

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
NAVAJO RESERVOIR  
AUGUST 21, 2012 MEETING NOTES  
SENT VIA FAX AND E-MAIL**

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 21, 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:

≡ A special presentation was presented by Senior Hydrologist Greg Smith from the Colorado Basin River Forecasting Center (CBRFC) in Salt Lake City, Utah. He discussed how the near-term and long-range water supply forecasts are compiled for Reclamation's guidance.

≡ Precipitation for the 2012 water year was below average in most locations within the San Juan Basin.

≡ The April through July modified unregulated inflow to Navajo Reservoir, was 310,296 acre-feet, or 42% of the 30-year average. The reservoir inflows continued to be below average thorough out the water year.

≡ The reservoir elevation on August 20, 2012 was 6,041.83 feet (81% of the 30-year average for the month of August) which corresponds to 1,132,723 acre-feet of live storage. The reservoir is at 67% of total capacity.

≡ A one week, 5,000 cfs spring peak release occurred beginning on May 21<sup>st</sup> reaching 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) on May 23<sup>th</sup> for seven days with a three day ramp down starting on May 30<sup>th</sup> reaching 500 cfs on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The release was earlier than previous peak releases due to warmer weather causing early runoff on the Animas River.

≡ A temporary decrease in releases was requested by the San Juan River Improvement Program (SJRIP) committee for in stream work beginning on August 22 at the Public Service of New Mexico (PNM) fish ladder. The release was reduced to 650 cfs for a period of nine hours on August 21. Following this work, the release was increased to 1,000 cfs due to the drier forecasted conditions. The target base flow in the critical habitat reach was suspended temporarily by the SJRIP to allow for these lower flow conditions.

≡ The most probable unregulated inflow forecast (based on the CBRFC's ESP August Model Run) for Water Year 2013 is forecasting a one week spring peak release. Under the maximum

probable forecast a full hydrograph could be met with a spring peak release of 5,000 cfs for three weeks with one week full ramps at the beginning and ending of the release. The minimum probable forecast will not require a spring peak release. This is very preliminary and will likely change as updated forecasts become available. Climate models indicate a wide variance centered over average conditions.

Copies of these meeting notes and the material presented at the meeting 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 **Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 1:00 at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call Ryan Christianson at 970-385-6590 or email [rchristianson@usbr.gov](mailto:rchristianson@usbr.gov).

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

August 21, 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 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.

### Guest Speaker

A special presentation on long-range weather and streamflow forecasting used in operations for the San Juan Basin was presented by Greg Smith, Senior Hydrologist from the Colorado Basin River Forecasting Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. In summary, the Autumn forecast for the next water year is generally based solely on historic climate, soil moisture, and current streamflow conditions. Future forecasts will trend towards the historical mean. Significant improvement in the forecasts occurs in the winter and spring as snowfall accumulates.

### Water Year 2012 Hydrologic Conditions

The precipitation pattern over the 2012 water year was highly variable, but mostly falling below average. Most months had below average precipitation throughout the basin with the exception of July.

San Juan Basin snowpack above Navajo Reservoir had below average snowpack for most of the year.

The April through July modified unregulated inflow to Navajo Reservoir, was 310,296 acre-feet, or 42% of the 30-year average.

### Review of Water Year 2012 Operations to date

A one week, 5,000 cfs spring peak release was made beginning on May 21<sup>st</sup> reaching 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) on May 23<sup>rd</sup> for seven days with a three day ramp down starting on May 30<sup>th</sup> reaching 500 cfs on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The release volume totaled an additional 80,000 cfs over the base flow. The release was earlier than previous peak releases due to warmer weather causing an early runoff on the Animas River.

The one week release was required by the San Juan RIP flow recommendations. There was no perturbation in the previous year. The release was timed to occur during the Animas River peak flow.

The goal of achieving flows in the critical habitat reach of greater than 2500 cfs for 10-days was the only SJRIP goal met.

### **Current Conditions**

The reservoir elevation on August 20, 2012 was 6,042 feet which corresponds to approximately 1,132,723 acre-feet of storage which is 81 percent of the 30-year average. The reservoir was 67 percent of the total capacity. The current release to the river was approximately 900 cfs.

A brief update on nearby reservoirs was provided. At the Animas-La Plata Project, the reservoir (Lake Nighthorse) pool elevation was 6879 feet and the current storage was 109,927 ac-ft. The live full capacity is approximately 115,075 ac-ft at an elevation of 6882 feet. Releases for flow testing from the lake to Basin Creek occurred for five days from July 30th to August 3rd. The maximum release was 150 cfs and the total volume released was approximately 400 ac-ft. No further releases or pumping from the Animas River is anticipated until the transfer to the Animas La-Plata Operation, Maintenance and Replacement Association (OM&RA). Vallecito Reservoir elevation was 7640 with storage of 63,985 ac-ft (51% full, 83% of average). The release was 563 cfs and the inflow was 124 cfs. At Lemon Reservoir, the elevation was 8075 feet with a current storage of 8,415 ac-ft (21% full, 39% of average). The release was 139 cfs and the inflow was 37 cfs.

### **Water Year 2013 Forecasts**

Forecasts from the Climate Prediction Center shows a wide variance centered over average conditions for WY2013.

Under the most probable CBRFC forecast on the ESP model, is indicating approximately 384,000 ac-ft of available water next spring. This prediction would result in a one week hydrograph spring peak release, consisting of seven days at 5,000 cfs. If the maximum probable inflow forecast of 593,000 ac-ft occurs, a full three week spring peak release would be required. The minimum probable forecast will not require a spring peak release. A base release of 350-500 cfs would continue through the winter and into the spring unless hydrologic conditions change. This is a very preliminary forecast that will likely change as the season progresses.

### **Maintenance Activities**

Rehabilitation work was completed on the left groin seepage area just above the road on the downside of the dam. No further rehabilitation or unusual maintenance work is scheduled for the remainder of the year.

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

Bloomfield Irrigation District –District will shut down for 2 to 3 days to remove a large rock from the ditch at the inlet structure.

Fish & Wildlife – SJRIP – Planning to apply remote tag meters to fish near PNM. They are considering also tagging fish near Hogback and/or Mexico Hat this fall. The McElmo Creek fish and monitoring sites have been completed. SJRIP Biology Committee will hold meetings from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in the Durango public lands room at the Forest Service Building. A Coordination Committee meeting will be held on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00 am to 3:00 pm also in the public lands room.

BLM – Reported losing equipment, a drift boat and two canoes were destroyed. The Monticello Office has lost approximately \$20,000 this season, mostly due to less river permits issued. The office operates using user fee revenues.

**Next Meeting** - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 15, 2013** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

## **Attendance List – August 21, 2012 Navajo Operations Meeting**

Ashcroft, Nick, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM  
Ben, Shannon, City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Benally, Quentin, Navajo Agricultural Production Industry, Farmington NM  
Bridge, Capt. Nicole, Fisheads Fly Fishing, Navajo Dam 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  
Dumont, Jim, Senator Bingaman Representative, Farmington NM  
Durst, Scott, U.S. Forest Service, Albuquerque NM  
Goode, Doris, Navajo Lake State Park, Navajo Dam NM  
Green, Kristin, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Albuquerque NM  
Greene, Mike, Public Service of New Mexico, Bloomfield NM  
Hodges, Jimmy, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Howe, Michael, Bureau of Indian Affairs, NIIP, Farmington NM  
Joe, Jeanette, Navajo Agricultural Production Industry, Farmington NM  
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
Laster, Steve, Lee Acres Water Users, Farmington NM  
Lile, Carrie, Southwest Conservation District, Durango CO  
McKim, Doug, Navajo Lake State Park, Navajo Dam NM  
Miller, Gordon, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Munoz, Mark, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Nesbit, Capt. Mark, Blue Sky Fly Fishing, Navajo Dam NM  
Prder, Sam, West Hammond Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM  
Ragsdale, Steve, Citizen, Aztec NM  
Richmond, Linda, Bureau of Land Management, Moab UT  
Smith, Brad, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Sorrelhorse, James, Shiprock Dept. of Emergency Management, Shiprock NM  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Tensfield, Jerry, Bureau of Reclamation, Navajo Dam NM  
Vigil, Warren, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce NM  
Wethington, Marc, NM Department of Fish and Game, Navajo Dam NM  
Williams, Shawn, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM