

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, January 14, 2015

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held on Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman  
James Hanks  
Henry Kuiper  
Glen Peterson  
David Pettijohn  
John Powell Jr.

Jack Seiler  
Michael Touhey  
Doug Wilson  
Jeanine Jones, Designee  
Department of Water Resources

Board Members and Alternates Absent

Stephen Benson  
Chris Hayes, Designee  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
James McDaniel

David Vigil, Designee  
Department of Fish & Wildlife

Others Present

Steve Abbott  
Tim Blair  
Brian Brady  
Robert Cheng  
Dan Denham  
Bill Hasencamp  
Christopher Harris  
Tom Havens  
Ned Hyduke  
Joanna Hoff  
Michael Hughes  
Eric Katz  
Kathy Kunysz  
Lisa Johansen  
Lori Jones  
Tom Levy  
Lindia Liu  
Kara Mathews  
Jan Matusak  
Jessica Neuwerth

Thang (Vic) Nguyen  
Autumn Plourd  
Angela Rashid  
Eric Ruckdaschel  
Ed Smith  
Mark Stuart  
Mark Van Vlack  
Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Fisher 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 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 to the next agenda item.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Board member Wilson introduced Brian Brady, an alternate representing the San Diego County Water Authority on the Colorado River Board. Mr. Wilson explained that the former alternate, Mr. Bud Pockington, has retired. Dr. Brady is the General Manager of the Fallbrook Public Utility District and is a representative on the County Water Authority. Chairman Fisher introduced Ned Hyduke as the new manager of the Palo Verde Irrigation District.

### **Approval of Minutes of the December 10, 2014 Colorado River Board Meeting**

Chairman Fisher asked if there was a motion to approve the December 10, 2014 minutes. Ms. Jones moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Pettijohn. By unanimous support, the December 10, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

### **Resolution honoring Ed Smith**

Executive Director Trujillo announced that the Colorado River Board has prepared a Resolution honoring the service of Ed Smith, manager at the Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID). Ms. Trujillo stated that the Board is appreciative of Mr. Smith for his goodwill, good character and good sense of humor. The Resolution highlighted many of Mr. Smith's contributions, which included his work on the Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP). In addition, the Resolution noted Mr. Smith's involvement in the successful implementation of the Palo Verde and Metropolitan Water District Fallowing Agreement over the past ten years. Ms. Trujillo thanked Mr. Smith for his service and wished him well in retirement.

Mr. Wilson moved that the Resolution honoring Ed Smith be approved, seconded by Mr. Kuiper. By unanimous support, the Resolution honoring Ed Smith was approved.

## Resolution honoring Larry Walkoviak

Chairman Fisher reported that the Colorado River Board has prepared a Resolution honoring the service of Larry Walkoviak, who recently retired as the Regional Director of the Upper Colorado Region. Chairman Fisher noted that Mr. Walkoviak was very helpful during the negotiations of the 2007 Guidelines among the states. Mr. Walkoviak retired about month ago due to health reasons and a farewell event is planned for him later this month in Salt Lake City.

Mr. Kuiper moved that the Resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Wilson. By unanimous support, the Resolution honoring Larry Walkoviak was approved.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

### Colorado River Basin Water Report

Ms. Trujillo reported on the current reservoir capacities of Lake Powell and Lake Mead and stated that the total system content is at 50% as of January 4, 2015. Last year's total system was nearly the same at 49%. The water year 2015 precipitation to date is 92% of average and basin snowpack is 101% of average. The unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is about average. As of January 4, 2015, the reservoir capacity of Lake Powell was at 47% while the other Upper Basin reservoirs ranged from 64-95%.

Ms. Trujillo noted that the Colorado River Basin Forecast Center (CBRFC) map indicates a mix of snowpack distribution for the Water Year thus far. Another graph provided by CRBFC compares the Snow Water Equivalent for 2015 with 2014 and median and average values for the period between 1981 and 2010. The monthly precipitation map for November 2014 from the National Weather Service shows only a couple of basin locations in Colorado and Wyoming that received above average precipitation. In December 2014, the situation improved and even some areas in the Lower Basin received heavy rains.

The U.S. Drought Monitor map indicates that California is still experiencing widespread drought. The most severe drought category, however, has reduced to about 32%.

Ms. Trujillo anecdotally reported that some areas in New Mexico have temperatures in the single digits but there has not been heavy snowfall yet this year.

### State Water Report

Mr. Stuart reported that the precipitation at the Los Angeles Civic Center for the period from October 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 was about 4.6 inches, or at about average. Although about an inch fell over the weekend, the forecast for California looks weak for the rest of January 2015. Southern California was at about average while San Luis Obispo was below average.

The NOAA's precipitation map indicated that the upper Central Valley and northern and southern California areas are at about average, but the southern Sierra was below normal. For the northern Sierra precipitation 8-station index, the current daily precipitation as of January 5, 2015 is 22.8 inches or slightly above average.

The statewide summary of water-year data suggests that precipitation is about 70% of average, runoff at 50% of average, and reservoir storage at 55% of average. The snow water equivalent (SWE) as a percentage of the April 1 average is 20% for the northern Sierra and 15% for the southern Sierra; statewide the SWE is only 17%.

Mr. Stuart reported that with respect to the State Water Project (SWP) water storage, Lake Oroville is at about 1.35 million acre-feet (MAF) as of January 1, 2015 after picking up 440,000 AF in December 2014. San Luis storage added 233,000 AF to 543,000 AF. The total SWP storage is at 44% of capacity and the SWP allocation is at a meager 10%. Shasta reservoir also increased by about 800,000 AF to 42% of its capacity but is still far below its historical average. Many of the reservoirs including Lake Oroville, Trinity Lake, New Melones, and San Luis are considerably below their historical averages. Mr. Stuart then pointed to a graph of Oroville storage which showed the reservoir at about 3.5 MAF when full in recent years to low of about 900,000 AF in October 2014.

Chairman Fisher asked whether the water was captured by the reservoirs in the recent storms or released downstream. Ms. Jones replied that most of the water went downstream due to the current flood control storage mode and fish protection requirements. Ms. Jones explained that smelt seem to be attracted to turbidity and larger storms generate more turbidity. At times, pumping operations were reduced because smelt were getting too close to the pumps.

### Local Reports

MWD's combined reservoir storage as of January 1, 2015 is at 49% of capacity. Mr. Peterson stated that Diamond Valley Lake is about half full. MWD continues to urge its customers to conserve.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that the water supply conditions for the eastern Sierra have not changed much from the previous month and the outlook is still weak. This situation is similar to last year when the lowest water delivery on record was recorded. If conditions don't change, there may not be much water delivered from the L.A. Aqueduct.

### **2015 CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE**

Ms. Jones noted that we are halfway through what would be considered the wettest winter months. Although there were some good storms in December 2014, it has been rather dry since then. The Sierra snowpack is only between 30 and 50% of average

for this time of the year. The snowpack deficit is very concerning in terms of its ability to refill reservoirs later in the season.

Ms. Trujillo stated that the process for allocating funding that was approved in Proposition 1 is underway. Ms. Jones added that there was another update to the California Emergency Proclamation to extend expiring authorizations relative to certain exemptions for operations. Agencies are generally in a wait-and-see mode to see how the Water Year will develop.

## **LOWER COLORADO RIVER WATER ACCOUNTING**

Ms. Trujillo announced that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will be developing the Final Decree Accounting report. Based on published provisional data, California used 4.65 MAF in 2014 and is legally authorized to use the approved amount over its normal entitlement. Ms. Trujillo explained that MWD used 1.176 MAF in 2014 according to the January 2 accounting report. MWD withdrew 330,000 AF from its Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) account, which was designed for use in times of need. It is anticipated that the Southern Nevada Water Authority will bank about 65,000 AF with MWD pursuant to the Storage Interstate Release Agreement (SIRA). These components provide MWD flexibility to use more Colorado River water in a year when the SWP allocation is not normal.

Ms. Trujillo stated that the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) appeared to be on target to create ICS in Calendar Year 2014. IID has repaid its overruns from prior years and now the account balance will be zero.

The total reported for Arizona was at 2.78 MAF and it appears that Arizona may request that unused water be stored in Lake Mead. Also, Nevada may have some unused water despite already banking some water with MWD. Mexico has also been receiving 1.5 MAFY as required by the treaty with the United States. Mexico has also been receiving excess water delivered as a result of system inefficiencies. The projection as of January indicates that excess deliveries were at 32,000 AF, which is lower than last year's reported 72,000 AF from the Final Decree Accounting Report. But the bypass flows (flows that cross the international border to help meet the salinity differential in Mexico) appear to be about 30,000 AF greater than what was delivered last year. Ms. Trujillo also noted there was a Pulse Flow released in 2014 that would be reflected in the Accounting Report. Reclamation will provide an opportunity to review a draft of the Lower Basin accounting report.

## **STAFF REPORTS REGARDING COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS**

### **Basin States Drought Contingency Program**

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Memorandum of Understanding for the Basin States Drought Contingency effort was finalized in December 2014 during the CRWUA conference. One of the components involved implementing the Pilot System Water Conservation Program that was finalized in 2014. Reclamation has sought proposals for conservation in the Lower Basin. To date, there has not been any award of funding for projects.

The Upper Basin Commission passed a Resolution in December 2014 on the Drought Contingency effort and supported coordination with interested agencies on demand reduction projects for System Conservation. Other contingency planning efforts include continuation of weather modification programs which receive funding from the Six Agency Committee.

One key piece of the Upper Basin states' efforts is to maintain flexibility in operations of the reservoirs by moving water from some of the more full reservoirs downstream. Mr. Don Ostler, manager of the Upper Basin Commission, has been invited to speak at the February Colorado River Board meeting to provide more details on their drought contingency planning efforts.

Ms. Jones asked whether Wyoming has published any study results on its weather modification program. Mr. Harris replied that the Wyoming Water Development Commission has just released its preliminary findings that are contained in a Draft Executive Summary. Cost estimates reportedly ranged from \$40 to \$400/AF for water produced. Ms. Trujillo said that a presentation on the Wyoming weather modification program would be on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Ms. Trujillo noted there has been a formal request by the Central Arizona Project (CAP) to review its proposal to create a new category of ICS. CAP currently does not have an ICS program. The CAP proposal was received in late December 2014 and is currently under review. CAP's plan is to bank water and reduce its Colorado River diversions. CAP plans to have its agricultural suppliers reduce their use by about 90,000 AF as part of a two-year program.

Mr. Peterson asked whether CAP is just banking its water entitlement and not fallowing land. Ms. Trujillo responded that CAP would be expected to meet the same standards that were applied to MWD and California water users, which included verification of reduced use.

Ms. Trujillo reminded Board members that Reclamation intends to coordinate with water users to create 50,000 AF through system efficiency improvements in the Yuma area. Jennifer McCloskey from Reclamation is expected to lead this effort.

## Colorado River Basin Water Study and Demand Study

A Final draft of the Phase I Report has been completed and is undergoing review by the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. The report is expected to be released in February 2015. The next phase may be to implement pilot projects in the municipal and agricultural sectors.

## Implementation of Minute 319

Ms. Trujillo noted that one of the highlights from the December 2014 CRWUA conference was to hear presentations from the Mexican delegation involved with Minute 319 implementation. Three different speakers committed to continued implementation of Minute 319 and showed an interest in negotiating a longer-term program. It is anticipated that we will learn more about this process from the engineer advisors from the International Boundary and Water Commission, its Mexican counterpart CILA, and Reclamation. Ms. Jennifer McCloskey is the designated engineering advisor and will be meeting with Basin State's representatives in February 2015 to plan a strategy for the next round of negotiations with Mexico.

Ms. Trujillo noted that we are two years into the 5-year period of Minute 319. The Pulse Flow was an accomplishment last year and it is hoped that more projects would be implemented this year.

## Salinity Control Forum, Workgroup, and Advisory Council

Ms. Trujillo reported that California will host the next Salinity Control Workgroup meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> at MWD's Diamond Valley Lake facilities. This will be an opportunity to highlight some of the water supply challenges that California is facing for the representatives from the Upper Basin, Arizona, and Nevada, and to show the importance of salinity control efforts for California's water users. The Salinity Control Forum is scheduled to meet in Salt Lake City, Utah in May. Ms. Trujillo reminded the Board of the detailed presentation by Mr. Don Barnett at December's meeting regarding the Paradox Valley Unit and the on-going EIS process. Reclamation reported earlier in the week that it is making progress with its review boards in evaluating locations for a potential second well.

## Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group

Ms. Trujillo reported that Ms. Jennifer Gimbel, currently the Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, had been selected as the Secretary's Designee for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) following the retirement of Anne Castle. The group's Technical Workgroup will meet on January 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in Phoenix to review the past year's research efforts. In February, the AMWG will meet in Salt Lake City and hold a workshop evaluating the high flow experiments that have been occurring in the Grand Canyon.

## Long-Term Experimental Management Plan EIS

The process for the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS is ongoing, with a draft EIS and a Preferred Alternative expected within the next several months and a Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expected later this summer.

## Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Trujillo noted that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is planning for its 10-year anniversary tour in April 2015 and that Deputy Director Christopher Harris has been coordinating with Reclamation staff on tour details. It is anticipated that the Secretary of the Interior will be attending. The MSCP is also planning a work group call on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Announcements/Notices

Ms. Trujillo reported that Mr. Estevan Lopez was formally confirmed by the Senate as the Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation, and was sworn in by the former Commissioner, now Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Conner. Mr. Lopez is recused from working on certain Colorado River issues for one year. Chairman Fisher added that is great to have both Ms. Jennifer Gimbel who used to represent Colorado, and Mr. Lopez who once represented the Interstate Stream Commission in New Mexico, working for the federal government.

Ms. Trujillo reported that Congress has passed its appropriations bill for the 2015 budget which included \$50 million in new spending for drought. Reclamation is undergoing a process to decide how to allocate those funds. Ms. Trujillo suggested that the Basin States could strategize on how best to use the funds such as implementing more system conservation projects or bolstering efforts to increase reservoir levels within the Colorado River basin.

Ms. Trujillo noted that Congress has started a new year and Senator Murkowski from Alaska is now chairing the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Murkowski was formerly the minority leader on the Committee and is very familiar with western water issues.

Ms. Trujillo reminded the Board that the State of California and the Department of the Interior have jointly issued the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, which has been out for review for several months. The comment period has been extended to February 23, 2015. Ms. Trujillo added that the staff of the Colorado River Board is in the process of drafting a comment letter. Ms. Trujillo explained that the report designated zones in the desert that would be appropriate for renewable energy development. Ms. Trujillo stated that the review will focus on water impacts associated with potential projects, particularly water used for solar power development. The

technology used in these development projects will have a huge impact on water requirements.

Ms. Trujillo reported that Senator Boxer has re-introduced a bill entitled “Water in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

The State of California’s budget has been released, with the drought figured as a prominent item. Ms. Jones added that funding for the State’s drought will depend on how the Water Year will develop.

Ms. Trujillo stated that the date of the 2015 CRWUA conference has moved to a week later in December. Accordingly, the date of the Board meeting has been moved to December 16, 2015 to coincide with the CRWUA conference.

### Adjournment

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Peterson seconded by Mr. Kuiper, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. on January 14, 2015.