



United States Department of the Interior

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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PRJ-13.00

FEB 09 2012

Dear Interested Party:

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations Meeting Notes

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enclosed is a summary of our January 24, 2012, 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, based on the mid-January forecast, is 600,000 acre-feet, or 81 percent of the 30-year average. However, this is very preliminary and will change as updated forecasts become available.
- The reservoir elevation on January 22, 2012 was 6,056.2 feet which corresponds to approximately 1,299,979 acre-feet of storage which was 99% of average and 76% full.
- Precipitation for the month of December in the San Juan Basin was less than average following a near average fall. As of January 23, 2012, the current basin snowpack was at 87 percent of average with a snow water equivalent (SWE) of 9.5 inches.
- The release from Navajo Reservoir has been approximately 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) through the time of the meeting, except. during the month of November, the release was decreased to approximately 350 cfs for the NM Game and Fish trout habitat restoration work on the river. The possibility of reducing the release to 350 cfs during the winter months for water conservation during drought years was discussed.
- Based on the January Mid-Month Inflow Forecast, a spring peak release hydrograph of 1-week at 5,000 cfs will be released this year. However, this can change with a increase in the inflow forecast. The reservoir is currently at a manageable elevation making it unlikely to require extended flood control releases or shortages this year.

Copies of the material presented and meeting notes from the January 24 meeting are available online at:

<http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/mtgs/pdfs/archieves/NavajoJan12Meeting.pdf>

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 **Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 1:00 at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call me at 970-385-6590.

Sincerely,



Ryan Christianson
Water Management Group Chief

Enclosure

NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

January 24, 2012

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 tri-annually 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.

Review of Operations

A quick overview was given of the Navajo operations since the last meeting.

A graph was used to show daily data, demonstrating how adjustments to the post-runoff release were used to keep downstream flows within the target base flow range.

Water Year 2012 Conditions & Forecasts

The fall 2011 precipitation pattern was near average, mostly due to a wetter than average October. Snowpack in December and the first of January has been below average. Soil moisture levels were near average, when modeled on December 1st, which will contribute to a more efficient runoff.

The average snowpack above Navajo Reservoir, as of January 23, 2012, was at 87 percent of average with a snow water equivalent (SWE) of 9.5 inches, which is slightly higher than neighboring river basins.

The most probable April-July inflow, based on the mid-January forecast, is 600,000 acre-feet, which is 81 percent of the 30-year average. The minimum probable and maximum probable April-July inflow forecasts are 430,000 acre-feet (58% of average) and 845,000 acre-feet (114% of average), respectively. SNOTEL analysis shows that this forecast may be a bit high based on historical snowpacks for this time of year.

The Climate Prediction Center indicates precipitation will continue to have a greater than average probability of below average precipitation for the next few months. ENSO models are all showing a trend back to neutral (El Nino/ La Nina) conditions by summer.

Current Reservoir Status

The reservoir elevation on January 22, 2012 was 6,056.2 feet which corresponds to approximately 1,299,979 acre-feet of storage, which is 99% of average or 76% percent full. The current release to the river is approximately 500 cfs.

An overview of the conditions of nearby reservoirs was presented. Vallecito Reservoir's forecasted inflow indicates it should fill. Currently, the Vallecito Reservoir is approximately 61% full, which is 120% of average for mid-January. Forecasted inflow for Lemon Reservoir remain below average, making it unlikely the reservoir will fill this year. Currently, Lemon is approximately 35% of full, which is only 66% of average. Lake Nighthorse is 98% full. No pumping is anticipated until just before the project is transferred to the OM&R Association, which is expected to occur sometime this summer.

Water Year 2012 Operations

Under the current, most probable inflow forecast, a spring peak release hydrograph of 1-week at 5,000 cfs will be released this year. This can change with an increase in the inflow forecast. It is unlikely a decrease in the forecast would be of such magnitude to decrease the amount of available water, resulting in no spring peak release. The reservoir is currently at a manageable elevation making it unlikely to have extended flood control releases or shortages this year.

Using the current most probable forecast, the San Juan River downstream of Farmington would see slightly below normal flows, peaking near 6,000 cfs in late May or early June. This estimate is based on models using comparable historical years, and the current peak release hydrograph, which is likely to change throughout the season.

The possibility of reducing the release to 350 cfs during the winter months for water conservation during drought years was discussed. Target base flows would still be met, and water savings of about 45,000 acre-feet could be expected. 350 cfs is the goal base release in the 2006 Record of Decision (ROD). Trout habitat improvement projects may minimize impacts to the trout fishery.

Maintenance Activities

The maintenance of the 6x13 emergency gate bonnet was repaired and the project was completed safely. During the gate maintenance, the release was diverted through the auxiliary gate. No major maintenance work has been scheduled during the remainder of the year.

Agency/Organization Activities and Discussion of Related Activities

New Mexico Game & Fish Department – There are additional proposed habitat improvement

projects to be scheduled for next fall. A request for reduced releases may be necessary; however the work might be able to be accomplished with the release at 500 cfs.

Bloomfield Irrigation District – The ditches are scheduled to receive water during the next week for filling ponds.

Next Meeting - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 2012** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

Attendance List – January 24, 2012 Navajo Operations Meeting

Adams, Erica, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ
Ashcroft, Nick, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM
Benally, Aaron, Navajo Nation Emergency Management, Shiprock NM
Broughton, Brian, CO Division of Water Resources, Durango CO
Christianson, Ryan, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO
Crawford, Carroll, Bloomfield Irrigation District, Bloomfield NM
Day, Henry, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ
Dennis, Neal, Navajo State Park, Arboles CO
Durst, Scott, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Farmington NM
Hodges, Jimmy, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM
Howe, Michael, NIIP, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Farmington NM
Greene, Mike, PNM, Albuquerque NM
Joe, Jeanette, Navajo Agricultural Products Industries, Farmington NM
Johnson, Clay, Citizen, Blanco NM
Johnson, Larry, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM
Leavesley, Brain, CO Division of Water Resources, Durango CO
Lile, Carrie, Southwest Water Conservation District, Durango CO
McKinnon, Kristen, Wild Rivers Expeditions, Bluff, UT
Miller, Gordon, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM
Montoia, Paul, City of Farmington, Farmington NM
Multin, Daryl, Navajo Agricultural Products Industries, Farmington NM
Oxford, Bob, Citizen, Farmington NM
Peterman, Ron, City of Farmington, Farmington NM
Prda, Sam, West Hammond Water Users, Bloomfield NM
Secrist, Doug, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO
Smith, Brad, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO
Tyler, Chester, Navajo Nation Emergency Management, Shiprock NM
VanWinkle, Barb, Colorado State Parks, Arboles CO
Wauneka, Julie, Navajo Dept of Emergency Management, Shiprock NM
Watson, Blaine, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM
Wethington, Marc, NM Department of Game and Fish, Navajo Dam NM
Williams, Shawn, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM