

WCS-PPage
ADM-10.00

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 21, 2001, meeting to coordinate Reclamation's operation of the Navajo Unit. The meeting was held in Farmington's Civic Center.

Highlights of the meeting include:

–The spring release began on May 15 through June 28, 2001 with releases reaching 5,000 cfs. There was a mechanical problem with one of the 72" hollow-jet valves and it had to be taken out of service on May 30, 2001. The repair was made after the spring release was completed.

–The low flow test was conducted July 9 through July 15, 2001. All the field information for completion of the Navajo Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was collected. The draft EIS should be sent to the public for comments by February 2002. The final EIS should be completed by July 2002. A record of decision may occur, as early as, August or September 2002.

–An evaluation of the trout living just downstream of Navajo Dam will be conducted with a trout health assessment on August 28 and 29, 2001. The results will be included in the Navajo EIS.

–Reclamation will continue to adjust releases from the dam, as necessary, to maintain a weekly average target base flow of between 500 cfs and 1,000 cfs in the critical habitat section of the San Juan River. Minimum releases from the reservoir will be 500 cfs until the Navajo EIS is completed.

–The refurbishing of the 4'X4' regulating gate and guard gate are tentatively scheduled for 2004.

–For information, on current events, releases, etc., go to www.uc.usbr.gov, reservoir operations, reservoirs, Navajo, current events.

If you have any suggestions on improving the operation meetings or the summaries of the meetings, please let us know. The next operation meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 22, 2002 at 1:00 in the Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call Pat Page at (970) 385-6560 or Ruth Swickard at (970) 385-6523.

Sincerely,

/s/

Pat Page, Team Leader
Water Management Team
Resource Management Division

Enclosure

Distribution (see attached list)

bc: Regional Director, Salt Lake City UT
Attention: UC-400, UC-434, UC-438, UC-600, UC-723, UC-720, UC-726 (ea w/encl)

Director, Technical Service Center, Denver CO
Attention: D-8510 (w/encl)

WCN-CDeAngelis, SMoyer, EWarner, DCrabtree, SMcCall, JOzga, KOzga., CStanton,
KFogelquist, MSteves, RStorbo, JWright (ea w/ encl)

WCD-PPage, RSwickard, JSimons, KLashmett, KBeck, MCharito, BDodd, MVelasquez

Distribution list (e/encl)

NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

August 21, 2001

Participation: This meeting was held in Farmington, New Mexico at the Civic Center.

Purpose of Meeting: The purpose of these meetings-- held in January, April, and August-- is to gather input for determining upcoming operations for Navajo Reservoir. This input is used in Reclamation's development of an overall 24-month study for operation of Reclamation projects in the Upper Colorado River Basin, which includes plans for Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge, Aspinal Unit and Navajo. Input from individuals, organizations, and agencies along with other factors such as weather, water rights, endangered species requirements, flood control, hydro power, recreation, fish and wildlife management and reservoir levels, will be considered in the development of these reservoir operation plans. In addition, the meetings are used to coordinate activities and exchange information among agencies, water users, and other interested parties concerning the San Juan River and Navajo Reservoir.

–Handouts provided included a review of the 2001 operation to date, and the proposed operation for the remainder of 2001 and the beginning of 2002.

2001 Operation:

- Monthly basin inflows to Navajo Reservoir for April through July, 2001 was 662,779 acre feet or 101% of the 30 year average. The total release for this time frame was 395,800 acre-feet or 100% of average. Reservoir releases varied from 500 cfs to 5,000 cfs. The spring release began May 30 through June 28, 2001 with a release of 5,000 cfs for five days. On May 31, 2001 a mechanical problem occurred with one of the 72" hollow-jet valves that regulate the releases. The problem valve was shut down and evaluated. The release was then held at 4,275 cfs for 18 days. By June 28, the release was reduced to 500 cfs.

–The Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) team completed the low flow test July 9 thru July 15, 2001, with the releases reduced to 250 cfs. All the necessary field data was collected. The impacts of the low flow on all involved resources will be addressed in the EIS.

–A trout health assessment will be conducted by Reclamation and a contractor on August 28 and 29, 2001, to evaluate the health of the fish in this section of the river. The results of this data will be incorporated in the EIS.

–The flow recommendations for the endangered fish call for weekly average target base flows in the critical habitat section of the San Juan River of between 500 cfs and 1,000 cfs. Reclamation will adjust releases to meet this criteria, with the minimum release being 500 cfs. A twenty four hour notice will be provided to interested parties and the media before releases are increased. A one week notice

will be given before a decrease is made.

–Based on the August 2001 most probable April-July inflow to Navajo Reservoir, it appears that a full hydrograph spring release will occur in 2002. Runoff forecasts, this early in the season will probably change, so inflow predictions should be considered very preliminary at this time.

Other Comments:

–Reclamation is preparing the Navajo Reservoir Operations EIS to describe the environmental impacts of alternatives for operating the dam and reservoir to implement the Recovery Program's flow recommendations. The draft EIS is scheduled for release for public review in February 2002. Public comment period will be March and April 2002. This is the next opportunity for formal public participation. It should be noted, however, that this schedule could be revised in the future. Comments and concerns are welcome at any time by contacting Ken Beck at 970-385-6558. Information is also available at Reclamation's Internet web site: www.uc.usbr.gov (select Environmental Programs, Navajo Dam and Reservoir Site).

Meeting Minutes - The current meeting minutes are located at Reclamation's Internet web site: www.uc.usbr.gov (select Reservoir Operations, Reservoirs, Navajo Reservoir, Meeting Notes).

Next Meeting - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 22, 2002** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

Attendance List - August 21, 2001 Navajo Operations Meeting

C. Nancy LaMascus, City of Farmington, Farmington
Dale Wirth, Bureau of Land Management, Farmington
Dan Crabtree, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction
Dorothy Ross, Navajo Dam Water Users, Navajo Dam
Ed Warner, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction
Jason John, Navajo Nation, Division of Water Resources, Fort DeFiance
John Simons, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango
John Weiss, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO
Ken Beegles, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Durango
Kirk Lashmett, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango
Mike Velasquez, Bureau of Reclamation, Navajo Dam
Mike Buntjer, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque
Nick Ashcroft, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield
Pat Page, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango
Pat Turney, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Santa Fe
Rob Ashman, Public Service of New Mexico, Waterflow
Ron Bliesner, Keller-Bliesner Engineering, Logan UT
Ruth Swickard, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango
Steve McCall, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction