

WCS-PPage  
PRJ-13.10

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations Meeting Notes

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 26, 2008, meeting to coordinate Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) 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 750,319 acre-feet, or 115% of the 30-year average.

— A spring peak release was made beginning with a rampup on May 19<sup>th</sup>, reaching 5,000 cfs on May 28<sup>th</sup> and ramping down from June 19<sup>th</sup> to June 25<sup>th</sup>. The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's (SJRIP) Flow Recommendation called for the 21-Day, 5,000 cfs hydrograph release. The SJRIP Flow Recommendation statistics were met for the 10-day-2,500 cfs, 21-day-5,000 cfs, and greater than 8,000 cfs for 10 days requirements.

— Base releases will be 500 cfs for the fall and winter. Adjustments will be made as necessary to react to changing weather and stream flow conditions. The reservoir elevation on August 25, 2008 was 6,060.10 feet (98% of the 30-year average for the month of August) which corresponds to 1,348,816 acre-feet of live storage. The reservoir is 79% of full capacity.

—The preliminary inflow for 2009 is assumed to be around 100% of the 30-year average for the most probable inflow condition. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.

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 27, 2009 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.

Sincerely,

Pat Page  
Water Management Group Chief

Enclosure

BC: 86-68140

UC-400, UC-432, UC-430, UC-434, UC-700, UC-735 (ea w/encl)

WCG-EWarner, WCG-DCrabtree, WCG-SMcCall, WCG-JHock (ea w/encl)

WCD-PPage, WCD-RSwickard, WCD-RChristianson, WCD-MChiarito,

WCD-BDodd, WCD-MVelasquez (ea w/encl)

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

August 26, 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.

### 2008 Water Year Summary

The total regulated inflow for the 2008 April-July season was recorded at 750,319 acre-feet, or about 115% of average runoff. The reservoir had a seasonal peak elevation of 6,066.84 feet on May 25, 2008.

The San Juan Basin snowpack (SNOTEL) in early February was at 159% of average, and the March April through July inflow forecast was for an estimated 1,400,000 acre-feet into Navajo Reservoir. Navajo Reservoir began releasing higher than average releases of 3,000 cfs on February 11, 2008 for flood control. Releases were increased to 4,000 cfs on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> to account for another increase in the inflow forecast. The releases were decreased March 24<sup>th</sup> to 3,400 cfs to accommodate an inspection of the auxiliary outlet works. Releases continued at 4,000 cfs on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The release was held at 4,000 cfs until April 7<sup>th</sup> when it was decreased to 1,600 cfs for an inspection of the auxiliary outlet works. On April 8<sup>th</sup> the release was resumed at 2,200 cfs due to a drop in the inflow forecast. As the forecasted inflow continued to decrease, the release was dropped to 1,000 cfs on May 12<sup>th</sup>. On May 19<sup>th</sup> the Spring Peak Release began with a rampup to 5,000 cfs on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The release remained at 5,000 cfs until June 19<sup>th</sup>, with exception of a one day auxiliary outlet inspection on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The ramp down continued until reaching 500 cfs on June 25<sup>th</sup>. No problems were identified with the auxiliary or main outlet works inspections, other than normal wear and tear.

Releases have remained at 500 cfs since June 25<sup>th</sup>, but were increased to 750 cfs on August 19<sup>th</sup> in order to meet the target base flow in the critical habitat area. Releases will be adjusted as necessary in order to meet the target base flow requirements.

### Preliminary 2009 Operation

The 2009 Ensemble Streamflow Prediction (ESP) forecast for unregulated inflow is predicted to be near average. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.

Based on this preliminary prediction, base releases will be 500 cfs this winter.

Assuming this average inflow, a one to two week spring peak release of 5,000 cfs would be made.

No water shortages are anticipated for Water Year 2009.

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

New Mexico State Engineer's Office is continuing to oversee the water measurement devices throughout the basin.

Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) was awarded a grant under Reclamation's Water 2025 program. The cost-share funding will be used to install a canal gate operating system and an irrigation scheduling program to decrease annual canal spills.

Fish & Wildlife Service indicated that results of this year's spring peak release should be available in February or March 2009.

New Mexico Game & Fish asked what the consequences of a dry fall and early winter might be in regard to reservoir operations. Reclamation replied that if that happened, there might be a need to reduce the releases to something less than the 500 cfs rate that is anticipated this winter.

A citizen questioned the science behind how the impacts to the trout fishery were determined in the Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement.

A citizen questioned why some of the spring release water was not held back to use to supplement the flows in the summer. Reclamation replied that due to the reservoir being higher than average coming into the spring runoff, coupled with the forecasted inflow amount, it was necessary to pre-release water in order to avoid spilling the reservoir. Having higher releases in the summer to supplement the flows could cause the target base flow to not be met and generally goes against the concept of the Flow Recommendations which is to operate the reservoir in a manner which better mimics the natural, pre-dam hydrograph – big flows in the spring followed by lower base flows in the non-spring months.

**Next Meeting** - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2009** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

## **Attendance List – August 26, 2008 Navajo Operations Meeting**

Baker, Herb, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Water Division, Dulce NM  
Bloomfield, Dave, Arizona Public Service, Fruitland NM  
Brinton, Scott, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Durango CO  
Carlson, Tom, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Chavez, Aaron, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Christianson, Ryan, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Cunningham, Ken, NM Department of Game & Fish, Navajo Dam, NM  
Davis, Kim, Navajo Nation Water Resources, Fort Defiance, AZ  
Duncan, Martin, San Juan River Dineh Water Users Assoc., Shiprock NM  
Goen, Mike, PNM San Juan Generating Station, Waterflow NM  
Franklin, Abraham, New Mexico Emergency Dept./SWQB, Santa Fe NM  
Henderson, Gerald, Shiprock Emergency Management, Shiprock NM  
Henrion, Rob, USGS, Albuquerque, NM  
Hodges, Jimmy, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Joe, Jimson, Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, Window Rock, AZ  
Johnston, Clay, Citizen, Blanco CO  
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
LeFevre, Andrea, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce NM  
Lynch, Steve, BIA, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington NM  
McKinnon, Kristen, Wild Rivers Expeditions, Bluff, UT  
Montia, Paul A., City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Norlander, Ken, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Novak, Andreas, Concerned Citizens for the San Juan River, Farmington NM  
Oxford, Bob, BJ Resources, Farmington NM  
Page, Pat, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Wethington, Marc, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, Navajo Dam, NM  
Tillen, Michele, San Juan County OEM, Aztec NM  
Velenzuele, James, NM State Parks, 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