

Minutes of Regular Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, April 13, 2011

A Regular Meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held in the Vineyard Room, of the Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 East Convention center Way, Ontario, California, Wednesday, April 13, 2011.

Board Members Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman
Thomas M. Erb
John V. Foley
W.D. 'Bill' Knutson
John Pierre Menvielle

John Palmer Powell, Jr.
Jeanine Jones, Designee
Department of Water Resources

Board Members and Alternate Absent

Terese Maria Ghio
Henry Merle Kuiper
James B. McDaniel

Christopher G. Hayes, Designee
Department of Fish and Game

Others Present

William S. Abbey
Steven B. Abbott
James H. Bond
John Penn Carter
T.T. Easterday
David Fogerson
Leslie M. Gallagher
Mark L. Johnson
Richard Johnson
Michael L. King
Jan P. Matusak
David R. Pettijohn
Halla Razak
Tina L. A. Shields
Jack Seiler
Catherine M. Stites

Douglas B. Noble
Carrie Oliphant
Ed W. Smith
Mark Stuart
Bill D. Wright
Michael Yu
Abbas Amirteymoori
J.C. Jay Chen
Christopher S. Harris
Lindia Y. Liu
Gary E. Tavetian
Mark Van Vlack
Gerald R. Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

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

ADMINISTRATION

New Coachella Valley Water District Representative

Chairman Fisher announced that Mr. John Powell Jr. has been sworn in as the Board Member representing the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). The Board welcomed Mr. Powell.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Fisher asked if there was a motion to approve the March 9th Board meeting minutes. Mr. Knutson moved the March 9th meeting minutes be approved. Mr. Menvielle seconded the motion. Unanimously carried, the Board approved the March 9th meeting minutes.

Cancelation of the May Board Meeting

Acting Executive Director Harris announced that there would not be a Board meeting in May.

Board Budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Mr. Harris reported that a packet would be mailed out to the Board members, alternates and agency managers including a copy of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012. The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 will be mailed out in May with action anticipated at the June Board meeting.

Retirement of Board Principal Engineer

Mr. Harris reported that Mr. Amireteymoori, the principal engineer of the Board is retiring. Mr. Harris added that Mr. Amireteymoori has been with the Board for ten years and will be missed. The Board wished him well on his future retirement.

AGENCY MANAGERS' MEETING

Mr. Harris reported that the Agency Managers have not met for awhile and asked that the Agency Managers meet following the Colorado River Authority meeting.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS

Colorado River Water Report

Mr. Harris reported that, October 1st to April 4th precipitation in the Upper Basin was 118 percent of normal, and the snowpack was about 115 percent of normal. The projected April through July runoff, as of April 1st, is 9.5 million acre-feet (maf), or 120 percent of normal. The anticipated 2011 water year runoff is about 13.1 maf, or 109 percent of normal.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation's April 2011, 24 month study indicated that if releases from Glen Canyon Dam remain at 8.23 maf, the projected water elevation behind Glen Canyon Dam would likely rise to over 3,662 feet, thus triggering equalization of the contents of Lakes Powell and Mead consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines. Consequently, Reclamation revised the releases from Glen Canyon Dam and increased the projected releases 8.23 maf to 11.56 maf for the remainder of Water-Year 2011. The releases from Glen Canyon Dam are subject to monthly updates reflecting the changing hydrology in order to achieve the operation specified by the Equalization Tier in the Guidelines.

Mr. Harris reported that precipitation in the southern Colorado River Basin has declined as expected, but the Upper Basin, particularly the Green River Basin, is still well above normal.

Mr. Harris reported that the storage in Lake Powell was 12.75 maf, or 52 percent of capacity. The water surface elevation was 3,610.2 feet. The storage in Lake Mead was 11.19 maf, or 43 percent of capacity, and water surface elevation of 1,096.6 feet. Total System storage was about 31.47 maf, or 53 percent of capacity. Last year at this time, there was 32.66 maf in storage, or 55 percent of capacity.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation's projected consumptive use (CU) for the State of Nevada was under its entitlement of 300,000 acre-feet (269,000 acre-feet); and for Arizona, the CU is projected to be below its basic entitlement of 2.8 maf (2.774 maf); and for California the CU is projected to be 4.103 maf. The total projected CU in the Lower Basin is estimated to be 7.146 maf.

State and Local Water Reports

Mr. Mark Stuart, of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported on the climate conditions of California. In the Los Angeles Basin precipitation is way above normal for this time of year, as is much of the southland, except for the Colorado Desert Region where precipitation, to date, was about 87 percent or normal in Blythe. The current Statewide precipitation in California for 233 stations was 140 percent of normal, with runoff 120 percent of normal for thirty-one rivers in California. Reservoir storage was up to 110 percent of normal for 155 reservoirs in California. The Sacramento River Index Precipitation was above average for every month except January and February. January was dismal, about 25 percent of normal, February was about average, but March was about 250 percent of normal. The Sacramento River Index Precipitation, as of April 1st, was 146 percent of average. The snowpack in the Northern Sierra was about 165 percent of normal, the Central Sierra was about 155 percent of normal and the Southern Sierra was about 150 percent of

normal.

Mr. Stuart reported that storage in Lake Oroville was to 2.8 maf or 81 percent of capacity. Even though there is nearly 700,000 acre-feet of storage available in Lake Oroville, flood releases have been ordered in case there is a warm spell that might cause too much snow melt to overflow the reservoir. Several reservoirs in the Sierras have made slight increases in releases to create flood control space. Mr. Stuart reported that the San Luis Reservoir, south of the Delta, was holding just over a million acre-feet. The State Water Project (SWP) as of April 1st had nearly 4.7 maf, or 85 percent of capacity, and projected deliveries were 70 percent of Table A Entitlements.

There was a question regarding increasing projected deliveries above 70 percent. Ms. Jones responded that currently delivery is restricted in the Delta due to fishery issues, not hydrology.

Mr. Foley, of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that overall storage in Lake Skinner, Lake Mathews and Diamond Valley Lake, as of April 1, was 942,100 acre-feet, or 91 percent of capacity. Diamond Valley Lake was about 736,600 acre-feet, or 91 percent of capacity. Lake Mathews was about 166,900 acre-feet, or 92 percent of capacity. Lake Skinner was about 38,600 acre-feet, or 88 percent of capacity. Mr. Foley reported that they're potentially a month away from nearly filling the Diamond Valley Reservoir, with SWP water, thus avoiding the Quagga mussel issue associated with Colorado River water.

Mr. Foley reported that within a month, they expect to bring Diamond Valley Lake to within 20,000 acre-feet of capacity. He added that they already have about 261,000 acre-feet of water stored in Lake Mead and expect to add an additional 200,000 acre-feet this year, and after accounting for system and storage losses, this would bring the total contents to about 448,000 acre-feet.

Mr. Erb, of the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that as of April 12th, climate conditions had improved in the Eastern Sierra. The Mammoth Watershed represents about 25 percent of the Los Angeles Aqueduct flow, and as of April 12th was about 171 percent of normal. The April 1st snow survey for the Eastern Sierra was about 167 percent of normal, so it's been an excellent water year so far.

Colorado River Operations

News Release that "Reclamation Completes Successful Pilot Run of the Yuma Desalter Plant"

Mr. Harris reported that on March 13th Reclamation announced completion of its year-long demonstration project running the Yuma Desalting Plant. The project partners included MWD, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD). During the course of the demonstration project 30,000 acre-feet of water was produced and delivered as part of the Mexican Treaty Obligation and consequently 30,000 acre-feet of mainstream water was retained in storage in Lake Mead. The demonstration project is considered a success and is another tool that can be used to

conserve and increase the flows of mainstream Colorado River in the Lower Basin.

Miscellaneous News Articles-“New Colorado River Projection Good News for the CAP Water Supply” and “Lake Mead Levels on the Rise”

Mr. Harris reported that both of the news articles included in the Board folder reported on Reclamation’s recent projections of water level rise in Lake Mead. The rise may be as much as 25 feet, from what the level would have been had the inflow into Lake Powell not been 16 percent greater than normal. Pursuant to the 2007 Interim Guidelines and the 2011 Annual Operation Plan, the “most probably inflow scenario” projects balancing the storage in Lakes Mead and Powell by increasing the releases from Glen Canyon Dam by as much as 11.5 maf over the 2011 water year.

Workshop on Remote Sensing Applications for U.S.-Mexico Border Water Management, June 8-9, 2011, San Diego, California

Mr. Harris reported that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Water Education Foundation, and National Aeronautic and Space Agency (NASA) are co-sponsoring a workshop to provide water managers with an overview of remote sensing data and tools that could be applied to binational water management issues. The workshop is to be held at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown San Diego, on June 8th and 9th, 2011.

Ms. Jones added that NASA had some stimulus funding for a project on Applications of Remote Sensing to Water Management in California. NASA has assembled some tools that collect data with the help of their satellite network, providing information where none had been before, particularly south of the border. NASA is looking to make some connections in the water community through this workshop and encourage the academic community to apply for some of the funding available to put the remote sensing data and tools to beneficial use on both sides of the border.

U.S. House Water and Power Subcommittee Oversight Hearing

Mr. Harris reported that on April 5th, the U.S. House Subcommittee on Water & Power held an oversight hearing entitled, “Creating Abundant Water and Power Supplies and Job Growth by Restoring Common Sense to Federal Regulations”. Mr. Harris included copies of Chairman McClintock’s opening statement, and testimony from the Family Farm Alliance, the National Water Resources Association, several Arizona Irrigation Districts, and the American Farmland Trust. Mr. Harris reported that witnesses supported a reassessment of federal laws and regulations that could contribute to a more balanced approach in addressing the needs of water and power resources users and the federal agencies with environmental stewardship responsibilities.

Basin States Discussions

Status of the Colorado River Basin Water Study Report

Mr. Harris reported that Technical Reports A-“Scenario Development”, B-“Water Supply Assessment”, and D-“System Reliability Metrics” were released in early March as

preliminary drafts. Mr. Harris reported that Technical Report C-“Water Demand Assessment” was recently released for review and comment by the Project Team participants. Mr. Harris reported that comments were provided by MWD and the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), and that those comments were circulated among the California agency members. Comments on all four Technical Reports are currently being reviewed by the Project Team. Mr. Harris asked that if the other California Agencies have commented on Technical Report C, to forward a copy to the other agencies and Board staff.

Status of Binational Negotiations

Chairman Fisher reported the Basin states are engaging in a process whereby they will jointly specify individuals who will be involved in the process to enter into negotiations with Mexico. Chairman Fisher added that during a call among the Basin states Principals, they decided to draft a letter to be sent jointly from all of the Basin states indicating their interests in the rights of the Colorado River and designating an individual and an alternate or two, to represent them at the future negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico. Reclamation Commissioner Conner has agreed to deliver the Basin states’ letter to IBWC Commissioner Drusina.

Chairman Fisher noted that Mexico’s IBWC Commissioner Salmon has been empowered with the signing authority from the federal government of Mexico, as well as the Mexican States and Cities. In Mexico the rights of the Colorado River are held by the federal government of Mexico, where in the U.S. the rights of the Colorado River, though managed by the federal government, are held by the states and/or public agencies that use Colorado River water. Chairman Fisher added that as in previous minutes negotiated between the U.S. and Mexico, the states have facilitated the creation of the past couple of minutes. Chairman Fisher expects this process to include the states in the protocol of negotiations affecting the Colorado River to be accomplished in a matter of three or four weeks and that the negotiations should proceed quickly afterwards.

Colorado River Environmental Activities

Seven Basin States’ Comment Letter on Reclamation’s Draft Environmental Assessment for the “Development and Implementation of a Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam, Arizona, 2011 through 2020”

Mr. Harris reported that the Board folder included the Seven Basin states letter sent to Reclamation commenting on the Draft Environmental Assessments (DEA) – “Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam, from 2011-2020”, and “Non-Native Fish Control Downstream from Glen Canyon Dam”. The comment letter included: A revised “Purpose and Need” statement for the DEA; Ensure that the High-Flow Experimental (HFE) Protocol is consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines; Ensure the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment rigorously analyzes impacts to Humpback chub; Evaluate potential inclusion of a Rainbow Trout “trigger” as an indicator of status of the health of Humpback chub populations; Clarify that the proposed HFE protocol is “experimental” and not a “management plan”; Clarify the process for deciding when to conduct an HFE release and how to incorporate feedback from the states.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Reclamation – “Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative” Initiative

Mr. Harris reported that the Department of the Interior (DOI) has initiated a new initiative called Landscape Cooperative Initiatives. The DOI have identified large eco-regions across all of North America and the one that includes most of the Colorado River Basin is known as the “Desert Landscape Cooperative Initiative”. In March, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Reclamation announced the new initiative – “Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative”. This initiative is intended to provide a science based response to climate-change impacts on land, water, and wildlife resources. Each Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) functions in a distinct geographic area. The Desert LCC covers portions of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and northern Mexico. The Desert LCC also includes the Mojave, Chihuahuan, and Sonoran Deserts. Mr. Harris reported that a Steering Committee is being created that will include representatives from federal, state, Tribal, academic institutions, and Mexico.

Status of the Grand Canyon Trust Litigation

Ms. Cathy Stites, of the MWD, reported that on March 28th, Judge Campbell, of the U.S. District Court of Arizona issued a final ruling that the Annual Operating Plans (AOP) are not subject to Environmental Species Act (ESA) consultation or under the NEPA.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher announced that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board will be held on June 15, 2010, 10:00 a.m., Holiday Inn Ontario Airport, 2155 E. Convention Center Way, Ontario, California.

There being no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Knutson, seconded by Mr. Foley, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned 10:42 a.m. on April 13, 2011.

Christopher S. Harris
Acting Executive Director