

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations Meeting Notes

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our January 22, 2008, 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 most probable April through July unregulated inflow to Navajo Reservoir was 1,030,000 acre-feet, or 133 percent of the 30-year average. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.
- The reservoir elevation on December 31, 2007 was 6,069.89 feet which corresponds to approximately 1,479, 000 acre-feet of live storage which was 114 percent of the 30-year average. The releases during December 2007 were 41,700 acre-feet or 77 percent of average. Precipitation for the month of November in the San Juan Basin was 35 percent of average, but December was high at 260 percent of average. This has put the current basin snowpack at 156 percent of average.
- The release from Navajo Reservoir has been 750 cfs since mid-October 2007, with the exception of a few weeks in November when the release was cut back to 250 cfs to accommodate the Trout Habitat Improvement project on the San Juan River below the dam.
- The most probable April-July 2008 inflow estimate, based on the mid-January forecast, is 850,000 acre-feet, which corresponds to 130 percent of the 30 year average.
- Based on the most recent inflow forecast, a spring peak release will occur this year. The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's (SJRIP) Flow Recommendations call for full hydrograph release of 5,000 cfs for three weeks. In addition, because of the amount of inflow currently forecasted, an additional volume of water would be released prior to the spring peak and an additional 9 days would be added to the 5,000 cfs peak release. The additional release would consist of a 2,500 cfs release starting in early March and extending through into May prior to the ramp up to 5,000 cfs.

***UPDATE! Since the meeting, and based on the February 1<sup>st</sup> forecast, Reclamation has revised the proposed operating plan for Navajo Reservoir for 2008. Beginning February 11, 2008, the release will be increased to 3,000 cfs where it will stay until mid-May when it will be ramped up to 5,000 cfs for 30 days.***

Copies of these minutes are available online at  
<http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/mtgs/nmcurrnt.html>.

If you have any suggestions on improving the operation meetings or the summaries of the meetings, please let us know. The next meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 24, 2008 at 1:00 at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call me at 970-385-6560 or Ruth Swickard at 970-385-6523.

Sincerely,

Pat Page  
Water Management Group Chief

Enclosure

bc: 86-68140  
UC-400, UC-434, UC-438, UC-436, UC-600, UC-723, UC-720, UC-726 (ea w/encl)  
WCG-CDeAngelis, WCG-EWarner, WCG-DCrabtree, WCG-SMcCall, WCG-MSteves,  
WCG-JHock (ea w/encl)  
WCD-PPage, WCD-RSwickard, WCD-JSimons, WCD-RChristianson, WCD-MChiarito,  
WCD-BDodd, WCD-MVelasquez (ea w/encl)

WBR:PPage:MDombrowski:2/11/08:02-11-08 Jan 22 Final NavOpMtg.doc

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

January 22, 2008

**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.

### **2007 Review Operations**

The actual inflow into Navajo Reservoir during April through July 2007 was 487,993 or 75 percent of the 30 year average. The reservoir water surface elevation on December 31, 2007 was 6,069.89 feet which corresponds to 1,479,000 acre-feet of live storage at 114 percent of average. Inflows in December were approximately 40,150 acre-feet at 77 percent of average. The total inflow for December was 41,000 acre-feet which was 260 percent of the 30 year average.

Due to projections of higher than average reservoir water surface elevation, a fall peak release was scheduled and then cancelled. Following discussions with the Fish & Wildlife Service, it was determined that the base release could be set at 750 cfs this fall and winter in an effort to lower the water surface elevation. The release has remained at 750 cubic feet per second (cfs) since mid-October 2007, with the exception of a few weeks in November when it was cut back to 250 cfs to accommodate the Trout Habitat Improvement project on the San Juan River below the dam.

### **Proposed 2008 Operation (Very Preliminary)**

The most probable April-July 2008 inflow, based on the mid-January forecast, is 850,000 acre-feet, which corresponds to 130 percent of the 30 year average.

Under the current inflow forecast, the maximum spring peak release hydrograph (5,000 cfs for 21 days), as identified in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) flow recommendations, would occur. In addition, in order to avoid a spill, a "nose" would be added to the release which would entail increasing the release to 2,500 cfs beginning on March 8<sup>th</sup>, and keeping it there until approximately May 11<sup>th</sup> at which time the release would be increased to 5,000 cfs over a 2 week period. Also, in order to evacuate enough water to maintain a manageable reservoir elevation of about 6,070 feet, an additional 9 days of 5,000 cfs releases would be added to the back end of the release (for a total of 30 days at 5,000 cfs). This would be followed with a 5 day ramp down to the base release of 500 cfs. However, this is very

preliminary and as updated forecasts become available, the spring release may change.

***UPDATE! Since the meeting, and based on the February 1<sup>st</sup> forecast, Reclamation has revised the proposed operating plan for Navajo Reservoir for 2008. Beginning February 11, 2008, the release will be increased to 3,000 cfs where it will stay until mid-May when it will be ramped up to 5,000 cfs for 30 days.***

The possibility of a fall peak release remains and will be dependent upon the inflow received over the summer months and the elevation of the reservoir.

### **Agency/Organization Activities and Discussion of Related Activities**

Congressman Tom Udall's Office – working on legislation...impact of climate change on water in the West. New Mexico's infrastructure is inefficient and outdated to meet current water supply needs...need to conserve to avoid shortages.

Navajo Nation – three weeks needed for Hogback Diversion work...should begin in mid-January. Agrees with the proposed most probable spring release with 30 days at 5,000 cfs.

Colorado Division of Water Resources – Colorado has a new State Engineer (Dick Wolfe). No Division 7 engineer has been selected as of yet.

City of Farmington – signed the contract with Navajo Nation and Bureau of Reclamation for the Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline which is a feature of the Animas-La Plata Project. Construction will begin within the year.

New Mexico State Engineer's Office – completed installing measurement devices throughout the basin. All diversions are now metered.

New Mexico State Parks – are looking forward to a great summer. The recreation was great during 2007 and should be even better in 2008.

Colorado State Parks – concurred with the New Mexico State Parks.

Concerned Citizen – Wanted to know if area of river immediately downstream from dam was ever going to be re-opened. Stated this was the traditional access for those who are elderly or with disabilities. Current access to the river is difficult for some to reach. Preliminary response given was that, due to added security after 9/11, it is unlikely that that area will be opened up to the public, but suggested that he write a letter to Reclamation requesting an official response.

The Hammond Project – ready for the irrigation season to begin.

**Next Meeting** - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 24, 2008** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

## **Attendance List – January 22, 2008 Navajo Operations Meeting**

Bloomfield, Dave, Arizona Public Service, Fruitland NM  
Campbell, Dave, US Fish & Wildlife, Albuquerque NM  
Chavez, Aaron, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Christianson, Ryan, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Crawford, Carroll, Bloomfield Irrigation District, Bloomfield NM  
Dennis, Neal, Navajo State Park, Arboles CO  
Jim, Kuthen J., San Juan River Dineh Water Users Assoc., Shiprock NM  
Hanna, Robert, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, Farmington NM  
Hart, Cheston, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Durango CO  
Hodges, Jimmy, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Horner, Gary, Citizen, Farmington NM  
Isaacson, Mike, Keller-Bliesner Engineering, Logan UT  
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
LeFevre, Andrea, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce NM  
Maltince, Aaron, New Mexico State Parks, Navajo Dam NM  
Montoia, Paul, City of Farmington, Farmington, NM  
Mueller, Steve, New Mexico State Parks, Navajo Dam NM  
Nes, Walter, NAPI, Farmington NM  
Nigel, Warren, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Water Division, Dulce NM  
Novak, Andreas, Citizen  
Oxford, Bob, Citizen, Farmington NM  
Page, Pat, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Reardon, Peter, Citizen, Chimney Rock, CO  
Secrist, Doug, Navajo State Park, Arboles CO  
Sheppard, Paul, Citizen, Durango CO  
Simons, John, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Snadling, Jeremiah, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM  
Sabo, Dave, US Fish & Wildlife, Albuquerque NM  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Tavener, John, Sandstone Anglers, Aztec NM  
Thomas, Art, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington NM  
Toller, Ernest, BIA, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington NM  
Truby-Tillen, Michele, Office of Emergency Management, Aztec NM  
Valencia, Pete, Congressman Tom Udall, Farmington NM  
Wethington, Marc, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Navajo Dam NM  
Whitmore, Sharon, US Fish & Wildlife, Albuquerque NM  
Williams, Michael, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM  
Williams, Shawn, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Yazzie, Duane, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington NM