



**Hydrology Committee Meeting  
Conference Call  
March 23, 2004**

**Member/Alternatives Present**

Pat Page, Chairman  
Mike Buntjer  
Joann Perea-Richmann  
Chuck Lawler  
Ray Alvarado  
Bill Miller  
John Simons  
Bernadette Tsosie  
Pat Turney  
Ron Bliesner  
Brian Westfall  
Dale Wirth  
Rick Cox

**Representing**

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
State of Colorado  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Navajo Nation  
State of New Mexico  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs  
  
Water Development Interests

**Introductions and Review and Approval of Agenda Items**

Joann Perea-Richmann was introduced as the new program assistant.

**Objection to October minutes**

Pat Page read the objection by John Whipple to the Alternatives Method language in the October 14, 2003, meeting summary. It is as follows:

I object to the language approved by the Hydrology Committee for the October 14, 2003, meeting summary at the bottom of page 2 continued onto page 3 on the subject of alternative methods for providing water to fish. The language that I suggested, and that was not accepted either in the summary or in the action item log for item 115, is language that is appropriate as regards the discussion had at the meeting and the task assignment. I believe that the language approved by the Committee wrongly insinuates that water leasing for fish is going to occur and we just want to know what issues we are going to have to deal with. I do not believe leasing for the fish is appropriate. Item 115 should be to research issues associated with leasing or forbearance. Further, the Hydrology Committee inappropriately reached a legal conclusion on its own without New Mexico representation when it inserted into the meeting summary that New Mexico cannot administer water for fish unless consumptively used. New Mexico committed to protect releases from Navajo Dam made to benefit endangered fish species in the San Juan River, and may do so to the extent of its authority by administering water rights in the basin. I request that you all reconsider the language I proposed for the subject section of the meeting summary.

--- Received via email from John Whipple -2/19/2004

It was decided to not revise the October summary but to incorporate John's objections into this summary.

### **Approval of January 21, 2004 Meeting Summary**

Summary was approved without objections

### **Review of Action Items**

The action item log was reviewed and updated. See attached log for March 23, 2004.

### **Federal agencies internet access.**

Internet access was shut down on Friday, March 20 by court order. Some Federal agencies have access but others do not. Pat will work on getting access so that information can be exchanged.

### **Generation 3 Model Development Update**

Dave said the status report represents the latest problems with the model. Ron explained the need to even out the hydrology using 7-day averages. Since the writing of the status report, the problems have been evaluated. Ron explained that there are anomalies in the SJ-Chamas depletions. The modelers will be working to identify the cause for the reduction in diversion from previous runs.

Brian reported that CADSWES responded within a week to questions about differences between results from version 3.1 and 4.2. They determined an error in 4.2. At this time, 4.4 was about to launch and the repair was made to that versions (4.4). So now, San Juan Basin Hydrology Model runs using 3.1 and 4.4 are essentially identical. Reclamation will detail the comparison between 3.1 and 4.4 at the next meeting. It was recommended that all current work use 4.4 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation analyses.

### **Discussion of budget.**

The budget was reviewed and shows very little remaining budget since we are nearing completion of the model revisions. Rick Cox encouraged preservation of budget for documentation and was assured that there will be sufficient to complete good documentation since much of the documentation work is already complete. A revised budget was provided allocating the \$20,000 of contingency to the modeling effort. The due dates were also revised. Dave reassured the committee that there was sufficient budget to complete the model. The revised budget was approved by the Committee.

### **Policy on Requests for Model Runs**

The proposed policy on requests for model runs was reviewed and discussed. Ron Bliesner explained that item 3 should be a description of the process and not depletions since model could and should compute the depletions.

Ray Alvarado stated that applications must be approved by the Hydrology Committee before work starts in order to allocate limited program funds.

A committee member stated that John Whipple had previously expressed a need to have modelers with USBR review the results report prepared by the applicant to verify that it accurately represents the model results.

Item three needs to be modified to encourage applicant to coordinate its application with its respective state.

The HC expressed appreciation to Steve Harris for drafting this policy.

### **Alternative Methods for Providing Water to Fish**

No new action items.

### **Hydrologic Conditions Discussion and Navajo Reservoir Forecast**

John Simons presented the mid-month March forecast. The most probable April-July modified-unregulated inflow, based on this forecast is 800,000 af, or 102% of the 30-year average. This is a decrease of 80,000 af from the March 1<sup>st</sup> forecast. After adjusting for Vallecito Reservoir and SJ-Chama operations, the April-July inflow to Navajo Reservoir is projected to be 656,800 af, or 97% of the 30-year average. This is a decrease of 70,000 af from the March 1<sup>st</sup> forecast.

Under the current minimum probable forecast, the maintenance flow is triggered; therefore the target base flow would be 400 cfs in the critical habitat this summer. This could change (back to 500 cfs) if the forecasted inflow increases to an amount that would result in an end-of-July Nava Reservoir content projection of greater than 1,000,000 af.

### **Shortage Sharing Update**

The current forecast does not project any shortages at this time. The 2004 Shortage Sharing Recommendations have been endorsed by all parties. USBR and NM are preparing their letters of acceptance. The 2004 version is similar to the 2003 version with the following exceptions:

- Duration of shortages to endangered fish flows has been incorporated.
- Maintenance flow of 400 cfs will be maintained in critical habitat this summer if minimum probable forecast projects end-of-July reservoir content to be less than 1,000,000 af
- NIIP demands are increased (if no shortage)

USBR is currently going through NEPA process to be able to have minimum allowable releases as low as 350 cfs this summer.