

MINUTES OF MEETING
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, March 11, 2026

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at Orion Room of Classic Club, 75200 Classic Club Blvd, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
Dana Fisher, Jr (PVID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Thomas Gibson (DWR Designee)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)	Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Christopher Harris
Jim Barrett	Jeanine Jones
Dennis Davis	Laura Landin
JR Echard	Travis Moore
Andrew Fisher	Yuanyuan Myint
Susan Fisher	Jessica Newerth
Rosalyn Fleming	David Rheiheimer
Steve Grasha	Alexi Schnell
Bill Hasencamp	Joseph Vanderhorst

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.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.

RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF JEANINE JONES

Consideration and approval of Board Resolution honoring Ms. Jeanine Jones for her service as Colorado River Board member

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that Ms. Jeanine Jones had been on the Board since the late 1990s and welcomed everyone to give comments.

Member Pettijohn stated that Ms. Jones is brilliant, open-minded, and very knowledgeable about hydrology. He also mentioned that he shares interest with Ms. Jones about rock.

Member Cordero thanked Ms. Jones and stated she had learned a lot from Mr. Jones.

Member Nelson stated that he always appreciated Ms. Jones' extensive knowledge about geology, hydrology, and forecasting.

Member Fisher thanked Ms. Jones and stated that Ms. Jones had broad knowledge of hydrology and weather modification.

Member Gibson thanked Ms. Jones's services to the Board and the Department of Water Resources. Member Gibson appreciated Ms. Jones' knowledge about Colorado River.

Member Joaquin thanked Ms. Jones's services to the Board.

Mr. Chris Harris, prior Executive Director of the Board, stated he met Mr. Jones in early 90s when he was working for the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Mr. Harris concurred other comments about Ms. Jones's knowledge of the Colorado River.

Member Dockstader appreciated Mr. Jones.

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the Resolution. Member Pettijohn moved to approve the Resolution, seconded by Member Cordero. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

Ms. Jones thanked everyone for the kind words. She stated that she would miss the people and enjoyed the intricacies of the Colorado River and all the field trips to the Colorado River. Mr. Jones remembered the long nights at the State Capitol for the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA).

Chairman Hamby invited all Board members to take a photo with Ms. Jones.

REPORTS

Water Supply and Operations Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that poor snowpack continues to persist across the Colorado River Basin. She stated that Upper Basin precipitation was 90% of normal and snowpack is 68% of normal. The forecasted inflow to Lake Powell was 52% of normal, which was the approximate inflow for Lake Powell last year. She stated that two consecutive years of low inflow is having an impact on Lake Powell. She explained that Lake Powell's elevation will usually drop over the winter as releases are made and its elevation will rebound as long as there is adequate spring runoff. She added that there would be very little rebound this year due to the low runoff projections.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that projections for Lake Powell's elevation show it dropping to 3,497 feet by the end of this water year. She stated that without compensatory action, Lake Powell will continue to fall by the end of calendar year until March 2027, until next year's runoff season. She stated that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is looking at options to protect Lake Powell's elevation through the end of this water year. She stated that Reclamation plans to make releases from the Upper Initial Unit reservoirs in the Upper Basin, primarily from Flaming Gorge which is about 85% full most of the time. She stated that there could also be releases from Aspinall, Blue Mesa and Navajo reservoirs to provide water to Lake Powell. Releases will occur between May 2026 to April 2027 in the amount of 500,000 AF. She reported that Reclamation also wants to conduct 6E operations. Under the 2024 SEIS, Reclamation is able to reduce the release from Lake Powell to as low as 6 MAF to protect elevation 3,500 feet. Currently, a 7.48 MAF release was planned for Lake Powell, the fourth year out of the last five with a release of 7.48 MAF or less. She stated that Reclamation has not announced the amount of the reduction to the Lake Powell release.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the ten-year running average for Lees Ferry flows required by the Colorado River Compact, adding that Lees Ferry flows are in

danger of dropping below this threshold. She stated that if this year's release drops to below 7.15 MAF, there may be a violation of the Compact. She added that she believes that Reclamation is planning to reduce the release from Lake Powell to around 6 MAF. She remarked that unfortunately the bad precipitation conditions this year are hurrying some of the issues that the Basin had hoped to resolve with a new agreement.

Colorado River Basin Programs Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported on highlights from a memo included in the meeting packet that provides a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) Work Group (Work Group) met over the past month. The Work Group reviewed the post-2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and made recommendations for how Reclamation could improve some of the salinity modeling that was included in that document.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam program is preparing for potential experiments this year. A High Flow Experiment (HFE) could be held this year, where a big slug of water is released through Glen Canyon Dam and, through the Grand Canyon, rebuilding beaches that get eroded by the steady flows through the Grand Canyon. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that a Cool Mix Flow experiment is also being considered, where the bypass tubes are used to deliver cooler water to prevent non-native fish breeding.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that channelization of a slough below Glen Canyon Dam has recently been completed and is expected to prevent establishment of nonnative fish. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that water temperature was increasing in the slough over the summer and providing an incubator for warm water non-native fish. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that one of the projects that Park Service has been working on for multiple years is channelizing the slough.

Executive Director Neuwerth showed a picture of the slough before and after channelization and described the channelization work, including that a little stream now connects the backwater to the channel so water flows through the backwater and cools down the temperature.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that significantly less warm water fish are being identified reproducing in that area now that the slough work is complete. Executive

Director Neuwerth added that the project has been performing as expected and is a non-flow option that helps control non-native fish.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that one of the detractions of Cool Mix Flows is that they are very costly. The only way to cool down the water right now is to release from the bypass tubes, which are located lower in the reservoir than the penstocks but that results in not generating power with any of that water. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the experiments are a significant hit to hydropower generation.

In response to a question from Member Fisher, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that HFEs require the use of the bypass tubes and a previous HFE at low reservoir elevations had resulted in minor damage to the bypass tubes. She stated that although consideration of an HFE had been triggered, this experience would likely affect the possibility of an experiment in 2026. Member Nelson asked whether chemical eradication of nonnative fish was under consideration, in addition to the channelization of the slough. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that chemical fish treatment had occurred several times at the slough, but channelization was seen as a more palatable and long-term solution.

Member Fisher stated that given the guided fishing industry below Glen Canyon Dam, it was unsurprising that nonnative fish issues were challenging. Executive Director Neuwerth agreed with Member Fisher and added that there are guided fishing trips that are very high dollar so there is always a lot of resistance to anything that changes the landscape or reduces the amount of certain non-native fish.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Financial Work Group met last month. The MSCP reported that program spending was significantly under the budget for last year. When the MSCP is under budget, the funds are able to be rolled over for future years. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the MSCP continues to be fiscally conservative, allowing the program to save joint state and federal funds for a future year when the money is needed.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the comment period for Reclamation Post-2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) closed on March 2. She reported that comments from the Lower Basin generally focused on the need for Reclamation to analyze and implement alternatives compliant with the Law of the River, when the alternatives analyzed by Reclamation shift nearly the entire burden of protecting the system onto the Lower Basin while showing the Upper Basin increasing its demands.

Comments from the Upper Basin focused on water use in the Lower Basin, stated that the Lower Basin needs to take larger reductions, and questioned the basis of Reclamation's authorities in the Upper Basin.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Reclamation will likely not be able to make sweeping changes to its alternatives and still meet a late-summer 2026 deadline for a final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD). In response to a question from Member Fisher, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there are only two alternatives that Reclamation could implement without additional authorities. Member Fisher stated that a return to operations under the Long-Range Operating Criteria would likely be better for California.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Executive Director's memo includes some D.C. updates, including information on new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines for the Department of the Interior.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Member Agency and Public Member Reports

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Member Cordero reported on MWD's conservation efforts. She stated that conservation targets outdoor water uses and accounts for 75% of new water savings. She reported that MWD's Metropolitan Turf Replacement Program and rebates for residential and commercial water users has replaced more than 6 million square feet of lawn with drought-tolerant landscaping in 2024 through 2025. She reported strong demand for the rebate, noting the rebate was increased to \$7 per square foot for commercial and public agency turf replacement with funding from the Department of Water Resources and Reclamation as part of the Lower Colorado River Basin States Conservation Program. She noted that demand remained strong after the rebate was reduced to \$4 per square foot. She reported that MWD is on track to meet most of its commitment under its Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Bucket 2 Funding Agreement with Reclamation to remove 30 million square feet of turf by 2031, noting that this is ahead of schedule.

Member Cordero reported conservation in support of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP). She provided some background on the program, noting that MWD is one of the 57 permittees contributing to the MSCP for Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance and is the program's largest non-federal funding partner. She reported on the success of the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area in particular; she noted that it was established in 2019 on land owned by MWD and described its transformation, listing various species it was expected to attract. She reported that the Yellow-billed Cuckoo and other neotropical birds have been detected

and are displaying breeding behavior in the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area. She also briefly recounted who Dennis Underwood was, noting that he was an expert in western water, a Commissioner of Reclamation and a General Manager of MWD.

Chairman Hamby noted that Dennis Underwood also served as Executive Director of CRB.

Member Fisher reminisced about the dedication ceremony of the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area.

Imperial Irrigation District (IID)

Member Dockstader reported that IID's Board just approved the Funding Local Opportunities for Water (FLOW) Grant Program. She described the program as a \$7.5 million program with a 50/50 cost share to fund conservation in the Imperial Valley, with funds available to local government entities, cities, special districts, schools, and Imperial County agencies for water-related projects. She noted that this was part of IID's 125th anniversary celebration.

Member Dockstader reported that yesterday IID hosted a tour of the Imperial Valley for officials from the Department of Water Resources and Reclamation. She listed some tour participants and described tour highlights, including a visit to the Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) (along the southern shore of the Salton Sea) to see new nesting sites and birds.

Chairman Hamby followed up on the SCH, noting that the conservation goal is now 9,000 acres. He commended progress and listed various species that are now using the new area, including American White Pelicans and Spoonbills. He reported that in the SCH the dust suppression objective is being met and that over 200 species have been observed. He also expressed appreciation for previous collaborations on the SCH between states, local agencies, CVWD, and IID.

San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)

Member Heidemann reported on the Water Infrastructure Program of the City of Poway, one of SDCWA's member agencies. He reported that the program is a 3-phase program that is expected to cost \$86.6 million in capital costs, noting that the program is the largest in the city's history. He described the program's phases, including a temporary bypass (Phase 1) to enable the replacement of its Clearwell water tanks (Phase 2) and a connection to treated water from SDCWA (Phase 3). He reported that the temporary bypass was completed in 2022, the new Clearwell tanks will be completed in 6 weeks, and the treated water connection is expected to be complete in 2029.

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)

Member Nelson reported that he will be retiring from the CVWD Board as of April 15, 2026. He expressed appreciation for his time with CVWD and reminisced about various Colorado River work he was involved in, including the 2004 Quantification Settlement Agreement. He stated that he has offered to continue to represent CVWD on the CRB Board but that he will leave it up to the CVWD Board to decide, noting that the CVWD representative on the CRB Board does not need to be a CVWD Board member. He also recognized CVWD Alternate Member Castulo Estrada.

Weather Modification Program Overview

Staff Member Rheinheimer presented an overview of the Colorado River Weather Modification Program. Executive Director Neuwerth introduced the presentation, noting that the Six Agency Committee has funded weather modification for ten to fifteen years. She stated that the Basin states are considering executing a new ten-year programmatic agreement for weather modification, and that this presentation is to provide background information to the CRB prior to that execution decision.

Noting that weather modification entails cloud seeding, Staff Member Rheinheimer provided an overview of cloud seeding science and technology, where cloud seeding operations are conducted in the Colorado River Basin, the history and nature of the Weather Modification Program funding scheme, historical cloud seeding financing/expenditures under the Weather Modification Program, the SAC's involvement in the North American Weather Modification Council, and key opportunities and decisions for the SAC for the new, 2027-2036 agreement. He presented that under the Weather Modification Program, three Lower Basin funding entities, one from each Lower Basin State, provide funding of up to \$1.5 million per year to support cloud seeding operations to increase snowfall during winter precipitation events in the Upper Basin, on an equal cost-share basis. He noted that generally only ground-based cloud seeding is funded through the program.

In highlighting policy and timeline considerations for the new proposed 2027-2036 programmatic agreement. He presented that policy considerations include whether to continue funding the program and, if so, at what funding level. He reported that initial legal review is mostly complete, that policy review should be complete at the end of April, 2026, and that the new agreement should be signed by May in preparation for review and approval of 2027 operations.

Executive Director Neuwerth followed up to summarize that the purpose of this is to give some background information for future decisions.

Staff Member Rheinheimer indicated that a key question for SAC members would be how much water we are getting for the money spent. He noted that while quantifying additional precipitation in any event remains a challenge, basic calculations indicate that it is a good investment.

Former Executive Director Harris provided a brief background of the program and also reiterated that the cost of the program represents a good deal.

Member Fisher provided some further history of the program based on his prior involvement, noting that the program also benefits Upper Basin States in meeting their delivery obligation to the Lower Basin. He also discussed the dynamics and receptiveness to weather modification in each Upper Basin state, with Utah and Colorado being particularly receptive. Executive Director Neuwerth followed up, noting that similar dynamics exist today.

Additional miscellaneous discussion followed, with Executive Director Neuwerth noting that there is no immediate decision to be made.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Hamby reported that the last several weeks have been focused on providing and reviewing comments on the Post-2026 Draft EIS. He noted that copies of basinwide letters have been shared with Board members, and the letters can provide insight on the legal and operational positions across the basin.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Basin States principals have not met in person since January, although several virtual meetings have occurred over the last several weeks. Chairman Hamby reported that Nevada included a proposal in its Draft EIS comment letter, which formed the basis of recent Basin States discussions. California is generally supportive of the proposal, although Arizona has raised concerns. The Upper Basin is expected to oppose the proposal. The Lower Basin is starting to work in earnest on a Lower Basin proposal, in expectation that the seven states will be unable to reach consensus.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Lower Basin proposal is expected to include the reductions of 1.5 MAF between the Lower Basin and Mexico that was negotiated in 2024. These reductions solve the chronic shortfall in the Lower Basin.

In response to a question from Member Nelson, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the 1944 Treaty with Mexico shares shortages in parity with the U.S. water users in extraordinary drought conditions. Member Fisher shared that reaching agreement on the definition of extraordinary drought has been an issue of significant debate between the two countries in the past. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that

Mexican has taken proportional reductions in recent years, and she and Chairman Hamby have been pushing the federal team on the importance of ensuring Mexican participation continue Post-2026.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:16 p.m.