

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, September 13, 2023

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at the PVID Board Room, 180 W 14th Ave, Blythe, CA, 92225.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)	Jack Seiler (PVID)
	David Vigil (DFW Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)	Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)
Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)	Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)

Others Present:

Steven Abbott	James Morgutia
Brian Alvarez	Michael Mullion
Jessica Arm	Yuanyuan Myint
Jamie Asbury	Jessica Neuwerth
Nick Bahr	Shana Rapoport
Robert Cheng	David Rheinheimer
Dennis Davis	Brad Robinson
JR Echard	Alex Rodriguez
Sue Fisher	Jason Rollo
Anna Garcia	Eric Ruckdaschel
Geoff Halbrook	Alexi Schnell
Christopher Harris	Areeba Syed
Brian Henry	Gary Tavetian
Ned Hyduke	Charles Vandyke
Larry Lai	Petya Vasileva
Travis Moore	Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

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

WELCOME FROM PALO VERDE IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Chairman Hamby introduced Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) new General Manager, Jamie Asbury. Member Fisher welcomed everyone and thanked Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) staff for organizing the tour.

ADMINISTRATION

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the August 9, 2023, Board meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Madaffer moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Member Nelson. By roll-call vote, the minutes were approved.

LOCAL AND STATE WATER SUPPLY AND OPERATIONS REPORTS

Member Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) reported the State experienced a great Water Year 2023 (WY-2023), noting that September is the last month of Water Year-2023. To date, statewide precipitation is 143% of average. She reported that statewide reservoir storage is 130% of average.

Member Jones reported that there will start to be a shift in the climate system as we transition from fall to winter. She added that as we approach the end of the year, we will see how those patterns start to shift to more of a zonal flow, for example, across the Pacific. She explained that the media has erroneously hyped future flooding events in California based on two or three previous El Nino years. She added that statistically speaking, the only phase of ENSO that has a predictive capability is a La Niña in Southern California. She stated that at this time we cannot say whether the winter season will be wet or dry, adding that if the winter season is dry the state has good reservoir conditions.

Member Jones reported that statewide WY-2023 precipitation was above average (between 200% and 300% of average) in several regions. She added that reservoir conditions improved greatly due to the above average precipitation, with exception to Trinity reservoir, because it is located in a region that was missed by the storm tracks.

Member Jones reported on Tropical Storm Hilary that occurred on August 20th. She noted that the Death Valley region received more than 2 inches from the storm event, which is more than it receives annually.

Mr. Larry Lai, representing the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that as of September 1st, MWD reservoir storage is 79% of capacity and the Colorado River aqueduct will be on a two-pump flow through October and a four-pump flow through the end of the year. He stated that the 2023 diversion target is projected to be 658,000 acre-feet (AF) and as of September 11th, MWD has diverted 475,081 AF. He reported that through July 2023, MWD's deliveries, which include immediate storage or replenishment to its member agencies are 81% of average. The 2023 delivery target for Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District is 245,000 AF. He added that there has been a reduction in projected deliveries to Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District due to the impact from Tropical Storm Hilary, and damage to the replenishment facility. He reported that that deliveries will be back online by the end of October.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER SUPPLY AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Executive Director Harris reported that as of September 11th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,573.75 feet with 8.80 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 38% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,066.20 feet with 8.90 MAF of storage, or 33% of capacity. The total system storage was 25.58 MAF, or 44% of capacity, which is 5.82 MAF more than system storage at this time last year. He added that the balancing release from Glen Canyon Dam will be 8.55 MAF for Calendar Year-2023.

Executive Director Harris added that due to the wet winter, the system gained an additional 280,000 AF between Glen Canyon dam and the Northerly International Boundary, which normally would have a loss of 400,000 AF. He stated that uses in the Lower Basin have been the lowest, historically, adding that uses are normally 7.5 MAF in the Lower Basin States and 1.5 MAF for Mexico, totaling 9 MAF. Executive Director Harris stated that this year, Reclamation is projecting a consumptive use for the Lower Basin States of 5.93 MAF and 1.4 MAF for Mexico. He stated that based upon the hydrology, the balancing release, and significant reductions in water use by the three Lower Basin States and Mexico, close to 1.5 MAF of storage has been added to Lake Mead.

Executive Director Harris reported that as of September 1st, for WY-2023, the forecasted unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 13.60 MAF, or 142% of normal, noting that normally it is 9 MAF. He reported that the observed April to July inflow into Lake Powell is 10.62 MAF, or 166% of normal. Executive Director Harris stated that observed inflow into Lake Powell for August was 82% of normal and the September inflow forecast was 116% of normal. He stated that there was a good monsoon season in the Four Corners region, particularly in Arizona. Executive Director Harris stated the precipitation to date is 155% of normal.

Executive Director Harris reported on precipitation conditions during July and August. He stated that precipitation conditions in August were above average in the Upper Basin, due to summer storm activity. Executive Director Harris stated that there was also significant monsoonal activity, particularly in the region of the Mogollon Rim and the Grand Canyon region in northern Arizona and then in scattered portions along the lower Colorado River.

Executive Director Harris reported on the August 24-Month Study. He stated that the 24-Month Study, is issued by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and is used to set the operating tier determinations for Water Year-2024 for Lakes Powell and Mead. He stated that Lake Powell's projected elevation has significantly improved from a year ago, when the Basin was desperately trying to keep Lake Powell above elevation 3,500 feet and minimum power pool of 3,490 feet. Executive Director Harris added Lake Powell's 24-Month Study projections show that the minimum probable dips down below elevation 3,575 feet, while that most of the traces, ninety percent of the traces are above this elevation. He added that the Basin did a good job in 2021 and 2022 taking various emergency actions to bolster the storage in Lake Powell, and the good hydrology also helped. Executive Director Harris stated that Lake Powell's elevation is projected to have a stable position over the next two to three years.

Executive Director Harris reported that Lake Mead elevation is benefiting from a modest balancing release from Glen Canyon Dam. He stated that historically, this is one of the smallest balancing releases that has ever been done. Executive Director Harris recounted that in April, a 9.5 MAF balancing release was anticipated, however, conservation in the Lower Basin propped up Lake Mead's elevation resulting in less water being released to balance the reservoirs. He stated that the Lower Basin States are contributing to the Lower Basin plan that was put forth in May to conserve up to 3 MAF between now and 2026. Executive Director Harris stated that Lake Mead's end of December 2024 projected elevation for all traces are within the Level 1 shortage tier. Deputy Director Neuwerth commented that that the 24-Month Study modeling includes some of the activities in the Lower Basin plan, resulting in improved projections for Lake Mead's elevation.

Chairman Hamby commented that Reclamation stated that the recent hydrology from Tropical Storm Hilary helped reduced Lower Basin demands and that Reclamation would be withholding about 300,000 AF in Lake Powell from the balancing release. Executive Director Harris concurred and noted that Lake Mead's storage is projected to increase by 1.5 MAF by the end of the CY-2023, adding that is the entire Mexican treaty burden.

Executive Director Harris reported that through the end of August, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 73,726 AF and 53,008 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 23,164 AF, compared to 2,395 AF at this time last year. Executive Director Harris noted that the excess flows to Mexico were due to local storm events. He added that when there are precipitation events and existing water orders that have already been released from Lake Mead, the water ends up going to Mexico. Executive Director Harris stated the saline drainage bypass flows to the Cienga de Santa Clara are 85,927 AF. He explained that there has been additional saline drainage flows from the both the Wellton-Mohawk Division and the Yuma Division that have been sent down south through the bypass drain. Executive Director Harris stated that he is uncertain why Reclamation is operating the bypass in this manner and stated that CRB staff will investigate further and provide an update.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM STAFF REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) is in the middle of their triennial review of water quality standards. The Forum has completed a draft document for this process that is currently available for public comment. Comments are due September 15, 2023, to Don Barnett.

Staff Member Rapoport added that the Forum's Work Group has not proposed any changes to the current salinity standards for the Colorado River.

Staff Member Rapoport shared that Board staff has shared this document with our agencies and offered assistance to anyone who may need help accessing the document.

Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Staff Member Rapoport reported that Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) met August 16 – 17 in Flagstaff, AZ.

The AMWG received a report from Reclamation regarding cavitation in the outlets Glen Canyon Dam. Reclamation reported that the cavitation likely occurred during the April High Flow Experiment (HFE). The low reservoir elevation during that experiment was about 3,525. Reclamation reported that repair plans were already underway to replace the coating in the outlet works. The cavitation will be addressed during those repairs. Repairs will take approximately two months for each outlet work, about eight months total.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the AMWG completed a process for reviewing a budget for both the Grand Canyon Monitoring Research Center and for Reclamation for their participation in Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program. The AMWG has forwarded the proposed budget to the Secretary of the Interior for consideration.

Staff Member Rapoport reported on ongoing efforts to try and keep at bay the nonnative species that are coming through Glen Canyon Dam, particularly smallmouth bass, and prevent them from establishing populations below the dam. Staff Member Rapoport reported that there have been small mouth bass sightings, particularly in the slough, which is one of the backwater areas. The National Park Service is carrying out extensive monitoring and removal efforts.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that Reclamation has completed a plan to potentially hydrologically modify the 12-mile slough. The slough is one of the breeding grounds for warm water fish as it gets warmer due to shallower depth and less circulation than the main channel. Reclamation has developed plans to potentially improve the flow in that area. The plan has been submitted to the National Park Service for evaluation. Staff Member Rapoport reported that the current estimate for potential implementation of modification of the slough is three years.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that Reclamation has extended the timeline for potential installation of either a net or curtain above Glen Canyon Dam to act a deterrent to fish passage. Reclamation has now estimated that it will take approximately five years to have a fish passage barrier in place.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the AMWG approved a plan to modify the sediment accounting window in the HFE protocol. Ms. Rapoport added that HFEs are designed to push sediment downstream and to rebuild beaches in Glen Canyon and Grand Canyon. The current protocol includes two different accounting windows for those experiments, a six-month accounting window to determine if an experiment can be held in the fall and another six-month accounting window to determine if a spring HFE is likely to be successful. The proposal from the AMWG would create an annual accounting window instead of six-month accounting windows. The proposal has been generally well supported by representatives to the AMWG and is likely to

be included in the upcoming SEIS that Reclamation will be issuing to modify other aspects of the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP).

MEMBER AGENCY AND PUBLIC MEMBER REPORTS

San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that SDCWA recently earned the 2023 Utility Innovation Award. He stated that SDCWA hosted drought landscape contests for residents to showcase how they conserve water for landscape. Vice Chairman Madaffer showed pictures of two residential turf replacement projects Residents can take advantage of free resources offered by SDCWA such as landscape workshops and Water Smart Landscape Makeover Program. He stated that SDCWA continued working with MWD to provide water smart tools, including rebate, for the public. Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that SDCWA has the lowest water usage per capita of 50 gallons per day in southern California.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that Mr. Dan Denham was appointed as General Manager at SDCWA in August 2023. Vice Chairman Madaffer also noted that SDCWA was planning an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary for Qualification Settlement Agreement (QSA) in November 2023.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

Member Vigil reported on dove hunting and stated that CDFW had a successful dove opener. Member Vigil also reported on upcoming hunting events and stated that apprentice pheasant hunts will take place in Imperial and Riverside Counties in the upcoming months.

Imperial Irrigation District (IID)

Chairman Hamby stated that tropical storm Hilary did not cause major problems in IID, but that the post-Hilary storm did. Chairman Hamby stated that about one quarter mile of the East Highline Canal, which serves about forty percent of the Imperial Valley's acreage, filled with silt. He further noted that there was significant damage to many of the lateral canals off the East Highline Canal, noting in particular damage to infrastructure around the headings of laterals O, P, Q, R, and S. Chairman Hamby stated that most of the cleanup work was finished in about two days and that some more work is ongoing.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Mr. Larry Lai, staff engineer from MWD, provided an update on behalf of MWD. Mr. Lai first noted MWD's efforts to reduce their carbon footprint as they transition to a zero emission fleet, showcasing two zero emission heavy duty trucks.

Mr. Lai then noted that MWD and member agencies worked together earlier in the month to manage a nitrification event in their distribution system. He described some of the efforts related to this event.

Mr. Lai reported on workforce development and outreach and tours. He highlighted participants from the California African American Water Education Foundation and the Inland Empire Works Pre-Apprentice Program, noting that they joined MWD staff on facility tours and had discussions on water supply and infrastructure reliability. Mr. Lai noted that these discussions were an attempt to raise awareness among students, young professionals, and elected officials about water agencies and career opportunities in the water industry.

Mr. Lai stated that MWD was honored for promoting ongoing water conservation and preservation through a Water Supplier Member of the Year Award from the Alliance for Water Efficiency.

Mr. Lai finally stated that MWD distributed a new water conservation commercial to local television stations, cable networks, and streaming services. He noted that the commercial was produced in-house by MWD staff, saving an estimated \$450,000 in production costs.

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)

Member Nelson reported on a video which showcased the effects of Tropical Storm Hilary. Mr. Nelson stated that significant damage was endured including loss of panels and damage to siphons. He noted that the old canal, used for storage with San Diego, was breached, and that some canal armoring was washed out. Member Nelson stated that the armory on the high sides was washed out; however, CVWD was fortunate with their main Canal.

Member Nelson noted that CVWD lost their delivery capabilities at Whitewater, CA, necessitating about eight weeks of repairs. He said CVWD worked with MWD to re-establish the Whitewater Channel to send water to nearby spreading-basins to store some of the 245,000 AF that MWD would like to put in [to groundwater].

Member Nelson reported on the I-10 freeway. He noted that it was closed for several days, Eastbound. Member Nelson reported on Indian Wells. He stated that a drop structure that was holding water was washed out, pushing much more sediment through Indian Wells. Member Nelson stated that 22,000 CFS was coming down the channel.

Member Nelson reported that several homes in Cathedral City were flooded. Member Nelson said that elderly communities needed assistance due to the storm.

Member Nelson reported that the storm also shut down the railroad for several days. He also noted that CVWD is the flood control district in the impacted areas, and that their [flood control] facilities generally functioned as intended.

Discussion took place regarding the damage from Hilary.

Member Nelson stated that the storm after Hilary caused greater damage to agriculture. He noted that several agricultural fields were wiped out and that emergency responses were required to address some agricultural water delivery structures.

Member Fisher asked a question regarding the Governor's Declaration to fund damaged infrastructure. Member Nelson stated that CVWD declared an emergency to access Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. Member Nelson stated that the CVWD general manager immediately declared an emergency to be able to sign cooperative agreements such as that with MWD and that they will be looking for funding and reimbursements through those types of agreements.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Basin States Activities

Executive Director Harris reported that the Basin states have been working to respond to Reclamation's June notice of intent to initiate scoping on the development of post-2026 operating guidelines for Lakes Powell and Mead. Comments were due in August, and Executive Director Harris noted that comment letters were available on Reclamation's Post-2026 website. Executive Director Harris reported that the comment letters addressed topics such as addressing climate change, changing hydrologic conditions, resolving the Lower Basin structural deficit, and ensuring broader stakeholder participation in the development of operational alternatives. He reported that California was a signatory to a Seven Basin States comment letter and a Lower Basin comment letter. Executive Director Harris reported that the Seven States letter was brief

and reiterated that States' intention to work collaboratively to develop an alternative for consideration in the post-2026 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Executive Director Harris reported that Reclamation aims to have a draft EIS complete by December 2024. To meet this goal, proposed alternatives will need to be submitted in March to be analyzed and compared against other potential alternatives. Executive Director Harris reminded the Board that developing the 2007 Guidelines required more than three years, while the Drought Contingency Plan took four and a half years to develop.

Executive Director Harris reported that an updated draft of the Supplemental EIS for the 2007 Guidelines, covering the period through 2026, was expected to be released sometime in October or November. The Lower Basin Plan submitted to Reclamation in May is now included as the preferred alternative. Initial modeling indicates that the Lower Basin Plan stabilizes the reservoir system and protects critical elevations in Lakes Powell and Mead. Executive Director Harris noted that the Basin States would be challenged over coming months with reviewing and implementing the draft SEIS, while simultaneously developing the post-2026 Guidelines.

2024 Colorado River Annual Operating Plan

Executive Director Harris reported on the status of the 2024 Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River Reservoirs (AOP). He stated that although the Basin has experienced good hydrology and the benefits of balancing releases for both Lakes Powell and Mead, next year the projections indicate the most probable release of 7.48 MAF release from Glen Canyon Dam. He explained that without a 9 MAF release, the structural deficit will increase, which means the Lower Basin needs to continue to reduce its uses. Executive Director Harris stated that the Lower Basin Plan includes the expectation that the Lower Basin will receive a smaller Glen Canyon Dam release in 2024, ensuring that additional storage is not mined out of Lake Powell or Lake Mead. He stated that this means that the Lower Basin will need to stay vigilant in implementing projected water conservation activities for 2024.

Executive Director Harris reported that the projected operations for Lake Mead is a Level one Shortage condition. He stated that there will be reductions in deliveries to Arizona and Nevada, as well as Mexico, in compliance with Minute No. 323. Executive Director Harris explained that based on the projected uses for calendar year 2024, average annual inflows and losses to the system from Lake Mead downstream to Mexico, Lake Mead could experience a deficit of about 400,000 AF. He reported that the third consultation meeting for (AOP) is scheduled for October 25th.

Washington D.C. Updates

Executive Director Harris reported that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers continue to work on the rule making process to update and amend the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Conforming Rule.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Hamby reported that the first meeting of the Federal-States-Tribes workgroup was held in Phoenix in August. The meetings will be held bimonthly and in coordination with major announcements, with the goal of robustly engaging tribes in the post-2026 process. Approximately 15 tribes participated in the inaugural meeting.

Chairman Hamby reported that he had recently met with Congressman Ruiz, who represents many of California's Colorado River water districts. Chairman Hamby reported that the Congressman has been actively engaged on Colorado River issues. Vice Chairman Madaffer suggested also initiating conversations with Congressmen Mike Levin and Darrell Issa.

Finally, Chairman Hamby reported that California had signed the Lower Basin and Seven States scoping letters for the post-2026 Guidelines.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board entered Executive Session at 1:05 p.m.

Pursuant to provisions of Article 9, commencing with Section 11120, of Chapter 1 of Part 1, Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code and Sections 12516 and 12519 of the Water Code, an Executive Session was held to discuss matters concerning interstate negotiations with representatives from other states or the federal government.

REGULAR SESSION

The Board resumed the regular session at 1:51 p.m. No action was taken.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Hamby announced that the next Board meeting will be in El Centro, CA on October 11th. In addition to the meeting, there will be a QSA 20th anniversary celebration in the

evening of October 10th and a dedication for the Lloyd Allen Water Conservation Operational Reservoir the morning of October 11th.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 1:52 p.m.