

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

April 13, 2004

**Participation:** This meeting was held in Farmington, New Mexico at the Civic Center. The attendance list is attached.

**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.

### **Preliminary April-July 2004 Planned Operation**

Based on the Most Probable Inflow Forecast as of April 5, 2004, the April through July forecasted inflow is 600,000 acre-feet, or 75 percent of average. The reservoir water surface elevation on April 12, 2004 was 6011.13 feet which corresponds to 831,865 acre-feet of live storage.

An overview of Navajo operations was presented. The San Juan Recovery Implementation Program (SJ RIP) is intended to recover endangered fish and allow for future water development. The flow recommendations attempt to mimic a natural (pre-dam) hydrograph. Reclamation is preparing the Navajo Reservoir Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to implement the flow recommendations, which call for minimum allowable releases of 250 cfs.

Reclamation increased the release from Navajo Reservoir from 250 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 350 cfs on Thursday, April 1, 2004. Subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), minimum allowable releases will be 350 cfs throughout the irrigation season.

Adjustments to the releases will be made as necessary to react to changing weather and stream flow conditions in order to meet downstream needs, including maintaining the target base flow for the endangered fish.

As outlined in the SJ RIP Operating Rule Decision Tree, and based on the April forecast, a spring peak release will not occur this year.

### **Navajo Dam Maintenance Activities**

A contract was awarded for repair and maintenance work on the auxiliary outlet works gates. Work is being done off site presently. Onsite work will begin in May and should be completed within nine months.

## **Navajo Reservoir / San Juan River Shortage Sharing**

A shortage sharing agreement was signed by ten major water users in the San Juan River Basin for 2004. The agreement is similar to what was developed for 2003. Two primary differences in this year's agreement relate to shortages to the endangered fish and the target base flow through critical habitat. The duration of shortages to the endangered fish would be reduced from what was planned last year, with the maximum shortage still being 50%

Also, as requested by the SJRIP Coordination Committee, the SJRIP Biology Committee developed a maintenance flow plan for endangered fish for 2004. The plan, which calls for a reduction in the minimum target base flow from 500 cfs to 400 cfs, would be implemented if the end-of-July content of Navajo Reservoir were predicted to be less than 1,000,000 af using the minimum probable inflow forecast. Based on the April 1<sup>st</sup> minimum probable inflow forecast, the end-of-July content was anticipated to be 865,000 acre-feet (af); therefore, the maintenance flow of 400 cfs is triggered. If future forecasts this year predict an end-of-July content of greater than 1,000,000 af, the target base flow would revert back to 500 cfs.

Based upon the current forecast, a shortage is not anticipated at this time.

## **Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement**

The Navajo Reservoir Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to describe the environmental impacts of alternatives for operating the dam and reservoir to implement the SJRBRIP flow recommendations has not been completed. The biological opinion (BO) is tentatively scheduled to be completed by the Fish and Wildlife Service within the next two months. It is anticipated that the FEIS could be released three months after a final BO is received. A Record of Decision would be signed sometime thereafter.

Since the FEIS has not been completed, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being completed for determining the minimum allowable release for this summer. Three alternatives are being considered: a minimum allowable release of 250 cfs, 350 cfs, and 500 cfs, respectively. The selected alternative will be in effect through the end of this irrigation season (October 2004) or when a Record of Decision is signed for the FEIS, whichever comes first. A public meeting will be held April 13, 2004, at 7:00 pm to present the plan and allow for public comment. Comments will be accepted through April 30, 2004. The final EA will be available prior to the end of May 2004.

**Next Meeting** - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 17, 2004** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

## Attendance List – April 13, 2004 Navajo Operations Meeting

Ashcroft, Nick, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM  
Ashman, Rob, San Juan Generation Station, PNM, Waterflow NM  
Balleon, P., BHP Billiton, Farmington NM  
Bliesner, Ron, Keller-Bliesner Engineering, Logan UT  
Bloomfield, Dave, Arizona Public Service, Fruitland NM  
Boretsky, John, New Mexico Council of Outfitters & Guides, Albuquerque NM  
Bryant, Doug, New Mexico State Parks, Navajo Dam NM  
Buntjer, Mike, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque NM  
Charley, Wilton, Navajo Agricultural Production Inc., Farmington NM  
Crawford, Carroll, Bloomfield Irrigation District and Citizen, Farmington NM  
Deswood, Luke P., Navajo Nation Water Resources, Ft. Defiance AZ  
Duncan, Martin, San Juan River Water Users Association, Shiprock NM  
Groseclose, Jay C., NM Interstate Stream Commission, Santa Fe NM  
Horner, Gary, Self, Farmington NM  
Jackson-John, Charmaine, Navajo Nation, Window Rock AZ  
Johnson, Lawrence W., Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM  
Kirkpatrick, Randy, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Knopick, Tom, Duranglers, Durango CO  
Krakow, Bob, BIA-NIIP, Farmington NM  
Lane, Harry, San Juan Trout Outfitters, Farmington NM  
Lashmett, Kirk, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Lee, Keith, San Juan Water Commission, Aztec NM  
LeFevre, Andrea, Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Dulce NM  
Lincoln Jr., Elmer J., BHP Billiton, Farmington NM  
McCall, Steve, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction CO  
Montoia, Paul A., City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Nesbit, Mark, Guide Service, Navajo Dam NM  
Nordlander, Ken, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
O'Brien, Maria, BHP Billiton, Albuquerque NM  
Oxford, Bob, Citizen, Farmington NM  
Page, Pat, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Ramaley, Karilee, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix, AZ  
Renfro, Jim, Lee Acres Water Association, Farmington NM  
Sidlow, Marc, Corp of Engineers, Albuquerque NM  
Simons, John, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Skillen, Buck, Trout Unlimited, Durango CO  
Smeal, Dan, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
Sorrelhorse, James, Navajo Nation Dept. of Emergency Management, Shiprock NM  
Stock, Lawrence, Waterflow NM  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Trost, Richard, BHP Billiton, Farmington NM  
Tsosie, Bernadette, Navajo Nation, Water Management Branch, Ft. Defiance AZ  
Valencia, Pete, Congressman Tom Udall, Farmington NM  
Velasquez, Mike, Bureau of Reclamation, Navajo Dam NM  
Walden, Larry, Bureau of Reclamation, Farmington NM  
Warner, Ed, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction CO  
Weiss, John, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO  
Wethington, Marc, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Navajo Dam NM  
Wilkinson, Peter New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe NM  
Williams, Shawn, City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Yazzi, Gilbert, San Juan River Water Users Association, Shiprock NM  
Yuska, Mark, Coop of Engineers, Albuquerque NM