

WCS-PPage  
ADM-10.00

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our April 23, 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 mid-April forecast predicted the most probable April-July inflow to Navajo Reservoir for this runoff season at 880,000 acre feet or about 114% percent of average seasonal runoff. Runoff predictions can still change between April and May, so inflow predictions should be considered preliminary at this time.

----- Since the April 23rd meeting, and based on the latest forecasted inflow, a spring release of 298,512 acre-feet will be made. We will begin ramping up the releases on May 15, 2001, reaching 5,000 cfs on May 23, 2001. Releases will remain at 5,000 cfs for 27 days before ramping down beginning on June 18, 2001. Releases will reach 500 cfs on June 27, 2001. For more information, including a chart showing the proposed spring release schedule, go to [www.uc.usbr.gov](http://www.uc.usbr.gov), reservoir operations, reservoirs, Navajo, current events.

– We will attempt to adjust releases from the dam, as necessary, to maintain a target base flow of between 500 cfs and 1000 cfs in the critical habitat section of the San Juan River, after the spring runoff. Minimum releases from the reservoir are scheduled to be 500 cfs, with the exception of the proposed low-flow test planned for this summer beginning July 9, during which time releases will be dropped to 250 cfs for a period ranging from five to ten days.

–Maintenance and repair work on the two 72" hollow jet valves was completed. After testing, some repair work was necessary on the coating. The re-coating is scheduled to be completed by May 11, 2001. The refurbishing of the 4'X4' regulating gate is tentatively scheduled for 2003. The 4'X4' guard gate will be refurbished in 2004.

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, August 21, 2001 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, SMcCall, DCrabtree, JOzga, KOzga., CStanton,  
KFogelquist, MSteves, RStorbo, JWright (ea w/encl)

WCD-PPage, RSwickard, JSimons, KLashmett, KBeck, MCharito, MFrancis, Bdodd,  
MVelasquez

Distribution list (e/encl)

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

April 23, 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, 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 review data on year 2000 operations; current year projected inflows to the reservoirs; and preliminary operation plans under maximum, most, and minimum probable water supply forecasts.

### 2000 Operation:

- Monthly basin inflows to Navajo Reservoir for April through July, 2000 was 288,800 acre-feet or 45% of the 30 year average. The total release for this time frame was 190,800 acre-feet or 60% of average. Reservoir releases varied from 500 cfs to 4,900 cfs. There was a spring release beginning May 30 through June 12, 2000 with a release of 4,900 cfs for one day. A one week ramp up and one week ramp down occurred. Navajo Reservoir elevation was seventeen feet below the spillway at elevation 6,078 feet, on July 31, 2000. The reservoir was fuller than the target elevation. The fall releases ranged from 600 to 900 cfs until October 22, for storage preparation of the 2001 spring runoff. The flow remained at 500 cfs for the remainder of the year.

### Preliminary April-July 2001 Operation:

–Based on the mid-April forecast, the most probable April-July inflow to Navajo Reservoir is 880,000 acre-feet or 114 percent of the 30-year average.

- As outlined in the Operating Rule Decision Tree from the San Juan Recovery Implementation Program Flow Recommendations, and with the forecasted inflows expected for Most Probable conditions, the spring release could begin as early as May 15, 2001, with two to three weeks at 5000 cfs. A perturbation is not required this year, however, releases will be made this spring to reach target reservoir elevations. The Biology Committee has indicated that an increased spring release would be preferred in lieu of high fall or winter releases to meet target elevations.

–The flow recommendations for the endangered fish call for target base flows in the critical habitat section of the San Juan River of between 500 cfs and 1,000 cfs. Reclamation will attempt to 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.

–The Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) team has rescheduled a proposed low flow test for July 9, 2001, with the releases being reduced to 250 cfs for a period ranging from five to ten days. Reclamation is in the process of finalizing an environmental assessment on the low flow test. During this test, data will be collected to evaluate impacts on all involved resources. The release will be stopped immediately, if any major significant impacts occur. Reclamation held public involvement meetings concerning the low flow test to gather input from all potentially affected parties. The Navajo Reservoir Operations EIS will address the impacts caused by high and low flows released from the reservoir.

#### Other Comments:

–Reclamation is preparing an 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 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](http://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](http://www.uc.usbr.gov) (select Reservoir Operations, Reservoirs, Navajo Reservoir, Meeting Notes).

Next Meeting - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21, 2001** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

Attendance List - April 23, 2001 Navajo Operations Meeting

Jim Brooks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque  
Joel D. Lusk, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque  
Mike Buntjer, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque  
Martin Duncan, SJRDWU, Inc., Shiprock  
Phil Gezon, Bureau of Land Management, Monticello  
Michael Sims, City of Farmington, Farmington  
J.C. Chirigos, City of Farmington, Farmington  
C. Nancy LaMascus, City of Farmington, Farmington  
Pete Valencia, Representative Tom Udall, Farmington  
Brian Avery, National Weather Service, Grand Junction  
Vern Harrell, Bureau of Reclamation, Cortez  
Steve Harris, Southwestern Water Conservation District, Durango  
John Leeper, Navajo Nation, Division of Water Resources, Fort DeFiance  
Steve Austin, Navajo Nation, EPA, Shiprock  
John Weiss, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO  
Ron Bliesner, Keller-Bliesner Engineering, Logan UT  
Ashley Willett, KOBF, Farmington  
Dan Slaver, KOBF, Farmington  
Doris Goode, New Mexico State Parks, Navajo Dam  
Marc Wethington, New Mexico Game and Fish, Navajo Dam  
Ken Beck, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Brad Dodd, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Ruth Swickard, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Pat Page, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
John Simons, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Kirk Lashmett, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Michael Francis, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango  
Ed Warner, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction  
Dan Crabtree, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction  
Paul Davidson, Bureau of Reclamation, Salt Lake City  
Nick Ashcroft, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield  
E. Earl Hickham, Farmer, Bloomfield  
James Doerr, Farmington  
Will Blanchard, Animas Valley Anglers, Durango