

WCS-PPage
ADM-10.00

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations Meeting Notes

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 18, 2005, meeting to coordinate Reclamation's operation of the Navajo Unit. The meeting was held at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico.

Highlights of the meeting include:

— The April through July actual inflow to Navajo Reservoir was 1,182,000 acre-feet, or 150 percent of the 30- year average.

— Releases are currently at 500 cubic feet per second (cfs). Adjustments to the releases will be made as necessary to react to changing weather and stream flow conditions. The reservoir elevation on August 18, 2005 was 6074.95 feet which corresponds to 1,550,520 acre-feet of live storage. This is 112% of the 30-year average for this time of the year.

— A spring peak release was made from the reservoir this year. Releases were ramped up beginning April 27, 2005. Because of stream gage errors, the peak release was approximately 4,500 cfs. Releases remained at 4,500 cfs for four weeks and were then ramped down to 500 cfs over a period of two weeks. All flow criteria as identified in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's (SJRIP) Flow Recommendations were met.

—The preliminary inflow forecast for 2006 is estimated to be around 97% of the 30 year average. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.

— The Navajo Reservoir Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been delayed pending completion of a biological opinion under the Endangered Species Act. Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service are scheduled to meet to resolve remaining issues. It is estimated that it would take a minimum five months before the FEIS could be completed and a Record of Decision (ROD) signed.

— In lieu of a ROD, and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared for operations this winter (November 2005 to April 2006). The EA will contain a preferred alternative that would allow minimum releases as low as 250 cfs; however, based on current storage conditions and the preliminary outlook for the 2006 water year, current projections show releases of not less than 500 cfs throughout the winter. If snowpack conditions do not materialize, releases could be reduced to as low as 250 cfs, subject to finalizing the EA.

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 24, 2006 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,

Pat Page
Water Management Group Chief

Enclosure

BC: Regional Director, Salt Lake City, UT

Attention: UC-100, UC-140, UC-400, UC-434, UC-436, UC-438, UC-600, UC-700, UC-723,
UC-720, UC-726, UC-735 (ea w/encl)

Director, Technical Service Center, Denver, CO

Attention: D-8510 (w/encl)

WCG-CDeAngelis, SMoyer, EWarner, DCrabtree, SMcCall, KOzga, CStanton, MSteves, JHock (ea
w/encl)

WCD-PPage, RSwickard, JSimons, Klashmett, KBeck, MCharito, BDodd, MVelasquez
(ea w/encl)

FCO – LWalden FCO-150

NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

August 18, 2005

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.

2005 Water Year Summary

The actual inflow into Navajo Reservoir during April through July 2005 was 1,182,000 or 150 percent of the 30 year average. The reservoir water surface elevation on August 18, 2005 was 6074.95 feet which corresponds to 1,550,520 acre-feet of live storage.

A spring peak release was made from the reservoir this year. Releases were ramped up beginning April 27, 2005. Because of stream gage errors, the peak release was approximately 4,500 cfs (instead of 5,000 cfs). Releases remained at 4,500 cfs for four weeks and were then ramped down to 500 cfs over a period of two weeks. The total spring peak release was approximately 397,242 acre-feet. All flow criteria as identified in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's (SJRIP) Flow Recommendations were met.

Releases have remained at 500 cfs through most of the summer and the target base flow through the endangered fish critical habitat area has been maintained. Releases will be increased as necessary in order to maintain the minimum target base flow of 500 cfs.

Preliminary 2006 Operation

Because a long-term forecast is not available, the proposed operation of the reservoir for 2006 is based on the short-term (August through October 2005) forecast and 30-year inflow statistics for November 2005 through September 2006. Using this information, the inflow in 2006 is estimated to be 97% of the 30-year average. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.

Navajo Reservoir / San Juan River Water Sharing

There has been some interest expressed by water users to develop a water sharing agreement again for 2006.

Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement

The Navajo Reservoir Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been delayed pending completion of a biological opinion under the Endangered Species Act. Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service are scheduled to meet to resolve any remaining issues remaining. It is estimated that it would take a minimum five months before the FEIS could be completed and a Record of Decision (ROD) signed.

In lieu of a ROD, and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared for operations this winter (November 2005 to April 2006). The EA will contain a preferred alternative that would allow minimum releases as low as 250 cfs; however, based on current storage conditions and the preliminary outlook for the 2006 water year, current projections show releases of not less than 500 cfs throughout the winter. If snowpack conditions do not materialize, releases could be reduced to as low as 250 cfs, subject to finalizing the EA.

Next Meeting - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 24, 2006** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

Attendance List – August 18, 2005 Navajo Operations Meeting

Ashcroft, Nick, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM
Ashman, Rob, San Juan Generation Station, PNM, Waterflow NM
Bloomfield, Dave, Arizona Public Service, Fruitland NM
Campbell, Dave, US Fish & Wildlife, Albuquerque, NM
Charley, Wilton, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, Farmington NM
Crawford, Carroll, Bloomfield Irrigation District and Citizen, Farmington NM
Horner, Gary, Self, Farmington NM
Johnson, Larry, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo NM
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM
Lashmett, Kirk, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO
Lynch, Steve, BIA, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington, NM
Martinez, Paul, City of Farmington, Farmington, NM
Mueller, Steve, New Mexico State Parks, Navajo Dam NM
Oxford, Bob, Citizen, Farmington NM
Page, Pat, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO
Renfro, Jim, Lee Acres Water Association, Farmington NM
Richmond, Linda, Bureau of Land Management, Bluff UT
Simons, John, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO
Trost, Rick, BHP Billiton, Farmington, NM
Valencia, Pete, Congressman Tom Udall, Farmington, NM
Weiss, John, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO
Whitehead, Bruce, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Durango, CO
Wood, Zang, Self, Farmington, NM