

Minutes of Regular Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, October 12, 2011

A Regular Meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held in the Vineyard Room, at the Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, at 2155 E. Convention Center Way, Ontario, California, Wednesday, October 12, 2011.

Board Members Present

Dana B. Fisher, Jr. Chairman
John V. Foley
W. D. 'Bill' Knutson
John Pierre Menvielle
John Palmer Powell, Jr.

Jeanine Jones, Designee
Department of Water Resources

Board Members Absent

Terese Maria Ghio
Henry Merle Kuiper
James B. McDaniel

Christopher G. Hayes, Designee
Department of Fish and Game

Others Present

Steven B. Abbott
James M. Barrett
James H. Bond
John P. Carter
Dave Fogerson
Leslie Gallagher
William J. Hasencamp
Mike Kaschak
Jan P. Matusak
Carrie Oliphant
Dan Parks
Glen Peterson
David R. Pettijohn
Halla Razak
Steven B. Robbins

Tom J. Ryan
Jack Seiler
Catherine M. Stites
Mark Stuart
William H. Swan
Fred A. Worthley
Bill D. Wright

J.C. Jay Chen
Lindia Y. Liu
Christopher S. Harris
Michael W. Hughes
Mark Van Vlack
Gerald R. Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Chairman Fisher asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Fisher moved to the next agenda item.

ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Fisher requested the approval of the September 14th meeting minutes. Mr. Knutson moved the September 14th minutes be approved. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Unanimously carried, the Board approved the September 14th meeting minutes.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS

Colorado River Water Report

Mr. Harris reported that from October 1st to September 30th, precipitation was 120 percent of normal, and there was no snowpack water equivalent reported. The observed April through July inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year 2011, as of September 16th, was 12.9 maf, or 163 percent of normal. The projected 2011 Water Year unregulated inflow into Lake Powell was about 16.8 maf, or about 140 percent of normal.

Mr. Harris reported that as of October 3rd, the reservoir storage in Lake Powell was 17.57 million acre-feet (maf), or 72 percent of capacity. The water surface elevation was 3,652.8 feet. The storage in Lake Mead was 13.01 maf, or 50 percent of capacity. The water surface elevation was 1,116.4 feet. Total System storage was 38.66 maf, or 65 percent of capacity. Last year at this time, there was 33.04 maf of water in storage, or 55 percent of capacity. Total System storage was about 5.6 maf greater than the storage at this time last year.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation's estimated consumptive use (CU) for the State of Nevada is under its entitlement of 300,000 acre-feet (257,000 acre-feet); and for Arizona, the CU is projected to be slightly under its basic entitlement of 2.8 maf (2.791 maf); and for California the CU is also projected to be under its apportionment of 4.4 maf (4.295 maf). The total projected CU in the Lower Basin is expected to be about 7.342 maf.

State and Local Water Reports

Mr. Mark Stuart, of the California Department of Water Resources, reported on the storage conditions of the State Water Project (SWP), as of October 1st, in California. Storage in Lake Oroville was about 3 maf, or 86 percent of capacity, about 1.3 MAF greater than this time last year. Storage in San Luis Reservoir was about 875,000 AF, or 82 percent of capacity. Total storage of the SWP was about 4.7 maf, or 85 percent of capacity. Mr. Stuart reported that SWP deliveries were at 80 percent of the Table A Entitlement.

Mr. Foley, of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that, as of October 1st, the combined reservoir storage of Lakes Skinner and Mathews, and Diamond Valley Lake were about 974,400 acre-feet or 94 percent of capacity. Storage in Diamond Valley Lake was about 764,300 acre-feet, or 94 percent of capacity. Storage in Lake Mathews was about 170,800, or 94 percent of capacity. Storage in Lake Skinner was about 39,300 acre-feet or 89 percent of capacity. Mr. Foley mentioned that an alga bloom had been reported at the Diemer and Weymouth water treatment plants, they had reduced the Colorado River Water blend from 80 percent down to 25 percent, allowing additional Colorado River water to be stored in Lake Mead as Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS). MWD currently has about 400,000 acre-feet of ICS water in Lake Mead. Mr. Foley added that total delivery to date was about 1.10 MAF, or 77 percent of the ten year average.

Colorado River Operations

Reclamation's Approval of Calendar Year 2011 Diversions for the Imperial Irrigation District and The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Mr. Harris reported that two letters included in the Board folder, dated September 12th, from Reclamation's Regional Director Ms. Lorri Gray-Lee, stated that Reclamation has approved Imperial Irrigation District's diversion amount of 2.858 MAF and MWD's diversion amount of 611,900 acre-feet for Calendar Year 2011.

Denver Post News Release entitled "Colorado Water Conservation Board votes to study Wyoming pipeline plan"

Mr. Harris reported that a recent article by the *Denver Post* indicated that the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) approved spending \$72,000 for a six-month study to explore and evaluate legal issues, costs, and potential environmental impacts associated with the pipeline concept. The CWCB also indicated a willingness to spend an additional \$100,000 if the initial study determines project is feasible. A previous CWCB study found that a similar pipeline project could cost as much as \$9 billion, making the water delivered the most expensive in Colorado history.

BASIN STATES DISCUSSIONS

Status of Binational Projects and Programs with Mexico

Mr. Zimmerman reported that a meeting of the Binational hydrology group was held on September 29th in San Diego. The Binational hydrology group are working on developing that indices for surplus and drought that could be endorsed by both countries. Mr. Zimmerman reported that there was some differences of interpretation on how the salinity differential is accounted for when Mexican ICMA and ICS Colorado River water would be stored in U.S. reservoirs. The objective still remains to have a signed Treaty Minute, acceptable to both countries, by the beginning of 2012. The U.S. has provided Mexico with an Exploratory

Cooperative Binational Package that contains the possible elements of a Binational Package. This package is still being reviewed by Mexico. Mr. Zimmerman reported that he would be the state ‘observer’ for the Lower Basin, and that the Upper Basin state ‘observer’ would be either Mr. Ted Kowalski or Mr. Don Ostler, at the federal Leadership Team meeting scheduled to be held in El Paso on October 27th, to further explore moving forward with a Binational Package. Chairman Fisher mentioned that the States should be at the table during negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico, but at least there are state ‘observers’ at the Leadership Team meeting.

Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study Report

Mr. Zimmerman reported that a Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study (Basin Study) workshop was held in Las Vegas, on October 4th. The focus of the workshop was on describing the “current trends” scenario for each of the Basin states and quantifying demands for each of the four alternatives scenarios. For California, further work is needed to ensure consistency in its demands projections. A meeting with Reclamation, their consultant and the Agency Managers is scheduled following the Board meeting to finalize the California demands under the current trends scenario. After the current trends data is finalized, Reclamation’s spreadsheet tool will be used to analyze demands and then project those demands in the context of other possible future scenarios. Mr. Zimmerman reported that the next Project Team meeting is scheduled for October 13th to review and discuss the initial draft of the demand scenarios.

Mr. Swan questioned how the Basin Study should be presented to the public prior to the completion of the Basin Study Report. Ms. Jones reported that the Western States Water Council met last month and mentioned that there were other federal water needs investigations being conducted in several of the western states and she questioned how the Basin Study conforms with those other federal studies. Ms. Jones mentioned that the DWR has worked with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in California on the USGS water census that incorporates water related information into a uniform format nationwide. Ms. Jones added that the Basin Study water information doesn’t appear to coordinate with the USGS water census. Mr. Matusak reported that a representative from USGS was at one of the work group meetings and was in communication with the technical group conducting the Basin Study Report. Ms. Razak added that Mr. Terry Fulp had met with the various tribes along the river, previously without identified future growth in water demand needs, to gather information from them to include projections for them in the Basin Study Report.

Basin States Technical Committee Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada, October 5, 2011

Mr. Harris reported he and Mr. Zimmerman attended the Basin States Technical Committee met in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 5th. The purpose of the meeting was to: provide basin-wide hydrologic and weather forecast updates; discuss upcoming changes in forecasting and hydrologic modeling tools; the status of Glen Canyon Dam operations; bi-national discussions with Mexico; and project updates and status reports.

Mr. Harris reported that full equalization of the Lakes Powell and Mead was not fully achieved within water year 2011 due to power plant release limitations at the Glen Canyon Dam facility. An additional 1.23 MAF remains to be released to achieve full equalization, and Reclamation anticipates that this will be released prior to December 31, 2011. The water surface

elevation in Lake Mead rose about 30 feet during water year 2011. Mr. Harris continued that with the use of Brock and Senator Wash reservoirs, Reclamation was able to more effectively manage, capture, and conserve flow releases below Parker Dam during water year 2011. Reclamation reports that 90,300 acre-feet have been conserved in Brock Reservoir, and 84,000 acre-feet have been conserved in Senator Wash Reservoir, allowing only 54,700 acre-feet as “excess flows to Mexico” so far this year.

Mr. Harris reported that the Colorado River Forecast Center (CRFC) is in the process of updating and recalibrating the models it uses. The CRFC uses a 30-year time series and over the past decade has used the period from 1971-2000, and is now shifting this time series forward with the period 1981-2010, which is the driest 30-year period on record. This time period change will likely result in a decrease in the ‘projected average annual inflow’ into the various Upper Basin facilities in future 24-Month studies. Mr. Harris reported that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) model recalibration is expected to be completed in November 2011. The updated model should be on-line and operational as of January 1, 2012, and will fully utilize the new 30-year time series.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation will also begin implementing a new computational ‘mass balance’ method in developing the future 24-Month Study reports beginning January 1, 2012. The new computational method was compared to the old method, the “three stream gage” method, for two years and it was found that the mass balance method improved stream and reservoir elevations predictions by about 40 percent.

The NOAA is currently projecting a “mild to moderate” La Niña year, potentially drier than normal fall and early-winter, with near-normal snowpack. Ms. Jones added that the official forecast is usually made in November. They’re waiting for mid-November observations of what’s going on in the Eastern Pacific before they make the final forecast.

WATER QUALITY

Colorado River Environmental Activities

Comments on Revised Critical Habitat Designation for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

Mr. Harris reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed a rule designating revised Critical Habitat for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (WIFL) on August 15th. The Board prepared a draft comment letter, circulated among the agencies and technical staff. There was discussion regarding proposed revised WIFL Critical Habitat designation and the appropriate response. Mr. Harris received direction from the Board to collaborate with Mr. Zimmerman and include the Agency’s attorneys and send the comment letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by October 14th.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher announced that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., at the Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 East Convention Center Way, Ontario, California.

There being no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Knutson moved the Board meeting be adjourned. Mr. Foley seconded the motion, and with unanimous approval, the Board meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. on October 12, 2011.

Christopher S. Harris
Acting Executive Director