

April 26, 2001

San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

Hydrology Committee Meeting Summary

March 21, 2001
Farmington, New Mexico

Welcome and Introductions: Errol Jensen, Committee Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and had everyone introduce themselves. Members in attendance included:

Errol Jensen, Chairman	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Steve Cullinan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Steve Harris	Water Development Interests
John Leeper	Navajo Nation
Ray Alvarado	State of Colorado
Brian Westfall	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Randy Kirkpatrick	Water Development Interests
Bill Miller	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
John Whipple	State of New Mexico
Rick Cox	Water Development Interests
John Simons	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Review and Approve Agenda: The committee reviewed the agenda and no changes were made. Action items from this meeting are shown in bold italics.

Review and Approval of January 31 Hydrology Committee Meeting Summary:

Several editorial changes were discussed and made at the meeting. John Simons corrected the information on when the City of Farmington is to be notified when changes in releases are expected. Ron Bliesner and John Whipple submitted changes for the paragraph on incidental losses. There were a few additional changes in the rest of the summary. The summary was approved as amended.

Navajo Reservoir Low Flow Test: The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will be holding two meetings to listen to the public's concern and questions regarding the low flow test proposed for this summer. The meetings will be held from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. on April 4 in Farmington, New Mexico and April 5 in Bluff, Utah. Some of Reclamation's resource staff will attend the meetings and will present what studies they plan to do during the low flow test.

The Hydrology Committee discussed whether there is specific information that they want collected during the low flow test. Reclamation will try to duplicate the test that was used for the mini model. They will be measuring the same river and canal locations and have added a couple of wasteway locations. The river will also be sampled for water quality during the low flow test. Work plans are still being finalized for the studies to be completed during the low flow test.

Currently the water supply is approximately 110 percent of normal, so the low flow test will probably be implemented. Reclamation will monitor the flows in the Animas River to ensure the flows in the critical habitat can be met before proceeding with the low flow test.

Model Documentation: Reclamation and Keller-Bliesner Engineering have received some comments regarding the model documentation, but those comments have not been incorporated yet. If the comments are not significant, then it is anticipated that the documentation will be completed shortly. *The authors of the documentation will contact the people who made comments and discuss the disposition of those comments. If the people who made comments are satisfied, then the model documentation will be considered complete.*

Review of Action Items from the January 31 Meeting:

- Pat Page, Reclamation, followed up on the Corps of Engineers' concern regarding the Hydrology Committee proposal (the Corps role in operation of the dam). It is recommended that we add the phrase "in accordance with Standing Operating Procedures of the dam" to the sentence talking about ultimate responsibilities. *Reclamation will submit the comment to Randy Seaholm on behalf of the Hydrology Committee.*
- To ensure that everyone has the policy statement that was approved in November, it will be attached to the meeting summary. *The Program Coordinator will attach the revised Policy Statement 1 to the November 14 meeting summary.*
- No comments have been received on the mini model. John Whipple stated that he will be submitting comments to John Simons.

- We do not have a final draft of the Hydrology Committee proposal. *Errol Jensen will get the latest draft of the Hydrology Committee proposal from Randy Seaholm and he will send it out to the Hydrology Committee.*
- There has not been a meeting of the subcommittee that will work on the format of the Long Range Plan. The Biology Committee Chairman is waiting to hear from Tom Pitts for an example of the level of detail necessary for the plan. Once that has been received, the subcommittee will meet.

Work Plan 2002 Proposals: John Whipple submitted a proposal to have the Program fund an additional person at Reclamation to become proficient with the model. The money would also help Reclamation be fully staffed to handle the work related to the model and Program requests, such as for the FY 2001 Work Plan, without needing to contract outside Reclamation for assistance. Reclamation is not ready to commit that they need another person to work on the model. When the updated model is further along, Reclamation will reassess their capabilities, but they are gaining more experience as they go along. Reclamation feels comfortable with the level of knowledge that they have now.

Reclamation was asked if they needed money for technical training. Reclamation believes that the staff is trained, but it will take more time for them to become faster and more efficient at running the model.

It was noted that Reclamation can now be the resource for water users to run the existing model. *It was suggested that Reclamation report this information back to the water users to inform them of their progress. It was suggested that Reclamation copy the Hydrology Committee on the letter to the water users.* There was appreciation that Reclamation was getting up to speed on the model. Reclamation will require assistance in evolving the output analysis to the new model.

It was discussed that the Hydrology Committee should consider formulating a work plan similar to the Biology Committee, where there is a description of the task and who is going to do the work. What will not get done in FY 2001 should be evaluated for inclusion in the work plan FY 2002.

For the next meeting, Reclamation will take the lead and draft the proposal for the FY2002 budget. The focus will be getting the model up to speed.

Progress Report: The draft progress report is due in May and the final is due to the Coordination Committee in July. It should be a one page summary on what has happened for the last year. *Errol Jensen will draft an outline for the progress report for the next meeting.*

Draft Policy Statement 2001-1: There was a general discussion about the draft policy. There were questions and disagreements on when the model is considered modified, when the Committee should approve changes, and whether the Committee has the authority to approve

changes. John Whipple indicated that New Mexico cannot agree to the use of the model, as it may be configured for later work on the Navajo Dam Operations EIS, for unspecified purposes over an indefinite period of time because model outcome may be sensitive to model errors or uncertainties, depending on the questions posed.

In that discussion, it was noted that some way of documenting the changes in the model was necessary. ***Dave King will use his current log of modifications and his naming convention to document the existing model and will provide this information to Hydrology Committee before the next meeting.***

Consideration of the Draft Policy Statement 2001-1 was tabled.

Recommendations for the Congressional Tour: The Committee suggested several ideas for the congressional tour to be held this summer. Some of these include the construction at the Hogback Diversion, Cudei diversion, PNM weir, APS power plant, Navajo dam, and NIIP.

Progress Report on FY 2001 Work Plan: The Committee went through the work plan and discussed progress on the tasks.

- Task A – Analyze and correct gage errors: Reclamation does not have a contract for this task yet, but they have made contacts with a possible contractor. The potential contractor needs more specific information on the work to be done. No funds have been expended yet.
- Task B – Evolve GIS data sets: This task was added to address the data to compute naturalized flows outside of Colorado. We need to work with New Mexico on return flows. This item will probably take more than 10 days.
- Task C – CDSS Review: This is different from CDSS interface. They have reviewed the Colorado data, so this item is done.
- Task D – Return flow testing: This task has been delayed because CADSWES has found a technical difficulty. They cannot get the return flows to talk to each other. It can be done, but it will take time.
- Task E – Water rights: This is to emulate the Colorado water rights process to see if they can duplicate what Colorado did in their model. Reclamation and New Mexico will have to discuss data and model configuration in New Mexico.

At this point, Dave King was asked to give a brief summary of the overall progress of the model update. We need critical information from New Mexico. Although CADSWES is a little behind on the return flow modifications, RiverWare is not yet on critical path. Reclamation will get together with New Mexico to discuss issues and time lines.

Dave presented some items he would like to test while he is waiting on the return flow programming. It does not fit into the existing work plan except in analyzing new decision model runs. This gets into the minute detail on how to implement the option of monthly above, daily below. The Committee said it would be helpful if they could see the new proposals, how it relates to the work plan, etc. ***Dave King will number the new work plan items and relate them to the lettered tasks under the approved FY 2001 Work Plan. Reclamation will develop a table that shows tasks, percent complete, money expended, etc.***

The modelers are not waiting for anything from Colorado at this point. The only task that is complete is item C. It is estimated that Reclamation has spent about \$35,000 of the approved \$400,000 so far. Some non-Program funds were expended before Program funds became available. Some of the GIS work was done with research funds. RiverWare modifications to date were funded with research funds.

Resolution of Outstanding Issues: Dave King asked for clarification on a couple of issues. The Hydrology Committee decided that the technical committee and/or the modelers should decide what they think needs to be done and then make a recommendation to the committee. The listserver can be used when guidance is needed prior to the next meeting. ***On items where Dave King wants direction or approval from the Hydrology Committee, he should put the information on listserver prior to meetings to help speed up things.***

- San Juan/Chama – The San Juan/Chama project has linkage with Navajo Dam. If there are mainstem shortages, then theoretically, the San Juan/Chama project would have to share in the shortages. This means we probably have to include the San Juan/Chama in the daily Navajo Operations model.
- Animas/LaPlata – Dave would like to include Animas/LaPlata Project in the daily model because it is integrated with Navajo decisions.
- Ungaged diversions – There are issues with shortages in New Mexico because we don't have recorded diversions. Estimated historical depletions are needed to recompute naturalized flows. One cfs for every 70 acres is a general rule of thumb used by New Mexico that may be sufficient to estimate historic shortages.
- Shortages occurred on the San Juan prior to completion of Navajo Dam. Would the rule of thumb in New Mexico apply on the mainstem prior to Navajo Dam to extend the natural flow back until 1929? Colorado used the perfected water right for the type of year by averaging wet and dry years to extend the data back to 1929. Reclamation and New Mexico need to get together to talk about historical data.

There was a general discussion around the fact that a lot of the work on the model is being held up until the modelers receive the data from New Mexico. John Whipple was not sure on when the data could be supplied. He stated that he has asked for a staff person to work full time on this issue. If approved, the person will not be on board until after July 1.

Washington, D.C. Highlights: Shirley Mondy, briefed the Committee on the recent trip to Washington, D.C. As Program Coordinator, Shirley accompanied the group to answer technical questions. The group met with congressional staffers from Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah. Things went well and the staffers were impressed with the collaborative efforts in the Upper Basin and the San Juan River Basin.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. on May 1 at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico.

Other attendees included:

Attendee

Representing

Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ty Arikan

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ed Warner

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Brent Uilenberg

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

David King

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

April Fitzner

Water Development Interests

C. Nancy LaMascus

City of Farmington

Tony Morton

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Pat Page

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Rege Leach

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation