

**WATER ACQUISITION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**  
**12/10/96**

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Water Acquisition Committee Meeting Notes  
December 10, 1996 meeting

1. Attendance: George Smith (Chairman and Note Taker), Bob Norman, Brent Uilenberg, Tom Pitts, Malcolm Wilson, Ray Alvarado, Sue Uppendahl, John Hamill, Ray Tenney, Jenny McCurdy
2. Review of the Agenda Two items were added to the Agenda: (Revised agenda attached)
  - 1) Price/Stubs Hydro & Section 7
  - 2) Section 7 Model Runs
3. Review of 1996 Project Annual Reports

With the deadline for annual progress reports due the day of the meeting, several reports were not available for review. The following reports were on hand and distributed for review:

Return Flow Gage O&M Data Analysis

15-Mile Reach Gage O&M

Water Rights Consultant

Water Acquisition Hydrology Support

Mineral Bottom Gage (1996 Channel Monitoring Project)

Grand Valley Water Management

Collbran Operation Plant

Upgrade of Redlands Diversion Gage

Coordinated Reservoirs Operation

Reports were not available at meeting time from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and the Central Utah Water Conservation District. These reports were received shortly after the meeting. Copies of all

the annual reports were sent on December 18, 1996, by the Recovery Program Director's Office.

The WAC reviewed the reports on hand and several issues raised in the reports were discussed. Discussion of the Return Flow Gage, or 27.5-mile gage, focused on the need to continue the gage past December 31, 1997. Ray Alvarado mentioned that the instream filing for 300 cfs was nearing completion with only the City of Grand Junction continuing to oppose the filing by not agreeing with the stipulation. Ray also mentioned that the right had been subordinated to a point where the right was nearly useless, but Grand Junction is still opposing the right.

Ray recommended that the gage be continued to support the right in any water court action. Tom Pitts recommended that a Scope of Work be developed for FY-98 and the need for the gage be reevaluated before the FY-98 work plan is finalized.

#### Redlands Diversion Gage:

Bob Norman recommended that the gage be retained until he had completed a study to determine if the gage could be correlated with the gage on the Gunnison River near White Water and the gage on the Redlands Canal to predict the flow below Redlands diversion. The WAC recommended that the gage be retained until all the evaluation studies on Redlands fish ladder are completed.

#### Collbran Operation Plan:

Brent Uilenberg explained that the water that was to be available from Collbran is now included in the settlement of the Orchard Mesa Check settlement and the water is available from Green Mountain Reservoir. Brent recommended that the Project be accepted as accomplishing its goals and be denoted as complete in the RIPRAP Document. The WAC concurred with the recommendation and Brent was instructed to revise the completion report to that effect.

#### Colorado Instream Flow Protection:

Sue Uppendahl reported that all tasks identified in the Scope of Work were accomplished, including review of scientific basis of flow recommendations, provision of Preliminary and Final Notices to the CWCB, appropriation of instream flow water rights and subsequent filing for these water rights. In addition, legal

activities continued on Case Numbers 92CW286 and 94CW330. The CWCB staff recommended that necessary actions be taken to resolve the administrative, policy, legal, and institutional issues that continue between the appropriate parties, in order to fully implement and protect these instream flow water rights for the benefit of the four Federally endangered fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin.

#### Colorado Compact Allocation:

Sue reported that during 1996, the CRDSS Project completed the implementation of water resource planning models on all major river basins within Colorado's western slope associated with Phase 2. The database to run these models is online and has been fully populated with data ranging from structures diversion, climate data to water rights information. It is also being recommended that the study period of the water resource planning model be extended to include a longer hydrology period.

{Coordinated Reservoirs and Grand Valley Water Management are discussed in individual Status Reports below}

#### 4. Status Reports

##### A. Colorado River Activities

John Hamill gave the WAC a short update on the status of 15-Mile Reach Strategy. John reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service and the 15-Mile Reach strategy group are now looking at the development of a programmatic Biological Opinion for water projects above the 15-mile Reach. The Biological Opinion is scheduled to be out in draft by February 26, 1997, and work is proceeding accordingly. Several WAC members sought to clarify how the analysis would be accomplished specifically what steps would be followed in developing the CRDSS Model runs to describe various scenarios. Unfortunately, Randy Seaholm, who is directing the model runs, was not present at the meeting to describe the work in detail. Ray Alvarado, who has been working on the project with Randy, described the runs as best he could but there was still considerable confusion. A main point of confusion was how the full build out of existing reservoirs and currently operation facilities would be modeled. This confusion came from Randy's memo of November 21 (attached). Where this analysis appears to be carried out in Run 4; reading the memo and discussing the runs with Ray it became clear that the full build out of reservoirs is going to be covered in Run 2 Group 2.

Tom Pitts stated that the Water Development Community wanted to look at full build out. Tom suggested the following scenarios, Existing Projects, Existing projects to full build out new projects (all or part of the

carveout). The issue of projects which have been consulted upon but have not been built came up and was discussed. These projects, mainly oil shale projects, will need to reconsult based upon listing of the razorback sucker in 1991 and the designation of critical habitat in 1994. These projects which are still viable will be addressed in Run 2 Group 3. The full build out of the Denver Water system was discussed and according to Randy's memo will be evaluated in Run 2 Group 2. The WAC made no recommendations on how the analysis should be accomplished. Ray responded that much of the data and analysis can be found on the CRDSS Home Page. Please call Ray for instruction on how to access the data.

### Coordinated Reservoirs:

Malcolm Wilson review the status of the effort as outlined in the annual report and asked WAC for guidance on monitoring work recommended by the Study Team. John Hamill relayed the information that FY-98 program guidance is being developed by Henry Maddux and calls for a limited Colorado River channel monitoring program. Malcolm further noted that implementation plan had been developed and distributed to the Management Committee and WAC. The basics of the plan will be implemented in 1997 and many of the details will be worked out as the process proceeds. The future of the coordinated reservoir effort was discussed and it was recommended that a Scope of Work for FY-98 be developed upon coordination of the effort and as a vehicle to account for local match for the Recovery Program.

### Grand Valley Water Management::

Brent Uilenberg gave an overview of the activities underway and current outstanding issues. Currently the project is in the permitting phase and a number of issues have been surfaced by the Grand Valley Water Users (Water Users). The issues include planned rehab of the main diversion dam and Highlands Reservoir use as a pumpback facility. The Water Users would like all these issues along with depletion impacts, fish passage and water quality to be all addressed in the biological opinion and NEPA compliance for Grand Valley Water Management. John Hamill mentioned that the depletion effects will be addressed in the Programmatic Biological Opinion and that contaminants are being covered under a separate program by the Reclamation. The Water Users want all of the impacts and permitting to be covered in one package because they feel they would have more leverage on the process. Currently the project is budgeted to begin in 1997 and to be completed in 1999.

### Price Stubs Hydro:

Bob Norman reported that an opportunity exists to purchase the right to build a hydro plant at the Price Stubs diversion dam from the current FERC applicant. It may be feasible for the program to build a fish ladder and hydro plant at the site and use the money from the hydro plan to pay for O & M on a number of Recovery

Program projects. The WAC recommended that Reclamation develop a proposal package for the acquisition and development of the site.

### Ruedi Issues:

John Hamill reported that he had recently received a contract which has not changed much from former drafts. The contract asks Colorado to purchase water but John doesn't have any idea of what Colorado thinks of the contract. Peter Evens has been trying to set up a meeting. If the contract is not acceptable, the Colorado Recovery Program will need to identify other methods of paying for the water.

John has also been working with the local community in the Fryingpan and Roaring Fork Valleys to explore the possibilities of increasing the flow in the Fryingpan River during late summer to accommodate the transport of water to meet flow recommendations for the 15-Mile Reach. A meeting was held June 27, 1996 in Carbondale and another is planned for Basalt on January 23, 1997 to explore options for exchanges and increasing fisherman access.

### Silt Operation Plan:

Brent Uilenberg reviewed the status of the Operation Plan that had been mailed to WAC members for review. The WAC concluded that there was not much in the Plan for the fish and that further study was not needed. Brent mentioned that he would like to keep the project in consideration for a source of water for coordinated reservoirs but in the coordinated reservoir meeting that followed the WAC the project was also dropped for further consideration.

## B. Yampa River Activities

### Steamboat Lake Lease:

George Smith reported that Colorado Division of Parks (Parks) had gotten agreement on the change to the water right decree for Steamboat Lake, except Tri-State Generation. Tom Pitts reported that Tri-State Generation has a problem with some of Parks assertions in the change decree and continues to oppose the decree as currently expressed by Parks. Tom will try and intercede to see if something can be worked out.

## C. Green River Activities

George Smith presented a review of the background and conclusions of the Duchesne River Hydrology and Water Availability Study as they relate to the need to acquire additional water in the Duchesne River to meet the Service's flow recommendations. John Hamill requested that the WAC begin a formal peer review of the study and that some of the water sources identified in the study begin to be implemented. The WAC instructed the Chairman to direct a letter to Gene Shawcroft, asking him to coordinate a peer review of the study with the remaining fund. The WAC suggested peer reviewers such as Ron Johnson, Brad Vickers, Tom Ryan, and Jerry Olds. The Letter is attached to the meeting notes.

## 5. Selection of New WAC Chairman

George Smith was renominated, and accepted, the chairmanship for a second term pending approval by the Management Committee.

## 6. Other Business

The next meeting of the WAC was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on February 12, 1997, at the offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Lakewood, Colorado. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. and was followed immediately by a coordinated reservoirs meeting.

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