

WCG-Ed Warner
ENV-4.00/PRJ-13.00

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 22, 2000, 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 April-July observed inflow was measured at 337,000 acre feet or about 43 percent of average seasonal runoff. This is a decrease from the April 1, April to July forecast of 430,000 acre feet, or 56 percent of normal.

– Maintenance and repair on the two 72-inch hollow jet valves has not started, however, the work will be completed before spring runoff. During the maintenance and repair work, these valves will be inoperable, and the total controlled release capability from Navajo will be reduced to 2,800 cfs (1,600 cfs for 4X4 gate outlet; 1,200 cfs for power plant releases).

–Releases from the dam will be adjusted, as necessary, to maintain 500 cfs in the San Juan River at Bluff throughout the fall and winter.

In light of the high precipitation and runoff conditions experienced last summer and fall, the reservoir elevation was lowered to below 6072 feet, after the beginning of July, in order to provide a cushion of storage while the hollow jet valves are inoperable.

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 23, 2001 at 1:00 in the Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call Ed Warner at (970) 248-0654, or Ruth Swickard at (970) 385-6523.

Sincerely,

Ed Warner
Resources Division Manager

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)

WCG-CDeAngelis, SMoyer, EWarner, SMcCall, JOzga, CStanton, KFogelquist, MSteves,
RStorbo, JWright (ea w/ encl)

WCD-RSwickard, JSimons, SMattingly, PPage, Klashmet, KBeck, MCharito
(ea w/encl)

WBR:EWarner:rb:09/11/2000:0654:navajo minutes
Identical letter sent - CIS addresses - Navajo Reservoir Operations

NAVAJO OPERATIONS MEETING

August 22, 2000

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

Purpose of Meeting: The purpose of these meetings-- held in February, 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, Aspinall 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 data on May-August 2000 operations; projected inflows to the reservoirs; and preliminary operation plans under maximum, most, and minimum probable water supply forecasts.

May-August 2000 Operation:

Monthly inflows to Navajo Reservoir over the May to July period ranged from 53% to 21% of average. Total unregulated inflow for this period was 185,600 acre-feet. Reservoir releases for this period varied from 500 cfs to 4,900 cfs. A one-day endangered fish release was completed on June 5 with a one-week ramp up and a one-week ramp down to 500 cfs. This release was not necessary this year for endangered fish; however, extra releases were necessary for maintenance work, so the releases were made in the form of a peak compatible with endangered fish needs.

Preliminary August-December 2000 Operation:

–Based on the mid-April forecast, the most probable April-July inflow to Navajo Reservoir was 430,000 acre-feet or 56 percent of the 30-year average. The January 1, April through July was 350,000 acre-feet or 45 percent of average. The desired end of June target elevation of 6072 feet or lower was met. On June 30, the elevation of the lake was 6071 feet.

–The releases for the endangered fish require the San Juan River flow at Bluff to be above 500 cfs on a weekly basis for critical habitat throughout the entire year. Releases will be adjusted to meet this criteria.

–The Navajo Environmental Impact Statement team had proposed a low flow test in July with the flows being 250 cfs for four days. Due to the extreme drought conditions it was postponed. The irrigation companies and trout fishery interests stressed their concern that this low flow will cause problems. The low flow test may still be completed this fall.

Navajo Unit Maintenance Work:

–Maintenance and repair work on the two 72-inch hollow jet valves contract has been awarded; work should begin soon, and last possibly through December. During the maintenance and repair work, these valves will be inoperable, and the total controlled release capability from Navajo will be reduced to 2,800 cfs (1,600 cfs for 4X4 gate outlet; 1,200 cfs for power plant releases).

Other Comments:

–Concern was expressed by several individuals that both high and low flows cause problems with existing diversions on the river. These diversions support communities as well as irrigation companies and industries.

–The Navajo EIS will address many of the existing problems caused by high and low flows from the reservoir.

Bureau of Reclamation:

–Reclamation will prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describing the environmental impacts of alternatives for operating the dam and reservoir to implement the Recovery Program's flow recommendations. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is scheduled for release for public review in October 2000. Public comment period will be November and December 2000. This is the next formal opportunity for formal public participation. It should be noted, however, that this schedule is presently being reviewed and may be revised. Comments and concerns are welcome at any time. Contact Ken Beck at 970-385-6558. Information is also available at Reclamation's Internet web site: www.uc.usbr.gov (select Environmental Studies, Summaries, & Reports).

National Weather Service:

–Long-term models show warmer temperatures and monsoon conditions throughout the fall.

Next Meeting - Scheduled for ~~1:00 on Tuesday August 22~~, at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street). ---should be 1:00 on Tuesday, January 23, 2001---