 895 feet, Hoover Dam will not be able to release water. Mr. Fisher stated that he is

in favor of the California agencies working together to contribute to the consensus-based plan and present it to the federal team. He cautioned that IID and Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) may not sign on to the plan because they will take the brunt of additional water conservation actions. He also added that Reclamation and Interior are considering curtailment of ICS withdrawal from Lake Mead, which is another issue that would impact the California agencies. He stated that California needs to work to develop the best possible plan to deliver to the federal team.

Mr. Harris stated that drought conditions across the American west are grim. He concurred with Mr. Fisher and stated that California needs to work with partners across the Basin at the federal and state level, and with Mexico and try to develop a plan over the next 40 to 50 days.

Board member Peterson expressed concern about California not having representation at the hearing. Mr. Harris concurred and stated that some of the testimony presented by Senator Kelly from Arizona regarding Arizona carrying the load in conservation contributions was factually inaccurate. He stated that California has contributed to conservation efforts with the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) and the 2007 Guidelines which created water for Lake Mead and kept Arizona out of Tier 1 shortage for close to six or seven years.

Board member Jones remarked that drought issues on in the Colorado River Basin impact California and given the poor hydrology on the SWP, California is subject to year-to-year hydrology challenges. She added that the State needs a hydrologic year like 2017 to recover the State's reservoir storage. She noted that it cannot be expected that California will have a good water year next year and some of the same actions that are being taken this year might be needed again next year.

Board member Fisher remarked that during the hearing, Pat O'Toole from the Family Farm Alliance attributed the reduction in runoff in the Upper Basin largely to unmanaged forest. He stated tree saplings are filling in the gaps between old trees increasing water demand. He added that last year the snowpack was close to 80% of average but the runoff was about 30% of average, noting that this year the snowpack is close to normal, but the runoff has ranged between 50% and 70%. Mr. Harris stated that the lack of forest management and or fire suppression has shifted evapotranspiration (ET) rates across some of the national forests. He added that aridification and increasing temperatures due to climate change have also increased ET rates.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Implementation

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum and Work Group Meetings

Mr. Harris provided an update on the May Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum and Work Group meetings held in Moab, Utah on May 9-12. In addition to the working meetings, the week included tours of the Paradox Valley Unit salinity control project located in Montrose County, Colorado, Atlas uranium tailings removal project located outside of Moab, and the Intrepid Potash facilities located outside of Moab. Key topics under discussion during the working meetings included updates from Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Survey, and Natural Resources Conservation Service on program funding, research, and implementation. The Forum and Work Group also discussed salinity control scenarios and data to be used to develop the 2023 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System.

Mr. Harris stated that Reclamation is restarting brine injection at the Paradox Valley Unit for at least some level going forward that will prevent 5,500 tons of salt per month from entering the Dolores River. During the test PVU will be operated at 66% of the most recent operating capacity. The Forum expressed to Reclamation during meeting the interest in pursuing long-term salinity control at PVU.

Mr. Harris stated that the Work Group and Forum members toured the Intrepid Potash facilities to learn more about the operations and possibilities to make use of the Paradox Valley salt. Intrepid Potash has expressed some interest in harvesting salt generated at PVU. Intrepid Potash creates commercial products including agricultural fertilizers, animal feed ingredients, and various salt products.

Mr. Harris described that the Work Group and Forum members toured the Atlas Uranium Mine Tailings clean-up site outside of Moab, Utah. Significant progress is being made on the clean-up of the site. Seventy-eight percent of the mill tailings have been removed from the site (12.4 million tons). Waste is transported by rail to an engineered waste disposal site located near Crescent Junction, Utah.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management (GCDAMP) program is struggling with the same issues we are basin-wide, having less water to work with. One particular problem is that as the water surface at Lake Powell gets closer to the intakes, the nonnative, invasive fish in Lake Powell are also getting closer to the intakes. If some of the nonnative fish survive and reproduce below the dam, they could endanger native fish populations in stretches of the river where endangered natives are currently doing well.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the GCDAMP received direction to evaluate solutions that could prevent nonnative fish from passing through the dam or to manage nonnative fish populations if they do become established.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the GCDAMP is conducting a “bug flow” experiment that provides a low steady flow release from Glen Canyon Dam on the weekends that is intended to help the food base for native fish. A group has been meeting twice a month to assess potential impacts of implementing the experiment.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) met last month from May 11th to 12th. The annual meeting included a review of accomplishments from the previous year, work in progress this year, and future planning. Ms. Neuwerth reported that the program is meeting approximately 80 percent of its habitat goal at the moment and is ahead of schedule in putting acreage in the ground.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that yellow-billed cuckoos are doing well on LCR MSCP habitats, although southwestern willow fly-catchers have still not been detected breeding in LCR MSCP habitats. Ms. Neuwerth also reported that the oldest known summer tanager has been captured at a conservation area and released again by the program.

Mr. Harris added that John Swett, Reclamation’s program manager for the LCR MSCP is retiring and that Laura Vecerina the deputy program manager, retired six months ago. These are big changes for the program.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Harris reported that a lengthy write-up of Washington, DC updates is available in the June Monthly Report. Ms. Jones reported that DWR issued a letter congratulating the new director of the National Weather Service. The letter also expressed the need to increase funding for seasonal to sub-seasonal forecasting (S2S). She added that a Basin States letter seeking increased funding for S2S forecasting would also be very helpful.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Vice Chairman Pettijohn adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.