

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
NAVAJO RESERVOIR  
AUGUST 26, 2014 MEETING NOTES  
SENT VIA FAX AND E-MAIL**

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our August 26, 2014, 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 2014 water year snowpack was below average for most of the San Juan River Basin.
- April through July observed inflow to Navajo Reservoir, was 428,086 acre-feet, or 58% of the 30-year average.
- 
- A spring peak release did not occur, in favor of recovering storage in the reservoir.
- The reservoir elevation on August 24, 2014 was 6,038.68 feet which corresponds to 1,098,609 acre-feet of live storage. The reservoir is presently at 65% of the live capacity and 43% of active capacity.
- The most probable April through July unregulated inflow forecast for water year 2015 is 85% of average, and the calculated available water is enough to qualify for a spring peak release. This is preliminary and will likely change as updated forecasts become available. Climate models indicate a wide variance centered over average conditions.
- Current models show a 65% chance of a weak or moderate El Nino forming this winter. Impacts on the basin are uncertain.

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 for the operation meetings or the summaries of the meetings, please let us know. The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 1:00 at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please call Ryan Christianson at 970-248-0652 or email [rchristianson@usbr.gov](mailto:rchristianson@usbr.gov) or Susan Novak Behery at 970-385-6560 or email [sbehery@usbr.gov](mailto:sbehery@usbr.gov).

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

August 26, 2014

**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.

### Water Year 2014 Hydrologic Conditions

The October 2013 to July 30 2014 precipitation throughout the San Juan River Basin was approximately 50% to 70% of average throughout the 2014 water year.

San Juan River Basin snowpack above Navajo Reservoir had below average snowpack this winter. The maximum Snow Water Equivalency (SWE) was 14 inches on April 9<sup>th</sup>. For comparison, the 2013 SWE was 13.9 inches on March 13, 2013.

The April through July modified unregulated inflow to Navajo Reservoir, was 428,086 acre-feet (ac-ft) or 58% of the 30-year average.

### Review of Water Year 2014 Operations to date

Releases to the river since October 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 have ranged from 250 to 750 cubic feet per second (cfs) from Navajo Reservoir, which have been sufficient to meet target base flows in the critical habitat area. The observed inflow for April through July was 428,086 ac-ft (58% of the 30 year average).

An above average monsoon season kept instream flows closer to average over the winter, allowing the minimum release from the reservoir while still meeting target base flows. With these lower releases, the reservoir was able to gain storage over the winter.

In cooperation with the SJRIP, a spring peak release was not conducted during the 2014 in favor of recovering the reservoir and ensuring that user needs and target base flows were met in future years. The San Juan River Basin saw below-average natural flows during the spring and summer. The lowest SJRIP Spring Peak flow goal of 2,500 cfs was met for 17 days between March 1<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Current Conditions**

Navajo was at 6036.68 ft of pool elevation and 1,098,609 ac-ft of storage by August 24, which was 65% full, 43% active. Observed inflow into Navajo was 371 cfs. The release to the river was approximately 750 cfs with the release being reduced to 550 cfs on August 26th. NIIP was diverting 452 cfs and San Juan-Chama diversion as measured at the Azotea Tunnel has been turned off, reading only 1.8 cfs.

A brief update on nearby reservoirs was provided. At the Animas-La Plata Project (ALP), the reservoir (Lake Nighthorse) pool elevation was 6,881.38 feet and the current storage was 114,153 ac-ft, which was 99% of live capacity. Lake Nighthorse is not currently pumping or releasing. Lake Nighthorse was topped off in May and June of this year. A total of approximately 10,220 acre-feet (approximately 4% of the total river flow) of water was pumped from the Animas River at the Durango Pumping Plant during that time. Vallecito Reservoir elevation was 7,647.71 with storage of 81,534 ac-ft (65% full, 107.7% of average). The release was 557 cfs and the inflow was 208 cfs. The April through July actual inflow was 149,000 ac-ft (77% of average). Lemon Reservoir elevation was 8,099.63 feet with a current storage of 15,613 ac-ft (39% full, 66% of average). The release was 148 cfs and the inflow was 54 cfs. The April through July actual inflow was 37,000 ac-ft (67% of average).

## **Water Year 2015 Forecasts**

The most probable forecast inflow for April-July of 2015 is 631,000 acre-ft (85% of average). The most probable forecast would likely allow a one week hydrograph spring peak release, consisting of seven days at 5,000 cfs. There would be no spring peak release under minimum probable forecast, and a full four-week hydrograph may be possible under the maximum probable forecast. A base release of 250-500 cfs will most likely be sufficient through the winter and into the spring unless hydrologic conditions change. This is a preliminary forecast that will likely change as the season progresses.

Current models show a 65% chance of a weak or moderate El Nino forming this winter. Impacts on the basin are uncertain.

## **Maintenance Activities**

The rock fall mitigation and concrete repairs to the spillway have been completed.

Starting September 8<sup>th</sup> a security fence along the frontage road will be installed. The new fence will not block off pedestrians access to the river. The frontage road will not block pedestrian use of the river. This work should take approximately one month.

Beginning September 13th, the rehabilitation work will begin on the right groin seepage area including the toe drain system

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

Colorado State Parks and Wildlife – had a good summer recreation session, with higher reservoir storage than last year they were able to reopen the marina and boat ramp.

City of Farmington Utilities – Both units are operational and available for meeting flow requirements.

New Mexico Game and Fish – Hammond project is finished on south side of the river, still working on north side. Russian olive work continues.

NAPI – Navajo Indian Irrigation Project will close their diversion gate in Navajo reservoir on September 13, 2014.

PNM – Waiting for EAP to respond to approving the plan to discontinue units 2 and 3 on the San Juan Generating Station, for compliance with the Clean Air Act.

Soaring Eagle Lodge - The 3,000 cfs rain-induced flood a few weeks ago caused some damage. Hammond fishing Area is having an opening August 29<sup>th</sup> from 11-11:45 am.

**Next Meeting** - Scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2015** at the Civic Center in Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).

## **Attendance List – August 26, 2014 Navajo Operations Meeting**

Ashcroft, Nick, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM  
Becker, Herb, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce NM  
Ben Shannon, City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Chavez, Aaron, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Christianson, Ryan, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction CO  
Day, Henry, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Dodd, Stacy, Bloomfield Irrigation District, Bloomfield NM  
Greenberg, M., Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo NM  
Green, Kristin, Interstate Stream Commission, Santa Fe NM  
Greene, Mike, Public Service of New Mexico, Bloomfield NM  
Haskie, Lionel, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, Farmington NM  
Horner, Gary, Citizen, Farmington NM  
Howe, Michael, BIA, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington NM  
Isaacson, Mike, Keller-Bliesner, Farmington NM  
Joe, Jeanette, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry O&M, Farmington NM  
Johnson, Larry, Soaring Eagle Lodge, San Juan River Guide Assoc, Bloomfield NM  
Kirby, Kim, Office of the State Engineer, Aztec NM  
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
Lile, Carrie, Southwest Conservation District, Durango CO  
Miller, Richard, City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Miller, Scott, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Montoia, Paul, City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Nordlander, Ken, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Prda, Nam, West Hammond Domestic Water Assoc., Bloomfield NM  
Richmond, Linda, Bureau of Land Management, Bluff UT  
Secrist, Doug, CO Parks and Wildlife, Arboles, CO  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Warner, Ed, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Junction CO  
Wethington, Marc, NM Department of Game and Fish, Navajo NM  
Whitmore, Sharon, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque NM  
Williams, Michael, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo NM  
Williams, Shawn, NM Office of the State Engineer, Aztec NM